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| Meeting of: | CABINET |
| Date of Meeting: | 4 FEBRUARY 2025 |
| Report Title: | UPDATE ON LOCAL LAND CHARGES NATIONAL PROGRAMME |
| Report Owner / Corporate Director: | CHIEF EXECUTIVE |
| Responsible Officer: | GARY ENNIS – GROUP MANAGER BUSSINESS SUPPORT |
| Policy Framework and Procedure Rules: | There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules. |
| Executive Summary: | The migration of Local Land Charges data to the HM Land Registry (HMLR) is scheduled to go live from 20th February 2025. After migration, the Council will no longer provide local searches as this will all be done through the National database. |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet in relation to the Local Land Charges National Programme and the schedule for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to migrate across its Local Land Charges data.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2015, HM Land Registry (HMLR) was given the authority under the Infrastructure Act 2015 to create a single, national, digital register of Local Land Charges (LLC) across England and Wales. It is the Government's ambition that the national register becomes a trusted and guaranteed source of LLC information, containing all local authority records in England and Wales by 2025. This is a historic step forward in the ambition to make the home-buying process simpler, faster and cheaper. HMLR is working in partnership with local authorities to standardise and migrate local land charges register information to one accessible place.
- 2.2 Anyone will be able to access the national register 24/7. Each search result will provide details of entries on the local land charges register relating to the land or property concerned. Local authorities will continue to provide replies to CON29 enquiries, such as nearby road schemes or outstanding notices, which may affect a purchaser's decision on whether or not to proceed. Once the Council's local land charges data has been migrated to HMLR members of the public will no longer be able to get a local land charges search from the Council.

2.3 The benefits of the central register will be as follows:

- Guaranteed search results that provide the highest level of due diligence
- The full spatial extent of every charge appears on the search result
- Standard £15 fee for each search
- Consistent quality of data which provides clear and accurate search results
- Instant online search results with 24/7 access to the data, reducing delays in receiving search results
- Unlimited repeat searches for six months to check for any new charges before completing a transaction
- Search history dashboard giving access to previous searches at any time.

2.4 The geospatial data set created by HMLR will bring the following benefits to the Council:

- data that can be shared across different departments to help deliver services more effectively and transparently;
- spatial data which can be overlaid with other mapping systems to provide a holistic picture of the Council's assets, locally maintained areas and features;
- free access to spatial data which will allow staff to self-serve when answering queries, reducing the number of requests for information between departments.

3. Current situation/proposal

3.1 A report was presented to Cabinet on 15th November 2022 detailing the proposal to migrate the land charges data to HMLR with a commitment to update Cabinet on progress at an appropriate time.

3.2 A delivery plan was originally signed off with an expected implementation date for the system to go live with HM Land Registry at the end of June 2024 but, due to a number of factors, this was delayed. A new delivery plan was signed off in April 2024, setting the implementation date of 3rd April 2025 for the migration of data from the Council's Land Registry system.

3.3 The migration has now been signed off by HMLR and is due to go live on the 20th February 2025, ahead of schedule. At that point, anyone will be able to access the national register for any entries on the local land charges register relating to the land or property concerned. The Council will no longer provide that service but will continue to provide replies to CON29 enquiries, such as nearby road schemes or outstanding notices, which may affect a purchaser's decision on whether or not to proceed.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this

report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

- 4.2 There is an assisted digital process that will be available for anyone who cannot access the HMLR GOV.UK Service. Essentially customers will contact their LLC Processing Team and they will undertake the search on their behalf.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals /objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The climate change implications were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the environment because of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 The safeguarding and corporate parenting implications were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon safeguarding and corporate parenting because of this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The cost of migrating to the central register was fully funded by HMLR and an allocation of £75,000 was made for the project of which £25,000 was received in 2023/24 with the balance of £50,000 to be received before implementation.
- 8.2 A further payment next year is expected from HMLR to cover additional activities undertaken in the period immediately after the Council goes live and work in applying to add, vary and cancel charges that is additional to that required under the previous process. This is anticipated to be c£23,000.
- 8.3 The Council will lose the income generated from search fees. The Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council in February 2022 included a £500,000 budget pressure to mitigate emerging pressures, to be allocated in line with need. In the Budget monitoring 2022-23 – quarter 1 revenue forecast to Cabinet on 19 July 2022 it was reported that £66,780 of this budget pressure was allocated to address this shortfall in income

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note the report.

Background documents

None