

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**HIGHWAYS & NEIGHBOURHOODS  
CABINET MEMBER**

**SCHMALLEMBERG DISEASE**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of the emerging New Livestock Disease known as Schmallenberg Virus.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Schmallenberg Virus is a new emerging livestock disease that has been detected in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. The new virus was identified in December 2011 and was named 'Schmallenberg virus' after the German town where it was first identified.
- 2.2 The virus has been associated with brief mild/moderate illness in adult cattle and late abortion or birth defects in newborn cattle, sheep and goats. As this is a newly identified virus there are still aspects of the disease that remain unknown, until more research has been done.
- 2.3 There is unlikely to be a risk to human health from Schmallenberg virus and so there is an extremely low risk of any public health implications; but this is not yet certain, so sensible hygiene precautions are advised for farmers and vets.
- 2.4 So far in the UK, sheep have been the most affected by the virus, a small number of cattle have also been affected. No other species have been infected. As of 27th February infection has been identified on 83 farms in the UK (predominantly in the south of England). Five of the positive cases have been diagnosed in cattle, and 78 in sheep.
- 2.5 Schmallenberg Virus is transmitted by midges, mosquitoes and ticks (known as vectors). The potential for direct transmission (i.e. direct from one animal to another) is therefore, as yet, unknown.
- 2.6 Schmallenberg Virus is not a notifiable disease, so does not have to be reported to authorities and no restrictions need to be put in place. There are currently no plans to make it notifiable. However, farmers and vets are being advised to remain vigilant and report any suspicious cases to The Department of Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Animal Health Veterinary Laboratories Agency (AHVLA) for testing as part of their enhanced surveillance.

2.7 There is no treatment or vaccine currently available for this disease. Defra and its agencies are monitoring the spread of the virus and recording confirmed cases. No livestock movement controls or control zones are currently in place for this virus.

2.8 There have as yet been no cases of the disease in North Lincolnshire. From the pattern of cases observed to date, it would appear that North Lincolnshire is at lower risk than some other parts of the country.

### **3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

3.1 As Schmallenberg is not on the list of officially notifiable diseases (which includes diseases like Foot and Mouth), there are no livestock movement controls, zones or restrictions for councils to enforce. So councils will not be expected to undertake any additional work as a result of the confirmation of the virus in the UK. This of course may change if the disease becomes notifiable.

### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 That the Cabinet Member notes the contents of this report and supports the advisory measures taken.

DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report : None**