

NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting Culture and Communities Select Committee

Date and Time Tuesday, 12th July, 2022 at 2.30 pm

Place Ashburton Hall - HCC

Enquiries to members.services@hants.gov.uk

Carolyn Williamson FCPFA
Chief Executive
The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UJ

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting may be recorded and broadcast live on the County Council's website and available for repeat viewing, it may also be recorded and filmed by the press and public. Filming or recording is only permitted in the meeting room whilst the meeting is taking place so must stop when the meeting is either adjourned or closed. Filming is not permitted elsewhere in the building at any time. Please see the Filming Protocol available on the County Council's website.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore all Members with a Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting should consider, having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, consider whether it is appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 10)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.

4. DEPUTATIONS

To receive any deputations notified under Standing Order 12.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements the Chairman may wish to make.

6. GRANT FUNDING TO CULTURE AND RECREATION ORGANISATIONS IN HAMPSHIRE (Pages 11 - 18)

To consider a report of the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services setting out proposals for grant awards to culture and recreation organisations in Hampshire.

7. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY FARMS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 (Pages 19 - 46)

To consider a report of the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services setting out the Hampshire County Farms Annual report 2021/22.

8. PROPOSALS TO ADJUST ACCESS TO, AND PRICES FOR, THE ENDA RYAN POPPY PODS AT TILE BARN OUTDOOR CENTRE (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX) (Pages 47 - 78)

To consider a report of the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services setting out proposals to adjust access to, and prices for, the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre.

9. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 79 - 86)

To consider the Select Committee's forthcoming Work Programme.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

11. EXEMPT APPENDIX - PROPOSALS TO ADJUST ACCESS TO, AND PRICES FOR, THE ENDA RYAN POPPY PODS AT TILE BARN OUTDOOR CENTRE (Pages 87 - 92)

To consider an exempt appendix in relation to Item 8 on the agenda.

ABOUT THIS AGENDA:

On request, this agenda can be provided in alternative versions (such as large print, Braille or audio) and in alternative languages.

ABOUT THIS MEETING:

The press and public are welcome to attend the public sessions of the meeting. If you have any particular requirements, for example if you require wheelchair access, please contact members.services@hants.gov.uk for assistance.

County Councillors attending as appointed members of this Committee or by virtue of Standing Order 18.5; or with the concurrence of the Chairman in connection with their duties as members of the Council or as a local County Councillor qualify for travelling expenses.

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Agenda Item 3

AT A MEETING of the Culture and Communities Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Monday,
17th January, 2022

Chairman:

* Councillor Rob Mocatta

Vice-Chairman

* Councillor Jackie Branson

* Councillor Lulu Bowerman
* Councillor Ann Briggs
* Councillor Steven Broomfield
* Councillor Pamela Bryant
* Councillor Peter Chegwyn
* Councillor Rod Cooper
Councillor Alex Crawford

* Councillor Barry Dunning
* Councillor Dominic Hiscock
* Councillor Hugh Lumby
* Councillor Lesley Meenaghan
* Councillor Tanya Park

* Present

Also present with the agreement of the Chairman:

Councillor Edward Heron, Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Alex Crawford.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations were made at this point in the meeting.

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations on this occasion.

24. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman was pleased to announce that in November, the County Council signed a five year contract with Ancestry to digitise 500 years of archive records relating to family history to include parish registers and probate records dating from 1536 to 1921. It was highlighted that Ancestry, as a global leader in family history, will make the records available online to those that want to research their family history. As part of the agreement, access to the Ancestry website will be made available free of charge to Hampshire libraries and at the Record office during January. Three Ancestry operatives will be based at Hampshire Record Office for around a year to digitise the archive records and the first tranche of probate records is likely to be made available online during the summer 2022. The agreement with Ancestry will pay royalties to the County Council for public access to the online records and is estimated to generate over £10k per year which will contribute to the SP23 savings for the Archive Service.

The Chairman sadly announced the death of Julie Chambers, Strategic Manager for Trading Standards who passed away peacefully on the morning of the 20 December following a short illness. Julie's contribution to the County Council, through her 33 years of service in Trading Standards, was considerable, and her legacy would be lasting. Julie would be remembered for her immense knowledge of Trading Standards, her unfaltering commitment to supporting her team to develop their careers in the service and her ability to always find time for people despite her busy leadership role. On behalf of the Culture and Communities Select Committee the Chairman extended his condolences to Julie's family.

The Chairman highlighted that at Christmas, for the first time, Staunton Farm, hosted an outdoor light trail called 'Enlightened' in partnership with The Colour Project. This was an evening event, in addition to the Farm's normal activities, which ran throughout December and into January. The Chairman was pleased to announce that Enlightened received extremely positive reviews from visitors and sold over 25,000 tickets, which has generated over £40,000 additional income for the Countryside Service. The event was managed very professionally and ensured no disruption to Staunton's usual activities during the day and was a great example of extending the use of County Council sites to expand the offer for customers. The Chairman hoped that Members of the Select Committee who were able to attend enjoyed their visit.

The Chairman also highlighted that following several technical issues beyond the County Council's control, the Hantsweb Shop was unavailable from Christmas Eve. It was heard that this affected advance booking of tickets online and other services such as the purchase of season tickets and memberships. It was noted that the County Council was currently assessing the impact across the Services, but the impact did seem to be minimal with most online sales taking place before Christmas. The Chairman informed Members that IT colleagues worked closely with Services over the festive season to develop an alternative to Hantsweb shop called Shopify which went live on Monday 10 January, and the Chairman extended his thanks to all the staff involved in trying to resolve this issue over the festive season.

25. **2022/23 REVENUE BUDGET REPORT FOR CULTURE, COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report of the Directors of Culture, Communities and Business Services and Corporate Operations (Item 6 in the Minute Book), outlining the 2022/23 revenue budget for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs Services within the Culture, Communities and Business Services, prior to decision by the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs on 17 January 2022 (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

A presentation was shown to Members which highlighted key areas of the report. Members heard that savings to be achieved in order to balance the budget in 2023 had already been agreed by Council in November 2021 so these proposals did not contain any new savings proposals. A one year settlement for local government had been announced by the government in December 2021; funding in future years would be subject to changes in the formula used for allocating the funding which will be subject to the outcome of a consultation to be carried out in Spring 2022.

Officers drew attention to the 2022/23 revenue budget by service, cost type and funding source, and the importance of income generation as a key factor in the operation of these services was highlighted. The different capital schemes within the service were also explained as set out in slide 12 of the presentation. Members also heard detail around the key departmental challenges and priorities which included income generation, impact of covid, climate change, inflation and recruitment and retention. It was noted that a Task and Finish Working Group established by the Committee was currently examining income generation for services within the department.

In response to Members' questions it was confirmed that:

- In relation to tree planting, a potential site for a tree nursery was being looked at, but establishing this would need careful consideration. A number of other initiatives were also being considered including community nurseries.
- In relation to ash dieback, trees were carefully examined to minimise felling where possible. It was noted that a report would be brought to a future Cabinet meeting around funding.

- There has been work undertaken in examining opportunities for managing Basingstoke canal, but there were issues regarding the financial cost effectiveness of these.
- Officers were working closely with the Spring Arts and Heritage centre to examine the potential of a service-level agreement to enable library services to operate from the centre.

The Chairman moved to debate, where it was heard that one member would not be voting for the budget because of the significant cuts and impact on services.

The recommendation was proposed, and a vote was held with the following outcome:

For: 10
Against: 3

RESOLVED:

That, in regard to the revenue budget for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs services, the Culture and Communities Select Committee supports the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs.

26. **REGISTRATION SERVICE UPDATE**

The Select Committee received a presentation providing an overview of the Registration Service in Hampshire (Item 7 in the Minute Book). The presentation was introduced and it was explained that a range of services were provided which include the registration of births and deaths, as well as civil partnership ceremonies and British citizenship ceremonies. It was also noted that Hampshire was recognised as a leader in registration training.

Details were also heard of the changes to the Registration service brought about by the Covid pandemic, and Covid easements enabled telephone death registrations, and outdoor ceremonies. Slide 10 of the presentation detailed the number of deaths registered within 5 days in Hampshire for two separate weeks in early October 2021 and late November 2021. Although the number registered within 5 days was low in early October, this was indicative of the national picture of that time, and in line with other Local Authorities due to staff absences related to Covid. This figure had risen considerably by late November.

It was explained that whilst there were risks for the Registration Service going forward, with the law commission review of marriage reforms and independent celebrants, there were also opportunities which included developing the approved venues portfolio and to explore opportunities for Hampshire to become a training provider.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- The Registration Service was exploring the provision of non-statutory services such as funeral services, which could be provided in the future.

- Since the lifting of Covid restrictions, Citizenship ceremonies had resumed in the Great Hall, and Members were encouraged to attend if they wished.
- Officers highlighted the scope to expand the number of licensed venues in Hampshire further.
- In relation to a Member query about registration facilities in Havant, it was noted that The Plaza is licensed for civil partnerships and wedding ceremonies, and Havant library is able to provide birth and death registration.

The Committee thanked Officers for the informative presentation and noted the update.

27. **AN INTRODUCTION TO HAMPSHIRE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS**

The Committee received a presentation providing an introduction to Hampshire Archives and Records (Item 8 in the Minute Book). The presentation was introduced and the recent visit in November to the Hampshire Record Office by the Select Committee was highlighted.

In relation to the archives service, Members heard that this was one of the largest archives services in the United Kingdom, and had achieved Archive Service Accreditation since 2018. Officers explained the move towards digital access of archives through the contract with Ancestry, and sources of income generation for the archives service were highlighted which included venue hire and ticketed events. Members heard details about the Council's Record Management Service, and it was explained that work was ongoing with IT to explore digital retention instead of paper, but there were challenges such as ensuring digital records could be accessed successfully in 100 years' time.

The presentation also highlighted the Hampshire Archives Draft Strategy, and close partnership working with other services such as the library and registration service was noted. Slide 10 of the presentation provided a breakdown of the expenditure of the Archives and Records service, and it was heard that the majority of expenditure was premises related and employee costs. Funding received by the service was also highlighted, and it was heard that £80,000 of funding had been received from the Archives Trust for the cinescanner. Details of the Income Generation Strategy were explained, and the opportunities to generate income were set out at slide 11 of the presentation which included receipt of royalties from Ancestry, providing professional consultancy and the potential to explore membership and partnership arrangements.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- Digitisation of records is expensive, and priority is given to those records which are the most popular.
- In relation to the future of the Hampshire Records building, this would be examined as part of the Hampshire Archives Strategy
- A voluntary contribution of £4,000 is asked of depositors annually.

- A challenge for digitisation is to ensure systems used are accessible in the future, and this will be explored and developed as part of the Hampshire archives strategy.

The Committee thanked Officers for the informative presentation and noted the update.

28. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Select Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive setting out the proposed work programme of the Committee (Item 9 in the Minute Book). In addition to the programme for formal meetings of the Select Committee, a schedule of proposed visits to sites around the County was appended to the work programme for information.

It was agreed that the following updates would be requested and the work programme amended accordingly:

- An update on effect of pandemic on Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs Services – to include details around recruitment issues and vacancies – would be added to the agenda for the 15 September meeting.
- The update from Arts Council England scheduled for the 23 November meeting - to include details of how arts are doing as part of cultural strategy, arts council funding and coping through the pandemic.

RESOLVED:

That the Work Programme for the Select Committee was agreed with the additions detailed above.

Chairman,

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date:	12 July 2022
Title:	Grant Funding to Culture and Recreation Organisations in Hampshire
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

Contact name: Emma Noyce

Tel: 0370 779 8373

Email: emma.noyce@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The report considers three awards for Grant Funding to Culture and Recreation organisations in Hampshire.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Culture and Communities Select Committee support the grant awards as outlined within the report, and recommend to the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs that he:

2. Approves a grant of £68,000 to Energise Me for the financial year 2022/23.
3. Approves in principle a final grant of £68,000 to Energise Me for the financial year 2023/24 subject to approval of the Council's budget in February 2023, this concluding the funding arrangement with Energise Me under the terms of the Funding Agreement dated 30th September 2016.
4. Approves a grant of £45,000 to The Spring, Havant for the financial year 2022/23.
5. Approves in principle two further awards of £45,000 per year for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 subject to approval of the Council's Budget in February 2023, these being the final awards payable to The Spring.
6. Approves a one-off grant of £24,730 to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens.

Contextual Information

Energise Me

7. At his Decision Day on 16 July 2015, the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside agreed that the County Council's Sports team, known as SHIOW, would form as a Community Interest Company (now Energise Me) and move out of the Council in April 2016. As part of the Funding Agreement of 30th September 2016 (the Agreement), a three-year funding package was agreed for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Period 1 of the Agreement).
8. Period 2 of the Agreement runs from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2024. In Period 2 the County Council *must* continue to pay LGPS contribution and *may* continue to pay core funding as agreed by the County Council and Energise Me.
9. On 7 December 2017 the Executive Member for Culture, Recreation and Countryside agreed a further £100,000 for 2019/20 and on 14 January 2019 the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs agreed a further £100,000 for 2020/21. In January 2020 the Executive Member agreed to fund £87,000 for 2021/22 (reflecting a 13% reduction for T21).
10. In addition to the core funding, in each year of the agreement the County Council has paid a supplemental contribution to the Talented Athlete Scheme under the terms of the Financial Arrangement. The full breakdown is shown in Table 1:

Table 1:

	2021/22 funding
	£'s
Energise Me	
LGPS Employer Contribution	48,000
2021/22 Core Grant	17,000
Coaches, Officials & Volunteers Scholarship Scheme - core grant	11,000
Hampshire Talented Athletes Scheme - core grant	11,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>87,000</i>
Hampshire Talented Athletes Scheme - additional contribution	29,000
	<u>116,000.00</u>

11. In return for funding from the County Council, Energise Me runs the Hampshire County Council Talented Athlete Scheme and Hampshire County Council Coaching Bursary scheme.
12. The Talented Athlete Scheme (HTAS) provides:
- Grants
 - Free access to participating leisure centres
 - A fast-track physiotherapy scheme
 - Sports science support
 - Sport psychology and lifestyle workshops for athletes, parents and coaches
 - Presentation and public speaking skills (in part to prepare the athletes for school visits in Hampshire)
13. The Coaching Bursary scheme provides grants to coaches (usually level 2 upwards), volunteers and officials to increase the number of qualified and skilled people working in clubs, schools and other community settings. Exceptions are made for under-represented groups in the workforce e.g. women.
14. For 2022/23 the approved budget remains at £116k as there is no approved SP23 saving to be applied. However, within this the LGPS pension contribution is currently assessed at £nil against the £48k budget provision, following the last actuarial review. Given that HCC will benefit from this saving, it is proposed to maintain the core grant(s) and additional Talented Athlete Scheme contribution at current levels for the financial year 2022/23. If the LGPS pension allocation remains at £nil for 2023/24 then it is proposed to maintain the same core funding for 2023/24, the final year of the agreement. However, if the next triennial actuarial review leads to an increase in the pension contribution from the £nil base in 2023/24, it is proposed to adjust the core funding to the scheme to offset the rise in pension contribution such that the overall cost does not exceed £68,000 in 2023/24:

Table 2

Energise Me	2022/23 funding	2023/24 funding*
	£'s	£'s
LGPS Employer Contribution	nil	nil
2021/22 Core Grant	17,000	17,000
Coaches, Officials & Volunteers Scholarship Scheme - core grant	11,000	11,000
Hampshire Talented Athletes Scheme - core grant	11,000	11,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>39,000</i>	<i>39,000</i>
Hampshire Talented Athletes Scheme - additional contribution	29,000	29,000
	68,000	68,000

*assuming the LGPS contribution remains at £nil.

The Spring, Havant

15. The Spring is the only professional Arts Centre and Museum in Havant Borough. The Spring delivers activities and cultural engagement opportunities that:
 - tackle disadvantage
 - raise levels of aspiration and educational attainment
 - create stronger, more cohesive communities
 - improve people's health and wellbeing

16. As part of a restructure of grant schemes, on 14 January 2019 the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage took a decision to transition from ongoing revenue funding to cultural organisations through the Culture and Recreation Investment Fund to one-off awards through the newly created Recreation and Heritage Community Fund. 9. As part of this decision, it was agreed there would be a phased reduction in awards for five organisations. Final awards were made to each organisation in 2021/22. The Spring, Havant was one of these organisations, it being awarded £75,000 in 2021/22.

17. Since that decision, it is considered that material differences to the situation in Havant specifically mean that consideration should be given to a further 3 year funding agreement with The Spring:
 - The Spring is considered the key strategic cultural partner in Havant Borough (Hampshire Cultural Trust, part of the County's extended organisation and a key partner in supporting the shaping of cultural strategy across Hampshire does not work across Havant).
 - Havant Borough has been recently designated a Levelling Up for Culture Place, indicating the DCMS and Arts Council consider this is a place where cultural engagement is low, but the opportunity to increase it is high. The Spring is one of the Arts Council's National Portfolio Organisations in recognition of the impact it makes in the Borough.
 - In July 2020 it was recognised that although Leigh Park Library and Havant Library were amongst the County Council's poorest performing libraries, due to local community need it would not be appropriate to close them. Instead, the Library Service agreed to look at other ways of delivering library services, including though working creatively with partners.

18. In view of the above, the Culture and Communities Select Committee has previously indicated its desire to support The Spring in its strategic role. Officers of the County Council and The Spring have met to discuss how The Spring can support Hampshire County Council in achieving its priorities and propose a partnership whereby the County Council provides Grant Funding to the Spring to deliver the following core activities:

- a strategic role in cultural placemaking and the development of cultural engagement in Havant Borough
- a unique partnership with Havant Borough libraries, testing new models and driving engagement to and with library services
- support of the delivery of Hampshire's cultural strategy in Havant Borough, in an extended delivery model

19. It is recommended that The Spring is awarded £45,000 per year for 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 to deliver the activities specified above. This shall be the final award made to The Spring, Havant from this budget.

Sir Harold Hillier Gardens

20. Sir Harold Hillier Gardens is a registered charity under the sole trusteeship of Hampshire County Council.

21. Sir Harold Hillier Gardens were due to have tills replaced as part of a Memberships and Booking project that included a new tills system. This project was originally planned to be implemented during 2020 and later delayed to 2021, this has been further delayed until late 2022. As older tills have not been replaced over the past 2 years, they have developed problems requiring them to be replaced urgently. In addition, new facilities have opened in the past year that required an interim till solution.

22. Fully functioning tills are vital to be able to operate the visitor facilities at Hilliers Gardens. A budget has been allocated by Hilliers for the Memberships and Booking project but these unforeseen costs, due to the delays have incurred an additional £30,000 spend.

23. Approval is sought to grant £24,730 to Hilliers Gardens.

Finance

24. The recommended awards can be met from within existing budget provision.

Consultation and Equalities

25. A high-level Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The grants are intended to have a positive impact and advance equality.

26. The corporate terms and condition of grant require that any organisation in receipt of funding shall ensure that at all times it complies with the Equality Act 2010 if applicable and shall ensure that it does not discriminate against

any person or persons on the basis of race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age or otherwise.

Climate Change Impact Assessment

27. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

28. The carbon mitigation tool decision tree indicates it is not suitable for the assessment of a programme. The decisions in this report are financial decisions in relation to a programme of one-off grant opportunities. Therefore, the tool is not suitable for this Climate Change Impact Assessment and has not been used.

Other Key Issues

29. Legal Implications: Section 1 (1) of the Localism Act gives the County Council the power to do anything that individuals may generally do. This includes the power to make grants.'

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
2020-01-16 EMRH Grant Funding to Culture and Community Organisations in Hampshire (hants.gov.uk)	16 January 2016
2021-01-12 FINAL EMRHCRA Grant Funding to Culture and Community Organisations.pdf (hants.gov.uk)	12 January 2021

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

2.1. A high-level Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The grants are intended to have a positive impact and advance equality.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date:	12 July 2022
Title:	Hampshire County Farms Annual Report 2021/22
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

Contact name: Josie Palmer

Tel: 03707 798057

Email: josie.palmer@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress made in 2021/22 to incorporate the new county farms policy priorities into operational practice.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that the contents of this first annual Hampshire County Farms report and newsletter be noted by the Culture and Communities Select Committee, and the Committee support its consideration by the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs.

Executive Summary

3. On 19 March 2021, the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage, Countryside and Rural Affairs approved the new County Farms Policy. The decision report proposed the preparation of an annual performance report to monitor policy implementation.
4. This first annual Hampshire County Farms report sets out progress made in the 2021/22 year. Progress has principally been centred around the key issue of new lettings, an important first stage in the lifecycle of a county farm holding. A new letting and tenant selection process has been both agreed and extensively tested during this first implementation year, culminating in the letting of 6 farms to new entrant farmers from Spring 2022.
5. Significant steps have also been undertaken to improve the profile and identity of Hampshire County Farms as a service. This has included its

movement within the CCBS structure from Property Services to the Natural Environment and Recreation branch to facilitate better, more joined up leadership and support across the County Council's rural estate.

6. The report also includes a newsletter summary of service activities at Appendix 1.

Background

7. The new County Farms Policy was approved on 19 March 2021 by the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage, Countryside and Rural Affairs. The [report](#) set out all the background to County Farm holdings and presented the revised policy statements.
8. The Policy is entitled 'County Farms Policy 2021 Towards 2050: A Vision for a Better Farming Future' ([Link to Policy document](#)) and comprises a vision to support the future of farming to contribute to Hampshire's quality of place and environment. The policy is divided into four main sections under the following strategic aims:
 - To provide inclusive opportunities for new entrants to a sustainable and innovative farming environment and opportunities for existing tenants to progress to larger holdings.
 - To achieve sustainable and adaptive systems of farming and land management to support high quality environmental, social and economic outcomes for Hampshire.
 - To support tenants to establish and grow viable agricultural businesses by providing farms from which they can operate and thrive for the duration of their tenancy.
 - To maintain the scale and quality of the land and assets available to the County Farms Service.
9. The County Farms policy review recognised the important contribution that county farms continue to make to farming in the UK, in particular their role in enabling new entrants to the sector, and identified:
 - the increasing requirement for farmers to provide public goods for public money,
 - the role of the Hampshire County Farms estate in contributing to the environmental and social priorities of the County Council,
 - the requirement for improved focus on performance and demonstrating good practice in land management,
 - the need for greater awareness of the county farms service and the achievements of our tenant farmers in contributing to the people and place of Hampshire.

10. The March 2021 decision report also recognised the synergies between the County Farms and the Countryside Service with increasing value being placed on the natural environment. It was agreed that the leadership of the County Farms service would be provided by the Assistant Director for Natural Environment and Recreation in CCBS to enable a more flexible, agile and holistic approach to the use of the County Council's rural estate.

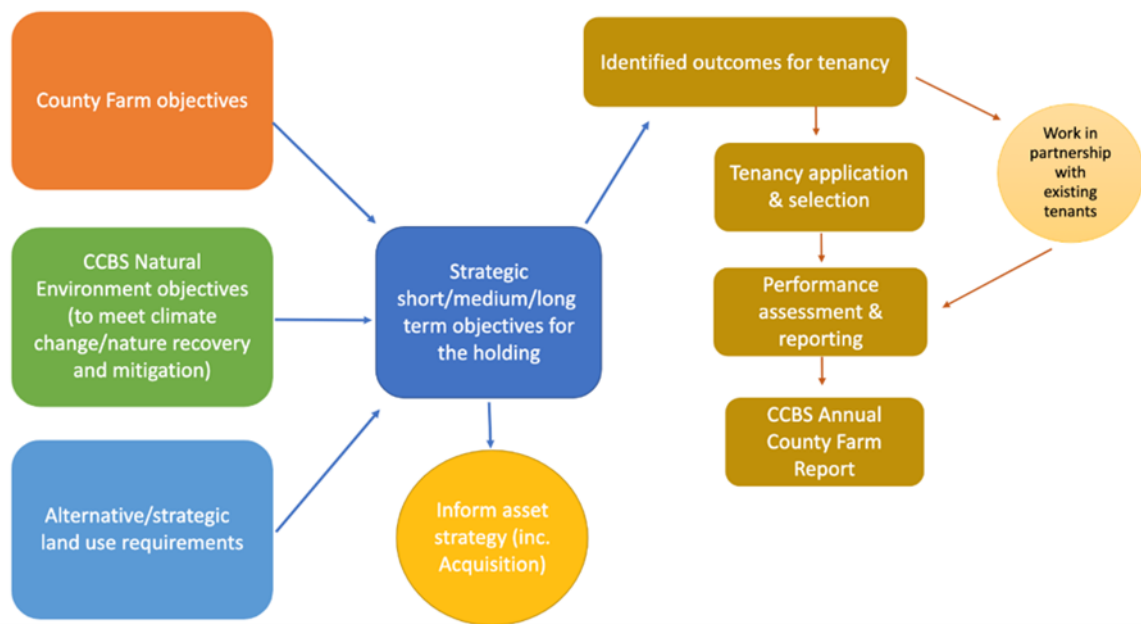
Progress Update

11. Following the approval of the revised policy and the recommendations arising from the policy review, several key actions were undertaken in 2021/22:
12. The Rural Estate and County Farms team is now under the leadership of the Natural Environment and Recreation branch of CCBS. This was formalised on 1 May 2021 and has enabled more bespoke support, a better joined-up rural estate and an increased profile and identity for the service. Communication and connectivity between corporate, departmental and service objectives (e.g. Natural Environment objectives to meet climate change/nature recovery) flows much better, and the team feel collectively part of an exciting opportunity area as nature and landscape recovery grows in strategic significance.
13. The change of branch has also resulted in changes to the financial management of the County Farms Service, with more operational costs, e.g. staffing, included in the same cost centre budget and enabling clearer reporting. However, the expenditure budget for risk management compliance, remedial work and planned maintenance remains with Property Services.
14. A new logo has been designed and brand guidelines prepared to lift the profile and identity of the service. A communications plan has also been drafted and this work has supported both improved engagement through social media and the development of some dedicated webpages for County Farms.
15. Farm landscape & environmental assessments ('FLEAs') have been developed by the service as a means of capturing, monitoring and tracking pertinent natural capital information about each farm. Historically, information of this type will have been gathered potentially many times by the Council for each of its land assets, but records can be often be fragmented across several different departments/teams. The intention is that relevant gathered landscape and environmental data (e.g. from Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre or the County Archaeologist) will be accessed by Hampshire County Farms via one document/terrier, which will be used to inform land management priorities.

16. It is anticipated that the FLEAs will facilitate better tenant collaboration and enhanced landscape stewardship, with both parties taking joined-up responsibility and contributing towards desired outcomes. These are to be prepared for each farm, but with farms to let from Spring 2022 prioritised in 2021/22 to inform Farm Action Plans.
17. Work with existing tenants on new policy alignment was limited this year with so many new lettings. Those tenants keen to join environmental schemes were however supported; guidance was developed to support tenant performance expectations ahead of any tenancy extension or progression application; and the team increased signposting to useful sources of information about the [Agricultural Transition Plan](#), training, wellbeing support and grant funding opportunities. Compliance and/or condition inspections were also undertaken on well over 40% of existing tenants' farms in 2021/22, which is work that will be built on in 2022/23.
18. A review of the letting and tenancy selection process was also undertaken, to support the marketing of 7 farm opportunities in 2021/22.

New letting and tenant selection process

19. The lifecycle of a county farms holding starts with letting process and, following adoption of the Policy, this is where the team focussed their attention in 2021/22. A staged process was designed, to fit around other county farms performance requirements and also within a wider departmental policy context as per the diagram below.



20. Given the number of new lettings scheduled for the year (7 farms vs a historic average of 1 farm per annum dating right back to 2010), this represented an incredible opportunity to implement new policy direction in a very deliberate way across at least 20% of our farms. With two tenancy extensions also received and due to be considered within the year, this pushed planned roll-out in Year 1 up to a quarter of our farms.

21. The letting process has been split into the following stages, which were extensively tested in 2021/22, given the number of farms marketed and subsequent applications received:

- i. Compilation of farm particulars
- ii. Advertising
- iii. Expressions of Interest
- iv. Viewing Days
- v. Outline Application
- vi. Full Application
- vii. Vetting and shortlisting
- viii. Interviews & decision-making
- ix. Requirement for Farm Action Plan

22. As well as summarising farm details, the priority outcomes identified for each farm were set out clearly within the farm particulars. Applicants were expected to demonstrate how they planned to deliver these as part of the application process and within their Farm Action Plans.

23. In 2021/22 the priority outcomes have generally included the following as a minimum:

- To keep sustainable food production at the core of farm activities;
- To protect, put into and keep in good condition the farm's soil health and structure, including organic matter content;
- To protect the farm's natural resources, including the local water environment which will be vulnerable to nitrate and pesticide leaching;
- To improve on-farm biodiversity and connectivity between neighbouring farms, local sites of importance for nature conservation, and within the wider landscape through good management and by providing joined-up wildlife-rich habitats;
- To strive towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions with a well-considered plan for monitoring, mitigation and adaptation;
- To boost pollinators and promote farmland bird abundance on farm through good engagement, monitoring and land management practices;
- To farm sustainably, adopting better performance measures, and with a willingness to undergo independent accreditation and/or periodic auditing to evidence strong performance;
- To adopt and uphold exemplar animal welfare standards;
- To engage with the public and play an active part in increasing the understanding of farming and rural Hampshire in the local community.

24. Advertising was mainly via social media, which reached a growing audience throughout the letting process. A quarter page was also taken in the Farmers Weekly. Marketing went well, although with hindsight some of our farms to let would have benefitted from longer marketing exposure, as indicated by the number of late enquiries. We now have a much-improved profile and identity from which to launch future new lettings.

25. Expressions of Interest enabled early eligibility checks, but whilst the principle worked well, this and subsequent application stages could have really benefitted from some 'smarter working tech solutions' to improve self-service and free up officer time. This is to be worked on in 2022/23.

26. The outline application stage has been included to ensure that there is an alignment of goals/priorities between the Council and prospective applicants before expecting the full extent of work required from applicants to produce a full business plan submission. There is a particular opportunity here to ensure that applicants have understood the need to deliver the Council's priority outcomes and broadly how they propose to do this. In practice, 9 questions were asked, which worked well, inspiring some good responses. Applicants were also asked to prepare an indicative farm action plan at this stage, demonstrating their commitment to sustainable farming and natural resource protection well ahead of producing their financials.

27. Well-rounded business plans with full financials are required at full application stage. Comprehensive guidance was provided to candidates to shape expectation and encourage candidates to provide decent proposals with a good breadth of content. Quality was variable, with weakest areas tending to be around management for nature conservation, e.g. how to support & monitor farmland birds & pollinators. Some curated content on our new webpages and social media should help to upskill and increase know-how in future applicants. There is also opportunity to share Countryside Service expertise on a range of nature topics on our webpages.
28. Scoring was carefully considered and weighted, as follows:
- a. Agricultural experience & qualifications – 25%
 - b. Financial strength & acumen– 25%
 - c. Climate & environmental commitment & awareness – 25%
 - d. Entrepreneurship & business acumen – 15%
 - e. Rent tendered – 10%
29. The selected applicants have been required to revisit their business plans and to prepare their own Farm Action Plan for the first 5 years of their tenancy agreement, setting out a firm commitment to how they will deliver the outcomes and any natural resource protection & enhancement in practice. There will be a further requirement built into the tenancy agreement (and any lease extension expectations) to review and renew their farm action plan before Year 5 of their tenancy term or as otherwise agreed. These farm action plans are appended to and referenced within the tenancy agreements and included as an Appendix.
30. Work to update the farm business tenancy template has also been undertaken and is ongoing to ensure ongoing fitness and flex to support new policy and emerging environmental opportunities.
31. It was rewarding to treat with so many aspiring farmers and to help improve their understanding and experience of applying for farms. Verbal feedback from candidates about the process was mainly positive, and we have also offered written feedback upon request to all applicants rejected out of the process at the various stages (perhaps an over-commitment given Year 1 pressures, to be addressed with automation via PowerApps in 2022/23).
32. An 'exit' questionnaire is also planned in due course to identify how we could do better in future, and to gear up interest for the next round of lettings.
33. The table below shows how interest and shortlisted numbers tracked for each farm marketed in 2021/22. An introduction to each of the new tenants has been included within the newsletter summary at Appendix 1.

<i>Farm</i>	<i>EOI forms</i>	<i>Viewings</i>	<i>Outline applications</i>	<i>Shortlisted to full stage</i>	<i>Full applications</i>	<i>Shortlisted to interview</i>
Lyde Green	18	15	5	3	3	2
Hazeley	15	17	9	8	7	6
Little Church	19	23	13	11	11	6
Lower Wangfield	17	18	10	5	3	3
Newhouse	12	8	4	4	4	2
Upper Brownwich	15	11	8	8	6	5
Bushfield	27	22	11	8	7	3

Performance assessment & reporting

34. Tenant performance expectations ahead of any tenancy extension or progression application have been developed. These will be summarised for tenant distribution and proactive implementation in 2022/23.

35. It is proposed that all tenants will be subject to regular annual inspections to monitor performance. This was not achieved in 2021/22, with only 60% of equipped farms being formally inspected during the year, including the marketed properties (which were inspected multiple times). If this service target is again not achieved in 2022/23 then a review of inspection frequency may need to be undertaken, or inspections split into different themes to spread workload (e.g. inspections for compliance, condition, letting event, environmental purposes or informal/'mini' spot checks). We look forward to reporting further in 2022/23 after scoping approaches.

36. For starter tenants, assessment and monitoring will be more rigorous, as follows:

37. Every 6 months for the first two years, a formal visit will be made to inspect the farm and examine the tenant's farm records and accounts. A written confidential report will be prepared confirming how the tenant is performing to date and any issues that need attention.

38. After the fifth anniversary but before the sixth, a written report will again be prepared, but with an additional recommendation that the tenant should, or should not, be offered a three-year top-up tenancy of the same starter holding following the expiry of the initial seven-year term.

39. Criteria supporting the expected level of tenant competence will be made openly available to tenants to guide performance expectations.

40. Constructive feedback, including the outcome of the Council's internal review processes, will be provided to the tenant after each programmed periodic visit.

Tenant movements on/off estate

41. A summary of tenant movements onto and off the estate during the 2021/22 year is included within the table below.

<i>Action</i>	<i>No.</i>
Tenant progression off the farms estate to farm in own right elsewhere	3
Retirements	2
Agricultural Industry leavers	1
Internal progression within estate (starter to progression opportunity)	2
Tenancy extensions (in line with policy)	2
New entrant opportunities granted onto the farms estate	5

Tenancy Type

42. There has been a subtle adjustment in spread of tenancy types in 2021/22, most notably the reduction in secure tenancies (now 8 tenants, down from 10, with two having left since the Policy review was undertaken). Please note that the table below includes bare land lettings within the portfolio.

<i>Tenancy type</i>	<i>2011-2012</i>	<i>Policy Review</i>	<i>2021/22</i>
Lifetime (secure)	10	7	6
Retirement (secure)	14	3	2
FBT Less than 5 years	15	11	9
FBT 5 - 10 years	14	9	12
FBT 10-15 years	3	8	8
FBT More than 15 years	4	3	2

Other notable estate achievements

43. Ten county farms now form part of farmer cluster groups (The Winchester Downs Cluster and the Winchester to River Test Cluster), established to deliver joined up and enhanced biodiversity benefit within the wider landscape.
44. A number of community events were hosted by tenants during the year, including Pumpkin Pastures at Brooklands Farm Fordingbridge and educational visits at South Stoke Farm, Kings Worthy.

Finance

2021/22 Financial Summary £'000	Annual budget	Year End Actual	Year End Variance
Expenditure	351	657	306
Income	(681)	(838)	(157)
Net budget/ actuals	(330)	(181)	149

45. *Net Revenue Position*

46. A revenue surplus of £181k was produced by the Rural Estates cost centre in 2021/22. £149k down on the budgeted £330k but tying in with Q1 and subsequent forecasts, that consistently highlighted both the big year of change following policy and operational reviews, plus the significant number of farm lettings.
46. The £181k cost centre surplus reflects all county farms estate income, all staff costs and the majority of property-related costs, including most premises repairs. However, it excludes certain costs administered by Property Services (PS), principally for compliance-related checks (structural surveys, dangerous trees, asbestos surveys and electrical).
47. Some fabric repairs are also met out of PS-administered budgets, for both reactive and planned maintenance. There was no planned maintenance carried out for County Farms in 2021/22 (£50k budgeted but not spent).
48. Factoring back in the PS-administered expenditure of £88k plus fees at 12%, in order to obtain a combined, or 'real', County Farms net revenue position, this reduces the surplus of £181k down to £84k in 2021/22, lower than the usual c.£150k combined revenue position estimated in February 2021.

49. The 2021/22 combined position is lower this year chiefly because of the large number of letting events falling into the same financial year and related costs. For example, an extra £269k of rural estates cost centre expenditure was required in 2021/22, chiefly to address the high tenant turnover-related property costs.

50. *Income*

51. The final income position was £838k for 2021/22, which exceeded the budgeted £681k by £157k.

52. This is chiefly due to the rents negotiated by the rural estates team for temporary smart motorways compounds (3no. in operation in 2021/22, tailing off to 1no. in Q4, which is forecast to remain in use for FY 2022/23 but at risk pending DfT smart motorways safety review).

53. *Expenditure*

54. Performance against budget analysis for PS-administered elements has not been included in this report, falling beyond the scope of the county farms service and largely driven by corporate risk management procedures (e.g. cyclical inspections and resulting repair works).

55. The application of risk management and similar arrangements to the county farms asset category is to be addressed within a future Farm condition review and associated works programme, also tying in with the CCBS Asset Strategy & Capital programme.

56. The Rural Estates budgeted expenditure in 2021/22 was £351k. Actual expenditure was £657k, producing a variance of £306k, predominantly to cater for extraordinary tenancy turnover-related property expenditure, tenants' outgoings/compensation payments and storm damage.

Capital projects

57. The relocation of 2no. steel portal frame buildings from Upper Cufaude Farm to Itchen Farm was completed in 2021/22, well under the £65k budget (£36k) and making excellent use of farm buildings due to be sold and demolished for housing development.

58. As at Year End, South Stoke Farm was close to having fully compliant slurry storage facilities after two short project phases, considerably delayed due to contractor staffing issues. Project still forecast to be delivered to budget (current spend is £326k – anticipated underspend against a budget of £457k).

59. Other projects planned for 2021/22 were pushed back a year given ongoing supply chain issues, or because of the knock-on impacts of other activities. For example, the tenant change at Lyde Green Farm has led to a re-scheduling of its slurry storage project so that the new tenants can feed into the design and construction proposals. Slurry infrastructure grants should also be available from 2022/23 which may assist with overall costs.
60. At Hollam Hill Farm where building replacement is critical, planning consent for the removal of a structurally poor old barn was contested, necessitating a revised scheme design. Some minor works are to be completed to Hazeley Farm to resolve flooding issues, now scheduled for 2022/23.

Consultation and Equalities

61. The new policy was informed by a Member Advisory Group, who met between June and October 2020, and by existing tenants through informal discussion and a targeted survey. This engagement has continued to support 2021/22 implementation activities.
62. Providing inclusive opportunities into a sustainable and innovative farming environment is a key policy aim. It was rewarding to engage with so many aspiring new entrant farmers throughout the letting process this year, providing increased mobility through those engagements into the agricultural industry, and thereby supporting the future of farming to contribute to Hampshire's quality of place and environment. Similarly, the new webpages have been designed to reach and benefit a much wider audience of aspiring new entrants.
63. At the time of the Policy Review, data sources for the agriculture and farming sector in the UK highlighted a continuing increase in the average age of farmers, an underrepresentation of women and a lack of diversity in terms of ethnicity. The review recognised the potential for gender inequality in Hampshire's County Farms service, which had only one female tenant at the time of the review, and the importance of removing barriers for new entrants to farming. The new Policy reflects a more open and inclusive approach to the recruitment of tenants as the first step in enabling opportunity and increasing diversity across Hampshire's County Farms estate. Progress to date against policy appears to have had early positive impacts for the service, with marketing and other activities attracting and retaining a much more diverse range of farm applicants than usual.

Climate Change

64. The County Farms estate forms part of the County Council's wider corporate estate and is therefore subject to the County Council's climate change strategy and targets. The approach to achieving a carbon net zero position

for the County Farms estate and ensuring its resilience in response to a potential 2°C temperature rise is being considered as part of the wider approach to the County Council's internal carbon reduction programme set out in a recent [report](#) to Cabinet.

65. It is anticipated that the service's priority outcomes identified for each farm will have a very beneficial impact on reducing carbon emissions, increasing carbon sequestration and also building resilience to climate change effects. The service will continue to work with both the CCBS climate change programme leads and farm tenants to identify and implement appropriate actions in line with the emerging strategy.

Next steps

66. Implementation planning for 2022/23 includes the following activities:

- a) Smarter working solutions for tenancy application process;
- b) Summarise performance guidance for tenant circulation;
- c) Finalise new Dilapidation Protocol;
- d) Ongoing farm compliance checks;
- e) Scoping for provision of tenant training, mentoring and support;
- f) Farm condition review and associated works programme, tying in with CCBS Asset Strategy & Capital programme;
- g) Proposal for farmhouse improvement programme to ensure compliance and with added value of reducing carbon;
- h) Coastal land case study – joined-up approach to management to boost farming, biodiversity and recreational uses;
- i) New Entrant Scheme – ongoing design considerations and opportunities for Hampshire County Farms;
- j) Carbon auditing – encouragement of detailed carbon footprint assessment by tenants by providing training to those engaging;
- k) 2022/23 Tenant Survey to support implementation and understanding of new policy amongst both the newest and existing tenants.

67. Spring 2023 provisional lettings:

- Copse Farm, Kings Worthy
- Hazeley Farm, Hook
- Lower Brownwich Farm, Fareham
- Tynefield Farm, Fareham
- Annarts Farm, Lockerley

Conclusions

68. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress made in 2021/22 to incorporate the new county farms policy priorities into operational practice.

69. It is recommended that the contents of this first annual Hampshire County Farms report and newsletter be noted by the Culture and Communities Select Committee, and the Committee support its consideration by the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs.

Appendix 1: A newsletter summary of service activities is included with this report.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> County Farms Policy 2021 Towards 2050: A Vision For a Better Farming Future	<u>Date</u> 19.03.2021
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u> Agriculture Act 2020	<u>Date</u> 11.11.2020

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken for the County Farms Policy. It identified that the Policy will have a positive impact in relation to protected characteristics of age, sex and race by providing more inclusive opportunities for new entrants to farming and support to tenants to establish viable farm businesses. The EIA also identified a positive impact on rurality arising from the renewed focus of the Policy on achieving high quality environmental, social and economic outcomes that support the communities of Hampshire.



**Hampshire
County Farms**
Supporting the future of farming

Hampshire County Farms annual newsletter 2021/22



Hampshire
County Council

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www.hants.gov.uk/countyfarms

Foreword



Hampshire County Council is the proud custodian of over 30 farms – one of the larger local authority-owned agricultural estates – which provide opportunities for talented farmers to develop their skills in agriculture whilst contributing to Hampshire’s quality of place and environment.

Farming is a sector undergoing a once-in-a-generation change. Defra’s Agricultural Transition Plan is phasing out the Common Agricultural Policy and bringing in new domestic arrangements to reward farmers for producing public goods on their land. At the same time, it is recognised that ongoing challenges in supply chains, energy markets and in the Ukraine, have hit the agricultural industry hard with rocketing costs, short supplies and labour issues. To see our farm tenants succeed and thrive notwithstanding these difficulties and to support them through change to embrace new sustainable approaches is really important to us.

This year has seen a high level of change on the farms estate - we have said goodbye to 6 of our longstanding tenants who have moved onto the next opportunity having developed their experience and knowledge. As a result, we have been able to welcome an above average number of new tenants, who we now look forward to working with on our collective priorities in the coming years.

Our goal is to work hand-in-hand with our County Farm tenants, recognising the vital role of the rural economy in Hampshire, the barriers that can exist to becoming a farmer, and the vital importance of land management to tackle the climate emergency. Standout initiatives include our new lettings and tenant selection process which has given us the pleasure of interacting with so many aspiring agricultural entrepreneurs this year, and also the fantastic efforts by our farmers to enter environmental schemes and engage with their communities, whether by farm shop or through hosting some fun educational events.

One year has passed since our new County Farms policy was put in place, and in this report we have highlighted the progress on the commitments we made. We thank all our tenant farmers for their passion and dedication in furthering these aims.

Director CCBS
Hampshire County Council



Our priorities to 2050

Last summer we rolled out our new policy which outlined our vision for a better farming future. Our priorities are now focused on:

Tenancy

To provide inclusive opportunities for new entrants into a sustainable and innovative farming environment, and opportunities for existing tenants to progress to larger holdings.

Land management and farming systems

To achieve sustainable and adaptive systems of farming and land management to support high quality environmental, social and economic outcomes for Hampshire.

Financial management

To support tenants to establish and grow viable agricultural businesses by providing farms from which they can operate and thrive for the duration of their tenancy.

The Farm Estate

To maintain the scale and quality of the land and assets available to Hampshire County Farms.



Supporting the future of farming to contribute to Hampshire's quality of place and environment.

Our farmers are making impressive progress both in the industry and with our farms at Hampshire County Farms.

Here's a quick overview of some of their achievements.

Brooklands Farm

Husband and wife team Dan and Sam started their tenancy at Brooklands Farm in 2015, an 80 acre farm on the edge of the New Forest. Last year they secured a Farming in Protected Landscapes grant to make Brooklands Farm resilient to climate change. They also formed a steering group with other land managers to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

"We are always looking into being as sustainable as possible and the Hampshire County Farms team are always at the end of the phone for advice".



Ravenscot Farm and West Lane Farm

Richard and Patricia have just completed the first year of their new countryside stewardship scheme. They now cut hedges in alternate years and have introduced 5 acres of wild bird seed mix, 5 areas of low input grass and 13 acres of grass has been replaced with a grass and legume seed mix.

"We think it's best to embrace these schemes now as this is the direction of travel for agricultural land and it will only accelerate."



Little Abshot Farm

Peter Barfoot, longstanding tenant of Hampshire County Farms, has received his CBE for Services to Sustainable Farming.

“My first rule of sustainability is profitability, without being profitable as a farmer your business will not be sustainable for very long”.

South Stoke Farm

With 30 years' experience caring for other people's dairy cows in this country and abroad, Nicki and Jon Proctor felt it was time to have a go for themselves. South Stoke Farm now produces around 1 million litres of milk a year.

They've recently begun welcoming school children to their family-run dairy farm. Working with charity, the Country Trust, they're helping connect children with the land that sustains us all.

“Hampshire County Farms has given us the opportunity to farm in our own right in a productive, positive and enlightening way.”

Down Farm

The Shergold family have started a doorstep delivery service, branded Cross Valley Milk, to sustain their dairy farm, delivering their fresh pasteurised milk around the Winchester area.

“We have a very close and successful working relationship with Hampshire County Farms and this project would not have been possible without their support.”



It's been rewarding to see some of our longstanding tenants move on to the next step of their farming story.

William and Katy Fox were tenant farmers with Hampshire County Farms until spring 2022. Here's what they had to say.



"Hampshire County Farms did what it said on the tin - it got us going. We've now gone on and purchased a farm and we are really living our dreams now. Without Hampshire County Council and taking on our tenancy, that wouldn't have been possible. This really has been a good foot on the farming ladder for us."

Ray Caddy was a successful tenant of Hampshire County Farms, with us until autumn 2021. Here's what he had to say about his experience:

"Having my own farm was a dream come true, giving me the opportunity to farm in my own right and develop both my business and agricultural skills through both the highs and lows of farming."

"From my experience, Hampshire County Farms have been good landlords, allowing me the freedom to run my own business - I would never have been able to afford my own farm. It has been a privilege to bring up my family in a rural, agricultural environment too."

"My advice to any incoming tenant would be make sure you have a realistic business plan and a passion for farming - and go for it!"



It's been a busy year for Hampshire County Farms with an unusually large number of new tenants joining us. This has provided a valuable opportunity to ensure our tenants' farming plans work towards County Farms newly refocused priorities.

Our new tenants have agreed to deliver the following outcomes:

- Keep sustainable food production at the core of farm activities.
- Protect the farm's soil health and structure, keeping it in good condition and putting in organic matter content.
- Protect the farm's natural resources including the local water environment which will be vulnerable to nitrate and pesticide leaching.
- Improve on-farm biodiversity and connectivity between neighbouring farms, local sites of importance for nature conservation, and within the wider landscape through good management and by providing joined-up wildlife-rich habitats.
- Strive towards net zero greenhouse gas emissions with a well-considered plan for monitoring, mitigation and adaptation.
- Boost pollinators and promote farmland bird abundance on farm through good management, monitoring and land management practices.
- Farm sustainably, adopt better performance measures, with a willingness to undergo independent accreditation and/or periodic auditing to evidence strong performance.
- Adopt and uphold exemplar animal welfare standards.
- Engage with the public and play an active part in increasing the understanding of farming and rural Hampshire in the local community.

Meet the new tenants

This year we've been delighted to welcome many new tenants who we're excited to be working with in the coming years.

Bushfield Farm

Two existing County Farm tenants, Andy Kirby and Tom Comley are collaborating on a new forward-thinking venture by taking on Bushfield Farm as a shared opportunity. They plan to add value to their existing farm businesses while embracing County Farms' priorities by developing their regenerative farming practices.

Andy and Tom's working relationship grew out of a mentoring arrangement set up informally between the neighbours when Tom took on his starter farm a few years ago.

Andy Kirby:

"In a time when farming faces significant change, more than perhaps seen in a century, it is exciting to have the opportunity to take a bold step in a new direction diversifying into retailing our own produce and hopefully collaborating with other county farm tenants to supply locally produced high quality food, with a business partner equally as passionate about sustainable practices, building resilience to climate change and aiming to achieve the highest standards."

"County Farms has been a springboard and lifeline for my arable contracting business, enabling me show my farm to build trust in my customer base".



Andy Kirby



Tom Comley

Tom Comley:

"Andy and I have differing, but complementing, skillsets including precision arable, livestock and contracting experience, and are very supportive of Hampshire County Farms. Together we plan to open a farm shop at Bushfield Farm, themed to showcase the best of Hampshire County Farms produce and possibly to include a small café and farm education facility".

Andy and Tom will enhance soil health over the period using rotational herbal leys and livestock. Biodiversity will get a boost with the introduction of pollen and nectar-rich margins, tying in with nearby nature reserves significant for their butterfly interest. Stepping stone and corridor habitat between their farms, such as wild-bird seed covers, improved hedgerows, and beetle banks, will be introduced to significantly improve wildlife connectivity within the landscape.

Meet the new tenants

Little Church Farm

Farmer Jake Smith intends to grow his flock of sheep and rear more animals during his tenancy at Little Church Farm. He's in the midst of applying for sustainable farming and stewardship schemes, and plans to introduce herbal leys which will increase the numbers of insects and pollinators as well as low input grassland to protect the River Whitewater that runs through the farm.



Jake Smith



Newhouse Farm

Newhouse Farm

Lester Brooks and his family have been busy starting up their micro dairy since taking over the tenancy at Newhouse Farm, welcoming the arrival of their first calf. Community is at the heart of their future plans with well-considered educational visits and a brand new farm shop: they'll be making their own ice-cream too. The couple are striving to get the farm onto an environmental stewardship scheme, farming in a sustainable way.

Lower Wangfield Farm

Young Liam Harvey has always been interested in agriculture and giving back to the community, and this is central to his plans for his new tenancy at Lower Wangfield Farm. He sees the farm business expanding to include sheep, cattle as well as hay and straw with a longer-term vision of farm visits for the local community and schools and a farm shop.



Meet the new tenants

Lyde Green Farm

Lucy and Adam Johnstone, together with their son Freddie, are fulfilling a lifelong dream in their new tenancy at Lyde Green Farm. Their efforts in sustainable food production, exemplar standards and high animal welfare have already led to an impressive seal of approval by Arla Foods, who have recently awarded them a milk contract. The team have now set their sights on achieving the exemplar Arla 360 accreditation and driving forward their dairy enterprise, while immersing themselves within the local community.



Lyde Green Farm



Richard Stiles

Upper Brownwich Farm

Richard Stiles, who has recently taken on the tenancy of Upper Brownwich Farm, is focused on outcomes which meet Hampshire County Farms' priorities. These include bringing in livestock at what has been an arable farm to increase organic matter and soil health. He's also introducing environmental stewardship schemes and farming methods which support biodiversity and wildlife habitats such as the installation of barn owl boxes.

Looking forward to 2022/23



Ten county farms have now joined farmer cluster groups. These will enable the farms to deliver joined up and enhanced biodiversity for the benefit of the wider landscape.


Newhouse and South Stoke Farms both hosted LEAF Open Farm Sunday events, just one of the ways that our tenant farmers involve local communities with their work.


We have formed a **partnership with CPRE Hampshire** for the second phase of their Hedgerow Heroes project. Together we will be working with local schools and the community, to restore and replant hedges on our coastal farms estate with the aim to raise awareness of the incredible value provided by hedgerows for tackling biodiversity loss and climate change, and for more sustainable farming.

For more information contact:

 county.farms@hants.gov.uk

 @hampshirecountyfarms

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 Hampshire County Farms

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date:	12 July 2022
Title:	Proposals to adjust access to, and pricing for, the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

Contact name: Alistair Palmer, Head of Hampshire Outdoor Centres

Tel: 03707 798717

Email: Alistair.palmer@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek a member decision on proposals to adjust access & pricing arrangements for military personnel and their families to the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre.

Recommendation

That the Culture and Communities Select Committee recommend to the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs that he approves the following recommendation:

2. That, following a recent consultation exercise, the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs approves a revised approach to access and pricing for the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre in accordance with Option 1 identified in paragraph 17 in this report. The revised approach will take effect from 1st September 2022.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to demonstrate the need, and to recommend a preferred option, for changes to the access and pricing arrangements for the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre, to enable the Centre to achieve its SP23 saving targets and support the Centre for future revenue growth and investment.

Contextual information

4. The “Poppy Pod Village” was built in 2016 with funding from the Armed Forces Community Covenant Fund (AFCC £250,000), Hampshire County Council (HCC £86,000) and the Brockenhurst branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL £50,000). The Pod Village comprises of 20 pods each sleeping four persons and a central wooden roundhouse communal area, the facility has proven to be extremely popular since opening. Up to January 2021, there had been over 3500 member registrations to the scheme and military personnel and their families have enjoyed over 21,000 bed nights at an equivalent commercial value of £341,250.
5. Currently, registered military personnel/veterans and their families have exclusive access to use the facility at weekends and school holidays. The all-year-round price for a Pod stay is limited to a small booking administration fee of £30 a weekend and £60 a week. During term time, the Pods are used by schools and youth groups taking part in outdoor educational residential programmes at the Centre. The current 2022 cost to school users for using the facility is £16.38 per person or £65.52 for a pod with 4 occupants.
6. In July 2021 the Council carried out the Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget consultation regarding all Council services including the Hampshire Outdoor Centres – further details can be found at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/balancing-the-budget> . The information which accompanied the Serving Hampshire - Balancing the Budget consultation identified that changes are required to secure the future financial sustainability of the Hampshire Outdoor Centres including Tile Barn Outdoor Centre. The Serving Hampshire Consultation provides the framework to support a consultation on the proposals which took place in March 2022.
7. In November 2021, the County Council agreed a package of savings proposals to be met by April 2023 (SP23) including a proposal to save £385,000 from the Hampshire Outdoor Centres of which £40,000 relates to the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre. The Centre is therefore required to operate in a financially sustainable way, meeting enhanced revenue targets whilst maintaining facilities such as the Poppy Pods for future users. This approach is in line with comments received during the Serving Hampshire Consultation – Balancing the Budget Consultation, regarding the need for income generating services such as Tile Barn to become cost neutral, and in due course contribute to financially supporting other key HCC services.
8. The Centre performs regular maintenance works on the Pods and has recently invested £29,000 in a new solid resin floor for the Roundhouse. Further planned works include new porches for the Pods at an estimated cost of £15,000. The Centre has recently invested in a new online booking

system to improve the booking journey for Pod Members and other users of the Centre.

Finance

9. Tile Barn's SP23 Targets include a net revenue target of £40,000 from the Poppy Pods. It is anticipated that this revenue target will contribute to the future investment requirements of the Pod facility.
10. It is anticipated that the proposed access and pricing arrangements will generate between c£45k to £60k revenue in 2023 based on 70% utilisation. Actuals will depend on the breakdown of officer & non-officer bookings and non-military use.
11. The current actual income generated by the Poppy Pods (with a current utilisation rate of c85%) is £16k to £20k per annum.

Consultation

12. The Centre consulted 7,500 of registered users of the Poppy Pods on its proposals for the revised arrangements, identifying the following aims:
 - To enable all Tile Barn customers to access the Poppy Pod facility throughout the year, including military and non-military customers.
 - To secure the financial sustainability of the centre by maximising income from available assets which will support on-going maintenance and investment in the future.
 - To develop a means-tested approach to maintain access for low-income military personnel and their families.
13. In summary, the consultation proposed nearly equal access to the Poppy Pods for the public save that there would be two military-only weekends (targeted at respite for physically and mentally disabled personnel and military personnel on low income) and a one-month priority booking window for military personnel. The discount payment scheme for military personnel was proposed although the level was initially 25% reducing to 15% from 1 April 2023 (not differentiating military rank). See Appendix A for a copy of the original consultation document.
14. The Centre received 116 responses to that consultation. It has been assessed that 44 of these responses were negative to the proposals, 60 neutral and 12 positive. A summary of the consultation feedback is available in Appendix B.

15. The Centre shared the consultation paper with the Armed Forces Community Covenant and attempted to engage a dialogue on several occasions but did not receive a response.
16. Responses to the consultation provided the Centre with useful feedback and a range of opinions on the proposed arrangements. The consultation illustrated that many people have very strong aspirations to maintain military family access to the Pods in-line with the original concepts. Many people also acknowledged that these facilities need to be operated on a sustainable financial footing, enabling future investment. The Centre considered all the responses carefully and produced revised proposals in response to the views expressed, Option 1 below.

Options

17. The options for decision arising from the consultation are:

Option 1 - To implement the proposals as amended following the consultation as detailed in Appendix D (where identified as Option 1 or relating to Option 1).

Option 2 - To implement the original proposals as set out in the consultation documentation in Appendix A.

Option 3 - To seek alternative additional funding from the original funders to maintain operation of the Poppy Pods with the current access arrangements.

Option 4 - To continue with the current access arrangements, without additional funding.

18. The preferred route is **Option 1** under which the original proposals consulted upon have been adjusted to include:
 - Public access to nearly half of term-time weekends and the majority of, if not all, available school holidays.
 - A 2-month early priority booking window for military giving access to all dates across the year when the Pods are open.
 - A minimum of two 'military- only' free weekends specifically targeted at respite for physically and mentally disabled personnel and military personnel on low income.
 - Phased introduction of charges to military starting with 65% off the public price between 1st September 2022 to 31st December 2022. From 1st Jan 2023, officers will receive 25% discount and non-officers 50%.

The Centre has risk assessed the revised proposals and included mitigation measures. A full analysis can be seen in the exempt Appendix C (not publicly available).

19. If the recommendations are agreed, a review of the new Pod access arrangements will take place during Autumn 2023. The review will also focus on utilisation levels, pricing and customer discounts to ensure the financial viability of the Poppy Pods moving forward. The Poppy Pod Members will be consulted if there are any significant amendments proposed to the arrangements.

Equalities

20. A full equality impact assessment (EIA 160) has been undertaken. The proposals to adjust access and charges to the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre have considered the impact on customers with protected characteristics. The EIA identified largely neutral or positive impacts for non-military customers, as the proposals will increase access to the facility, and for military customers as two 'military-only' free weekends will be specifically targeted at respite for physically and mentally disabled personnel and military personnel on low income. There will be a low negative impact for military families in poverty. The revised proposals take account of this impact and aim to mitigate to some extent the impact of increased financial costs by providing a minimum of two free weekends to military personnel on low income (as referenced above). Access for this will be means tested. Non officers will also receive a 50% discount off the public price.

Conclusion

21. The Centre's view is that adjustments are required to the access and pricing arrangements for military families using the Poppy Pods. The revised proposals ensure Tile Barn Outdoor Centre can continue operating the Pods in a sustainable manner, whilst retaining significant elements and benefits to military personnel and their families.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed in relation to these proposals.

The proposals to adjust access and charges to the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre have considered the impact on customers with protected characteristics. The EIA identified largely neutral or positive impacts for non-military customers, as the proposals will increase access to the facility, and for military customers as two 'military- only' free weekends will be specifically targeted at respite for physically and mentally disabled personnel and military personnel on low income. There will be a low negative impact for military families in poverty. The revised proposals take account of this impact and aim to mitigate to some extent the impact of increased financial costs by providing a minimum of two free weekends to military personnel on low income

(as referenced above). Access for this will be means tested. Non officers will also receive a 50% discount off the public price.



HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION

Proposals to adjust access and charges to the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre

March 2022

Introduction

The Council is carrying out this consultation with military personnel and their families who currently access the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre near Brockenhurst, Hampshire. This facility is owned and operated by Hampshire County Council (HCC). As part of the consultation, we will seek views on the proposals from all interested stakeholders including the Armed Forces Community Covenant Fund (AFCCF), Ministry of Defence (MOD), Royal British Legion (RBL) Brockenhurst branch and members of the military community who have access to use the facility.

The “**Poppy Pod Village**” was built in 2016 with funding from the Armed Forces Community Covenant Fund (AFCC £250,000), Hampshire County Council (HCC £86,000) and the Brockenhurst branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL £50,000). The Pod Village comprises of 20 pods each sleeping four persons and a central wooden roundhouse communal area, the facility has proven to be extremely popular since opening. Up to January 2021, there had been over 3500 member registrations to the scheme and military personnel and their families have enjoyed over 21,000 bed nights at an equivalent commercial value of £341,250.

Currently, registered military personnel/veterans and their families have exclusive access to use the facility at weekends and school holidays. The all-year-round price for a pod stay is limited to a small booking administration fee of £30 a weekend and £60 a week. During term time, the Pods are used by schools and youth groups taking part in outdoor educational residential programmes at the Centre. The current 2022 cost to school users for using the facility is £16.38 per person or £65.52 for a pod with 4 occupants.

In July 2021 the Council carried out the Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget consultation regarding all Council services including the Hampshire Outdoor Centres – further details can be found at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/balancing-the-budget>. The information which accompanied the Serving Hampshire - Balancing the Budget consultation identified that changes are required to secure the future financial sustainability of the Hampshire Outdoor Centres including Tile Barn Outdoor Centre (see Appendix B). The Serving Hampshire Consultation provides the framework to support this consultation on proposals which are set out below.

1.0 Proposals

- 1.1 To enable all Tile Barn customers to access the Poppy Pod facility throughout the year, including military and non-military customers.
- 1.2 To secure the financial sustainability of the centre by maximising income from available assets which will support on-going maintenance and investment in the future.
- 1.3 To develop a means-tested approach to maintain access for low-income military personnel and their families.

www.hants.gov.uk/tilebarn

2.0 What are the details of these proposals and why are they needed?

2.1 Tile Barn Outdoor Centre's mission is to enhance access to all its outdoor education and recreational facilities, which includes the Poppy Pods. This means that the Centre is proposing to open-up access to the Poppy Pods for non-military users of the Centre alongside military families during weekends and holiday periods. The Centre proposes that military families will be offered a priority booking window for one month before the Pods go on general sale. This will ensure military families have first refusal for popular holiday periods.

2.2 The Poppy Pod facility was established in 2016 by grant funding from the AFCC, HCC and the RBL. Since then, HCC and the Centre have maintained and developed this facility for service users within its revenue budget. The Centre performs regular maintenance works on the Pods and has recently invested £29,000 in a new solid resin floor for the Roundhouse. Further planned works include new porches for the Pods at an estimated cost of £15,000. The Centre has recently invested in a new online booking system to improve the booking journey for Pod Members and other users of the Centre.

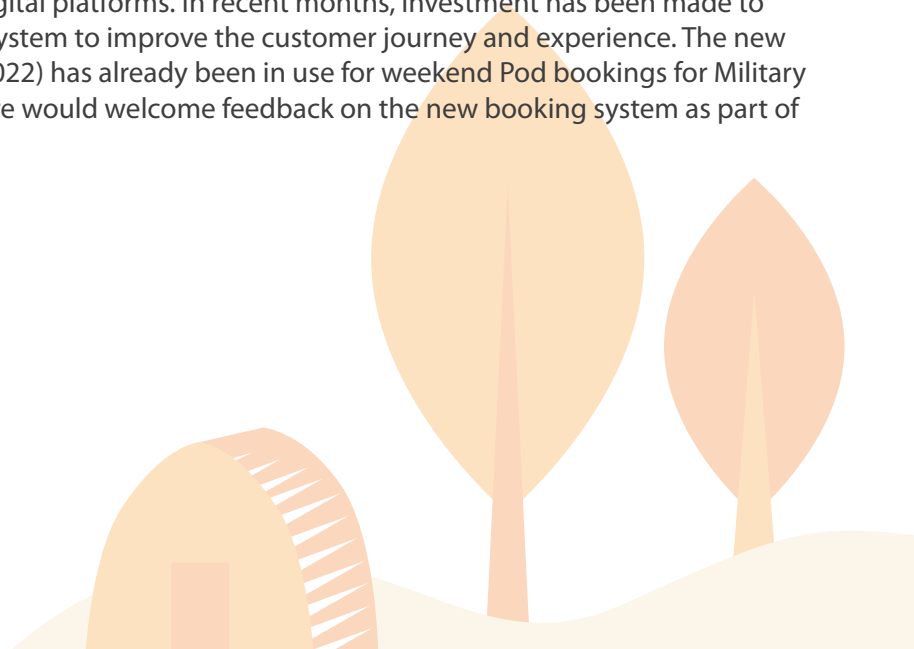
2.3 Some of the financial support Tile Barn receives from HCC will be removed in April 2023 and the Centre is required to operate in a financially sustainable way, meeting enhanced revenue targets whilst maintaining facilities such as the Poppy Pods for future users. This approach is in line with comments received during the Serving Hampshire Consultation – Balancing the Budget Consultation, regarding the need for income generating services such as Tile Barn to become cost neutral, and in due course contribute to financially supporting other key HCC services.

2.4 The Centre also proposes that the current booking fee would be replaced by a discount payment scheme, where a discount code will be provided to military families enabling reduced prices based on the public rate. Proposed pricing can be seen in **Appendix B**.

2.5 The Centre recognises that these proposals may place an increased financial burden on some military personnel. The Centre therefore proposes to phase the introduction of charges over the next 12 months by offering an enhanced discount of 25% off the standard publicised rate for both peak and off-peak periods in 2022, reducing to a standard military discount of 15% from 1st April 2023.

2.6 One of the original purposes of the Pods was to provide "a facility where Armed Forces personnel and their families can come together and share support" (2014 AFCC Grant Application). The Centre proposes advertising at least two military-only weekends per year, specifically targeted at respite for physically and mentally disabled personnel and families and those on low-incomes. Access for these weekends would be 100% free and allocated on a means-tested basis. We propose to engage with current military charities (i.e Blesma, RBL and MOD unit welfare officers) to develop a system which enables this to happen.

2.7 The Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget Consultation identified that improved end-to-end customer-friendly journeys could be achieved through digital platforms. In recent months, investment has been made to update the Centre's website and Pod booking system to improve the customer journey and experience. The new online booking portal (introduced in January 2022) has already been in use for weekend Pod bookings for Military families during March and April 2022. The Centre would welcome feedback on the new booking system as part of this consultation.



3.0 What are the expected impacts that this will have on the Armed Forces Families and its current arrangements with the Centre?

Current arrangements	Proposed arrangements
<p>3.1 Provision of current military family bookings</p> <p><i>The current arrangements are that members of the full time serving military or veteran military personnel once registered have full and complete access to stay in all 20 Poppy Pods with their family during all weekends or school holiday weeks between March and October each year.</i></p> <p><i>The cost to the family is a £15 booking fee per pod/per night. Total cost of a stay for a family of 4 for a weekend is £30 or for a 4-night week £60. Larger families can still access the pods but would have to book 2 adjacent pods thus doubling the cost.</i></p> <p><i>This access arrangement has been in place since 2019 when we changed from an annual membership fee system. At this time the military families paid an annual membership fee and had free access to the pods once a member. This led to large numbers of cancellations of pods mostly at last minute meaning we had an underutilised facility.</i></p>	<p>a) Except for the provision of military-only weekends (see item (b) below), all customers of Tile Barn Outdoor Centre, both military and non-military, will have equal opportunity (subject to the priority booking window referenced in item (c) below) to book a stay in the Pods during weekends and school holidays periods, subject to when the facility is open.</p> <p>b) The centre would advertise a minimum of two 'military- only' free weekends specifically targeted at respite for physically and mentally disabled personnel and those on low income. We envisage engaging with current military charities (i.e Blesma, RBL and MOD unit welfare officers) to refer suitable families and administer their stay with the centre.</p> <p>c) Military families will also be offered a priority booking window for one month before the Pods go on general sale. This will ensure military families have first refusal for popular holiday periods.</p> <p>d) The current booking fee would be replaced by a discount payment scheme, where a discount code will be provided to military families enabling reduced prices based on the public rate. Please see item (e) below and Appendix B for details.</p>
<p>3.2 Military discounts</p> <p><i>The current arrangements are that members of the full time serving military or veteran military personnel once registered pay a £15 booking fee per pod/per night.</i></p> <p><i>This is a 77% discount based on our current public rate of £65 per pod per night in the peak period. The discount equates to 62.5% in the low season when the current public rate is £40 per pod.</i></p>	<p>e) The Centre proposes to introduce a military discount code providing a 25% discount from the public rate for both peak and off-peak periods during 2022, reducing to 15% discount from 1st April 2023. Proposed pricing can be seen in Appendix B.</p> <p>f) The Centre would continue to advertise at least two military only free weekends. Please see item (b) above.</p>
<p>3.3 School and youth group bookings</p> <p><i>Schools and youth groups can currently book the pods during term time Monday-Friday for outdoor educational experiences in the New Forest in line with the service mission.</i></p> <p><i>The current 2022 cost to school users for using the facility is £16.38 per person or £65.52 for a pod with 4 occupants (prices INC VAT).</i></p> <p><i>"We strive to improve the lives of our customers and deliver a safe, highly valued, cost effective and quality focused service through the provision of accessible outdoor education and recreational facilities."</i></p>	<p>g) The Centre does not anticipate altering the access arrangements for these user groups however the pods may be used by schools and youth groups at weekends and school holidays if there is availability.</p>

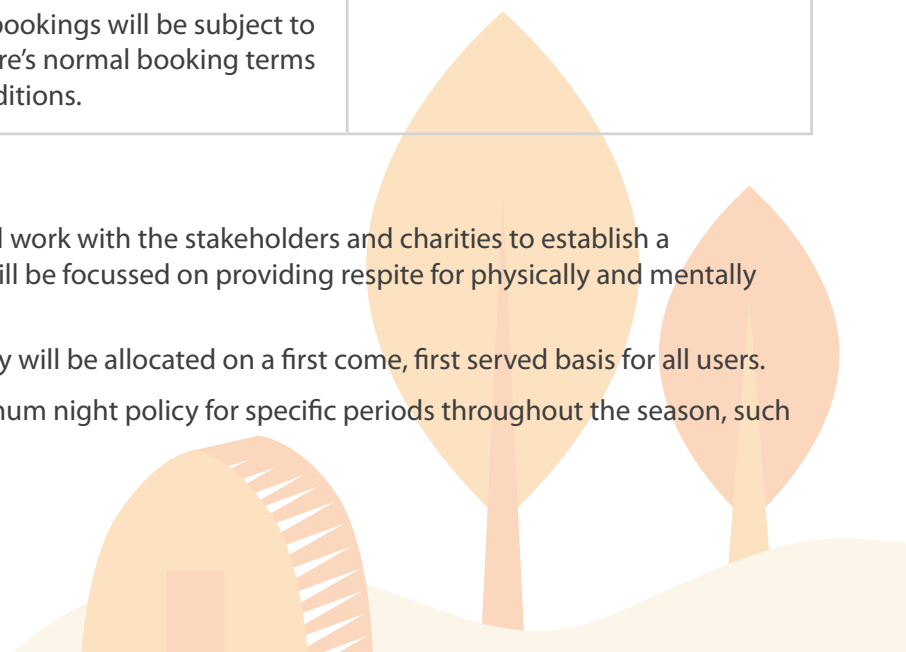
<p>3.4 Stakeholder use</p> <p><i>The centre supports the local branch of the RBL with free facility use at tile Barn during the local Anzac commemoration event held on the last Sunday in April. This includes use of the pod roundhouse area and the Anzac room of the Bunkhouse building.</i></p> <p><i>This is largely organised and supported by the Brockenhurst branch of the RBL.</i></p>	<p>h) The Centre proposes to continue offering this support to the RBL and will liaise with them around their access needs.</p>
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4.0 Summary of proposed Poppy Pod customer journey

Stage 1: Military personnel register with the Poppy Pod scheme	Stage 2: Pod bookings & availability	Stage 3: Military mailing list
<p>Military personnel and families register for the Poppy Pod scheme on the Centre’s website.</p> <p>The Centre will then verify applicant military credentials and email a discount code for members to use when booking a Poppy Pod.</p>	<p>One month before the pods go on general sale, the Centre will open an early booking window for military members. The Centre will communicate this to members by email.</p> <p>All customers will book pods directly through the Centre’s website. Customers will be able to request specific pods and the Centre will accommodate this if possible.</p> <p>Pod availability will be in real time and payment will be taken at the time of booking.</p> <p>Military families will be able to use their discount code at the checkout stage.</p> <p>All pod bookings will be subject to the Centre’s normal booking terms and conditions.</p>	<p>Registered military users of the Poppy Pod scheme will be emailed with updates and information on when the military only weekends dates become available.</p>

5.0 Other key points

- 5.1. If the proposals are adopted, the Centre will work with the stakeholders and charities to establish a mechanism for military only weekends. These will be focussed on providing respite for physically and mentally affected personnel and those on low incomes.
- 5.2 If the proposals are adopted, Pod availability will be allocated on a first come, first served basis for all users.
- 5.3 The Centre will continue to operate a minimum night policy for specific periods throughout the season, such as bank holidays.



6.0 Next steps

Thank you for reading through the above information. You are invited to give your views on the proposals. Your views will be considered before a decision on the proposals is made. You can submit your views by completing our online form or by emailing the Centre.

[CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE OUR ONLINE FORM](#)

[CLICK HERE TO GET IN TOUCH BY EMAIL](#)

Important: This consultation is open from Monday 28 March 2022 to Sunday 1 May 2022.

Privacy notice

Hampshire County Council is seeking your views and comments to inform its approach on operations at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre. The information you provide in this response form is being collected for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest in the exercise of official authority vested in the County Council, and for reasons of substantial public interest.

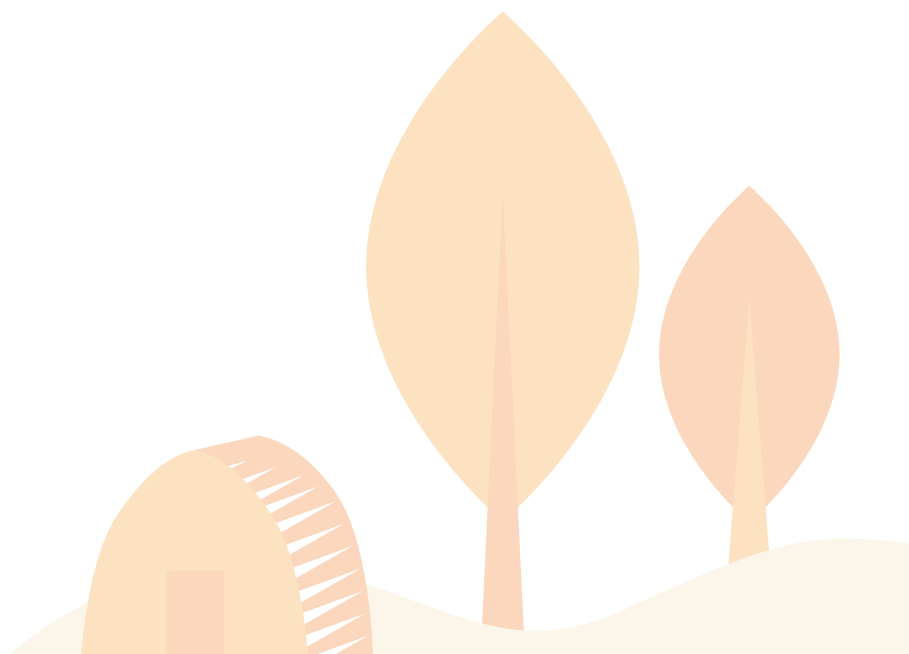
We will use the information to understand what people think about the perceived impact of the potential options. All data will remain within the UK/EEA or (European Economic Area) and will only be shared with third parties where they are undertaking data processing on behalf of Hampshire County Council.

We will keep your personal information securely for two years, after which it will be deleted or destroyed. You have some legal rights in respect of the personal information we collect from you.

Please see our Data Protection page (www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/strategiesplansandpolicies/dataprotection) for further details.

You can contact the County Council's Data Protection Officer at data.protection@hants.gov.uk.

If you have a concern about the way we are collecting or using your personal data, you should raise your concern with us in the first instance or directly to the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>.



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Appendix A - Comments relating to Hampshire Outdoor Centres in the Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget consultation

The following statements are comments from people who contributed to the Serving Hampshire – Balancing the Budget consultation which relate to Tile Barn Outdoor Centre and directly or indirectly the Poppy Pod village.

Do you have any further ideas on how the County Council could generate additional income?

- Charge market rates where appropriate
- Could additional (paid for) services be provided to generate income and provide valuable experiences for young people, especially when we already have great facilities like Calshot.

Please describe what, if any, impact the County Council's options for balancing its budget could have on you (or your organisation or group).

- Decrease of job security. Increase in household costs (council tax etc). Loss of outdoor activity centres. Deterioration of road network.
- I feel the outdoor activity centres are important for character development of young people.
- Personal finances have been stretched over the last year and continue to be. Introducing charges for things such as outdoor areas would make us unlikely to go as a family due to cost, which would be a shame for both our family's wellbeing and other small businesses within these places i.e. we are more likely to treat the children to a small treat from a café somewhere if we don't have to pay for car parking.
- For my family it would also be a great shame to let the Hampshire Outdoor Centres or Countryside Services decline as they provide an important outlet to nature and new experience for children/youth locally.
- With regard to the cuts to outdoor centres: This sounds like access by schools will be reduced, and only children/families that can pay will be able to utilise the facility (these are educational facilities - not holiday parks!).
- I disagree with any more money being spent on outdoor activities. It's non-statutory and a nice to have, therefore get rid of it from Council responsibilities, and the cost should be fully recovered by its users and not the public.
- Outdoor centres and parks are immensely important to our wellbeing and should be maintained.
- Countryside Service and Hampshire Outdoor Centres: We all know that easy access to greenspace and outdoor activities are so important to health and well-being of people of all ages and abilities. There should be free access to all residents to natural open green spaces and outdoor activities are crucial for many children and young people to explore and develop their self-confidence and spatial skills. I am sure that these services are more important than ever to most residents especially following the Covid-19 restrictions. I hope that open and free access will continue to all HCC owned countryside spaces and the outdoor centres can be used much more.

Do you have any further comments on how the County Council could balance its budget?

- Fees could be increased for things like outdoor activities and parking at the country parks.
- Please don't cut this area - a decent cultural sector, outdoor spaces, libraries etc. are so crucial for communities and wellbeing. The pandemic has truly highlighted this
- If the Outdoor Centres are a non-statutory service, why not consider ceasing to provide it altogether? There are other outdoor centre providers out there that are used by schools so, the sector would still be provided for.
- Hire of venues for weddings, camping, group sessions etc.
- Libraries should remain free; all other activities should be self-funding through attendee charges.
- Outdoor education centres should be cost-neutral if they are discretionary.
- I can only comment on the ones I use, which are parks and outdoor areas, archives and libraries and all fabulous.
- Run outdoor fitness and training classes at parks. More outdoor camping areas to hire.

- Country Parks and outdoor areas are essential to the health and well-being of the nation as has been discovered during the pandemic.
- Outdoor space as we know is more vital than ever, do not make the mistake of putting it out if reach for all by introducing excessive charges.
- Country Parks and Outdoor Centres should offer more services/attractions and ways to spend money.
- We should be doing everything we can to keep libraries and outdoor areas accessible to all.
- Look at ways to generate more income from these services, eg) Outdoor and Library services.
- For a civilised society and an engaged creative population we need proper provision for leisure activities and cultural programmes. We need to keep up our parks, green spaces, libraries and theatres, as well as youth programmes and safe spaces for children to explore and grow
- Great idea to focus on driving revenue at Calshot. Getting the basics right such as an easy to find website and services would be helpful as the current digital offer is holding back opportunities.

Appendix B - Proposed military & public prices

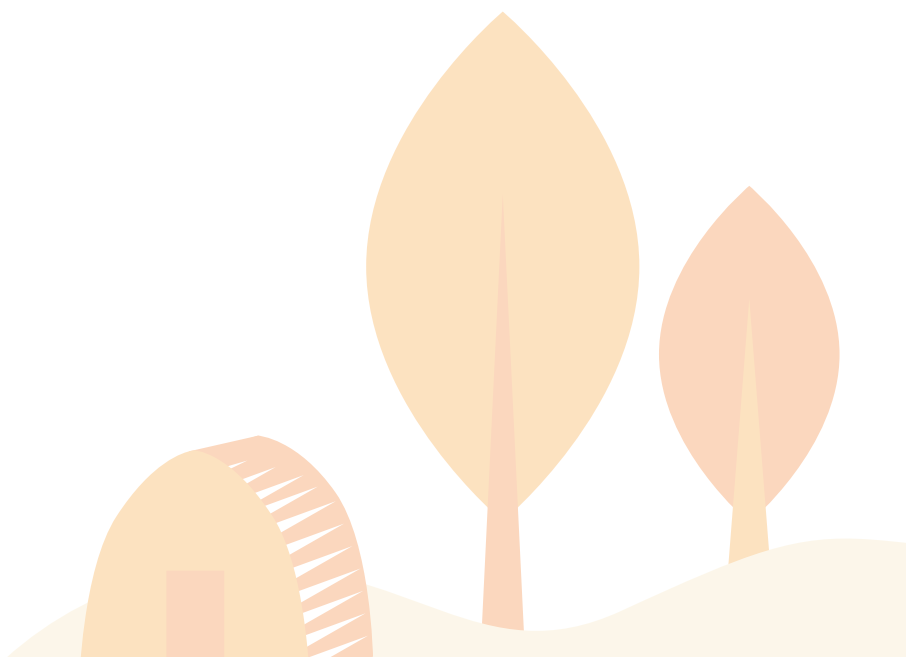
	Current military price	Proposed military prices 2022 (25% discount)	2022 Public price	Proposed 2023 military prices** (15% discount)
Peak	£15.00	£51.19	£68.25	£58.01**
Off peak	£15.00	£31.50	£42.00	£35.70**

Peak pricing: 1 May - 30 September

Off peak pricing: 1 October - 30 April

*All prices are including VAT at the appropriate rate.

** 2023 prices will be subject to a RPI increase.



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Rag	Name	Are you a military family that has visited the Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre?	Are you a member of any of the following organisations?	Do you have any feedback for Hampshire County Council regarding the proposals?
		Yes	Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;	Pods get released and are very quickly booked. Consider trickle feeding the booking to allow people to gain a booking. Or only allowing 1 booking per year per person to allow other to book.
		No	Defence discount card;	I am a serving personnel, and have been trying to stay at the pods for the last few years. However, I've been unable to get in due to the complicated booking process. I think this should be considered moving forward.
		Yes	Defence discount card;	I believe that Hampshire County Council should continue with current arrangement and only allow usage by Military families and school/community groups only.
		Yes	N/A;	I think it's a good idea and a wise way to bring in money to sustain the poppy pods and its recreational areas.
		Yes	Defence discount card;Royal British Legion;	If on peak prices triple like is stated in this document I won't be bringing my family to the poppy pods again. Part of the appeal also was having a short break away in a location where all the neighbouring families where from the military community.
				I agree with the proposals. The benefit of having a 1 month priority booking for military personnel fir weekends and holidays seems fair and will maintain the integrity of facility for their original intended use.
		Yes	Defence discount card;SSAFA;RAFFA;	We stayed there over morthers day weekend this year and loved it.
				Considering that the AFCC funded approximately 65% of the poppy pods, I think it is frankly disgusting to increase the cost of a peak stay for armed forces personnel by 286%. The armed forces has made a huge sacrifice over the past few years, heavily contributing to the coronavirus vaccine roll out, maintaining operational deployments in central Africa, the Afghanistan evacuation as well as the enduring operation in Iraq. During this period there have no pay increases for most armed forces personnel, with the cost of living significantly increasing for all. You may find that your current price increase will in fact price out the families that need to use this facility most.
		Yes	SSAFA;	
				I feel part of the attraction was being able to mix with military families, who has experiences similar to our own. I see the attraction with opening to the general public to increase revenue. But feel there should be more than 2 weekends dedicated military personal times. Maybe a full week in the Summer holiday's and a weekend during each of the school breaks for sole use by military, veterans and their families. This would create a happy compromise and open the centre for all, but not forgetting the purpose this village was created for.
		Yes	No;	The proposals go completely against the reason for which the pods were set-up. It has been very difficult to book at times owing to significant interest from military and veterans. Opening this up to the public would further prevent military families from accessing the facility. Opening the facility for more of the year or incremental raises in the cost for military families would enable greater income rather than preventing them from using the facility.
		Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;SSAFA;RAFA;	I think there are a lot more single parent families and larger families in the Military that require more than one pod. I think raising the prices to nearly £60 per stay weekend from £15 per night means that it would be unaffordable for a lot of single parent and military families to actually achieve as we have to factor in fuel, living costs and days out whilst there. Whilst I agree a we should be paying a little more than £15 for this facility I am just worried this once affordable military pod will become out of reach for some now.
		Yes	Defence discount card;	The proposals are awful. It was designed to allow military personnel and families the opportunity to have some affordable R&R as a family which can be hard to come by. Part of the purpose was to allow military families to become less isolated by being able to befriend other military families. We are still in contact with families we met on our trip. The proposals hardly feel in keeping with the ethos or purpose of the poppy pods. The current system works well and means we are able to benefit. I fear under the new systems we would be priced out or unable to book as they would get booked up by civilians as typically military families only get notice of their leave close to the time, at least this is true of my husbands cap badge.
		Yes	card;	should be means tested and it should be reserved, in the main for military families. There are so few opportunities for our military families these days and we need safe havens. I also
				I would not pay £51.19 / £58.01. These are very basic pods with limited amenities. There were no events taking place when we attended, and when they are, there is an additional fee.
				The pods were freezing cold when we visited (admittedly it was Mar), and we only stayed one night because it was too cold to stay another night.
				There needs to be more facilities available: food, coffee, portable heaters (in the colder months).
		Yes	Defence discount card;	The AFCC and RBL funded the majority of the costs to build these pods, therefore military personnel should continue to receive the generous discount of 77%.
		Yes	Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;	I think they should continue with the current arrangements as it is nice to be surrounded by military families and not be mixed with civilians. This is because everyone in the military environment is going through the same thing and children can make friends etc. They were built due to grants for the purpose of military families being able to connected and this now seems to detract from that. It appears that they now wish to run the pods as a commercial business rather than its intended purpose.
		No	Royal Navy;	booked up far in advance. Demand already outstrips supply at times I'd look to use one.
		Yes	Defence discount card;	We used the poppy pods as a welcome, affordable place to go when husbands were deployed. Having only military families there added an element of safety and comfort. It also meant it was easy to ask for help if needed.
		No	Royal British Legion;	ALLOWING THE PUBLIC TO BOOK.
		Yes	Defence discount card;	This seems to fly in the face of the intended reason the pods were made in the first place. Most of the investment in the first instance was made by military charities/funds. This support is being all but taken away by this proposal. I would be unable to afford to use these facilities if this proposal goes through. There will be no availability for military families and the sense of community will disappear
		Yes	Defence discount card;	We currently holiday at tile barn yearly but with the proposed changes to pricing it will no longer be viable for us.
		Yes	Defence discount card;Blue Light Card;	It is crucially important that the original intent, of supporting the military and veteran community, is maintained. I would like to see more than 2 military only weekends each year, and the early bird option for military and veteran families to book before anyone else, must always be very well publicised to registered families, and to the wider military community in the first place. I completely understand the need to restructure how the Poppy pods are run, to keep them financially viable, but this must not be at the detriment of military families.
		No	Defence discount card;	I am a member but have never actually been able to book a pod. :(nothing ever available
		Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	
		Yes	SSAFA;	The kids play together nicely and people are very relaxed sharing equipment and helping each other with things like unpacking.
				I do not agree with the proposals. The majority of the funding for this project came to support holiday for the military and the increase up to over £50 per night i feel is too high. I feel the increase will stop the military from using the facility and this was the reason it was built!
				I as a member of the military will not use the facility at that price.
				I do agree that if the Pods have not been booked by military to be opened up for non-military to try to get additional funds.
		Yes	Defence discount card;	I think that funds can be made through the booking of the outdoor activities. Perhaps including that an outdoor activity has to be bought with each pod would bring in some of the additional funds required.
		Yes	Defence discount card;	I do not agree with the proposals. The sense of belonging to the military community will be lost if opened up to anybody. Proposals go against the against the initial proposals for the facilities.

	Yes	Royal British Legion;	I totally disagree with the opening up of the Pods to non-Military personnel. Many of our Wounded service personnel and veterans use these pods to get away. When we have stayed at the pods Tile Barn had allowed a large civilian group book in to the empty pods, they used the central area like there own private party, we had to complain about the noise and live music late into the night. The majority of the funding for these pods came from MOD. Please do not open them up to non military.
	Yes	Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;	
	Other	Hm forces ;	I worry that the poppy pods are already hard to book for availability! If opened to the general public would be even harder .
	Yes	Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;	I have never been able to book as it is always booked up
	Other	Military ;	Whilst i appreciate the need to balance the cost, it is a huge jump in cost to military for what is often the only family holiday one can afford. I think the option to open it to the public is a good idea, however i am sceptical as there is rarely availability at present.
	Yes	Defence discount card;	I am military however haven't booked to use the poppy pods as i could not find any dates at all on the booking system. If the new pricing system opens up bookings then this is a great move, if it reduces interest from HM forces this could push the community away even more if they have had the same booking issues as me.
	Yes	Defence discount card;	This should remain as a primarily military facility, it is hard enough to get dates to stay without it being opened to civilians. The proposed pricing for military families is far too great an increase, especially for those serving members on low incomes.
	Yes	RAF;	
	Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;SAMA82 ;	Sound infinitely sensible to me, thank you for asking for our views.
	Yes	SSAFA;	
	Yes	Defence discount card;SSAFA;	decompress away from the stresses and strains of the job is to be increased so much. Some things are worth more than the money surely!
	Yes	Defence discount card;	Yet another knife in the back of military personnel. With the cost of living increasing the poppy pods are a perk for military personnel so they are able to spend time with their families at a reduced cost, in celebration for their service to the country. Service personnel in this country are treated like diplomatic pawns when it suits and then dropped at a moments notice. Why are these pods not being offered up to homeless veterans before they are offered to civilians. Seems like another cash injection scheme created by the local councils. This is not well received as a current serving military person.
	Yes	Defence discount card;Combat stress;	The facility should stay as it is and not turned into a cash cow for the county council. This was not the aim of the site. This is socking what has been proposed
	Yes	Defence discount card;Royal British Legion;	This was built for military families to provide a "safe" and secure network where we can get support from those around us. If this is opened to non military families the whole thing will not work. Military personnel have a great ethos on respect and integrity. You will not get this from all families that are non military and it would be detrimental to those who thrive for this opportunity to spend time with those that "just know you and understand you" no matter where or when you served. I have enjoyed taking my boys there and meeting up with friends and their kids that have served . It was a great moment when these were built and emphasised the need for military personnel to come together in a private area and feel like a family even though no one knows each other . You can't mix this with families who have never been through, or engaged in this kind of bond. You will be making a huge mistake by opening this up to non military families so you can make more money .
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>We used the poppy pods in the first year and had a fantastic time. My serving spouse had been working away from home a lot but we didn't feel we'd been under undue strain, so wouldn't have thought we needed 'respite'. However, a weekend away from home, in this beautiful setting in the new forest, gave us much needed time and space to re-connect as a family. One other really important point I think may have been overlooked is that we really connected with other MILITARY families in the evening. There is something about being with others that 'get it' that made our time there really special. Forces families love to 'spin a dit' (retell a story) and often civilians cannot relate to it. Having to explain your lifestyle and justify your choices endlessly is tiresome, so mixing military and non-military users would, in my opinion, take something special, reassuring and restful away from the experience.</p> <p>In addition, serving families make significant sacrifices, for example moving often. This makes maintaining friendships and support networks harder. We are currently serving overseas and have faced many challenges, especially with covid, making this posting a lonely one. I would love for the poppy pods to be a place where military friends from different bases/ships/locations/countries etc could come together to rekindle and rebuild their distant friendships. I know this isn't a typical use or consideration, but for the often forgotten mental health of military spouses and their children, this would go a long way!</p> <p>In regards to the proposed increase in cost, I understand the need to balance the budget but as a family of 5 who would need two pods, the revised costs would not make the poppy pods affordable. Under the current pricing structure, a weekend for us would cost £60. The new structure would cost £232! There are many other more affordable options available.</p> <p>Overall I feel the changes detract from the original purpose of the poppy pods. Given that over 77% of the funding came from armed forces related funding/charities, the use of them should remain primarily for, and accessible to, armed forces personnel and their families. An alternative would be to keep weekends, including bank holiday weekends, exclusively for military use, but increase the price to market rates during school holidays and open these times up to the public. There is no comment about whether schools and youth groups would be required to pay the increased price for weekends, should there be availability, but it would seem more appropriate to increase the nightly, per person rate, during the week, as this form of usage does not appear to be part of the primary purpose of the poppy pods (given the funding structure), but more of a supplementary/secondary use to help maintain and fund the upkeep of the poppy pods. If Tile Barn is not able to break even as an outdoor centre, then maybe other parts of the centre should be reviewed for their profitability or other revenue generating activities offered? Or would moving the poppy pods to MOD land be more appropriate?</p> <p>I don't live in a quarter and my family miss out on the military cohesion. The poppy pods support this.</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;	The poppy pods should be treated as a respectable military hide away. Opening the pods to the public is not what my family want. I want to contact with other military members that share the same values, that the poppy pods deserve.
	Other	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;	I appreciate you will still be giving the military and veteran community a discount but it appears that the prices will be going up by a large amount unless I have read the report incorrectly. I feel that the military and veteran community do appreciate the use of the pods but i'm sure everyone is sick of all bills increasing in price! If there is any way to keep the prices the same across the board rather than means tested it would be very much appreciated.
	Yes	Defence discount card;	Thank you very much
	Yes	Defence discount card;	Poppy pods have been a great break away and knowing full well that you would have like minded people staying on site. New discount scheme would see military families paying far more than current booking fees which is what the poppy pods were designed for.
	Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	How can you justify increasing the prices by more than three times? And then in 2023 it's nearly four times the amount! Why can you not keep the prices the same for all military and veterans? £15 per night is a reasonable amount to charge. The military community put their lives on the line for Queen and country and deserve a nice break without being massively out of pocket. Thank you for considering my feedback regarding this matter.
	No	Defence discount card;	HCC should not be allowed to dramatically increase the cost of a facility that was funded by the AFCC and RBL for the benefit of the Armed Forces. I support the opening of the facility to other users after an advanced booking window to members of the Armed Forces, but the success of raising funds through this route should be tested before increasing the costs to the Armed Forces.

		<p>Thats a big increase.</p> <p>To increase the prices by such a dramatic amount is a lot to ask when families such as ours like the outdoors and enjoy what's on offer but have no rise in wages. For that price per night to camp all be it in a wood hut not a tent is a lot to ask for. Holiday camps and hotel options will be competitive and offer a lot more amenities with also the option of being located in rural areas with outdoor activities.</p> <p>Every one is feeling the pinch, however the poppy pods have no external electricity outside of the solar power and require minimal maintenance. The other facilities on site are charged at extra except the wash rooms so I struggle to see the justification for the price increase of that much.</p>
Yes	Defence discount card;RAFBF;	
Yes	Royal British Legion;	This proposal will basically deem the poppy pods out of reach for most military families. They will be booked up well in advance of the military families being able to
	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;	
Other		
Yes	none of the above;	I see no issue with opening the use of the pods up to non-military users, provided that military families retain priority of booking. I do however object to the significant hike in costs that would result from these proposals. The initial price reduction for 2022 aside, a 15% discount on full public rate of £65 a night from 1 Apr 23 is still £55 - 3.5 times what they currently pay! I feel like this increase is disproportionate, and not in keeping with the spirit of the project, given that over 75% of the project funds came from military sources.
Yes	Defence discount card;Royal British Legion;	
		<p>I don't think opening up the pods to all is a good idea:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Military families all have a common connection, so all feel at home with those currently using the facilities. Opening up the booking could lead to stag and hen parties or other group bookings - not the family feel!!! 2. Having only managed to book one weekend in the past it was hard enough to book one (due to availability and changing deployments), Opening up to all will drastically reduce the chance of getting a pod. 3. My understanding is that the pods were aimed at providing a cheap respite for service personnel - a 15% discount in 2023 does not provide this. 4. I believe with the current proposals that there will be a dramatic decline in uptake from the serving personnel as adding travel on top of this proposed pricing doesn't make it a cheap break. 5. In the letter there is mention of how many nights that have been taken by armed forces but no break down of annual running costs or any mention of the income from other residential users, it would be interesting to see how much has been generated in total per year against the running costs as this feels very much a income generation exercise. <p>I appreciate that prices do rise but the dramatic rise from £15 to nearly £60 per night (2023) is unfair to those it was set up to support</p>
Yes	Defence discount card;Royal British Legion;	
No	Defence discount card;	I think it sounds very reasonable to balance the books, so to speak.
Yes	Defence discount card;	Taking into consideration that over 75% of funding for the Poppy Pods was provided under the Armed Forces Covenant or Military charities, it is highly inappropriate for Hampshire County Council to both withdraw guaranteed access for military families and substantially increase fees. This entirely removes any special military family access to the Poppy Pods, save for two token weekends that will undoubtedly be heavily oversubscribed. I do not support this proposal.
No	Royal British Legion;	Totally agree with the proposals. Could the pods allow Dogs as this would allow more forces families to use the facility.
Yes	Royal British Legion;	I am Vice Chairman of our local RBL Branch. I am somewhat disappointed at the proposals given in your email. It seems that the Poppy Pods are becoming a "General Camp Site" facility! It would be such a shame if the facility is used for anything other than it's original use. I understand that running costs have to be found from somewhere, but surely there is another way of finding the funds (ie grants, donations and other military charities). Have you approached the RBL for their help? (not the local branch). There are a number of military associations (Navy/Army/RAF), you could approach for Annual Grants etc.
Yes	Defence discount card;	Whilst I understand the funding is going to be cut in the coming months, I personally believe the proposed prices being charged will deter some military families from using the facility on a regular basis. If a 25% discount could be retained for the 2023 season and beyond, I honestly believe you may retain the interest of many families. Kind regards.
Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	I think more discount should be given to the military in the new proposal. The price is rising to hotel prices and any military I know would rather a hotel over a pod. I have stayed in the pods and my family enjoyed the weekend but that was because it was a cheap weekend away during hard times. If the prices where the new proposed ones I would not of thought about booking there.
		<p>Mixing military with non military is a mistake. The military tend to go there to get away from the civilian world, its a safe haven. Removing the 77% discount is a mistake, it really felt be feel special that it was so reasonable. The biggest reported problem to RBL helplines for veterans aged 30-60 is money worries. Increasing the price will not help that issue. Having the 2 or three weekends a years for civilian only would be better, as opposed to 2 weekends a year for military only. Why dont you apply to the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund for Support if you are struggling for money? This is the bigger Westminster /MOD fund? Why dont you offer exclusive weekends for service charities. This biggest issue you have is not advertising it enough to the service community. Why not connect it with the veterans railcard - to get veterans travelling from outside Hampshire? There is promotion oportunity there that could also help advertise the veteran railcard, cheap travel, cheap accomodation etc....</p> <p>Di you know the RBL closed there own respite centres? https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/royal-british-legion-to-close-break-centres-and-end-handy-van-service-to-save-nearly-6m.html. So reducing or changing access to the pods is not a clever idea and why on earth is the RBL not promoting you?</p> <p>Did you know Help for Heroes have closed all their recovery centres and now run an in the community model? so why are there community teams not advertising you?</p> <p>Why not advertise yourself with unit welfare officers?</p>
Yes	Help for Heroes;Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	Please, please dont change the good you do, dont increase the price, dont dilute the access to the forces, just promote yourself more!
Yes	Royal British Legion;SSAFA;Defence discount card;	I really don't think it's fair to change the charges to military personnel. It's a great scheme and gives that bit of respite to the families who can really struggle. Perhaps a charge of around £40 would be better? And making it exclusive to serving/ veterans keeps it more personal to the families, bringing the general public in takes away that
		<p>We have tried on numerous occasions to access the pods but to no avail as they are always fully booked.</p> <p>How can you open them up to other people if military families are struggling to access them now?</p> <p>Opening them up to non military families, when military families can't get booked in is unfair. This isn't what the pods were designed for- a refuge for military families to use and enjoy with other families that share the same experiences.</p>
No	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;SSAFA;Help for Heroes;	I think this is greedy and not essential for the council to be considering this. If you need the revenue from it, put the price up slightly for military families but leave it for them- they don't get much for serving their country.
Yes	Help for Heroes;	How often do the pods not sell out to military? They are hard enough to book ad it is, let alone opening them up to more people. The best thing about our weekend was knowing that all families were military. I do not think adding public will continue this. Its not a good idea.

		<p>As you state early on in your proposal this facility was built using £300,000 of funding from sources specifically designed to support the military. The Council paid just £86,000 but got a £386,000 facility, meaning they only paid 22% of the costs of building this facility but could then profit from it. The current arrangement gives Hampshire Council very generous usage of the facility adding up to 200 days a year of profit making access, the lions share.</p> <p>The Council very publicly trumpeted it's signing of the Covenant in 2011, the middle of the conflict in Afghanistan, when it was a good PR move to do so. As a result it was able to secure Covenant funding to pay for its new facility which it opened in 2016 to great fanfare. They heavily emphasised its purpose in supporting the military and the council garnered a Royal opening, good press and plaudits. Now, less than a year after the armed forces have withdrawn from Afghanistan the PR glow has gone and the Council wants to maximise its revenue and the lions share of access, and the free money doesn't look good enough. The covenant looks great when it's a pipeline of free cash. But now there are more profits to be made and those public statements about supporting serving families look very inconvenient.</p> <p>Service families struggle to get access to the pods under current arrangements due to how quickly they book up. This will make it almost impossible. If the council wants to renege on its previous commitments which gained it the money to build this facility it should repay the funds that paid for 88% of this facilities construction and cease using its military nature of the facility at the site and online.</p>
Yes	Defence discount card;	
Yes	Defence discount card;	I agree with the proposals. A sustainable financial footing that enables continual maintenance and improvement benefits everyone. Advance booking window for military is welcome. I'd like to see use broadened and not dominated very a few repetitious customers. Whilst military-only events have their place, actually enabling military and other others to mix is a positive in my opinion; the military community can be too insular.
Yes	SSAFA;Defence discount card;	I think that the Poppy Pods are a wonderful facility and we have used them on numerous occasions and it has provided much needed respite in a safe environment for our family. When we have stayed we have liked the fact that we know all other people staying are military - it feels a part of the military community. I think that the price increase - albeit with a 25% military discount will price the facility out of some military families which is a shame. Given that the initial funding was from military charities I am not in favour of opening the pods to all - I would be interested to know how many empty bed spaces/pods there have been per year vs availability - and I feel the price rise would sadly prevent some military families taking respite there, which I believe was the purpose of the original funding.
Yes	Defence discount card;SSAFA;	As a family of 6. At the prices that the pods are increasing to, I won't be able to afford the pods. But it was fun whilst it lasted.
Yes	Defence discount card;	The proposals seem to be solely aimed at turning the Poppy Pods into a purely commercial entity. The planned 340% price increase to military members at the same time you are proposing to remove the privilege of having sole access at weekends and holidays seems pretty cynical. Given that HCC contributed less than 23% of the initial set up costs of this centre, to now attempt a restructure in order to extract more money from the demographic it was set up to provide for leaves a very sour taste.
Yes	Defence discount card;	Clearly no-one is going to be in favour of a price increase, but you are attempting to simultaneously decrease access and raise prices. I appreciate the need for a more sustainable commercial footing, in that vein I could accept a 100% price increase if military users retained sole access at weekends and cede primary access in school holidays.
Yes	RAF;	The Poppy Pods, should remain for military personnel over weekends and holidays as the current arrangements.
Yes	Defence discount card;	There are constantly oversubscribed and there was a pause on membership from the military due to the high demands. Appreciate the council need to raise money, the costs should increase for military personnel to £25 a night..
Yes	Defence discount card;	Yes I think military should be given more discount, 15% is nothing
Yes	Defence discount card;	To increase the price by some 325% is shocking. We have been trying for 3 years to get here and have always been beaten to it. Even doing it within 24hrs of the email stating you can book. Feel like the military are being used as a scape goat to feed the fat cats of the council. It's no longer a service for the forces, I am very disappointed.
Yes	Serving;	This proposal appears to be a stealth takeover of an excellent Welfare and respite facility for Service personnel and Veterans by HCC for financial gain. Given the fact that the facility was purchased using grants from the AFCC & RBL totalling £300,000 with HCC's initial outlay being £86,000. I appreciate that HCC staff and maintain the facility however the income generated to date (£341,250) highlights that the facility has almost broke even. It seems that all profits generated will now go to support " other key HCC Services". Given that the justification for the grant application was Service personnel/veteran based, is this proposal even legal? Furthermore, an increase in fees is now being levied against Service personnel and veterans which is being touted as a discount! This is unacceptable. Lets say it for what it really is. Your prices to serving personnel and Veterans is more than doubling. Was the plan always to make profit or to provide a welfare/respite haven for those that need it? Will a percentage of profits go back to the RBL or AFCC "to support further services"?
Yes	Help for Heroes;Defence discount card;Royal British Legion;	no
		<p>I do appreciate the requirement to review the current process and price structure, and fully appreciate the offer of means tested free access for respite for those Service personnel and Veterans with disabilities and on low incomes. I do, however, have a couple of concerns in that I don't think this fully recognises at all the benefit that a dedicated space provided to the military community.</p> <p>Firstly, those of us Veterans who have no disability, whose mental health is generally manageable and who would not receive a means-tested free place are seeing quite a considerable price hike. This proposal prices the pods similarly (or even higher) than general campsites up and down the country.</p> <p>Furthermore, by making the weekends open to both military and civilians there will be the loss of the 'security' of knowing that we'd be with people who have shared experiences, who 'speak the same language' and who provide support just by being together - something we no longer really get once we leave the fold of the Armed Forces. This was a guaranteed haven of shared understanding, where conversations didn't feel they needed to be quite so guarded - but this proposal now denies us that. I fully anticipate that the two military-only weekends per year would be booked up by those with disabilities and low incomes, so they - at least - would still receive some benefit. They are only one small part of the Service community though.</p> <p>While you say that registered military users will receive a one-month priority window for other weekends, it rarely works for those who are Serving to be able to plan and book months in advance (especially with the no refund policy that currently operates). For various reasons it may not be possible for Veterans to be able to plan and book within that window either.</p> <p>I would therefore now see no advantage in booking the Poppy Pods, and anticipate that many other previous users may now also be put off booking.</p> <p>Regarding the fee itself, the initial funding for the project came from 75% Armed Forces community contributions, yet we are now only receiving a 25% then 15% discount on the fee - I'm not sure I see how this is fair.</p> <p>I don't think this proposal recognises at all the enduring impact of Service life on an individual. While some people may see this centre as a 'nice to have', and I agree that it is in comparison with housing, feeding and educating people, I don't think that this view fully appreciates the delicate balance of mental health in our Service and Veteran community. It fails to truly acknowledge how nurturing little things like a weekend away in this haven are, a place where we can let go and can really keep us sustained for the months that follow. It is not only those who have a noted disability who struggle upon leaving Service life, many non-disabled Veterans also do so, often for many years. This proposal feels like another way in which service given to this country is no longer valued.</p>
Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	Overall, I feel that this proposal revokes the initial aim of the centre, as a place where 'Armed Forces personnel and their families can come together and share support'. It is currently one tiny place out of thousands which was just ours on those weekends; non-military families have countless other options.

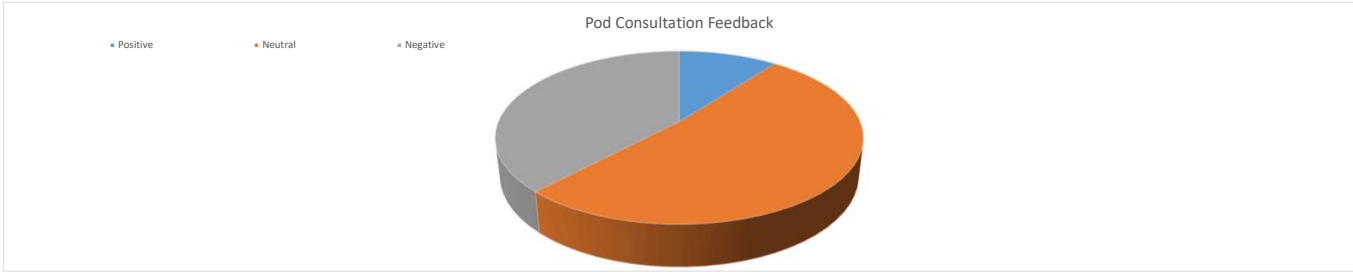
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>Think it's unfair, military personnel barely get any benefits as it is. This is the only perk that isn't means tested. It's already shared with veterans who get to book all the good dates when released as they know their schedules. how are people actually serving supposed to get a booking when they're not fighting with civilians also for dates when we don't know exact dates for anything ever as it is</p>
	Yes	;	<p>I think it is bad form that you have funding mainly from AFCC fund to build this lovely pod village, now you are making it to expensive for the military to use; a 15% reduction on market rates is not sufficient! £30 for a weekend was a nice little break away. Going from £15 to £58 per night is excessive and not affordable for my family - you will notice a massive decline in military uptake. I understand that you need to make money, how about you provide half the pods to the military on current terms and then the other half open up to non-military at your new price. I think this proposition is going to result in military families not using the facility which is a real shame!</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>Far too big price hike that will stop us from using the pods now. Such a shame</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>Not sure why these price increases need to happen!?... these pods are an absolute asset to the military families and putting the prices up by that much will certainly put a lot of families off! We love going to the pods but they would not be worth paying nearly £100 come 2023! Really hope this doesn't happen as this is sometimes the only holiday some families get as they can't afford anything more....</p>
	Yes	Royal British Legion;Help for Heroes;	<p>I think these price I creases are ridiculous when this facility is supposed to provide respite for military families. Also, if they are open to the public will they be able to book at the same time. I enjoy going to meet other military families who are on similar situations and can connect with each other. With the intended price increases I wouldn't be booking any stays.</p>
			<p>With regards to the proposals, I fundamentally disagree with these. There are thousands of Armed Forces families that could potentially wish to utilise the facilities, so to narrow it down to 2 weekends, which would be specifically targeted for respite for disabled personnel and those on low incomes, is basically removing this facility in its entirety from Forces Families. As a family who have both adults in the forces, trying to organise a 'weekend away' to focus just on these 2 weekends would prove exceptionally difficult to organise, never mind if given the opportunity due to being means tested. I appreciate that Military families will be offered a priority booking window for popular holiday seasons; however this year is a prime example that this may prove difficult to implement, as we are still waiting for the release of the pods for this year - I have tried to contact the centre direct and was told that I could not book until the pods have been released.</p> <p>Also increasing the costs from £15.00 per night, to £51.19 per night on peak times is limiting use of these by military families, as that will be over £100 a weekend, which when you include the activities becomes unaffordable.</p> <p>All in all, I believe that if you implement these changes, the military preference to utilise the Poppy Pods will be lost - this is a fantastic facility that actually shows support and preference to the military, so to implement such drastic alterations will cause friction and unwillingness to visit.</p> <p>I do however appreciate that if the pods are not booked in entirety, the Pods could run at a loss - but there are ways in which advertisement and engaging with local charities (Sea Cadets, Scouts etc) could make up for some of that. Also, I have only seen advertising of the Tile Barn once outside of the social media (which requires you joining the FB page), and I was only made aware of the Pods through word of mouth.</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;Active Ministry of Defence;	<p>To summarise, keep the costs as they are for the military, but offer them up to the public as well - this will not negatively impact the military families that do use the facility, but open it up to others and bring in revenue. Also, please increase advertising - even on the social media pages, it is limited.</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>This is a fantastic facility for military families</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>This is a fantastic facility for military families</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>I don't mind there not being any military only days, maybe half the pods could always be on offer to the general public and half go to the military that way you would always make extra money. The price increase for the military is massive and that would put me off staying there unfortunately as I would expect there to be more on offer, our solar powered light only stayed on for an hour max and rather than a better porch for the pods as they seem fine it would be good if there was a wooden play park or little obstacle course for the kids that they could just play on whenever they wanted.</p>
	Yes	Royal British Legion;	<p>The use of the facility should remain exclusive for serving military and veterans. The facility provides an environment where like minded families, all with similar stresses and strains on their lives can relax. The experiences of military families are unique and different to their civilian counterparts. This is particularly relevant when considering our WIS veterans who deserve an environment in which they can relax amongst other military families.</p>
	Other	SSAFA;Defence discount card;	<p>Was planning on visiting the facility when my kids are abit older. I am shocked and saddened at this proposal, especially the proposed price hike for military families. Having these pods available gives low income military families the option of having a family holiday. Considering due to the strains of service life, quite often 1 parent has to make a sacrifice on their career so finances are stretched. Highly disappointed. I am sure the small amount of money that this price hike would generate can be offset by other means.</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>We used the pods a number of times under the original scheme of pay for membership and then free use. We would of been happy to pay the amounts proposed to stay. It is a beautiful place and great facilities the memories made will stay with us forever. My only concern is that military personnel are prioritised and that some lower income families would within the military may found the amount charged costly (especially if two pods are required) could it be a standard charge per family regardless of number of pods? Something to consider. The council need to help support this amazing facility.</p>
	Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	<p>This facility has been a great weekend escape for me and my family, it has and I hope still will be a place very close to my heart where I come with my family to chill out, de-stress and make memories. ,which is even more important now I have been diagnosed with secondary breast cancer. My family and I have been enjoying the pods for over 6 years, for the past couple of years before covid, it has been difficult to get a booking, I was unable to get any bookings this year and am disappointed. I feel the price rises will be difficult for service and veteran families to afford, which is such a shame as the location and the history of the military hospital should be cherished by the serving military and veterans, Hampshire county council are pushing us all out. This will result in the children of the future military not having access to making memories with their parents that spend so much r time away from their families. These price hikes stop now stop, the present hikes are high enough and achievable any more rises will leave families unable to afford to stay here.</p>
	Yes	Help for Heroes;Defence discount card;Royal British Legion;	<p>These pods were ment to be for forces families not everyone. When have stayed several times and it the people who go eg the military that make this a fab holiday, all coming together on an evening kids playing together etc etc mixing military and civies you will loose that feeling and it will become just another site for anyone and at the prices you will attract all the wrong people who will damage the pods where as military are nore respectful of the environment and pods.</p>
	Yes	Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;SSAFA;Royal British Legion;	<p>Losing the military only ethos will only take away what they pods are about. Going on holiday and being around everyone who's military is so much more comforting than being mixed.</p>
	Yes	SSAFA;Defence discount card;	<p>These have been mostly funded by military charities and are a vital asset to the military community.</p>

		<p>I've not visited the pods as a military family as they are always booked far in advance. I am very familiar with the pods through work. I think the price rise for military families will make it unobtainable for many. Many of us are 1parent income families due to many military postings and moves. We are often at the stage which is labeled 'Just about managing'. This means we are unable to afford those special treats as the earnings are just above the benefits cap, but not enough to be anywhere near regarded as financially OK. I do think the prices need to increase as they have not increased for years, however the increase offered is over a 200% increase. Not only are you proposing this price increase but you are taking away the pods from military families in which it was designed for and opening it up to the public. Military families do not have access to the pods through any of the term time as this is solely used for groups organising with tile barn, this is the vast majority of the year we already do not have access. Change from military having access at the weekends to only having sole access to 2 weekends is almost an insult, especially when the reasoning isn't for it to be open to the whole of the serving and x serving community but to be pin pointed down to those with medical needs.</p> <p>Please reconsider your proposal to be more fair. A more fair non means tested price increase with more sole access for military personnel but with the option of some weeks/weekends to have shared access or even reversed, two weekends with non military access at all. There are many pods there, to have an agreement where 60% are always for military (at the times they are available now) and 40% to non military families with shared sole weekends for either side. Its such a shame to feel like the military families really don't have it easy. Think practically single parent family moving every couple of years to a new place away from friends and family for one and you are choosing to make the restbite as a family that is currently obtainable, unobtainable.</p>
No	Defence discount card;	<p>It has been difficult to book poppy pods with the armed forces community and opening this up to everyone would make it even worse to be able to book and faking away a perk that we had will be met by upset.</p> <p>The price hike with the affordability will then cause the lower and disadvantaged not be able to book and this is only holiday that they have. It is a massive price hike and 15% isn't enough discount to accommodate a holiday with armed forces family. I don't agree with any of the changes.</p>
Yes	SSAFA;	<p>I feel as though military families will miss out of what it is intended for, being means tested is so unfair as most military family's are one income families due to the job - but aren't always able to receive benefits! Also would just be better to increase the price. Absolutely no perks of being in the armed forces any more as anything and everything is taken away. When we have come before we cherished the time with other military families and listening to their experiences, opening up to the general public will make it even more impossible to book and it loses its speciality, very very sad and disappointed by these proposals. Feel as though it's to push money and not for the people the pods have been created to help.</p>
No	Just a 'Wife' ;	<p>It is a disgrace that you are proposing to charge military families a considerable amount to stay in what was built specifically for families and veterans. £300,000 was donated by military charities of the total £386,000. £341K of which has been 'repaid' by the use of which it was intended for. How many service personnel do you think have the new increased prices available at the end of the month? I would hazard a guess that a good 70% of families who visit have zero disposable!! We come knowing that every weekend there are families like us, that understand the struggles we face, the insecurity, the anxiety, the months of missing family members, the deaths of our husbands, son, daughters, wives... We are able to unwind without having to focus of Operation Security. If it was opened up to NOT-military families we would be right back in an unsupportive place with opsec as a highest priority! Instead of increasing the pricing for those who it was intended for, increase the prices for those who use it commercially! Yet again though fat cat government officials are using the military and its families to line the pockets of its coffers!! NOT GOOD ENOUGH!! This just shows that it doesn't matter what you do for this country, even charitable runds that were specifically given to support you in times of need aren't sacred. Makes me sick!!</p>
Yes	Defence discount card;	<p>The proposals to remove what was the original intention of The Poppy Pods as a place for military families to enjoy a week or weekend away, at a much reduced rate, is very sad indeed. I was present at the opening of The Poppy Pods as part of the choir and the sense of military community was very important and much appreciated. I was excited to visit with my family as my husband is away a lot and although we do not qualify for benefits, we do not have hundreds of pounds to spend on travel, accommodation and activities when going away, particularly at short notice/for just a couple of nights. We finally visited last year and all enjoyed our stay. It was nice to know that we didn't have to be as careful about any conversations about my husband's job, or our lives be sure everyone there was also military and it was all "normal". We were also able to book very last minute as our Welfare Team sent out communication that there were still spaces available.</p> <p>I feel that increasing the costs and reducing the chance for military families to book in the way that we have will limit the chances families like ours have to have even a short weekend holiday.</p> <p>It's taking away from the intention of the centre and ethos of it all. And that's without even getting to the funding for it coming from armed forces specific organisations or funds.</p> <p>With so much being taken away from the armed forces that is truly "for them", this feels like yet another set back in giving back to this group.</p>
No	SSAFA;	<p>As a serving military family, we feel the proposal to be not in the spirit to the vision of the scheme nor does it reflect the significant financial contributions made by the AFCC. We do not support the proposal.</p>
No	British army ;	<p>This is disgraceful this was created mainly using money aimed at military. The person involved wanted this to be solely for military and veterans. You have now opened this for anyone meaning it's not something for the military but for every man and his dog and you also want to charge a ridiculous amount which is a disadvantage to thousands of military families who have no money to afford this now. It was hard enough to start off with to get the chance to have a break here, now you have made it impossible you should be thoroughly ashamed of yourselves. How do you get to use money for military for Joe blogs to now take over most of the bookings. Military families usually can't afford breaks as they are generally a one income house due to lifestyle and moving so much and you have taken an option from them that can help assist their mental health. I hope you're investigated for this and I hope they all boycott it. This is unacceptable</p>
No	Defence discount card;	<p>This is disgusting. We haven't been able to book the pods in the last 4 years. Which prunes they must be popular. Military families often operate last minute as things change all the time, so to open bookings to the public disadvantages us.</p> <p>Means testing is unfair. We are not entitled to benefits as we earn 'too much' but we are barely scraping by.</p> <p>£15 to 50 is insane and makes it unaffordable.</p> <p>This is absolutely a disgrace. I'm dumbfounded that this is even a suggestion.</p> <p>This needs to stay for military only. Do you understand that military people often only feel safe around other military people??? I'm disgusted at HCC. Absolutely disgusted. You obviously have no clue on military life at all.</p>

		<p>The proposals will further disadvantage military families who often struggle as it it to afford holidays due to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. struggling to find a second income for the non-serving Spouses. 2. Struggling to afford a holiday that could have to be cancelled last minute due to military postings or deployments out of their control. 3. The military community have an understanding of one another, the struggles and difficulties we all go through. Part of the attractions of the Poppy Pods is being surrounded by other military families who are in the same position and have an instant understanding. 4. The Poppy Pods are incredibly popular currently and very difficult to book, we have tried every year for 4 years and never been able to get one. If booking was open to a larger group then military families would likely never get a chance to book. <p>The Poppy Pods were build with the sole purpose of giving military families a get break from the difficulties they face. The majority of the money came from military charities, they are named Poppy Pods due to the poppies military tie. If they are opened up to all and it becomes a free-for-all for a pod with less and less military families being able to book then I fear that the purpose they were build for, the reason military charities gave so much money to enable them to be built, will be completely lost and the appeal of them will disappear.</p> <p>Military families will also be highly unlikely to access these through welfare due to the enormous amount of stigma within in the army and a refusal to ask for help. There is a reason that suicide amongst soldiers considerably is higher than any other group. They don't ask for help, they don't like to admit 'weakness' and I don't think those who truly need a break, somewhere to forget the realities of life and just relax, will actually access the Pods through welfare.</p>
Yes	Defence discount card;SSAFA;Royal British Legion;	
Yes	Labour Friends of the forces;Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	They're not great. Keep things the way they are and advertise the pods more. I have been married to my husband for 17 years and only found out about these pods late last year,
Yes	Royal British Legion;SSAFA;	The suggested consultation would price our military family out of coming to the Poppy pods. On average, my husband is away 5months of the year, we have very few opportunities for respite as a family. Having time amongst other service families is important due to the unique stresses and experiences this life provides us. Experiences that civilians do not understand and therefore are unable to support (even family and friends), being surrounded by people who "get it" is so very important for ourselves and our children. Means testing would also cut our family out of the opportunity to attend the Poppy pods. Although my husband is not a low earner and I work, we are by no means well off and have minimal funds left over at the end of the month due to the expense of constant childcare required by the unpredictability of my husband's work/deployment schedule. We are not eligible for any benefits due to income and therefore, miss out on means tested provisions every time. The Poppy pods are one of the only provisions still accessible by all military families and we would be incredibly sad for this to no longer be such a viable option due in availability to book or unobtainable price hike.
No	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;BLESMA;SSAFA;Combat stress;	We are a military family who has many many times tried to book the poppy pods and they have been full, and I can think of multiple other families who have done the same but they are always full. So why are you opening up the pods to the general public when you are already full- you are now making it almost impossible for military families to book these facilities and they are a one of a kind! A place where military families can be with others who understand and support them. I wholeheartedly disagree with these being opened to the general public and I think the proposal should be reconsidered.
Yes	Defence discount card;	Increase in price means we are out and have visited for a few years now when we can get in due to its popularity with military families. Not sure it was designed or intended to be such a money making scheme but more for rest bite for serving and ex military personnel. Very disappointed with this latest development!
Yes	Defence discount card;	This is an excellent facility but not enough of the military know about it. Better communication and booking would allow more military to utilise it. Whilst a small price increase is inevitable in the current climate and would likely be accepted by the military community the current proposal sees a significant increase which will price it out of the majority of users budgets. A big selling point for the military is the community spirit you get from having sole military use, everyone has the same mindset. You may lose this with the proposal put forward and I don't think the military will use it as much. it will just become another campsite that offers a small military discount. This is a huge shame given that it was built largely through military charities/funds for the military community.
Yes	Defence discount card;	As a member of the Armed forces, I would not be in support of the commercialisation of a scheme set up to support military families.
Yes	Defence discount card;	none
No	Regular Army;	For a start, your question set is skewed - there is nowhere for me to register that I am a serving military member. The current question only allows me to register that I have used the Pods. I haven't - yet. I would also like to register my disagreement with the changes. A lot of Forces Covenant money went into this project and I believe it should be left predominately for Serving/Veterans use. Perhaps you could open up certain weeks/weekends only for mixed groups (perhaps 6 weekends or 3 weeks a year?)
Yes	Defence discount card;	I believe the discount for military personnel should be greater than 15%. 25% sounds more reasonable.
No	British Army;	The village was built with military money and support therefore it should stay for the military and veterans. Commercialisation of a welfare asset is yet another kick to all serving members of the military and the charities that have contributed to this establishment and it seems to me that getting the military and charities to fund something that you are then going to charge people for is a disgrace and an obvious cash grab. This puts a dark shadow on any military organisations contributing to any developments under your council as they will just be exploited to make money.
Yes	Defence discount card;Royal British Legion;	If I was a gambler I would put money on the odds that within 2 years HCC will have driven off any business from UK Armed Forces members, the cynic in me believes this is probably their desired outcome. I recommend they re-familiarise themselves with the Armed Forces Covenant, https://www.armedforcescovenant.gov.uk/about/ before taking a decision that will see them disadvantaged at a time of great economic uncertainty. This is a privilege that has been earned through service and sacrifice, I am saddened to see the lack of respect displayed by HCC.
Yes	Defence discount card;	I feel this is another way to overlook the outstanding work the Armed forces do, in favour of profit. I doubt many Armed forces members will continue to use the facility if the prices increase. I certainly wont. The benefits applied to the Armed forces in civilian industry have slowly eroded over time, more emphasis being placed on students. The increase in prices for these Pods will simply follow this trend and once again go against everything the Armed Forces Covenant was set up to combat.
Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;SSAFA;	I am strongly against the proposed changes to the poppy pod's. As a serving member of the Armed Forces I find there are very few "safe spaces" for military personal and Veterans to get together and de-stress. Currently this facility is ideal for such activity with no alternative in Hampshire. With rising costs to every household in the U.K. and no planned pay rise for serving soldiers, now is not the time to increase costs to service families. We in the Armed forces give up a lot for the U.K., its not unreasonable to get a little back.
Yes	Royal British Legion;Defence discount card;	I think to reduce the availability of poppy pods for military families and almost increase the costs so significantly is a real shame. Whilst campaigns such as Afghanistan are no longer active, the military are busier than ever. Covid has seen military families affected at short notice to support testing and vaccination programmes. The situation in Eastern Europe has seen an increase in military deployments to NATO partner countries in the area. The proposed increases will put the pods out of reach for many military families. Whilst inflation has risen considerably, military pay rates have not. I would encourage the council to look at other ways to maintain this facility without affecting military families. The use of the facility for weddings is one option which would increase revenue.
Yes	Defence discount card;	The proposal is absolutely fine.
Yes	SSAFA;Defence discount card;Help for Heroes;	I believe that changing this facility to only allow military personnel to take a standard "discounted" rate, commercialises a facility which was intended to benefit military personnel. It is a real shame that this is what is being proposed, especially considering the benefit and respite it currently provides to families.

			<p>I think it's difficult enough to book the pods when it's just military let alone open to the public. Weekends and time as a family unit is hard most of the time but to restrict that even more is really upsetting. Not only that, we don't fall under the bracket of low income, but we're hardly flushed as a family of 5, so when we book 2 pods it's an expense but one we really cherish as we can't afford holidays.</p> <p>The main funding came from military and now to take that away or restrict it, to also make gains on that I think is awful.</p> <p>Military families move so often, the children and schools are disrupted, often families apart for long periods of time or even a few days, but they are always saying goodbye and having to just get on with it. The pods are, I feel, a restbite for all. Its a chance to rekindle as a family unit, so tech, more conversations and it would be a real shame to take this village of pods away from the safe military family we know are there. Its a defeat net knowing that the other occupants are and have experienced the same as the other. There's a mutual respect and that's the bond the military bring. Please don't take another safety net away. We love the few times we have visited the pods.</p>
	Yes	No organisation ;	All makes good sense and should increase occupancy.
	No	Royal British Legion;	Thank you for retaining our RBL Branch ANZAC Sunday usage for Lunch and Tea. Much appreciated
	Yes	Defence discount card;Royal Air Force Association;	Whilst I'm content with the proposal, I am an officer so able to afford the increase in the military rate whereas other military personnel with young families may not be able to do so. Therefore, would it be possible to increase the level of military discount for the junior ranks (OR1 to OR4) (e.g. 25% to 33%)?

	Positive	12
	Neutral	60
	Negative	44



Tables showing current Poppy Pod access and pricing arrangements together with two sets of amended arrangements comprising Options 1 and 2 contained in the report, Customer Journey and Pricing

Table 1 - Current Poppy Pod access and pricing arrangements together with two sets of amended arrangements comprising Options 1 and 2 contained in the report

Current Poppy Pod Access and Pricing Arrangements	Proposed Arrangements Consulted Upon in March 2022 - Option 2 in the report	Amended Proposed Arrangements Following the Consultation - Option 1 in the report, which is the preferred option recommended to the Executive Member for approval.
<p>3.1 Provision of current military family bookings</p> <p><i>The current arrangements are that members of the full time serving military or veteran military personnel once registered have full and complete access to stay in all 20 Poppy Pods with their family during all weekends or school holiday weeks between March and October each year.</i></p> <p><i>The cost to the family is a £15 booking fee per pod/per night. Total cost of a stay for a family of 4 for a weekend is £30 or for a 4-night week £60. Larger families can still access the pods but would have to book 2 adjacent pods thus doubling the cost.</i></p> <p><i>This access arrangement has been in place since 2019 when we changed from an annual membership fee system. At</i></p>	<p>a) Except for the provision of military-only weekends (see item (b) below), all customers of Tile Barn Outdoor Centre, both military and non-military, will have equal opportunity (subject to the priority booking window referenced in item (c) below) to book a stay in the Pods during weekends and school holiday periods, subject to when the facility is open.</p> <p>b) The centre would advertise a minimum of two ‘military- only’ free weekends specifically targeted at respite for physically and mentally disabled personnel and those on low income. We envisage engaging with current military charities (i.e Blesma, RBL and MOD unit welfare officers) to refer suitable families and administer their stay with the centre.</p>	<p>As per Proposal (a) in column 2 although the number of military-only weekends is significantly increased (see item (b) below).</p> <p>As per Proposal (b) in column 2 and dates for these respite weekends would be confirmed in January 2023. If demand for Pods was not maximised on these respite weekends, then any excess availability would be offered out to the general military membership but not the public.</p> <p>Existing access and payment arrangements would apply up until 31st August 2022.</p> <p>From 1st September 2022, the Centre would advertise half of</p>

<p><i>this time the military families paid an annual membership fee and had free access to the pods once a member. This led to large numbers of cancellations of pods mostly at last minute meaning we had an underutilised facility.</i></p>	<p>c) Military families will also be offered a priority booking window for one month before the Pods go on general sale. This will ensure military families have first refusal for popular holiday periods.</p> <p>d) The current booking fee would be replaced by a discount payment scheme, where a discount code will be provided to military families enabling reduced prices based on the public rate. Please see item (e) below and Appendix B for details.</p>	<p>the available term-time weekends as military only. Subject to availability and the respite weekends, the other 50% of term-time weekends and all school holiday periods would be accessible to both military and non-military families. The breakdown of these dates would be made available on the booking website.</p> <p>As per Proposal (c) in column 2 except with a priority 2-month early booking window starting 1st January 2023.</p> <p>As per Proposal (d) in column 2. Adjustments to the discount rates are explained in item (e) below.</p>
<p>3.2 Military Discounts</p> <p><i>The current arrangements are that members of the full time serving military or veteran military personnel once registered pay a £15 booking fee per pod/per night.</i></p>	<p>e) The Centre proposes to introduce a military discount code providing a 25% discount from the public rate for both peak and off-peak periods during 2022, reducing to 15% discount from 1st April 2023. Proposed pricing can be seen in [Table 4].</p>	<p>As per Proposal (e) in terms of the introduction of a military discount code but with increased discount levels. The Centre would increase the costs to military personnel in a phased approach.</p>

<p><i>This is a 77% discount based on our current public rate of £65 per pod per night in the peak period. The discount equates to 62.5% in the low season when the current public rate is £40 per pod.</i></p>	<p>f) The Centre would continue to advertise at least two military only free weekends. Please see item (b) above.</p>	<p>For arrival dates from now until 31 August 2022, the current fee arrangements would apply. In respect of arrival dates on or after 1st September 2022 to 31st December 2022, all military Pod bookings would receive a 65% discount from the publicised rates. (The Pods are normally closed to all bookings from the first weekend of November to the last weekend of February).</p> <p>For arrival dates on or after 1st January 2023, commissioned and non-commissioned Officers would receive a 25% discount off the public rate. Enlisted ranks (non-officers) would receive a 50% discount from the public rate. Proposed pricing can be seen in Table 3.</p> <p>The Centre reviews all its pricing on an annual basis to ensure it achieves a balanced budget position. Military discount rates would be reviewed in 2023, as part of a wider review of the arrangements relating to the Pods, and thereafter annually and would be subject to change.</p> <p>Poppy Pod Members would be consulted about any significant changes to these arrangements. The discounts would be applicable to current and ex-service/retired personnel.</p> <p>Regarding the military only free weekends, see item (b) above.</p>
<p>3.3 School and youth group bookings</p>	<p>g) The Centre does not anticipate altering the access arrangements for</p>	<p>As per Proposal (g).</p>

<p><i>Schools and youth groups can currently book the pods during term time Monday-Friday for outdoor educational experiences in the New Forest in line with the service mission.</i></p> <p>The current 2022 cost to school users for using the facility is £16.38 per person or £65.52 for a pod with 4 occupants. (prices INC VAT)</p> <p><i>“We strive to improve the lives of our customers and deliver a safe, highly valued, cost effective and quality focused service through the provision of accessible outdoor education and recreational facilities.”</i></p>	<p>these user groups however the Pods may be used by schools and youth groups at weekends and school holidays if there is availability.</p>	
<p>3.4 Stakeholder use</p> <p><i>The centre supports the local branch of the RBL with free facility use at tile Barn during the local Anzac commemoration event held on the last Sunday in April. This includes use of the pod roundhouse area and the Anzac room of the Bunkhouse building. This is largely organised and supported by the Brockenhurst branch of the RBL.</i></p>	<p>h) The Centre proposes to continue offering this support to the RBL and will liaise with them around their access needs.</p>	<p>As per Proposal (h).</p>

Table 2 - Revised Poppy Pod Customer Journey for both Options 1 and 2 contained in the report

Stage 1: Military personnel register with the Poppy Pod scheme	Stage 2: Pod Bookings & Availability	Stage 3: Military Mailing list
<p>Military personnel and families register for the Poppy Pod scheme on the Centre’s website.</p> <p>The Centre will then verify applicant military credentials and email a discount code for members to use when booking a Poppy Pod.</p>	<p>Each year, (commencing 1st January 2023) the Centre will open an early booking window for Military members to book Pods throughout the year. The booking system will show the dates which are military only and those open to the public.</p> <p>All customers will book Pods directly through the Centre’s website. Customers will be able to request specific Pods and the Centre will accommodate this if possible. Pod availability will be in real time and payment will be taken at the time of booking.</p> <p>Military families will be able to use their discount code at the checkout stage.</p> <p>All Pod bookings will be subject to the Centre’s normal Booking Terms & Conditions.</p>	<p>Registered military users of the Poppy Pod scheme will normally receive an email in December, explaining the process and providing links to the booking portal.</p>

Tables 3 and 4 - Military and Public Prices for Options 1 and 2 contained in the report

Table 3 - Military & Public Prices – Option 1 contained in the report

	2022 Public price	Current Military booking fee per pod/per night.	Military price From 1st September to 31st December 2022 per pod/per night. Including 65% discount.	2023 military prices officer ranks per pod/per night. Including 25% discount.	2023 military prices non-officer ranks per pod/per night. Including 50% discount.
Peak 1st May – 30th September	£68.25	£15.00	£23.89	£51.19	£34.12
Off Peak 1st October – 30th April	£42.00	£15.00	£14.70	£31.50	£21.00

*All prices are inclusive of VAT at the appropriate rate.

** 2023 Prices will be subject to inflation.

*** The Pods are normally closed to all bookings from the first weekend of November to the last weekend of February

Table 4 - Military & Public Prices – Option 2 contained in the report

	2022 Public price	Current Military booking fee per pod/per night.	Military price From 1st September to 31st December 2022 per pod/per night. Including 25% discount.	2023 military prices (all ranks) per pod/per night. Including 15% discount.
Peak 1st May – 30th September	£68.25	£15.00	£51.19	£58.01
Off Peak 1st October – 30th April	£42.00	£15.00	£31.50	£35.70

*All prices are inclusive of VAT at the appropriate rate.

** 2023 Prices will be subject to inflation.

*** The Pods are normally closed to all bookings from the first weekend of November to the last weekend of February

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Culture and Communities Select Committee
Date:	12 July 2022
Title:	Work Programme
Report From:	Chief Executive

Contact name: Members Services

Tel: 0370 7792351

Email: members.services@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. To consider the Committee's forthcoming work programme.
2. For reference, site visits proposed for Members of the Committee are appended at Annexe 1.

Recommendation

3. That the Culture and Communities Select Committee consider and approve the work programme.

WORK PROGRAMME – CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Issue	Reason for inclusion	12 July 2022	15 September 2022	23 November 2022	26 January 2023
County Farms Annual Report	To pre-scrutinise prior to consideration by the Executive Member	X			
Grant Funding to Culture and Recreation Organisations in Hampshire: The Spring, Energise Me, Sir Harold Hillier Gardens	To pre-scrutinise prior to consideration by the Executive Member	X			
Proposals to Adjust Access and Charges to the Enda Ryan Poppy Pods at Tile Barn Outdoor Centre	To pre-scrutinise prior to consideration by the Executive Member	X			
Dogs in the countryside	To receive an update		X		
Trading Standards	To receive an update		X		

Issue	Reason for inclusion	12 July 2022	15 September 2022	23 November 2022	26 January 2023
Impact of pandemic and Brexit on staffing	As requested at 17 January 2022 Select Committee		X		
Further update on Arts Council England Overall Delivery Plan	As requested at 20 September 2021 Select Committee			X	
Hampshire Cultural Trust (last update 20 September 2021)	To receive an annual update - to include impact of the Covid pandemic on cultural organisations			X	
Cultural Strategy (last update 20 September 2021)	To receive an annual update			X	
Countryside item	To receive an update			X	
Pre-scrutiny of revenue budget	To pre-scrutinise prior to consideration by the Executive Member				X

Issue	Reason for inclusion	12 July 2022	15 September 2022	23 November 2022	26 January 2023
Archives Strategy and Plans for Implementation	To receive an update				X
Scientific Service and Asbestos Service	To receive an update (timing tbc)				
Income Generation Task and Finish Working Group	To present findings to Select Committee (timing tbc)				
Calshot Futures	To pre-scrutinise prior to consideration by the Executive Member (timing tbc)				

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This is a scrutiny review document setting out the work programme of the Committee. It does not therefore make any proposals which will impact on groups with protected characteristics.

3. Climate Change Impact Assessment:

This is a scrutiny review document setting out the work programme of the Committee. It does therefore not make any proposals which will impact on climate change.

Select Committee proposed site visits 2022

January

- Calshot and Tile Barn Outdoor Activity Centres took place on 24 January

March

- The Arc, Winchester took place on 3 March
- River Hamble Country Park and Manor Farm took place on 23 March

June

- Basingstoke Canal and Runway's End took place on 13 June

July

- Gosport Discovery Centre, Gosport Museum and Grammar School (HCT) and High Street – date tbc
- Registration and Coroners Tour of Castle Hill – 12 July
- Ashford Hangers/QECP (bike base)/Butser Hill project and BOATS – 26 July

The following visit are still to be confirmed.

- Basingstoke Chineham Library and Milestones
- County Farm Visit

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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