

**POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET BOARD**

**22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY 2009**

**DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND  
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**INDEX OF REPORT ITEMS**

**Part 1 – Doc. Code: PRB-220109-REP-FS-DM**

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## **SECTION C**

### **ITEM 1**

#### **BUSINESS PLAN - PROPERTY & CORPORATE AND LITIGATION & COMMERCIAL TEAMS - LEGAL SERVICES SECTION**

1. **Purpose of Report**
  - 1.1 To report on the above Business Plan for monitoring and scrutiny purposes. A full copy of the Business Plan is available on the Council Intranet site.
2. **Overview of Business Units**
  - 2.1 The Teams are two of four units within the Legal Services Section which, in turn, is part of the Directorate of Finance & Corporate Services.
  - 2.2 During the course of the year David Michael was appointed Head of Legal and Democratic Services, and Aled Roderick replaced him as Principal Solicitor (Property and Corporate) and head of the Property and Corporate Team.
  - 2.3 In the Property and Corporate Team there are nine members of staff. The bulk of the staff are legally qualified as Solicitor/Barrister or Legal Executive.
  - 2.4 The Litigation Team is headed by the Principal Solicitor (Litigation and Commercial) who is also the interim Deputy Monitoring Officer. There are currently eleven members of staff within this Team. Most are legally qualified being either Solicitors or Legal Executives.
  - 2.5 During the course of the year two Trainee Solicitors have been appointed to address staffing issues and the age profile of the Teams if at all possible.
  - 2.6 All staff are based at Civic Centre Port Talbot.
  - 2.7 Administrative Support is provided by the Business Unit in Legal Services.

- 2.8 The Property and Corporate Services Team works across organisational boundaries with the Litigation and Commercial Team in order to provide the correct mix of skills for any particular item of work. Because the two Teams work so closely together and since many of the actions are shared, a joint Business Plan has been prepared.
- 2.9 The Property and Corporate Services Team is responsible for:-
- 2.9.1 the provision of legal advice and assistance in relation to all property and landlord and tenant matters.
  - 2.9.2 the conduct of conveyancing, property and landlord and tenant matters of a non-contentious nature on behalf of the Authority including the registration of title.
  - 2.9.3 conveyancing arising out of the Right To Buy scheme.
  - 2.9.4 using the services of the Archive service, custody of title deeds and contract documents.
  - 2.9.5 the conduct of statutory agreements on behalf of the County Borough including planning agreements and road adoption.
  - 2.9.6 provision of advice and assistance in relation to appropriate areas of highway, economic development, and education.
  - 2.9.7 attendance at Board meetings as appropriate, legal advice to Appeal Committees.
  - 2.9.8 the provision of advice and assistance in relation to Freedom of Information and the role of Data Protection Officer.

2.10. The Litigation and Commercial Team are responsible for:-

- 2.10.1 The drafting, execution of and general advice on contracts; together with responsibility for the receipt of tenders process.
- 2.10.2 The prosecution of regulatory offences relating to: planning, environmental health, benefit fraud, trading standards; in the magistrates and crown court, including advocacy in the former.
- 2.10.3 Also appeals to the magistrates in respect of notices served by the Authority under various statutes.
- 2.10.4 The conduct of cases and advocacy in the county court including debt collecting, housing possessions and appeals; conduct of and advocacy at planning inquiries, employment tribunals, conduct of judicial review proceedings.
- 2.10.5 General advice to client departments on planning, housing, employment and highways issues.
- 2.10.6 Attendance at planning committee, appeals committees, licensing committee and advice to members.
- 2.10.7 Training courses for client departments and to members.
- 2.10.8 Membership of the Crime and Disorder Case Review Group and action teams set up by them. Applications for ASBOs made on behalf of the group.

2.11. The budgets for the two Business Units in the financial year 2008/2009 are summarised below:

	<u>Estimate</u>
	<u>2008/09</u>
	<u>£'000</u>
<b>Revenue Budget</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Employees	1,071,240
Premises	980
Transport	4,900
Supplies and Services	<u>155,680</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,232,800</b>
<b>Income</b>	-316,400
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<hr/> <b>916,400</b> <hr/>

2.12 During the Legal Services Best Value Review the aims and objectives of the Legal Services Division were established. The revised version of aims and objectives were agreed with Members on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2002 as:-

“ LO1. To enable Neath Port Talbot to achieve high standards of legality and probity in the conduct of its business.

LO2 To develop a stronger corporate role for Legal Services in

- Identifying and advising on forthcoming legal developments;
- Adapting the service to meet anticipated needs;
- Taking a more proactive role in the development of corporate policy, and
- Supporting Corporate initiatives and policies such as Welsh Language, Equalities, Sustainability and Social Inclusion

LO3 To ensure that priority is given to the provision of Legal Services which will assist in the achievement of Corporate Aims and Values together with those contained in the Community Plan.

- LO4 To support clients fully by the provision of prompt accessible services operating to agreed timescales and to keep them apprised of progress at all times.
- LO5 By providing the right legal framework to assist Neath Port Talbot in being a modern, outward looking local authority with good communications with the Members, the public and other partners in the provision of services.
- LO6 To provide a service which is financially transparent and gives service users an accurate account of the cost of the provision of Legal Services.
- LO7 To embrace the principles of “E-Government” and to maximise the use of Information Technology in the provision of Legal Services.
- LO8 To provide and maintain a quality legal service by staff development, training and the application of the Quality System.”

2.13 The aims and objectives of the Property and Corporate Team are:-

- 2.13.1 To assist the Council in the achievement and maintenance of propriety and appropriate standards in its dealings with its land and with other land owners measured by the prevention of adverse findings by the Local Government Ombudsman and/or District Audit where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.
- 2.13.2 To ensure that the Council complies with all rules of Local Government and Public Law relevant to the property function measured by the avoidance of successful legal actions against the County Borough where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.

- 2.13.3 The provision of well informed advice to the Council on rights and liabilities relating to its present and prospective land holdings and those of others measured by the avoidance of successful legal actions against the Council or adverse rulings of the Land Registry.
- 2.13.4 To effectively pursue the policy objectives of the Council especially those relating to development, job creation and provision of housing by the provision of an effective legal property service measured by the achievement of agreed targets in service provision.
- 2.13.5 To ensure that Council's interests are properly protected in any transaction.
- 2.13.6 To maximise Council's income measured by the achievement of agreed targets for income generation.
- 2.13.7 To record properly all transactions and ensure that deeds and other papers are safeguarded measured by the maintenance of proper deed records.
- 2.13.8 To ensure that the Directorate of Education Lifelong Learning and Leisure and all Schools are provided with appropriate levels of advice and legal support in the carrying out of educational functions.
- 2.13.9 To provide the Data Protection Officer Service as required and advice on Freedom of Information.
- 2.13.10 To investigate and report on internal complaints on behalf of the Chief Executive.
- 2.14 The Aims and Objectives of The Litigation and Commercial Team are:-
  - 2.14.1 To provide an effective dispute resolution service, to include effective and competent advocacy, only using Counsel as and when necessary.
  - 2.14.2 To ensure propriety in contract tendering.

- 2.14.3 To ensure the Council complies with the law in exercising the planning, licensing, highways and housing functions.
  - 2.14.4 To protect the Councils interests in the drawing up of Contracts.
  - 2.14.5 To assist the Council in attaining the aims and objectives of the Community Plan in the drafting and service of appropriate notices and the taking of action through the courts
  - 2.14.6 To assist the Council in the achievement and maintenance of propriety and appropriate standards in connection with its planning, housing, highways and licensing functions as measured by the prevention of adverse findings by the Local Government Ombudsman and/or District Audit where the position of the Council is based on advice given by the Legal Services Section.
- 2.15 The common Aims and Objectives of the two Teams are
- 2.15.1 To provide the services at a moderate financial charge commensurate with the level of service provided facilitating the agreed prioritisation of matters and to fully account to internal clients for work done measured by a time recording system.
  - 2.15.2 To ensure that other parties are treated in an appropriate and courteous manner and to facilitate the prompt completion of transactions measured by a record of complaints, internal client satisfaction surveys and avoidance of service of notices to complete on the Council.
  - 2.15.3 To provide the best and timely advice to Members and to client departments.
  - 2.15.4 To have a well trained and motivated staff, with ready access to latest developments in their area of work.
  - 2.15.5 To raise awareness of developments within the law with client departments affected.



- 2.15.6 To focus on and to progress the aims of the Community Plan by the provision of proactive advice and in the taking of legal action to support same.
- 2.15.7 To make greater use of IT in the provision of the service to support the Council's modernisation strategy for the provision of services.
- 2.15.8 To retain ISO2000 accreditation and to examine LEXEL or other recognised Quality System preferred by the Council as a total quality solution for in house service delivery.
- 2.15.9 To make best use of the restricted accommodation in the interest of the staff and to seek to group the teams appropriately.

### 3. **Action Plan and Targets**

- 3.1 Attached is the Action Plan of the Business Plan.
- 3.2 During the plan period officers have dealt with major items of litigation and complex non contentious matter whilst maintaining the provision of day to day services to the internal clients.
- 3.3 As an update on Action A1 following discussions with the client departments training is being arranged for investigation of regulatory offences following on from experience gained in an actual prosecution; and also training for the new Estate Rangers in statement taking.
- 3.4 In the early part of the year training was concentrated on complying with Action A9 (Member training following the local elections) and to this end training was given to new and existing Members on the Members' Code of Conduct including the Planning Code, Licensing, and Appeals Committees.
- 3.5 With regard to Action A2 of those "top line" projects identified by the Authority as strategic priorities such as WHQS and Transformation of Older Persons Services, Legal Services are represented on each of the groups currently convened and on the main Programme Board.

- 3.6 Action A3 – IIP needs to be readdressed following the appointment of the new Head of Service.
- 3.7 Due to the commitment of senior staff in dealing with some of the items above, regular formal staff meetings have not been held to the extent that management would have envisaged in accordance with Action A4. It is anticipated that more regular staff meetings will be held in 2009/2010.
- 3.8 A draft intranet site proposal was put to another Directorate in line with Action A5 but did not attract interest, perhaps because of other issues that were happening at the time. Corporately the section has been tasked with the provision of better advice on forthcoming legislation. We will be looking to put provision into next year's Action Plan to support this.
- 3.9 We have been unable to encourage diversification as proposed in Action A7 due to changes in the Section but will revisit this next year.
- 3.10 All legally qualified staff are required by their respective professional bodies to undergo a set number of hours training each year. This has been successfully completed by all staff. Also to save costs greater use has been made of local providers of approved training, courses and in-house training mechanisms. This ensures that Action A6 has been complied with.
- 3.11 The time recording system used by Legal Services is a vital part of its functioning. It provides information to calculate internal recharges and allows the sections to recover costs from third parties. It also provides the backbone of the filing system. The system has been operational for a number of years and is now seriously out of date and although a new version of the system has not been installed to date it is anticipated that this will be in place early in the next financial year. Also a new dictation system is being introduced called "Big Hand". This will be in place in February and training has already been arranged for all staff on its use. Action A8 refers.
- 3.12 As part of the precautions for the section against damage to records the Authority is continuing to document old paper records with a computer database in line with Action A10.

- 3.13 In relation to Action A12 as a result of implementing two gating orders within the Authority area it became clear that in order to deal with future requests it would be appropriate to establish a policy to cover the issues that had arisen. The section has assisted with the drafting of a policy document which has now been adopted by the Authority.
- 3.14 One agreement has been executed on Windfarms and Community Benefit pursuant to Action A13 and is to be used as standard for future agreements.
- 3.15 Progress is being made on Action A14 in that a substantial proportion of all Section 106 and Section 52 Agreements have been scanned and it is anticipated that all records will soon be scanned.
- 3.16 As contemplated in Action A15 the Authority and WAG exchanged trainee solicitors for a four month period between May and August. This was the first such exchange between WAG and a Local Authority in Wales. It was considered a great success with the two trainees concerned gaining invaluable experience. A further exchange has now taken place for the period January to April 2009 and it is hoped that the two trainees involved will similarly benefit from the exchange. Given its success both sections and WAG have agreed that there should be further exchanges of trainees in the future.
- 3.17 All housing rent possession cases are now entered into Court electronically in line with Action A16. This not only leads to cases being processed internally more efficiently but also has the benefit of lower court fees and quicker Court dates.
- 3.18 A procedure for potential anti social behaviour orders in accordance with Action A17 has been drafted, consulted upon internally and now adopted by the various departments and agencies.

4. **List of Background Papers**

Business Plan

5. **Wards Affected**

All

6. **Officer Contact**

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## ACTION PLAN

## Appendix 1

No.	Action	Supporting service objective	Responsible Officer.	Target date	Finance – ALL IN BUDGET
A1	As part of on-going dialogue with client departments to see if there are any training requirements that can be met by the section and to provide any training identified.	LO 2 &3	BST DM	On-going	
A2	As part of the on-going dialogue to seek to be involved at an earlier stage/more strategic stage with projects.	LO 6	BST DM	On-going	

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Supporting service objective</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Finance – ALL IN BUDGET</b>
A3	To carry out IIP interviews and through informal discussions throughout the year consider the development and training needs of staff	Objective LO 2	BST DM	On-going	
A4	To have regular formal staff meetings to discuss workloads, staff concerns, any other issues.	Objective LO 2	BST DM	On-going	
A5	To publicise on the intranet and by email important developments in the law.	Objective LO 3	All staff	On-going	

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Supporting service objective</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Finance – ALL IN BUDGET</b>
A5 continued	To forward relevant regulations, cases, articles and prepare notes on important developments in the law for relevant departments	Objective LO 2 And LO 3	All staff	On-going	
A6	To ensure all staff undergo training in areas of law applicable to their work	Objectives LO 1,2,3,4,5.	BST, DM	On-going	
A7	To encourage a degree of diversification in the areas of law covered by individual members of the section.	Objectives LO 1,2,3.	BST, DM	On-going	

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Supporting service objective</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Finance – ALL IN BUDGET</b>
A8	Purchase and commission a new evolution system of case management and improved dictation system.	Objective LO 8&9	BT/DM	Early 2009	
A9	Provision of Training for new and existing Members following the May elections.	LO1, LO2 2.3.1	DM BT PW ID	July 2008	None required
A10	Computer data base supplementing old paper records (former Neath, Lliw and Port Talbot)	LO 7	DM ADMIN HD	March 2008	None required



<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Supporting Service objective</b>	<b>Responsible Officer.</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Finance</b>
A11	Provision of legal advice job evaluation	LO 4	BT KD	Ongoing	In Budget
A12	To assist the Head of Housing draft a Corporate Gating Order Policy and Procedure Document.	LO 2 Corporate Crime and Disorder	BT	December 2008	
A13	Preparation of Documentation for Planning gain and community benefit – wind farm development	LO3 Corporate Environment and Transport	DM/BT/AR/DR	December 2008	In budget

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Supporting Service objective</b>	<b>Responsible Officer.</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Finance</b>
A14	Compilation of electronic register of S106 Agreements available to Planning Section	LO7 Corporate Corporate Service Quality and Improvement	DM/HD	Ongoing	In budget
A15	Staff exchange with WAG	LO8 Corporate Service Quality and Improvement	BT	Ongoing	Within Budget
A16	To make greater use of web-based applications to Court.	LO4 LO7	BT	Ongoing	Within Budget

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Supporting Service objective</b>	<b>Responsible Officer.</b>	<b>Target date</b>	<b>Finance</b>
A17	To provide a written procedure for potential ASBO cases	LO4 and LO5 – Crime and Disorder	BT	October 2008	Within Budget
A18	To develop better links with other legal services in South and West Wales	LO5 and LO6	DM	Ongoing	Within Budget

**SECTION C**  
**ITEM 2**

**LOCAL LAND CHARGES BUSINESS PLAN**

**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To report on the above business plan for monitoring and scrutiny purposes. Members can view a copy of the full plan on the intranet.

**2 OVERVIEW OF THE BUSINESS UNIT**

The Local Land Charges Unit is part of the Finance & Corporate Services Directorate, within the Legal Services division. The Head of Legal Services is the “Proper Officer” for this function, but overall the Council has a legal responsibility for maintenance of the Local Land Charges Register.

The Unit currently consists of 3.6 full time equivalent staff plus the Practice Manager who also oversees the Legal Business Support Unit.

**3 KEY ANNUAL STATISTICS – 2007/08**

Number of Official Standard Searches	1,911
Number of Personal Searches	2,330

**4 FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

The Unit’s budget for 2008/09 is summarised below:

	<b><u>Estimate</u></b> <b><u>2008/09</u></b>
	<b><u>£’000</u></b>
<b>Revenue Budget</b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Employees	100,590
Premises	0
Transport	100
Supplies and Services	12,950
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>113,640</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Search fees and Charges	-198,000
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b><u>-84,360</u></b>

## 5 AIMS OF THE UNIT

The overall aims of the Land Charges Unit are:

- To ensure that purchasers of properties and land are aware of obligations enforceable against successive owners by the local authority under the terms of various Statutes
- To maintain the Land Charges Register and an Index of Charges
- To help facilitate a speedy conveyance for the sale and purchase of domestic and commercial property or land and to assist in the mortgage process

## 6 ACTION PLAN

Attached are the Action Plan and Targets sections of the business plan, which incorporate the latest performance data.

- The major issue for 2008/09 has been the impact of the introduction of Home Information Packs (HIPs) for residential properties and the significant impact that the “credit crunch” has had on the property market. The number of searches completed is a good indicator of the movement in the property and land market in an area. The overall number of searches being conducted has decreased by **24.5 %** between April and December 2008 compared with the same period last year and worryingly search numbers from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 are nearly **48%** lower than the same period last year. This is as a direct result of the “credit crunch”, with fewer properties being bought and sold and also fewer re-mortgages, as the number and availability of mortgage products has sharply fallen. Until recently we saw even small parcels of land being searched upon for potential housing development but this has all but ceased.
- Home Information Packs were introduced in the summer of 2007 and in the preceding twelve months there was an increase in activity as people put properties on the market before HIPs were introduced. This has impacted on both the type of searches undertaken, and the method of submitting and returning searches. Nationally many HIPs now contain a personal search instead of a full Local Authority Official Search. Fortunately most of our local solicitors are still choosing to include an Official Search and are our main source of income. The HIP regulations put responsibility on sellers to obtain a HIP when they market a property, and sellers obviously want to do this as cheaply as possible. Most Estate Agents are offering HIPs which include a Personal Search and not our more comprehensive Official Search.

- We are continuing to engage closely with the local business community to ensure our service reflects their business needs.
- We have actively been marketing the service to maintain and increase our market share, which is now a key issue for the section, as well as continuing to improve efficiency to keep our fees competitive. We have focused closely on improving the electronic capture of source documents by scanning, thus making them more readily available to land charges staff when they are needed for searches.
- Performance so far in 2008/09 has been good with our 100% target being achieved in most months.
- In 2007 the Department for Communities and Local Government consulted with Local Authorities on issues relating to personal searches of the local land charges register and other records held by local authorities. A Good Practice Guidance for Local Authorities and Personal Searchers has now been produced and we are currently awaiting the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Wales) Regulations which relates to the costing of the service and access to information.
- We are actively involved with partnership working with other Local Authorities and the Local Land Charges Institute in order to share best practice.

## **7 KEY ISSUES**

Changes regarding the insurance provisions of personal searches by the end of March 2009 may dramatically change the current trend to have a personal search instead of an official search in a Home information Pack. However, irrespective of the type of search if volume continues to fall because of the current economic climate this may well have an effect on the business unit. Our improved service delivery together with a competitive price and the decision not to increase our fees, is working to our advantage thus far, as elsewhere in Wales and nationally the position is worse.

This is an extremely complex situation, and price and quality are only a small part of a much larger equation. The situation is particularly frustrating as audits have shown we have significantly improved the service over the last three years, yet never in the history of Local Land Charges has the future seemed so uncertain

**8 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**9 WARDS AFFECTED**

All

**10 OFFICER CONTACT**

Helen Dennis

Business Support Manager – Legal Services

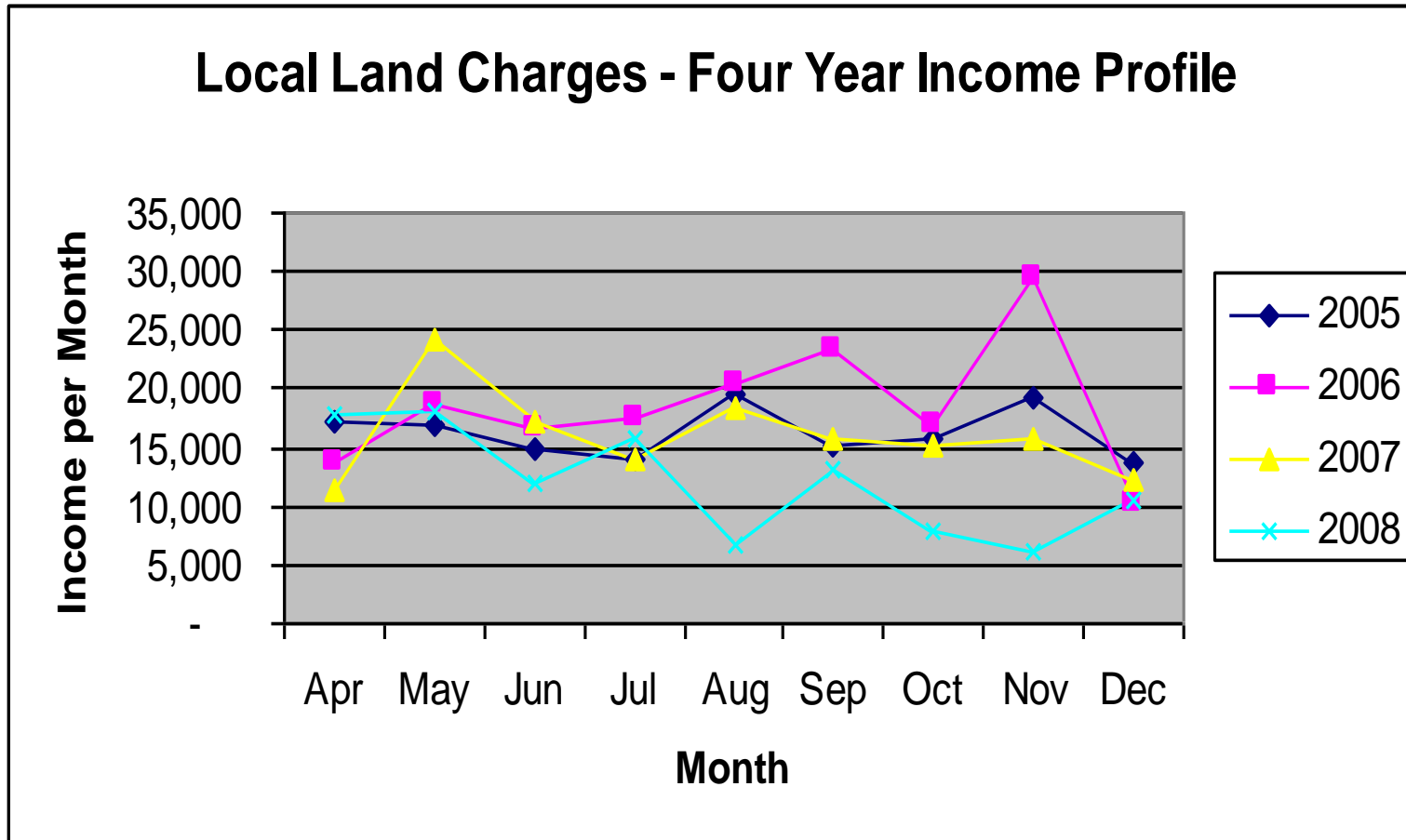
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**TARGET SUMMARY**

No.	Performance Indicators (No. and brief description)	2002/03 Actual	2003/04 Actual	2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Actual	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual to end Qtr 3
7.7	Percentage of Searches carried out in ten working days	63.6%	34.9%	83.6%	99.5%	44.4%	84.3%	100%	99.4% * See below

The average Residential Official Search is now completed in 3 working days. Searches on Commercial properties and land can some times take a little longer with an average of 5 days. Turnaround times are constantly under review as demanded by our customers. Our aim is to complete all searches in two working days.





**LOCAL LAND CHARGES MONTHLY PERFORMANCE 2007/08**

**Appendix 3**

	New Instructions (Official)	Number Completed	Total Personal	Total Number of Searches	% of Personal	Officials Completed within 10 work days	% of Official completed within 10 working days	Official Average days to Close
Apr-07	148	148	157	305	51.5%	135	91.2%	7
May-07	212	212	175	387	45.2%	195	92.0%	7
Jun-07	199	199	166	365	45.5%	198	99.5%	5
<b>TOTAL Q1</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>559</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>1057</b>	<b>47.1%</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>94.5%</b>	
Jul-07	168	168	175	343	51.0%	168	100.0%	5
Aug-07	172	172	180	352	51.1%	145	84.3%	7
Sep-07	153	153	188	341	55.1%	128	83.7%	8
<b>TOTAL Q2</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>493</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>1036</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>89.5%</b>	
Oct-07	183	183	237	420	56.4%	183	100.0%	5
Nov-07	144	144	233	377	61.8%	76	52.8%	10
Dec-07	104	104	142	246	57.7%	72	69.2%	9
<b>TOTAL Q3</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>431</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>1043</b>	<b>58.7%</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>76.8%</b>	
Jan-08	144	144	195	339	57.5%	117	81.3%	8
Feb-08	146	146	254	400	63.5%	80	54.8%	10
Mar-08	138	138	228	366	62.3%	114	82.6%	7
<b>TOTAL Q4</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>1105</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>72.7%</b>	
<b>TOTAL Q1 TO Q4</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>2330</b>	<b>4241</b>	<b>54.9%</b>	<b>1611</b>	<b>84.3%</b>	<b>7</b>

**LOCAL LAND CHARGES MONTHLY PERFORMANCE 2008/09**

**Appendix 3**

	New Instructions (Official)	Number Completed	Total Personal	Total Number of Searches	% of Personal	Officials Completed within 10 work days	% of Official completed within 10 working days	Official Average days to Close
Apr-08	158	158	263	421	62.5%	153	96.8%	6
May-08	130	130	198	328	60.4%	129	99.2%	6
Jun-08	132	132	178	310	57.4%	132	100.0%	5
<b>TOTAL Q1</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>1059</b>	<b>60.3%</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>98.6%</b>	<b>6</b>
Jul-08	142	142	157	299	52.5%	142	100.0%	5
Aug-08	92	92	141	233	60.5%	92	100.0%	5
Sep-08	101	101	134	235	57.0%	101	100.0%	4
<b>TOTAL Q2</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>56.3%</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>5</b>
Oct-08	98	98	110	208	52.9%	98	100.0%	3
Nov-08	82	82	105	187	56.1%	82	100.0%	3
Dec-08	71	71	80	151	53.0%	71	100.0%	4
<b>TOTAL Q3</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>54.0%</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TOTAL Q1 TO Q3</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>1366</b>	<b>2372</b>	<b>57.6%</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>99.4%</b>	<b>5</b>

**LOCAL LAND CHARGES UNIT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN – 2008/09**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Supporting Corporate Objective(s)</u></b>	<b><u>Officer Responsible</u></b>	<b><u>Target date milestones</u></b>	<b><u>Linked indicators</u></b>
	Probity				
<b>A1</b>	Develop partnership working procedures and protocols with other local authorities	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	On-going	
<b>A2</b>	Meet Client business needs with regard to developing various methods of submitting & returning searches, and payments	Corporate Obj. 2+8	Helen Dennis /Finance Staff	On-going	
<b>A3</b>	Review & update Quality Manual with system amendments	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	On-going	
<b>A4</b>	Provide Land Charges guidance to departments	Corporate Obj. 8	All Staff	Ongoing	
<b>A5</b>	Ensure the Council implements relevant new legislation, guidelines and best practice relating to the Service	Corporate Obj. 8	All Staff	Ongoing	
	Efficiency				
<b>B1</b>	Establish a maximum turnaround time of 5 working days	Corporate Obj. 7+8	Helen Dennis/All Staff	Acheived	7.7

**INDEX RE. CORPORATE AIMS:**

<i>Corporate Aims:</i>	
1. Community Leadership	5. Environment and Transport
2. Economic Prosperity	6. Community Safety
3. Education and Lifelong Learning	7. Confident Communities
4. Better Health and Well Being	8. Service Quality and Improvement

**LOCAL LAND CHARGES UNIT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN – 2008/2009**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b>Supporting Corporate Objective(s)</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Target date milestones</b>	<b>Linked indicators</b>
<b>B2</b>	Review the Commons Registration and Searches function carried out by City & County of Swansea	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis/ Countryside staff	On-going	
<b>B3</b>	Implement the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) (Wales) Regulations as well Guidance for Personal Searches	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis/ Dept Staff	March 2009	
<b>B4</b>	Implement improvements to ensure the unit meets 1% annual efficiency target	Corporate Obj. 8	All Staff	Ongoing	
<b>B5</b>	Evaluate potential areas improving market share and developing a marketing plan	Corporate Obj. 8	Head of Legal/Helen Dennis	Ongoing	
<b>B6</b>	Review current working methods to ensure that economies of scale are exploited, and improve work methods	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	On-going	
<b>B7</b>	Identify key elements of service costs in preparation for guidance from KPMG report	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis/ Finance staff	March 2009	
<b>B8</b>	Continue data clean up of information	Corporate Obj. 8	All Staff	On-going	

**LOCAL LAND CHARGES UNIT STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN – 2008/09**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Supporting Corporate Objective(s)</u></b>	<b><u>Officer Responsible</u></b>	<b><u>Target date milestones</u></b>	<b><u>Linked indicators</u></b>
<b>B9</b>	Develop the Local Land Charges pages on the intranet and internet	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	March 2009	
	<b>Economy</b>				
<b>C1</b>	Rationalise document retention and scanning	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis/All Staff	On-going	
<b>C2</b>	Develop electronic submission and return of searches to improve speed, reduce costs and document handling	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis/All Staff	On-going	7.7
	<b>Professional Development</b>				
<b>D1</b>	Ensure Land Charges staff are appropriately trained to meet the demands of the service, through the employee review process	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	On-going	
<b>D2</b>	Specifically address the areas of Commons Registration in the training plan	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	On-going	
<b>D3</b>	Develop appropriate protocols, procedures and guidance documentation in conjunction with the staff training plan	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	On-going	
	<b>General Matters</b>				
<b>E1</b>	Improve communication with the Welsh Assembly on matters regarding Local Land Charges	Corporate Obj. 8	Helen Dennis	On-going	