

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Acting Head of Legal and Administrative Services

REPORT NUMBER **E207**

TO: Overview & Scrutiny (Stewardship) Committee

DATE OF MEETING 22 November 2005

LOCAL LAND CHARGES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

1. **SUMMARY**

1.1 This report sets out the latest performance trends for the Local Land Charges service. The report is for information only.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

4. **KEY INFORMATION**

4.1 The Committee received a report (E158) at its meeting on 27 September 2005. At that meeting it was reported that, as a result of supplementing the resources available to the section, the backlog of searches had been cleared and the average response time for searches was once again below 10 working days. The Best Value Performance Indicator for the service refers to the percentage of standard searches replied to within 10 days.

4.2 Since 23 September 2005, 100% of replies to standard searches have been made within the 10-day target. Moreover, as the performance of the service has improved, so the proportion of personal searches has decreased. At its peak personal searches accounted for 25% of the total. In October they represented 22%. It is too early to suggest that this represents a trend but there is a link between the speed with which a search may be turned around and the choice by a solicitor as to whether to request a local authority or a personal search. That in turn has an impact upon the income derived from the service.

4.3 Now the breakthrough has been made, it is expected that it will be possible to sustain the improvement for the remainder of the year. If so, a cumulative performance figure for the year of around 60% will be achieved which, although still bottom quartile, would represent the best performance since 2002/03. Meanwhile, the data capture of the Local Land Charges Register is nearing completion and it has been agreed that improvements will be made to the Council's corporate land and property gazetteer. Both developments will be beneficial for the Land Charges service. Furthermore, following completion of the gazetteer work, subject to the necessary funding being available, it will also be possible to progress the acquisition of software to enable the Local Land Charges service to commence operating at NLIS Level 3. This will allow searches submitted via NLIS to be downloaded directly into the Land Charges system. If, as part of the Local Authority Modernisation Programme (LAMP), additional work is ultimately undertaken to automate the processing of searches, both the costs of the service and turnaround times could be reduced.

5. **APPENDICES**

None.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO**

None.

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