Local Land Charges Register continues to grow as Sevenoaks joins

News story

Sevenoaks District Council has become the latest local authority to migrate its local land charges data to our central, digital register.

Image credit: SuxxesPhoto/Shutterstock.com

From today (Wednesday 28 April), anyone requiring local land charges (LLC) searches in the Sevenoaks local authority area will need to get them from HM Land Registry rather than going directly to the council.

Jim Carrington-West, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Customer and Resources at Sevenoaks District Council, said:

> We're always looking at new ways to modernise and improve access to our services. Working in partnership with HM Land Registry has allowed us to tick both of these boxes. The migration has given us a great opportunity to improve the accessibility of our register data and to make the customer journey more efficient. It's fair to say we are very pleased to be one of the first councils to migrate to the new system.

Allison Bradbury, Head of Local Land Charges Implementation at HM Land Registry, said:

> We have worked closely with Sevenoaks District Council to migrate their dataset to our national, digital Local Land Charges Register. I am delighted that people buying property in Sevenoaks will now have access to instant local land charges search results, meaning it will be quicker and simpler to buy and sell property in the area.

Local land charges searches are normally required in the property-buying process. Most local land charges are restrictions or prohibitions on the use of the property such as planning permissions or listed buildings. The local land charges search will reveal whether a property is subject to a charge which then informs a buyer's decision to buy a property or parcel of land.

HM Land Registry is working in partnership with local authorities to migrate their local land charges data to a central, digital register as part of a phased approach. Once migrated, anyone will be able to get instant online search results using the Search for Local Land Charges service.

HM Land Registry's business customers can use their existing portal and Business Gateway channels or their usual search providers to access local land charges data for those local authorities which have migrated.

Customers will need to continue to submit CON29 enquiries to the local authority.

Watch our short video for an overview of the service.

For more information, read about the Local Land Charges Programme.

Published 28 April 2021

Government paves the way for self-driving vehicles on UK roads

- first types of self-driving vehicles could be on UK roads by the end of this year
- journeys of the future could ease congestion, cut emissions and reduce human error
- Automated Lane Keeping Systems are a first example of self-driving technology, and will be limited to speeds of up to 37mph on motorways

Motorists could see self-driving vehicles on British roads for the first time later this year, the Department for Transport has announced today (28 April 2021).

Following a landmark call for evidence, the government has set out how vehicles fitted with Automated Lane Keeping System (ALKS) technology could legally be defined as self-driving, as long as they receive GB type approval and that there is no evidence to challenge the vehicle's ability to self-drive.

Designed for use on a motorway in slow traffic, ALKS enables a vehicle to

drive itself in a single lane, while maintaining the ability to easily and safely return control to the driver when required.

The technology could improve road safety by reducing human error, which contributes to over 85% of accidents. The driver will be able to hand control over to the vehicle, which will constantly monitor speed and keep a safe distance from other cars.

Today's announcement comes as a consultation on The Highway Code rules is launched to ensure the first wave of this technology is used safely and responsibly. This consultation will conclude on 28 May 2021.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said:

> This is a major step for the safe use of self-driving vehicles in the UK, making future journeys greener, easier and more reliable while also helping the nation to build back better.
>
> But we must ensure that this exciting new tech is deployed safely, which is why we are consulting on what the rules to enable this should look like. In doing so, we can improve transport for all, securing the UK's place as a global science superpower.

Self-driving technology in cars, buses and delivery vehicles could spark the beginning of the end of urban congestion, with traffic lights and vehicles speaking to each other to keep traffic flowing, reducing emissions and improving air quality in our towns and cities.

Not only are automated vehicles expected to improve road safety, the technology could also improve access to transport for people with mobility issues and lead to more reliable public transport services, helping to level-up access to transport in historically disconnected and rural areas.

As we build back better, connected and autonomous vehicle technology could create around 38,000 new jobs in a UK industry that could be worth £42 billion by 2035. Over 80% of these jobs are expected to be in professional, technical and skilled trade occupations.

SMMT Chief Executive, Mike Hawes, said:

> The automotive industry welcomes this vital step to permit the use of automated vehicles on UK roads, which will put Britain in the vanguard of road safety and automotive technology. Automated driving systems could prevent 47,000 serious accidents and save 3,900 lives over the next decade through their ability to reduce the single largest cause of road accidents – human error.
>
> Technologies such as Automated Lane Keeping Systems will pave the way for higher levels of automation in future – and these advances will unleash Britain's potential to be a world leader in the

development and use of these technologies, creating essential jobs while ensuring our roads remain among the safest on the planet.

The UK is already a world leader in connected and self-driving vehicle innovation, and British companies are working on and developing the next generations of automated vehicles.

Liz Truss call with USTR Katherine Tai

News story

A readout of the International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss's call with United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai.

LONDON – The Secretary of State for International Trade has a positive and productive call today with United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai.

They discussed issues of mutual importance, including making substantive progress on WTO reform, the role of trade in combatting climate change, tough action on market-distorting industrial subsidies and the Airbus Boeing dispute.

Both welcomed the outcome of the G7 Trade Ministers meeting at the end of March and looked forward to making further progress at the next meeting, due to take place in late May.

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PM call with the Irish Taoiseach: 27 April 2021

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to the Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin.

The Prime Minister spoke to the Irish Taoiseach Micheál Martin this evening.

They updated one another on the Covid situation and progress on vaccine rollouts in their countries. They agreed to continue working together to fight the pandemic and to consider ways they may support each other.

They discussed Northern Ireland and the importance of continued good relations between the UK and Ireland to the peace process. They committed to strengthening the partnership further and finding new ways to cooperate on areas like trade and science.

The Prime Minister and Taoiseach looked forward to meeting in person as soon as possible.

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Anti-ageing roads could keep roadworks at bay

A section of dual carriageway in Northamptonshire has become the first in the country to be resurfaced with a pioneering new material that is designed to help roads last significantly longer.

England’s motorways and major A-roads are expected to be resurfaced every

10-12 years because water, sun and air, combined with the weight of heavy traffic, causes the surface to deteriorate and crack.

However, laboratory tests have shown that an innovative blend of materials can help extend the life of the road surface without the need for a facelift.

Highways England, together with partners Tarmac and Total, has resurfaced a busy section of the A43 near Silverstone, in Northamptonshire, with the new asphalt mix.

The mix is held together by a new bitumen called Styrelf Long Life, which is designed to be more resistant to the elements by oxidising more slowly. This slower process means that the road surface stays flexible for longer, preventing cracks forming.

More durable road surfaces that require fewer repairs could lead to less money needing to be spent on maintenance, lower carbon emissions caused by maintenance work and less disruption for road users.

Total estimates that getting the asphalt required to resurface a mile of single lane carriageway – not including transport to site and working with it – can produce up to 26.5 tonnes of CO2.

If roads lasted longer, so that two sets of resurfacing could be avoided in a 60-year period, the reduction in asphalt production alone could save the equivalent of the CO2 produced by an average car if it was driven for more than 270000 miles – more than 10 times around the Earth.

Mike Wilson, Highways England's chief highways engineer, said:

> We're always looking for innovative ways to help us keep England's motorways and major A-roads in good condition.
>
> The ultimate priority for us is safety so we invest in new technology and materials to keep those using the roads safe.
>
> Longer lasting roads means fewer roadworks, less disruption for motorists and a more sustainable network for everyone.

Brian Kent, technical director at Tarmac, said:

> As part of our corporate commitment to sustainability, boosting efficiencies and delivering improved whole life performance across the network, we're always pushing to introduce any new technology or innovation that can further improve the durability of the roads we maintain.
>
> What we have in this case is essentially an anti-ageing cream for roads – just as these products are designed to reduce and prevent the signs of fine lines and overall ageing of the skin, the new

> bitumen being trialled on the A43 will protect the road surface.
>
> It not only has the potential to offer improved value for money to the public purse, but it also contains properties to increase the overall lifespan of roads. Through preventing cracks to the surface of the road caused by elements such as air and water, the longer life bitumen has the ability to reduce disruption, deliver long-term carbon savings and importantly help network operators to better manage their assets.

Rick Ashton, market development manager at Total, said:

> At Total our key focus is sustainability through durability. These long-life binders will ultimately lead towards our vision of net zero carbon by 2050 by reducing roadworks, saving manufacturing, transport and installation energy and the associated emissions.
>
> This trial paves the way for enhanced highways asset management and predictive deterioration modelling for Highways England.

The new material has previously been tested in the laboratories of Total, at Tarmac’s site in Elstow in Bedfordshire and on sections of road in The Netherlands and Germany. The A43 trial is the first time it has been used with high traffic levels in the UK.

Technical experts from Total will regularly measure the performance of the material against an equivalent control section laid at the same time on the A43 before its use is considered elsewhere in the country.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.