

From: Gaetano Romagnuolo, Research Officer - Overview & Scrutiny  
To: **Scrutiny Committee – 22 January 2021**  
Subject: Short Focused Inquiry – Farming Economy  
Classification: **Unrestricted**

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## 1. Introduction

- a) At its meeting of 23 June 2020, the Scrutiny Committee agreed that the work programme for the Short Focused Inquiries should include an inquiry into Kent's farming economy.
- b) Oral evidence was gathered from the following people/organisations:
  - David Smith, Director of Economic Development, KCC
  - Floortje Hoette, CEO, Produced in Kent
  - Stephen Betts, Managing Director, Laurence J Betts Ltd farm
  - Amanda Corp, Kent County Adviser, National Farmers' Union
- c) In addition, the Committee received written evidence from a variety of sources, including the following:
  - KCC Members, who provided feedback from their own division's perspective
  - Kent County Agricultural Society
  - Kent Farmers' Market Association
  - Hadlow College
  - National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) East Malling Research (EMR)
  - British Summer Fruit
  - Country Land and Business Association
  - BTF Partnership – land agents and rural surveyors
  - A number of farmers
- d) The recommendations and findings of the inquiry are set out in the report contained in Appendix 1.

## **2. Next Steps**

- a) Once agreed, the report and recommendations will be submitted to the Executive.
- b) The Short Focused Inquiry process will conclude at this stage to coincide with the end of the Council cycle.

## **3. Recommendation:**

**That the Scrutiny Committee approve the Short Focused Inquiry Report into the farming economy, and that it be submitted to the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members along with a request for a formal response to the recommendations within two months.**

## **4. Background Documents**

None.

## **5. Contact details**

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