

Milton Keynes District Council joins HM Land Registry's Local Land Charges Register

From today (27 August), anyone requiring local land charges (LLC) searches in the local authority area of Milton Keynes District Council will need to get them from HM Land Registry rather than going directly to the council.

Pete Marland, Leader of Milton Keynes Council, said:

We're proud to be among the first local authorities to move our land charges and personal searches function onto a new national digital database. This is a testament to the rigorous processes that the team have put in place, and the new database will help us improve the service even further. My thanks go out to council colleagues for working collaboratively to help achieve this.

Karina Singh, Director of Transformation at HM Land Registry, said:

Milton Keynes is the latest local authority to offer its local property customers instant, easy access to HM Land Registry's digital Local Land Charges Register. We are working hard with local authorities like Milton Keynes to ensure customers can obtain the information they need quickly, to allow informed property buying decisions, even during lockdown. This is making the conveyancing process quicker and simpler for everyone.

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 in England 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.

For an overview of the service, watch our short video (1 minute 18 seconds).

[Creating a national Local Land Charges Register.](#)

For more information, read about the [Local Land Charges Programme.](#)

[Ministers call on councils to help deliver digital connectivity ambitions](#)

- Updated guidance to speed up agreements between the public sector and telcos
- New plain English guide for councils to tackle misinformation about 5G safety
- Calls for councillors to play a greater role in local digital strategies

Government ministers are calling on local councils to help ensure people can access better broadband and mobile connectivity crucial to the UK's coronavirus recovery.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman and Local Government Minister Simon Clarke have today written to local authorities setting out how they can help boost gigabit broadband rollout and 5G mobile coverage.

The ministers urge councils to follow new government advice on land access and valuations so deals granting access for new infrastructure such as 5G masts and full fibre broadband cabinets on public land can be reached quicker and with reasonable rents attached.

Central government has also shared new guidance on the safety and benefits of 5G so councils can give people the facts and tackle disinformation about this revolutionary mobile technology.

It follows a spate of attacks against digital infrastructure during lockdown and increased opposition to some local planning applications for phone masts, spurred by harmful online conspiracy theories falsely claiming a link between 5G and the spread of coronavirus.

The ministers are also asking councils to appoint a 'digital champion' to work across multiple teams to ensure a cohesive digital infrastructure strategy and encouraging authorities to use central government's dedicated 'barrier busting' team which is charged with removing the obstacles to rollout.

Minister for Digital Infrastructure Matt Warman said:

"We want to help people get access to fast and reliable connectivity. It is a

top priority for this government.

“Councils have a vital role to play in the rollout of digital infrastructure and while there is good work going on up and down the country, there is more we can do.

“Today I’m writing to local authorities with new guidance and advice to help them break down some of the barriers to rollout and give them the tools they need to quell quack theories about 5G.”

Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Simon Clarke MP said:

“Councils play a critical role in delivering high-speed broadband and this new guidance will help them roll out this vital infrastructure more easily.

“I want councils up and down the country to ensure their communities benefit from faster internet connections and better connectivity.

“This will help to drive growth locally and is part of this Government’s mission to level up every area of our country and help local areas to recover after the pandemic.”

Cllr Mark Hawthorne, the Local Government Association’s digital connectivity spokesperson, said:

“Councils are uniquely placed within their communities to identify the needs of residents and businesses, including their demand for faster and more reliable digital connectivity.

“This new suite of guidance will complement the work councils are already doing, alongside central government and local partners to support the roll out of digital infrastructure across local areas. As we look forward, councils are committed to working closely with the Government to help deliver on its nationwide gigabit-broadband and mobile coverage ambitions.”

Hamish Macleod, Director at Mobile UK, said:

“The updated valuation guidance published by the Government will give councils the confidence to bring wider community benefits, such as enhanced mobile coverage, to their communities. From an industry perspective, it means adding public assets, often located in ideal locations for radio signal broadcast, into the mix to assist in the rapid rollout of world-class mobile connectivity.”

Telecoms companies need to secure rights to install their infrastructure on public sector land and buildings. But there are concerns some deals are not progressing quickly enough. This means homes, businesses and mobile customers are missing out on faster and more reliable internet connections.

While councils are obliged to get ‘best value’ when agreeing land access agreements, ministers expect them to take into account non-monetary benefits

such as enhanced connectivity for residents to work from home and SMEs to trade online. The guidance also highlights recent legal interpretations of the current framework which indicate reductions in previous rents are to be expected.

The letter also emphasises the impact councillors and senior non-elected officials can have to drive forward strategies for getting better connectivity in local areas and encourage a more joined-up approach between highways, legal, estates and digital teams.

The ministers point to Cambridgeshire and Kent as excellent examples of local authorities working effectively to encourage next-generation gigabit broadband networks. The West Midlands 5G project, part of the Government's £200 million 5G Testbed and Trials programme, is cited as having successfully addressed some of the challenges councils face when deploying 5G technology.

The West Midlands also is one of the areas in the country with the highest available coverage of gigabit capable broadband. Others include Kingston Upon Hull, Dunbartonshire, Reading, Edinburgh, Southampton and Liverpool.

The plain English guide to 5G has been created to help councils answer questions and manage any concerns around the health implications of 5G. The guide explains what 5G is and what health experts say about it.

Philip Marnick, Spectrum Group Director at Ofcom, said:

“The UK has a great opportunity to be a world leader in 5G – making the most of the benefits this new technology offers people and businesses. So it's important that public bodies work together to address some of the myths and misinformation around 5G, and that decisions are based on sound evidence.”

Public Health England says 5G should have ‘no consequences to public health’. Ofcom has also been measuring the levels of electro-magnetic radiation emitted by 5G masts around the country, and in all cases has found the levels to be a small fraction of those allowed by international safety guidelines.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The land valuations [guidance](#) updates existing advice available to local authorities to reflect tribunal determinations on valuation that have been published since the 2017 reforms to the Electronic Communications Code came into effect.
- The guidance also clarifies how the public sector duty to obtain ‘best value’ applies when local authorities are granting access to their land and assets for telecoms deployment.
- The guidance also explains the different approaches that can be taken to the renewal of existing agreements. The Electronic Communications Code is the legislative framework underpinning these type of agreements. It was reformed in 2017 to make it cheaper for industry to deploy, install and maintain infrastructure. It is important public sector bodies are

aware of court cases interpreting the new provisions, which demonstrate that reductions in previous rents are to be expected.

- The [plain English guide](#) to 5G explains the facts to help local politicians deal with queries from the public and to combat any misinformation that is spreading online. Concerns have been raised around 5G and how it could affect people's health. These are unfounded. This guidance will help dispel wrong information about 5G.

[New payment for people self-isolating in highest risk areas](#)

- Government to implement new payment for people on low incomes in areas with high rates of COVID-19, who need to self-isolate and can't work from home
- Payments of up to £182 to be made to people who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their contacts
- Scheme to start first in Blackburn with Darwen, Pendle, and Oldham

People on low incomes who need to self-isolate and are unable to work from home in areas with high incidence of COVID-19 will benefit from a new payment scheme starting on Tuesday 1 September, the Health Secretary has announced today.

Starting with a trial in Blackburn with Darwen, Pendle and Oldham to ensure the process works, eligible individuals who test positive with the virus will receive £130 for their 10-day period of self-isolation. Other members of their household, who have to self-isolate for 14 days, will be entitled to a payment of £182.

Non-household contacts advised to self-isolate through NHS Test and Trace will also be entitled to a payment of up to £182, tailored to the individual length of their isolation period.

It is designed to support people who are unable to work from home while self-isolating, either after testing positive, or after being identified by NHS Test and Trace as living in the same household as – or coming into contact with – someone who has tested positive. It will be available to people currently receiving either Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

The British public have already sacrificed a great deal to help slow the spread of the virus. Self-isolating if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or have come into contact with someone who has, remains vital to keeping on top of local outbreaks.

This new payment scheme will help people on low incomes and who are unable to work from home to continue playing their part in the national fight against this virus.

Payments will be provided within 48 hours of the eligible individual providing the necessary evidence. Individuals will be asked to provide a notification from NHS Test and Trace and a bank statement.

The local authority can also check the NHS Test and Trace system to confirm the individual has been asked to self-isolate, if the individual is unable to provide this information. The local authority will put in place checks to prevent fraud and ensure compliance through welfare check-ins, phone calls and employment checks.

There will be a rapid review of the scheme in Blackburn with Darwen, Pendle and Oldham to assess the performance consider how effectively vulnerable people have been reached, and consider how far it has helped reduce transmission of the virus in these areas. If the approach is successful, the scheme will be quickly applied in other areas of high COVID-19 incidence.

Background information

This will not reduce any other benefits that they receive. This payment equates to:

- £130 if an individual has tested positive for coronavirus and has to self-isolate for 10 days (from the point they first developed symptoms).
- £182 if a member of an individual's household has tested positive for coronavirus and they are asked to self-isolate for 14 days (from the point the member of their household first developed symptoms).
- £13 per day (up to a maximum of £182) if an individual is identified as a non-household contact of another person who has tested positive for coronavirus and is asked to self-isolate up until 14 days after they were most recently in contact with the person who tested positive.

To be eligible for the funding, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Have tested positive for Covid-19 or received a notification from NHS Test and Trace asking them to self-isolate
- Have agreed to comply with the notification from NHS Test and Trace and provided contact details to the local authority.
- Be employed or self-employed. Employed people will be asked to show proof of employment. Self-employed will be required to show evidence of trading income and that their business delivers services which the local authority reasonably judges they are unable to carry out without social contact
- Be unable to work from home (checks will be undertaken on all applicants) and will lose income as a result
- Be currently receiving Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit

Supporting economic and political stability in Iraq

Thank you, Mr President, and thank you to the SRSB. You paint a picture of the ongoing challenge in Iraq, in the economic space, social space and, critically, in the security space. The United Kingdom will continue to stand with the Government and people of Iraq to face and overcome these challenges.

Mr President, it's also good that we're joined again by the Permanent Representative of Iraq. Welcome, Ambassador.

We welcome the political progress that we've seen in Iraq since we last met. The completion of Prime Minister Kadhimi's government formation process – including the appointment of two women ministers and the appointment of a cabinet member from a minority community is encouraging.

We also commend the actions taken by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to ensure the safety of its citizens as they tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. The UK supporting Iraq in addressing Covid-19, including through the provision of over \$12 million in assistance. But we note the significant challenge the virus is causing in Iraq, as spelt out by the SRSB.

The UK is also committed to supporting the government in addressing the broader challenges facing Iraq. The most urgent of these is tackling the economic crisis facing the country through undertaking crucial economic reforms. Again, the UK will help, including through our technical assistance partnership with Iraq that we agreed just this week.

We also welcome Prime Minister Kadhimi's moves to prioritise economic stabilisation. However, it's clear that the challenges of Covid-19, combined with the collapse in oil prices and consequent budget deficit, are compounding long standing problems posed by Iraq's undiversified economy and rapid population growth. Reforms, although difficult, are necessary if Iraq is to achieve long-term economic and social stability. So we urge the Council of Ministers to put forward a reform programme without delay and to build parliamentary support for it. The UK stands ready to support and has already contributed over \$19 million to the World Bank Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund.

Mr President, we also express our deep concern at what the SRSB described as a spike in violence against civil society activists in Iraq – in particular, the targeted assassination of activists in Baghdad and in Basra. And we note with concern this morning's IED attack against a WFP vehicle in Ninewah Province. We wish a speedy recovery to the one WFP employee who was injured and we urge the Government of Iraq to investigate this attack and bring the perpetrator to justice, as it should for all the attacks of this kind.

We also condemn the actions of groups who seek to target the US and Coalition personnel through continued rocket attacks and the attacks against Iraqi contractors working for the Coalition. And we join others in expressing our concern at the increased frequency of attacks by Daesh in recent months, particularly in the disputed territories.

The UK, like the other members of the Global Coalition, remains committed to supporting Iraq in its efforts to combat Daesh and its attempts to re-establish itself in Iraq. Mr President, as the SRSG said, effective Baghdad-Erbil cooperation is critical to addressing Iraq's challenges. We welcome the recent short-term budget arrangements, which are in place until the end of 2020, but urge the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to resume talks on a long-term sustainable budget agreement.

And we commend Prime Minister Kadhimi's efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with Kuwait, including to strengthen cooperation on the Kuwaiti missing persons and property file and the return of the remaining Kuwaiti National Archives. We call for the resolution of all outstanding issues.

We note President Kadhimi's call for early elections in June 2021, and we urge the Council of Representatives to complete the outstanding work on the electoral law and associated issues. We will work closely with UNAMI and the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission to ensure that the elections, when held, are free and will allow the Iraqi people to have a genuine voice in their future.

Thank you, Mr President.

[UK push for landmark UN resolution to agree responsible behaviour in space](#)

The UK's proposed UN resolution aims to broker an international consensus on responsible behaviour in space – agreed by countries around the world at the UN – and is the only initiative of its kind in the world.

The global economy and systems that we use every day – including mobile phones, online banking and GPS – depend on safe and secure space systems. However, as space becomes increasingly congested and competed over, the risk of accidents, misunderstandings and miscalculations between nations is escalating.

The UK is therefore launching a draft UN resolution calling for a global discussion on what responsible behaviour in space looks like. All countries will be invited to take part in this open discussion and submit their views on responsible and threatening behaviour to the UN Secretary General, for inclusion in a report to the UN General Assembly.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK is leading the global discussion on what responsible behaviour in space looks like. We believe a new approach is urgently needed to increase trust and confidence between countries operating in space to prevent an arms race or a conflict that could have catastrophic consequences.

Military and security threats in space can damage the satellites that enable mobile technology and GPS systems, resulting in large scale disruption to the everyday lives of people around the world.

Many countries use military space systems to control battlefield communications, defensive and offensive missile systems and even their nuclear forces. These systems are vulnerable to attack by space and Earth-based weapons systems, interference and malign cyber activity. When countries don't communicate about their intentions in space or act in a threatening way, the risk of retaliation increases, with potential for devastating consequences.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Conflict in space has potentially profound consequences, and all powers should recognise the importance of this not only to their economies, but to global security. Preventing malign activity and reducing the risk of accidents is incredibly important for the safety of the UK, and to the successful military operations that rely on systems in space.

While weapons of mass destruction have been banned in space for over fifty years, there are almost no meaningful constraints on the deployment of new weapons or technologies that can damage or destroy space systems, whether from the ground or in space. UN talks remain stalled as current proposals do nothing to prevent attacks on satellites from the Earth. The UK initiative offers a new approach – to break the impasse on space at the UN, increase transparency and reduce the risk of miscalculation between nations that could lead to conflict.

Further information