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| CABINET | AGENDA ITEM No. 6 |
| 25 NOVEMBER 2015 | PUBLIC REPORT |

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| Cabinet Member(s) responsible: | Councillor Gavin Elsey, Cabinet Member for Digital, Waste, and Street Scene | |
| Contact Officer(s): | John Harrison, Executive Director Resources | Tel. 01733 452520 |

FUTURE OF WIND AND SOLAR PROJECTS – AMERICA FARM

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| RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| FROM : John Harrison, Corporate Director, Resources | Deadline date : N/A |
| <p>That Cabinet approves the cessation of the solar project at America Farm and that the planning application in respect of America Farm be withdrawn.</p> | |

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet following an internal review by officers and consideration by the Cabinet member.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the cessation of the ground mounted solar PV project at America Farm and withdrawal of the related planning application.

- 2.2 Cabinet received a report on the 23rd February 2015 to consider the way forward in respect of the two wind and three ground mounted solar PV projects namely Farms of Newborough (wind and solar) Morris Fen (wind and solar) and America Farm (solar only).

- 2.3 The report to Cabinet on the 23rd February advised members of potential issues relating to grid connections in the America Farm area. However this is now no longer relevant as the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) confirmed in August 2015 that the level of FiTs payments will significantly decrease over time, with the next reduction coming into force on the 1st January 2016 with a likely reduction of circa 80% of the tariff. DECC has also announced further reviews of the FiT and is likely to recommend further reductions in the rate over time. The reductions in FIT makes the America Farm solar business model completely unviable.

- 2.4 This report is for Cabinet to consider under its terms of reference 3.2.3 'to take a leading role in promoting the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area'.

- 3. TIMESCALE** (If this is not a Major Policy item, answer **NO** and delete second line of boxes).

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| Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan? | NO |
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4. PROPOSAL FOR AMERICA FARM

4.1 America Farm

In the light of all factors outlined in paragraph 2.3 it is recommended that the solar scheme at America Farm should not progress and the planning application (12/01904/R3FUL) in respect of this be formally withdrawn.

The future of the farm will be determined in line with Strategy for the Management of the Farms Estate, as adopted by Cabinet at their meeting on 20th July 2015.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 It is not believed that any further consultation is needed on the proposed cessation of the America Farm schemes.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

6.1 Agreement to cease the America Farm solar and wind schemes and withdrawal of the related planning application.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That the America Farm solar scheme be ceased due to financial considerations as a result of lack of grid capacity and changes to government subsidies on FIT.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The announcement from DECC referred to in paragraph 2.3 makes alternative solar schemes similar to America Farm financially unviable at the present time.

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Financial

9.1.1 The cost of the America Farm scheme were written off in the 2014/15 financial year. There are no other financial implications resulting from the recommendations contained in this report.

9.2 Legal

9.2.1 No additional legal considerations arise as a result of the cessation of the America Farm wind and solar schemes and withdrawal of the related planning application.

9.3 Property

9.3.1 Currently the farm is being let to a tenant on an annual basis.

9.3.2 The future of the farm will be determined in line with Strategy for the Management of the Farms Estate, as adopted by Cabinet at their meeting on 20th July 2015.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

10.1 Report to Cabinet 23rd February 2015 Future of Solar Wind Projects.

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