

REGISTRATION OF LAND PURCHASED FOR HIGHWAYS PURPOSES

- To:** Audit and Accounts Committee
- Date:** 24th January 2017
- From:** Camilla Rhodes, Asset Manager – Information
- Electoral Division(s):** All
- Purpose:** To report to committee on:
a) The 18 month project to register all 6,000 parcels of land purchased for highways schemes with the Land Registry
- Key Issues:** This project is needed to secure the value of the assets financially and legally in terms of the rights they represent.

The project has been delayed, resulting in a revised completion date of Autumn 2018. This means that the £25,000 funding set aside for the project will need to be rolled forward.
- Recommendation:** That the Committee notes the revised timescale for the project and the proposal to roll forward the requisite funding into 2018-19.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The County Council is seeking to electronically register some 6,000 parcels of land purchased since the 1930s to 1990 for highway purposes with HM Land Registry (HMLR). The total area of the plots is about 1,800 hectares. This land represents assets of considerable value as resources for future transport schemes and as assets of financial value. Registration of title will protect the assets from being lost, for example through adverse possession.
- 1.2 There is no estimate of the total value of the land, due to the large number and wide geographical location of the plots. However, a small plot of urban land in Newnham, Cambridge realised a price of £40,000 in 2013. Rural land will realise less, depending upon location and purpose.
- 1.3 The objective is both to secure the registration of the land to the Council and to obtain detailed, indexed titles of each deed.
- 1.4 Approval for the project was given, by the Executive Director for Economy, Transport and Environment, on 30th November 2015 after consultation with the Chair of the Highways and Community Infrastructure (HCI) Committee. Funding for the project was secured from operational savings allocated for consolidation and digitisation of highway asset records.
- 1.5 The cost of the project is estimated at £25,000, based on the Land Registry's quotation received on 30th September 2015. This includes a 25% discount for a large-scale application.
- 1.6 The project was estimated by Land Registry to take them approximately 18 months to process, completing around June 2017.
- 1.7 Initial scoping indicated that it would be possible to make an electronic lodgement using previous scans of the County Council's deeds, the first of its nature in the country. The benefit of this would be a more efficient and secure process, removing the need to move thousands of legal deeds physically between Cambridge and Land Registry Fylde office.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 The detailed scoping of the project was initially delayed by resourcing issues at the Land Registry until May 2016. The project was subsequently delayed by problems discovered by the Land Registry in the sample of scanned documents during detailed scoping. It was found that the scans were not complete, and as a result it would not be possible to make an electronic lodgement.
- 2.2 In order to resolve this, the documents are to be re-scanned using funding from the Asset Information 2016-17 Searches budget. This will take

approximately two months. The project can then proceed with Land Registry. Further sample electronic documents will be provided to ensure that the new electronic registration processes are effective.

2.3 It is now anticipated that the project will be completed autumn 2018. As a result, the £25,000 operational savings set aside for the project need to be rolled forward to be spent in the financial years 2017-18 and 2018-19.

Source Documents	Location
None	