



Notes of evidence

Name of meeting	POLICY COMMISSION FOR BUSINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
Date and time	WEDNESDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2007 AT 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Commission	Cllrs Jonathan Fitzgerald-Bond (Commissioner), Henry Adams, William Burt, John Hobart, Brian Mosdell
Cabinet	
Other Councillors	Cllrs Arthur Taylor, Jilly Wood
Officers Present	Mr Jonathan Baker, Committee Services Miss Andrea Lisseter, Overview and Scrutiny Team Mr Stuart Love, Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods
Stakeholders	
Apologies	Cllrs Lora Peacey-Wilcox and Charles Hancock Mr Rob Owen, Head of Consumer Protection

1. **Notes of Evidence**

1.1 The notes of evidence from the previous meeting on the [29 August 2007](#) were discussed and the following items were clarified:

The statistics of livestock leaving the Island to be slaughtered at mainland abattoirs could be obtained from sub departments at DEFRA.

When exploring the marketing possibilities, local marketing experts specialising in livestock should be approached with a view to promote advantages such as quality of grazing land hence delivering a high quality product.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest at this stage.

3. **Abattoir Feasibility Study**

3.1 The Commissioner reported on the recent visit to the Langport Abattoir in Somerset.

- 3.2 The Chair reported that Mr Richard Phelps, Managing Director of Southern Counties Fresh Food Ltd, who ran the abattoir, dealt with more than 100 livestock per day and was a main supplier to Tesco.
- 3.3 Mr Phelps had made it clear that he was not interested in opening an abattoir on the Island as it would not be financially viable and Langport were already slaughtering Island livestock.
- 3.4 The Chair reported on a scheme by Blade Farming South West Ltd, run by the Langport abattoir. Calves at 14 days old are bought from the dairy farm and are then reared on dedicated units managed by Blade Farming for 12-14 weeks. Beef finishers can order a group of weaned calves 12 weeks in advance of the estimated delivery date. The animals are finished 6 months on grass and then 6 months indoors using the Blade Farming ration and give an end result of high quality Aberdeen Angus Beef.
- 3.5 The Chair clarified that the Commission was not abandoning the investigation into the feasibility of an abattoir but was reporting on an option that could be considered by local farmers offering a good source of regular income.
- 3.6 Such cattle could be branded as Isle of Wight meat and marketed accordingly. Supermarkets on the Island could then sell Isle of Wight Beef off Island and on.
- 3.7 The current Island dairy stock provided good potential for the Blade Farming scheme.
- 3.8 More and more people were now becoming aware of the food they eat and if the Blade Farming Scheme was correctly implemented and marketed, this in turn could lead to a demand for a local abattoir.
- 3.9 The disposal of unwanted meat from a carcass was still an issue that needed to be addressed.
- 3.10 Unwanted meat and bones at the Langport abattoir was taken to Stoke for disposal which was the most cost effective method of disposal.
- 3.11 The planning department had been approached for advice and suggestions on the matter of abattoirs and incinerators.
- 3.12 The Island currently had special dispensation from DEFRA regarding the disposal of fallen stock although this could change at any time.
- 3.13 SEEDA had indicated that finances could be made available to support an abattoir and would be attending the next Policy Commission meeting.