



FARMING AND PROPERTY BULLETIN – OCTOBER 2020

Sustainable Food and Farming Scheme - White Paper

The Sustainable Food and Farming Scheme (SFFS) white paper, produced by a group of Agricultural organisations including the NFU, CLA and TFA was published on the 15th September and aims to set out their idea of what a successful Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) should look like. The paper focuses on the theme of sustainable farming practices as opposed to environmental land management.

The White Paper proposes the use of a three-tier system. This includes a simple 'Farm Tier' which aims to be accessible to all farmers without the need for professional help to deliver both productivity and environmental benefits to farm. The 'Collaborative Tier' and 'Tier 3' would then follow with more complex and ambitious environmental management and restoration aims.

The White Paper aims to influence the creation of the new agricultural policy to enable UK farmers to remain profitable whilst increasing both environmental and welfare standards.

The Green Energy Grant and Further EPC restrictions

Applications are now being taken following the launch of the Green Energy Grant in September. The £2 billion government funded scheme aims to improve the energy efficiency and low carbon heat improvements of 600,000 homes in England. With the pressure on rural estates to improve their residentially let properties to reach an E level EPC, this grant scheme can ease this financial burden. The scheme can provide up to £5,000 (or £10,000 for those landlords or home owners with lower incomes) to put towards the works required.

With the current requirement for let properties in the UK to be an EPC band E as well as the September Government proposal that EPC letting requirements may be increased to a level C by 2025, the Green Homes Grant can act as an aid or facilitator for Landlords and homeowners to carry out the necessary works.

COVID 19 - Winter Economic Plan

Further financial support measures have been announced by the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak as the Furlough scheme is phased out despite further increases in the number of COVID 19 cases throughout the UK. The new 'Winter Economic Plan' will provide support for those with reduced work out through the new Job Support Scheme (JSS).

Job Support Scheme - This scheme will effectively top up the wages of those working under reduced hours but does not however support jobs which are considered unviable in the current economic climate. Commencing on the 1st November as the Furlough scheme ends, employees must work a minimum of one third of their original contracted hours which will be paid for by their employer. The further two thirds of wages will be split between the government JSS, the employer and the employee. The JSS is proposed to be used for a period of 6 months following the end of the furlough scheme.

VAT Relief - The temporary VAT cut for the tourism and hospitality industry has also been extended until the 31st March 2021. This allows businesses trading within these sectors to benefit by paying 5% VAT compared to the usual 20% charged.



Plans for 'Green Recovery'

After signing the leaders 'Pledge for Nature' at a United Nations event, Boris Johnson has committed to additional protection to English biodiversity. The proposal aims to protect 30% of the land area in England by 2030 through the expanded use of designated protection areas such as AONBs and SSSIs. 26% of the land area in England is currently protected, meaning a further 4% of protection is required, totalling 400,000 hectares. The new ELM Scheme has been noted as a tool to aid the completion of this target.

UK Free Trade Agreements

UK – Japan: Trade agreement agreed 'in principle'

UK – US: Outcome dependant on the result of the 3rd November US election

Australia and New Zealand: Trade agreement in process. Increasing competition for UK farmers

Agriculture Bill – Food Standards

MPs have voted against an amendment to the Agriculture Bill proposing that imports and trade deals meet UK animal welfare and food safety standards. This result may lead to the acceptance of lower standard agricultural produce being accepted in future trade deals.



Thimbleby & Shorland

HAY & STRAW AUCTION SALE

TUESDAY 12TH JANUARY 2021

Further details to follow

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