Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire Council, South Derbyshire District Council

Local Land Charges

BUSINESS CASE FOR FUTURE DELIVERY OF LOCAL LAND CHARGES SERVICES

Department Lead Officers	Ardip Kaur (Solicitor) Head of Legal and Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer South Derbyshire District Council
	Grant Mitchell Assistant Director Enterprise & Growth South Staffordshire Council
	Ged Cooper Partnership Manager Lichfield District Council

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<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>

Land Charges is a small local authority service but significant in terms of the service it provides to customers and the income it generates. Anyone planning to buy or lease property needs to know whether there are any issues of concern, such as plans for a new road at the bottom of the garden or outstanding Notices requiring owners to remedy an earlier wrong doing.

Councils, by law, (Local Land Charges Act 1975) must keep a Local Land Charges Register (LLCR). The LLCR records relevant information on every property/parcel of land within the district. It is updated daily. Land Charges also include a discretionary, fee earning service providing property history reports known to the industry as the 'CON29' service or 'Official Search'. It competes against private companies to provide that service.

Land Charges teams tend to be small (one or two FTE posts in small LAs) with little or no resilience should a member of staff be absent. Key considerations in formulating this outline business case have been:

- The government intends for the Land Registry to take over responsibility for the LLCR. This will remove an income stream which is currently around 25% of Land Charges income. The proposal will also increase each Council's workload and responsibility as councils will be responsible to the Land Registry.

- Around 75% of the income is from the main chargeable (fee-earning) service that involves selling information (CON29) held by the council. This is not directly under threat and there is opportunity to increase market share by improving services.

- Non-chargeable services provided by Local Land Charges include maintaining the LLCR and providing access to information for 'Personal Search' companies who attend the council. These services are funded directly by the council and workload is expected to rise following the takeover of the Land Registry

- The main aims and objectives moving forward are:
  1. Improved customer service
  2. Greater service resilience
  3. Deliver competitive chargeable services fully funded from fee income, at zero net cost to the council.
  4. Non-chargeable statutory services to be delivered at the lowest cost possible.
  5. Electronic service delivery.

All Councils are already collaborating successfully within the "Central Building Control Partnership'.

Lichfield District Council and South Staffordshire Council have an existing and successful land charges shared service hosted at Lichfield DC since May 2015. This report recommends that South Derbyshire DC join the existing shared Local Land Charges service, creating a new three party shared service.

- All staff will be employed and managed by Lichfield DC. No staff will be transferred from South Derbyshire District Council.

- Remote access to all IT systems will be maintained to provide resilience.

- Governance is provided by a Partnership Advisory Board

Contents

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1 Councils have clear statutory duties to manage land and property information and provide basic environmental information for free. Some of this information is held on the Local Land Charges Register (LLCR) which is managed and maintained by the 'Land Charges' service. However, Land Charges also provides an established value added, discretionary and fee earning council service providing 'Official Searches'.

1.2 The purpose of this document is to provide Senior Officers and Members with an opportunity to consider how Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire Council and South Derbyshire District Council (the Councils) may provide the local property market with information in future, and discharge other statutory duties.

1.3 A key factor in this work is to move away from the traditional service delivery by key people and to fully utilize available technology to transform services to minimize officer time, improve the customer journey and increase income to deal with threats to the service.

1.3 The document is focused on the Land Charges service, but no service operates in isolation. The relationships and other services affected by any proposal require full consideration.

1.4 The government has issued guidance on assessing options for small services and it is important that research and investigation into options is proportionate. Therefore, this document has taken that advice on board. Given the limited scope of the services, this document will recommend a single option.

2   THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 Land and property information held by councils is essential to all sectors of the property market, from home buyers' mortgage lenders, to large developers.

2.2 Without this information the property market cannot operate effectively.

2.3 Councils have a legal duty under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 to provide access to most 'Environmental Information' free of charge, such as the Local Land Charges Register (LLCR). 'Personal Search' companies (PSCs) access this information and sell it on to their customers.

2.4 'Land Charges Official Searches' is a trusted and high quality, customer focused, fee-earning council service that pre-dates and competes against PSCs to sell value added property related information. There is clear legislation set out in the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008 about how fees can be applied. Not everything can be charged for.

2.5 There is new government legislation currently in process (The Infrastructure Act) to ensure some information (LLCR) is accessible and available in electronic format via the Land Registry. This will place new burdens on councils to supply the Land Registry.

2.6 All councils face financial challenges and need to ensure that services are resilient; sustainable; as low cost as possible and that income is maximized.

3 THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH

3.1 Budgetary constraints on all local authorities have created an environment where savings must be made whilst maintaining services but have also provided the impetus for innovation and exploration of new ways of working. This proposal responds to these challenges.

3.2 Not all of the work of Land Charges can be charged for and this 'non-chargeable' work is funded directly by councils. The cost of this non-chargeable work is increasing at a time when council budgets are under pressure.

3.3 The government intends for Land Registry to take over part of the service over the next two to six years. This will have a negative effect locally as it will reduce income by around 25% and increase non-chargeable workload which will be a direct cost to councils.

3.4 Resilience is a high risk factor with services reliant on a few people with local knowledge.

3.5 Opportunities exist to increase resilience and service standards by transforming the service, a part of which is to move to fully electronic systems.

3.6 Opportunities also exist to increase market share and to charge where this has not been previously possible.

3.7 There are good examples of shared services that have achieve improved resilience, competitiveness and efficiency at the lowest cost possible to customers and taxpayers.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Aims

1. To provide timely and accurate 'Environmental Information' including land and property information, through the use of technology, that is affordable and dependable.
2. To provide a resilient cost effective service that exceeds customers' expectations

4.2 Objectives

1. Provide all non-chargeable services at £7K net cost per council within 2 years.
2. Deliver all chargeable services at zero net cost within year 1.
3. Create a single team employed and managed by Lichfield DC.
4. Compete better and improve market share by 5% per year.
5. Deliver high quality by ensuring data is accurate, with zero errors revealed by auditing within year 1.
6. Provide dependable agile services that can be delivered from multi-locations, including voluntary home working within year 1.
7. Deliver all official searches within 5 working days.
8. Deliver searches for a fee that is competitive and recovers all our costs.
9. Manage risk effectively by ensuring all risks are identified and monitored in accordance with council procedures.

4.3 Current Performance of the existing partnership in delivering the objectives

The current legal agreement between Lichfield DC and South Staffs councils has a requirement for a Business Plan and annual budget to be agreed in advance. The Business Plan and financial performance is reported regularly through a performance management system and also to the Partnership Board twice a year. There are also additional regular meetings with officers that attend the Partnership Board meetings where that is requested.

Of the 9 objectives in section 4.2 above, all have been achieved with the exception of the following:

Objective 5

Data accuracy is fundamental to an automated system, and most of the data is not owned by the Land Charges team. To achieve this objective Land Charges works with other departments. This has involved creating a working group, identifying data owners and custodians, ensuring staff are trained to input data accurately and consistently. Where there are inaccuracies, they work with data custodians to support data cleansing, training and assistance. This may not be necessary if data is accurate but may be a significant piece of work.

5   BACKGROUND TO LOCAL LAND CHARGES

5.1   Local Land Charges Register

All councils are required to keep a Local Land Charges Register (LLCR). This records all 'Local Land Charges' that the council and others place on land. For example, planning conditions or where the land owner owes the council money and many other restrictions or obligations.

5.2   The 'CON 29' Official Property Search

Not all potential issues are formal 'Land Charges' and solicitors have a variety of further questions about what the council knows about land. This could be about proposed development, railway schemes, building regulation consents, etc.

For consistency, a search 'form' (CON29) has evolved which solicitors use to request all the information they require. This is known as an 'Official Search'.

5.3   The Local Land Charges 'Market'

Much of the information the solicitor wants is available for free to those who attend the council offices and are prepared to carry out their own 'personal search'. There are local and national 'Personal Search' companies who provide this service and compete against councils.

Therefore, a competitive 'market' has grown as private companies compete against councils to provide this service to solicitors. The council's market share is around 50%.

5.4   The Services that Local Land Charges Provides

All councils provide the same services.

Chargeable (Fee Earning)
- Property search (Con 29).
- Search of the 'register' (LLCR)
- Copies of certificates, etc.

Non-Chargeable   (Non-Fee Earning)
- Dealing with Personal Search companies
- Environmental Information requests (For Land & Property)
- Maintaining the Local Land Charges Register.

6   CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Challenge	Opportunity
6.1 Fluctuating demand	
The chargeable service is totally dependent on external income from fees. Most costs are fixed costs, and the services are vulnerable to changes in market size and demand fluctuations.	The services have around half of the available 'search' market so there is potential for growth. There is a clear demand for high quality accurate information to be provided directly by the council, approved and quality assured by the council.
6.2 Land Registry takeover	
As the Land Registry intends to lead on the LLCR the councils will face both a reduced income and increase in workload. This is because proposed legislation would require councils to supply information to the Land Registry for free.	Land Registry proposal may have a greater negative effect on our competitors than on us. Therefore, if we can deal with 20-30% more searches without increasing resources we can maintain current income levels.
6.3 Local knowledge	
Despite using the latest systems available, procedures employed still require local knowledge of the area, current issues, etc. Whilst customers value this, it means the services are less resilient.	Capture this information electronically. Simplify and document procedures and quality assurance systems. Staff to have full access to information - remove need to consult with internal departments.
6.4 External regulation	
All Environmental Information must be available for free at reception. 'Digital by default' agenda, 'Inspire' data publishing regulations.	Opportunity to charge officer time for some information following recent case law and ICO guidance. This relates to the recent East Sussex case – councils can charge associated costs for supplying EIR information that is not a public register. There is an opportunity to view EIR information that we hold as an asset. Consider Building Control information and follow up enquiries from the LLCR searches.
6.5 Residual Costs	
In many cases where a service is reduced in size, there will be less central support required. For example, less workstations may be required. In services that are externally funded, this may mean that there is less payment to the council's central support services, which may result in residual cost for the council.	Managing these residual costs is one of the challenges faced. However, with small services the effect should be manageable.

6.6   Analysis

There are threats to the service income from the Land Registry take over and competition to provide searches. The service at South Derbyshire DC is not resilient and relies on a few key staff with local knowledge which is a high risk.

There is an opportunity to transform the business into an electronic and automated system, faster, more reliable and resilient.

7   OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Bearing in mind the government's advice *[Footnote 1]* to keep this type of assessment proportionate, a fully detailed options appraisal of all potential options was not carried out. This would require significant resource without any clear benefits. Instead, a 'Business Justification' method was used as this is a 'small project' (Less than £2 million).

The options considered:

1. Do Nothing
2. Improve the service within the current arrangements.
3. Wider collaborative working with other councils
4. Outsourcing
5. Alternative vehicle delivery models.

7.1   Do Nothing

- Potential rising costs due to increasing volume of non-chargeable work and the planned Land Registry takeover of the LLCR make this a high risk option that is likely to increase net cost to the Councils.

7.2   Improve the service within the current arrangements.

- Transforming services to increase efficiency is an option that will have to take place to ensure costs are reduced. Regard must be had to the available resources to identify and implement changes.

- This option will not help with resilience unless other services and or resources are made available to give support.

- It may not generate sufficient efficiencies to enable improvement and investment into technology. It also provides less opportunity to reduce the service running costs.

- It does provide full control over the business transformation.

Footnote 1 – HM Treasury (2013) The Green Book: Appraisal and evaluation in central government

7.3 Wider collaborative working with other councils

- By working together with other councils, economies of scale will usually result in overall lower costs than running separate services.

- Sharing expertise, learning and investment costs in using technology better is more cost effective.

- Providing resilient, consistent customer service will help keep customers satisfied.

- Having a single marketing strategy will help to develop market share and increase income.

- Having a fixed non-chargeable cost as low as possible would provide sustainable services.

- There may be residual costs that will need to be managed.

7.4 Outsourcing

- There is clear regulation about setting fees for Land Charges and the key principle is that this is not-for-profit.

- This means there is no attraction to private companies to take on the chargeable search service as they would only be able to recover their costs and not make a profit.

- It is also unlikely that they would use council services and accommodation so the residual costs to the council would need to be assessed.

- The non-chargeable work is a smaller part of the whole service and benefits significantly from the staff that also carries out chargeable work.

7.5 Alternative vehicle delivery models.

- The small scale of the service makes this unviable to set up as a separate business, such as a trading company. However, working with other councils may make this a viable option for the future.

7.6 Preferred Option – collaborative work with other councils.

The preferred option is to work in collaboration with other councils. This provides the opportunity to use income to reduce the costs to councils; greater resilience; better services to customers and provides a lower risk environment.

8   FINANCIAL STRATEGY

8.1   Funding the service

The service is funded in two different ways: 'Chargeable' and 'Non-chargeable' as described below.

The council has to provide information for free to its competitors. This means that as its market share increases, its non-chargeable costs decrease.

Service	Funding arrangements
<u>Chargeable</u> Council staff provide information to customers signed, stamped and approved.	• Chargeable services are funded on the **'user pays'** principle. • There is specific legislation that sets out how the fee is to be calculated. • A fee is charged for each individual search request. The fee recovers 100% of the service. • There can be no subsidization of the service from other council funds. • The income cannot be used to fund other services.
<u>Non-chargeable</u> Public access to information. Maintain LLCR	• These services are funded directly from the **council's revenue** account as a normal council funding arrangement.

8.2   Income received from Land Charges CON29 search service:

This includes Lichfield District Council, South Staffs Council and South Derbyshire District Council.
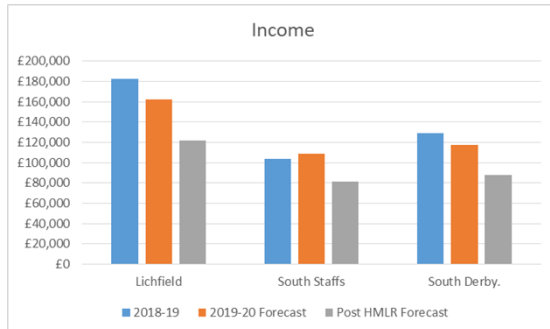
- This graph shows the actual income received in the preceding year and current forecast income for to 2019 to 2020.
- Sometime after 2022, Land Registry takeover will reduce income by 25%
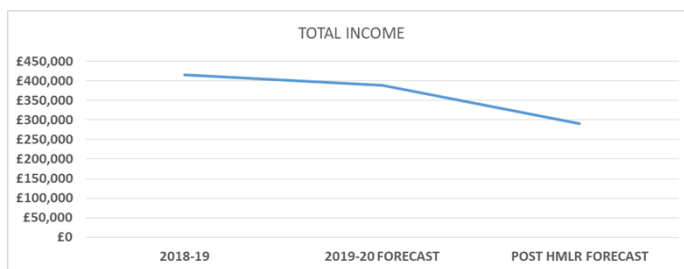
- The Land Registry take over will have a significant negative effect on income.
- However, the council's responsibilities and workload will increase following the takeover.

Income				
	Lichfield	South Staffs	South Derby	TOTAL
2018-19	£182,514	£103,400	£129,015	£414,929
2019-20 Forecast	£161,971	£108,675	£117,195	£387,841
Post HMLR Forecast	£121,478.3	£81,506.3	£87,896.3	£290,880.8

- This table shows the income figures in more detail.
- The HMLR takeover of the LLCR is expected within '2 to 7 years'. No other information on timescale is yet available.

8.3 Draft Budget

The budget is shown in Appendix 1. This is based on the existing model with the Host Authority (Lichfield DC) holding all resources on behalf of the partnership. Income and costs are managed under the Host Authority's procedures and the host authority's Partnership Manager provides reports to the partnership board. Budgets are agreed/approved by the board and any surplus is held in an earmarked reserve account for reinvesting in the partnership.

If there is a loss, the partnership is expected to manage that loss over a three year period without net contribution from any partner by applying normal business techniques, such as reducing costs and increasing income.

The host authority, 'buys in' support services from SDDC and South Staffs council in order to deliver the service. Therefore, SDDC and South Staffs Council will invoice the partnership for providing support, IT, accommodation etc.

- There needs to be agreement about what support services would be provided.
- When agreed at the budget review stage, Lichfield DC pays for this service out of the partnership budget.
- Establishing reasonable and transparent support costs is key to the success of the project. These costs will be funded from fee income. There is an expectation that:
    - I.   All costs associated with supporting and delivering the Land Charges service will be fully apportioned to the Land Charges partnership budget.
    - II. No other costs will be apportioned.

All costs associated with delivering the Land Charges function are funded by the partnership fee income, this will include data transfer and cleansing. Includes costs associated with the transformation of the service to a fully digitized process.

It can be seen that in Year 1:
- The chargeable service forecast income is achievable.
- The chargeable service is delivered at zero net cost
- Non-Chargeable costs are assumed to be zero. These costs will be absorbed.

8.4 Deficit
There is a risk that the chargeable service will make a loss. There is a legal requirement for the service to break even over a three year rolling period. Therefore, this risk is shared and the situation is carefully monitored. Action to alleviate this risk is dealt with through the council procedures and the Partnership Board.

8.5 Surplus
The budgets show a surplus. If this becomes excessive the service must re-assess its charging scheme to balance income v expenditure over the three year rolling period. If surplus exists the Partnership Board would decide the appropriate action. Options include holding an earmarked reserve to deal with future fluctuation, reducing fees, further investment in the service.

8.6 Fees and income target

- For normal house purchase CON29 searches there is similarity between pricing, between £98 and £115, which amounts for around 80% of the searches.
- For commercial searches there are significant price differences. Lichfield charge £200 compared to £98 at SDDC There are opportunities to look at harmonizing these charges.
- All councils are achieving their income target. However, without action, income is expected to fall, due to the risks identified such as the HMLR takeover.
- Income targets are based on costs of service delivery. This is a requirement of the fee regulations. However, there is opportunity through transformation to increase speed, maintain quality and market the service to generate increased volume.

8.7 Procedures and service transformation.

A legal agreement would need to be created and this will require approval at each council. The Building Control Partnership collaboration agreement has been fully agreed by all councils previously and that has been suggested as a template. Systems are available to create a fully automated, digital system for providing Searches for the property market.

- Lichfield and South Staffs currently have separate but identical fully electronic Land Charges Systems called Total Land Charges (TLC) systems from the same supplier. SDDC has a new fully electronic system. It will not be possible to have a single system but procedures and processes will be harmonized and staff trained on multi systems.

- Action Plan - Appendix 4, Page 28 identifies the main tasks and resources.

- Therefore, Year 1 of the expanded partnership will focus on harmonizing IT, procedures, processes and all business activity. Processes will be re-engineered so they can be carried out from any location. This will also involve work with departments that hold data to ensure it is accurate and clean.

- Once implemented, the service will be marketed. The unique selling points are the speed of service, experienced, professional advice and guidance on search results, accuracy and that the information is owned by the council. It is expected to increase market share, increase volume so that when the HMLR take over the register, the service will be able to manage the reduction in income by growth in the number of CON29 searches.

- It is not yet technically possible to create a single electronic local land charges register, even with the same system it has not proven possible to achieve that. Therefore, three separate systems must be maintained.

- All payments will be made from Land Charges partnership fee income.

9 CURRENT AND PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS

9.1 South Staffs Council, Lichfield DC

- Service has a staffing 4 x Full Time Equivalent posts. (FTE). This includes a Team Leader and Assistant team leader that provide the specialist knowledge. The team delivers Local Land Charges services for both councils. They can operate from any location. The team is supported by Partnership Manager

- This is a one-stop-shop with full access to other systems and little consultation with other departments is required.

- All information is held electronically.

- The system is party automated but checking is required to ensure quality.

- All information is made available by Land Charges on a self-service basis to Personal Search companies except Building Control.

9.2 South Derbyshire District Council

- At this time South Derbyshire District Council do not employ any staff in Land Charges. The service is being delivered on a consultancy basis by the existing Land Charges partnership.

9.3 Proposal

- A total establishment of 5.6 FTE to deliver all land charges duties for the three Councils.
- This will involve Lichfield DC employing direct another 1 FTE.
- Document and capture all procedures.
- Arrange for remote access into SDDC's IT systems from LDC systems.
- Assess quality of data held on department's systems
- Switch on automation (depending on quality of data)
- Work with other departments to cleanse data.
- Implement remote working and commence accommodation review.
- A draft 'Action Plan' is included in Appendix 4 page 26.
- The partnership would need to use SDDC and South Staffs support services and that would be set out in the business case and future business plans.
- All costs associated with delivering the Land Charges service would be funded from Land Charges income to make the business sustainable. All transformation will be delivered from fee income.
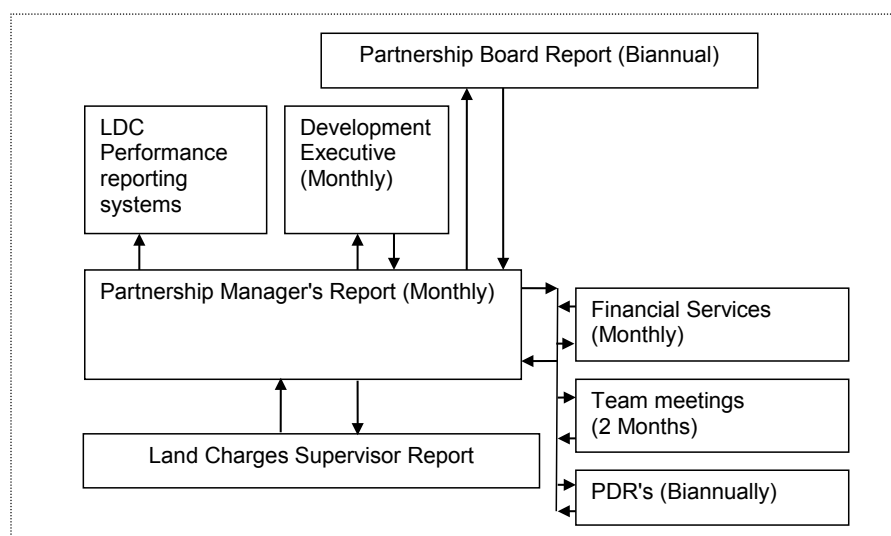
9.4 Staffing

- The existing and proposed staffing structures are shown in Appendix 2 Page 24.

10 OPERATIONAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

10.1 Managing Workload and Staff.

- The Partnership has a competency framework and a performance management system. All staff are involved in the reporting and feedback of performance.

- The Land Charges Team Leader has real-time reports on current search status.

- The Land Charges Team Leader provides a monthly report to the Partnership Manager identifying, income, speed, volumes and customer feedback.

- The performance report and template is included in Appendix 3 Page 26.

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│                    │  Partnership Board Report (Biannual) │             │
│                    └──────────────────────────────────┘                │
│   ┌──────────┐  ┌──────────────┐                                       │
│   │ LDC      │  │ Development  │                                        │
│   │Performance│  │ Executive    │                                       │
│   │ reporting │  │ (Monthly)    │                                       │
│   │ systems   │  │              │                                       │
│   └──────────┘  └──────────────┘                                       │
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│   │ Partnership Manager's Report (Monthly)│ │ Financial Services   │    │
│   │                                      │  │ (Monthly)            │    │
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│                                            ┌──────────────────────┐     │
│   ┌────────────────────────────────────┐  │ Team meetings        │     │
│   │ Land Charges Supervisor Report      │  │ (2 Months)           │     │
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│                                            │ PDR's (Biannually)   │     │
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10.2 Potential Changes to Employment Terms and Conditions

It is a requirement of Lichfield District Council, as the 'Host Authority' that a review must be carried out on the potential impact on any post affected by a shared service. Any likely increase in costs must be calculated and incorporated within the business case.

1. A new Team Leader post would be required (promoted from within existing team)

2. A new full time Technical Support Officer post would be required at band 'D".

The Land Charges Partnership would have two team leaders. One responsible for Lichfield DC and South Derbyshire DC. The Second team Leader post is responsible for South Staffs Council and leading ongoing discussions with other Councils.

10.3 Operational Delivery

- All management and supervisory functions will be carried out at Lichfield DC. This includes finance and budget setting, service delivery performance management and marketing; HR services will be at Lichfield. Any complaints, etc. will be referred to the Partnership Manager for stage 1 response.

- Administration functions will be carried out at Lichfield DC and South Staffs Council. This includes receiving search requests, registering, and customer liaison. Access will be available to each system remotely so that the service is not entirely reliant on staff attending the office.

- Payments and Invoicing customers will be carried out using Lichfield DC systems to manage the partnership budget and account.

- All office procedures will be carried out in accordance with Lichfield QA procedures.

- The service will become fully IT based, with GIS searching facilities. Non-reliant on local knowledge.

- Governance is provided by a Partnership Board.

- Data accuracy is fundamental to an automated system, and most of the data required to answer CON 29 is not owned by the Land Charges team. To achieve the full automation Land Charges works with other departments.

- This is expected to involve creating a working group, identifying data owners and custodians, ensuring staff are trained to input data accurately and consistently. Where there are inaccuracies, they work with data custodians to support data cleansing, training and assistance. This may not be necessary if data is accurate but may be a significant piece of work where data is not held digitally.

- A detailed Implementation Action Plan will be prepared for consultation prior to commencing work on the shared service.

11 RISK MANAGEMENT

The risk register below identifies all the main risks and how these are controlled

Risk	Likelihood/ Impact	Risk Category	Countermeasure	Responsibility	OK?
Resilience: Critical staff leave before changes are implemented	Medium/High	Tolerable	Additional team leader post created. Provide support and assurance. Ensure staff are fully briefed and support the changes. Staff to be fully engaged in the process.	Partnership Manager / All	To monitor
Data held on Systems may require cleansing.	Medium/High	Tolerable	Data Audit to be carried out. Prepared to work with data owners.	Team leaders	To monitor
Fail to deliver set up of the expanded shared service	Medium/High	Tolerable	Clear Detailed Action plan and resource strategy	Partnership Manager	OK
Partnership operates at loss as income falls below target	Medium/High.	Tolerable	Accounts kept under constant review.	Partnership Manager	To Monitor
Failure to deliver service due to low staffing.	Medium/High	Tolerable	Move to electronic service delivery	Partnership Manager	To Monitor
Insufficient allowance made for running costs	Low/Medium	Tolerable	Current information is based on previous actual budgets. Monthly budget monitoring and reports.	Partnership Manager	OK
Take-over by land registry expected 2-7 years	Medium/High	Tolerable	Increase market share within 2 years without increasing staff costs.	Partnership Manager	To Monitor
Quality of data	Medium/High	Tolerable	Continue to develop Land Charges working group	Team leaders	To Monitor
Unforeseen costs occur	Low/Medium	Tolerable.	Flexibility built into business case.	Partnership Manager	OK

12 CONCLUSIONS

12.1 There is a real opportunity to increase market share and transform service delivery to a fully digitized, customer focused service, but the current arrangements are not resilient.

12.2 Despite a number of threats to Land Charges income faced by all councils, there is clear opportunity to develop a sustainable business that meets the needs of the local property market and discharge the council's legal obligations at zero net cost to the councils.

12.3 The service has to make available information to its competitors for free. However, by digitizing information and providing free access at Reception, this cost can be minimized and may also present an opportunity to charge.

12.4 Collaboration with other councils clearly provides the best opportunity to provide resilient, fully electronic services. It also enables the Councils to deliver statutory non-chargeable functions at the lowest cost.

12.5 The existing collaboration between Lichfield District Council and South Staffs Council provides a platform to develop wider shared Land Charges services and there is mutual benefit for South Derbyshire District Council to join with all three councils as equal partners sharing risk and rewards.

13 RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 It is recommended South Derbyshire District Council, Lichfield District Council and South Staffs Council create a shared Land Charges service.

13.2 Digitization of data is key to the success of business transformation and analysis should be made of the potential opportunities to develop a fully agile business model.
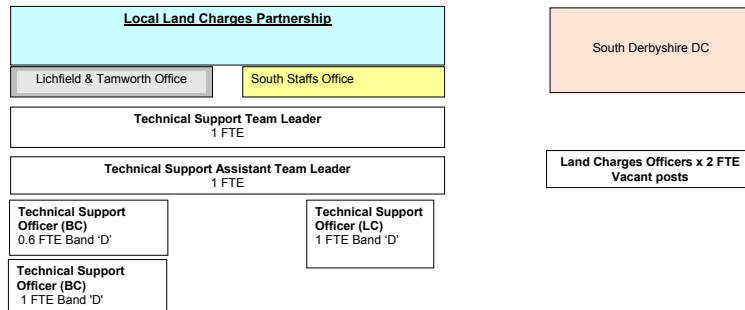
14 APPENDICES

Appendix 1:   Land Charges Partnership Budget

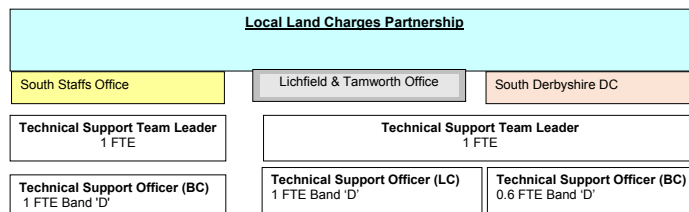| YEAR 1	Existing Budget	Changes with SDDC	Revised Budget
Employees	111,150	31,730	142,880
Transport	1,040		1,040
Supplies & Services	5,780		5,780
Land Search	97,080	35,000	132,080
Support payments to Other LA's	13,400	25,000	38,400
Recharges	73,120	4,000	77,120
Income	(288,070)	(117,000)	(405,070)
Contribution to Partnership Reserve			7,770
	13,500	**(21,270)**	**0**

Appendix 2 Existing and proposed structures.

This shows the development of the Land Charges partnership Administration and Land Charges teams. It excludes Building Control Officers.

Current Structure – existing

Local Land Charges Partnership	
Lichfield & Tamworth Office	South Staffs Office

Technical Support Team Leader
1 FTE

Technical Support Assistant Team Leader
1 FTE

Technical Support Officer (BC) 0.6 FTE Band 'D'	**Technical Support Officer (LC)** 1 FTE Band 'D'

Technical Support Officer (BC)
1 FTE Band 'D'

South Derbyshire DC

Land Charges Officers x 2 FTE Vacant posts

YEAR 1 Structure

.

Local Land Charges Partnership		
South Staffs Office	Lichfield & Tamworth Office	South Derbyshire DC

Technical Support Team Leader 1 FTE	**Technical Support Team Leader** 1 FTE	
Technical Support Officer (BC) 1 FTE Band 'D'	**Technical Support Officer (LC)** 1 FTE Band 'D'	**Technical Support Officer (BC)** 0.6 FTE Band 'D'

Appendix 3: Performance management Report Templates

LAND CHARGES MONTHLY PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND INDICATOR REPORT

This report is produced for the Month of

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Activity	*Annual Target (£)*	Target to Date (£)	Actual Total (£)	(£) Difference
Con 29, etc.	£	£	£	£
LLC1 received without Con 29	*£0*	£	£	£
TOTAL	£	£	£	£

MANAGEMENT COMMENT

Speed of service

Income to date

Quality and Incident reports raised.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

This figure is reported by Land Charges on a monthly basis through the Corporate Covelant system. It is published externally.

1. Speed of service

The average turnaround for Searches

| ACTUAL | TARGET 5 Days | *Source: TLC Standard report (D1)* |

<u>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION</u>

Performance management information is used internally to manage the performance of the service. These targets relate to the 'Expected' income, which the service must receive to recover existing costs. This is less than the above 'Target' income.

2. Number of **CON29** searches received from April 1st.

Actual		Target	per year (Av £123	*Source: TLC Standard Financial Report*

3. **Income** from **CON29** Searches from April 1st
(Average £143 each. Include optional enquiries, additional parcels/questions, etc.)

Actual	£	Target	£ year	*Source: TLC Standard Financial Report*

4. Number of **LLC1** searches received from April 1st

Actual		Target	per year	*Source: TLC Standard Financial Report*

5. **Income** from **LLC1** Searches from April 1st

Actual	£	Target	£ per year	*Source: TLC Standard Financial Report*

6. Number of **Personal Searches** received from April 1st.

Actual		Target	per year	*Source: TLC Standard Financial Report*

8. **Quality**

Customer feedback comments & Complaints

Feedback received   YES / NO   (Comments to be noted or attached)

Pentana Updated: DATE:

SIGNED OFF BY: NAME:

Date:

LOCAL LAND CHARGES

<u>PREPARING FOR THE LAND REGISTRY MIGRATION OF DATA</u>

- IDOX -TLC contains the electronic <u>'Local Land Charges Register'</u>. This data will be migrated to the Land Registry each day.
- TLC receives data from other IDOX modules, such as Development Management, Planning Enforcement, Building Control, Environmental Health, CIL, etc.

Not all the data is required for the Land Registry migration, but all modules are required for full TLC automation. The first priority of the Land Charges Working Group (LCWG) will be to prepare for the migration of data to the Land registry, and following that full automation of TLC.

The core Land Charges Working Group will consist of representatives from:
- IT services and/or GIS
- Planning – Uniform System administrator, Planning Enforcement, DM, CIL
- Building Control - Uniform System administrator
- Environmental Health
- Land Charges Partnership

Others, including Land registry, will be invited to the Working Group as required.

<u>South Derbyshire District Council will:</u>

- Support the Land Charges Working Group
- Actions in the table below in bold will need to be primarily carried out by SDDC Staff with assistance for the Land Charges Partnership. Some of this work may have already been started.
- A decision on a Registration can only be made by the originating department. For example, Land Charges staff when registering a new Charge, or removing an old registration have no authority to make a change without authority from the originating department.
- The only exceptions are where information held on the register is clearly not a Local Land Charge, or when originating departments have trained and authorized staff to amend.

The table below identifies the main tasks and role of the Land Charges Partnership

Items in **Bold** relate to work required to be done by South Derbyshire DC with the Land Charges Partnership assisting where possible.
Land Charges Working Group will, for each entry on the Land Charges Register:

TASK	RESPONSIBLE	COMMENTS
Identify register sources	Land Charges Partnership	This should be apparent
Identify missing data items- refer to LR 'Minimum data items' table.	**IT/GIS to run a script/report. Originating departments will need to input that data, or train Land Charges staff.**	**It should be possible to check database fields to identify gaps in information. Once gaps are identified the LCWG will discuss the best fix.**
Locate source documentation	Land Charges Partnership	This should be apparent from system.
Cleanse expired charges/ repealed acts/ General Financial Charges	Land Charges Partnership -**Requires confirmation from originating departments**.	Process needs to be agreed so that staff can work efficiently.
Remove non-charge related documents	Land Charges Partnership	This should be apparent from system
Remove non-charge related Planning information/ Duplicate charges	Land Charges Partnership – **Requires confirmation from originating departments.**	This should be apparent from system
Identify extent/plotting area	Land Charges Partnership. However, where this information is already available it will be used.	**Further support may be required from originating departments and GIS Team.**
Ensure addressable properties are addressed	**IT/GIS to run a script/report and find any gaps**	**Once gaps (If any) are identified the LCWG will discuss the best fix.**
Ensure Land relating to an entry is plotted	Land Charges Partnership	**Further support may be required from originating departments and GIS Team.**
Known errors to be corrected	Land Charges Partnership – **Requires confirmation from departments**.	This should be apparent from system
Place of inspection identified/ supply of further information.	Land Charges Partnership	**LCWG will consider alternative processes for public inspection and ensure that Officer time is minimized and any opportunities for charging is explored.**