

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE			
PORTFOLIO AREA: INFRASTRUCTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT			
Date of Meeting:	30 September 2002		
Public			
Key Decision:	Yes	Recorded in Forward Plan:	Yes/No
Inside/Outside Policy Framework			
Decision to be taken on or after:			

Title: LOCAL LAND AND PROPERTY GAZETTEER AND NATIONAL LAND INFORMATION SERVICE

Report of: CITY SOLICITOR AND SECRETARY

Report reference: TC.191/02

Summary:

This report provides an update on the initiatives by Central Government through the IDeA to create a National Land and Property Gazetteer ("NLPG") and the National Land Information Service ("NLIS"). It outlines the steps which Central Government is requiring Local Government to take, the deadlines which have been set, and what action is required to be taken in order to meet Central Government's objectives. It is important that the Executive have an understanding of this because it is more than likely that any CPA assessment will have regard to the extent to which authorities are complying with these targets.

Contact Officer:	Tim Nicholson	Ext:	7018
	John Nutley		7250

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Executive agrees:

1. In relation to the proposed creation of a Local Land and Property Gazetteer in the financial year 2003:

- (i) to authorise the Head of IT Services to arrange that Intelligent Addressing identify the data discrepancies which have emerged during the data matching at an estimated

cost of £4,750;

(ii) to authorise the Head of IT Services to arrange the resolution of the discrepancies and the cleaning of the data at an estimated cost of £60,000; and

(iii) subject to completion of (1) and (2) above to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary to sign the Licence Agreement with the IdeA.

2. In relation to progression to Level 3 of the National Land Information Services in the financial year 2003:

(i) to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary under Contracts Standing Order 1(2) to arrange with Plantech to install appropriate equipment and software to computerise the Land Charges System and bring it up to Level 3 NLIS compatibility at an estimated cost of £37,000;

(ii) to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary to arrange for data capture of the Land Charges Register at an estimated cost of £15,000 (£3,000 of which is the estimated cost of project management by Plantech and £12,000 of which is the estimated cost of a typist or clerical assistant), and;

(iii) to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary to sign the NIS Level 2 and 3 sign up forms and price differential forms.

3. That the vacant Research Officer post in the Corporate Policy & Strategy Unit is re-graded to support the development and maintenance of the LLPG at an annual cost of £7,000.

4. That the costs identified in 3.1 to 3.3 above are provided for and recommended for approval by the Council in the current round of budget estimates for 2003.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1.1 Local Land and Property Gazetteer; Local Land and Property Gazetteer

1.1.1 Each Local Authority is required to create its own Local Land and Property Gazetteer ("LLPG") and these, together with information from the Land Registry and Valuation Office will form the National Land and Property Gazetteer ("NLPG"). The LLPG is formed from electoral register, the Council Tax data base, the NNDR data base Address Point, and the Local Street Gazetteer (which should be maintained by the County Council). Data from these sources must be matched and the resulting LLPG must conform to a basic standard used by the NLPG (BS7666).

1.1.2 In order to assist Local Authorities with the data matching exercise, the IDEa has set up a Company, Intelligent Addressing plc, who match the data from the electoral register, the Council Tax and the NNDR databases and the postal address point (PAS), in order to create an LLPG.

1.1.3 The Council has, in common with most other Authorities, submitted its data to Intelligent Addressing. The data, comprising details of 150,772 properties, has been matched and out of this has arisen 35,346 discrepancies. This comparison exercise only counts the discrepancies. For a further £4,750 Intelligent Addressing will detail the discrepancies.

1.1.4 Intelligent Addressing do not resolve the discrepancies and it is for the Local Authorities to "clean up" the data and resolve the discrepancies at its own expense. The discrepancies could occur in any of the three data sources and there is a resource implication for each service in resolving the address conflicts. Clearly there is a need for an officer to undertake the management and delivery of this work on an on-going basis. There is currently a vacancy in the Corporate Policy and Strategy Unit for a Research Officer (Scale 4/5) and it is proposed that the job description of this post be recast to take on this role. It is envisaged that the appropriate level of appointment for this role would be in the range PO 3-6. The revenue consequence of re-grading the vacant post of Research Officer would be £7,000 inclusive of on-costs.

1.1.5 Once the Local Authority is in a position to create its own LLPG it must sign a Licence Agreement with the IDeA which essentially commits the Council to maintaining and improving the LLPG and sending regular updates to the NLPG.

1.1.6 Recently the IDeA has written to all Local Authorities requiring them to submit plans for the creation and maintenance of the LLPG by the 1 July 2002 with the deadline for completion of the LLPG by 31 December 2002.

1.1.7 The Council has not so far signed the Licence Agreement* and has not committed the £4,750 to enable the 35,346 discrepancies to be detailed in order to resolve the discrepancies referred to above arising out of the matching of the four data sets. This exercise will be time consuming and will involve the buying in of extra resources by way of dedicated staff or an exterior company. The costs are estimated at £ 60,000 and have not been budgeted for.

*Note that the NLPG Licence Agreement has not so far been signed because until resources have been allocated to resolve the discrepancies have been resolved the Council will not be in a position to comply with the legal obligations set out in the Agreement

1.1.8 Therefore in order to progress the creation of the LLPG the Council must:

- Fund the £4,750 to detail the 35,346 highlighted discrepancies
- Resolve the discrepancies in the four data sets which have been matched and commit resources in the region of £ 60,000 for this purpose, and,
- Sign the NLPG Licence Agreement

1.2 National Land Information Service/Land Charges

1.2.1 The objective of the National Land Information Service ("NLIS") is to provide a "One Stop Shop" for access to information concerning land and property and to promote the electronic delivery of land and property related information. This will include the delivery of integrated land and property information services.

1.2.2 As far as the Council is concerned, participating in NLIS will entail the electronic delivery of land charges searches. At present land charges searches are delivered by post, document exchange ("DX") or personally using the medium of paper.

1.2.3 Under NLIS there will be 3 levels of Local Authority participation:

- Level One – Receive requests by document exchange (DX) and process search requests using

traditional methods and return the response to the Solicitor via DX.

- Level Two – The search request is received from a central hub via the internet. The search is processed within the Council using traditional paper based methods. The search result is scanned into a computer terminal by Land Charges Officer at the Council's offices and sent back to the hub via the internet.
- Level Three – The search request is received via the internet and is processed automatically or manually (as at present) in the Council's offices. Once it has been processed it is validated by the Land Charges Officer who then returns the response via the internet.

1.2.4 It should be noted, as far as Best Value is concerned, that working at Level One is only recognised as demonstrating a *commitment* to meeting the Best Value Performance Indicator for Electronic Service Delivery. However, working at Levels Two and Three are recognised as *meeting* the Best Value Performance Indicator for Electronic Service Delivery.

1.2.5 Councils will only be permitted to operate at Levels Two or Three if they introduce an 18% differential between the amount charged for a Level One search and the amount charged for a Level Two/Three search, the latter being the lower of the two fees. It should be noted that the Council has not been able to migrate to Level Two in the current financial year because the Council only received notification of the "Fee Differential" requirement for the first time in March 2002 which was long after the Land Charges Fees for the present financial year had been set together with the target income amount in the budget process last year. In order to migrate to Level Two/Three in the financial year 2003/04 it will be necessary to set the fee to allow for the 18% differential whilst still achieving the target level of income. The City Solicitor and Secretary has submitted a report for the Executive to approve the setting of such fees for 2003/04 and such fees have now been agreed in principle by the Executive.

1.2.6 It will also be necessary to obtain additional software and hardware in order to migrate to Level 2/3. Insofar as Level 2 is concerned it will be necessary to obtain certain software and scanning equipment as well as training relevant staff; however the IDeA have signified that this will be available free of charge once the Council has demonstrated a commitment to progress to Level 2 by a certain date. Insofar as Level 3 is concerned it will be necessary to fully computerise with the Land Charges Register, to have capacity to process the search requests and responses electronically and probably also to computerise certain other key data bases in the Council (principally Planning and Environment Services) insofar as these feed into the Land Charges process.

1.2.7 There are bound to be significant costs associated with Progressing to Level 3. So far two possibilities have emerged:

1.2.7.1 Computerisation of the Land Charges Service.

- An estimate has been obtained from Plantech who already supply software to Development Control and Building Control. The estimate provides for the cost of the installation and licensing of the relevant software, a link to the hub fully compatible with NLIS Level 3, training of relevant staff, project management and maintenance in the sum of £37,000.
- It does not provide for the cost of data capture. (Although useful and more efficient than a paper based register, data capture and full computerisation of the register is not essential for NLIS Level 3 compatibility). It is considered that data capture may be undertaken by a typist/clerical assistant for a period of about one year at an estimated cost of £12,000 and that Plantech Project manage the

exercise at an estimated cost of £3,000.

1.2.7.2 In order to assist Local Authorities the IDeA have devised a package with a McDonalds Detweiler who will arrange for the relevant software to be installed and all data captured and for the costs to be repaid over 7 years. This is known as the Local Government Modernisation Program ('LAMP'). So far only one Council in the whole country has signed up to such a deal but others are believed to be in the pipeline. It should be noted that MacDonald Detweiler won the government contract to operate the central hub. The minimum amount that can be bought under this package is £500,000 (repayable over 7 years works out at about £6,000 per month or £71,430 pa). This package covers not only NLIS but also the LLPG. It is likely that a significant amount of automation and data capture could be achieved for this price.

1.2.8 Once the Council is in a position to comply with NLIS it will be obliged to sign a Licence Agreement with Local Government Information House. This will allow Local Government Information House an exclusive Licence to use the data provided by the Local Authority for processing searches etc. So far the Licence has not been signed by this Council as it is not yet in a position to move to Level 2/3.

1.2.9 For the first time in June 2002 the Council received a letter from the IDeA requesting that the Council should let them know by 1 July 2002 how it plans to move to Level 2 and to Level 3. The letter also contains information that it is the Government's target that Local Authorities should move to Level 3 by 2003. The City Council has not been able to comply with the deadline for submission of its plan because it is not ready to move to Level 2 and will not be ready to do so until next year when differential fees take effect as mentioned above.

1.2.10 Subject to the installation of software and hardware and training of relevant staff, it is likely that the Council will be able to progress to Level 2 without undue difficulty or extra expense in 2003. What will not be achieved however without significant expenditure is migration to Level 3. If migration to Level 3 progressed within the next 12 months in order to meet the target set out by the IdeA it will be necessary to incur expenditure as indicated above.

1.3 IMPLICATIONS

1.3.1 The issue for the Executive is the extent to which they consider the Council should progress the creation of the LLPG and participate in the NLIS in the short term and the long term and the funding and resource requirements needed to do this. The steps which will be required for this are set out in summary below. Full progress will require substantial resources to be allocated. However if the Council does make progress it will have demonstrated its commitment towards meeting Central Government's targets for electronic service delivery and will evidenced by compliance with the relevant Best Value Performance Indicator.

1.3.2 If on the other hand the Council makes no progress with these initiatives, this will be seen as evidence that the Council is not committed to electronic service delivery and does not regard it as a priority and it will ultimately fail to meet Central Government targets for electronic service delivery and will eventually fail to meet the demands of its customers as use of electronic service delivery expands. It is likely that such failure would be subject to adverse comment in any Comprehensive Performance Assessment/Best Value Review and might even lead to the Council being "dragged down" to a lower level category than might

otherwise have been the case had it progressed these initiatives. It is also worth noting that the IDeA reports on the status of Local Authorities in relation to these initiatives on a monthly basis to the Lord Chancellor and to the Central Government's Stakeholders Group.

1.3.3 In summary, in order to progress the LLPG, the following steps are required:

1. The cleaning of the data discrepancies.
2. The signing of the LLPG Licence with Local Government Information House.
3. Thereafter all necessary detailed steps to ensure connection to the NLPG hub
4. The total estimated costs of steps 1 to 3 is in the order of £65,000 minimum.

1.3.4 In relation to the NLIS the following steps are required:

1. The implementation of differential fees to ensure that they take effect from 1 April 2003.
2. Submission to the IDeA of NLIS Level 2 and Level 3 sign up forms, NLPG/NLIS implementation plans and NLIS differential pricing form.
3. The formulation of plans to progress from Level 2 to Level 3, the minimum total estimated costs of steps 1 to 3 above are £37,000 together with the cost of data capture which could be in the region of approximately £15,000. The total cost would therefore be £52,000. The costs set out in this paragraph are set out on the assumption that the Council purchases the package offered by Plantech. For the reasons explained above, it is considered to be the better course to purchase the Plantech system as this would represent an extension of the existing system in Planning terms and compatibility issues (which would arise with an alternative supplier) are thereby avoided. The Executive are therefore requested to consider this proposal under Contracts Standing Order 1(2) which allows for exemption from the provisions of the Contracts Standing Orders regime in the Constitution (including the requirement for competitive tenders).

2. CONSULTATION

1. Consultation to Date.

CMT have been consulted as well as relevant Officers who are responsible for service delivery.

2. Consultation proposed.

Continued consultation with relevant Officers responsible for service delivery.

3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS

As specified in Section 1 above.

4. CITY TREASURER'S COMMENTS

Included.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

Included.

6. CORPORATE COMMENTS

Included.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Computerisation of Land Charges to Level 3 NLIS will be project managed by Plantech.

8. EQUALITY ISSUES

None.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Executive agrees:

11.1 In relation to the proposed creation of a Local Land and Property Gazetteer in the financial year 2003:

(1) to authorise the Head of IT Services to arrange that Intelligent Addressing identify the data discrepancies which have emerged during the data matching at a cost of £4,750;

(2) to authorise the Head of IT Services to arrange the resolution of the discrepancies and the cleaning of the data at an estimated cost of £60,000; and

(3) Subject to completion of (1) and (2) above to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary to sign the Licence Agreement with the IdeA.

11.2 In relation to progression to Level 3 of the National Land Information Services in the financial year 2003:

(1) to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary under Contracts Standing Order 1(2) to arrange with Plantech to install appropriate equipment and software to computerise the Land Charges System and bring it up to Level 3 NLIS compatibility at an estimated cost of £37,000;

(2) to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary to arrange for data capture of the Land Charges Register at an estimated cost of £15,000 (£3,000 of which is the estimated cost of project management by Plantech and £12,000 of which is the estimated cost of a typist or clerical assistant), and;

(3) to authorise the City Solicitor and Secretary to sign the NLIS Level 2 and 3 sign up forms and price differential forms.

11.3 That the vacant Research Officer post in the Corporate Policy & Strategy Unit is re-graded to support the development and maintenance of the LLPG at an annual cost of £7,000.

11.4 That the costs identified in 3.1 to 3.3 above are provided for and recommended for approval by the Council in the current round of budget estimates for 2003.

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to meet targets set by Central Government for National Land and Property Gazetteer and National Land Information Service.

J M Egan

CITY SOLICITOR AND SECRETARY

D Thomas

CITY TREASURER