

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-051-2009/10  
**Date of meeting:** 10 January 2013



**Portfolio:** Finance & Technology and Planning

**Subject:** National Land and Property Gazetteer

**Responsible Officer:** John Gilbert (01992 564062)  
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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) To note that the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) is falling considerably short of the national standards required;
- (2) To note that the Council has until the end of March 2013 to bring the LLPG up to the required standard or face intervention from the national LLPG managers, GeoPlace LLP; and
- (3) To recommend to Council a supplementary district development fund estimate of £100,000 to provide the short term resources required to bring the LLPG up to the national standard.

### **Executive Summary:**

The Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) arrangements for managing addressing accuracy is governed by the Data Co-operation Agreement (DCA), a contractual agreement between Epping Forest District Council and GeoPlace LLP, a Limited Liability Partnership jointly owned by the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (trading as Local Government Improvement and Development) and Ordnance Survey.

Epping Forest District Council address management performance indicators are currently Below National Standards and are rated as one of the poorest performing out of 47 Local Authorities in the East of England.

This report seeks additional resources such that the LLPG can be corrected and updated to ensure its accuracy for all agencies who are required to use it and to prevent the intervention of GeoPlace and their associated costs.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To enable the LLPG and address database to be corrected and brought up to the required standard by the end of March 2013

## **Other Options for Action:**

To not apply the necessary resources or to apply lesser resources. The former would effectively ensure that GeoPlace would act to update the LLPG itself, at a significant cost to the Council both financially and reputationally. If a lesser amount is approved it may still be possible to achieve the desired standard depending upon the availability of the necessary skilled resources.

## **Report:**

1. The Local Land and Property Gazetteer arrangements for managing addressing accuracy is governed by the Data Co-operation Agreement (DCA), a contractual agreement between Epping Forest District Council and GeoPlace LLP, a Limited Liability Partnership jointly owned by the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government (trading as Local Government Improvement and Development) and Ordnance Survey.

2. Epping Forest District Council address management performance indicators are currently Below National Standards and are rated as one of the poorest performing out of 47 Local Authorities in the East of England (see Appendix A Performance Comparison with Essex Local Authorities as at November 2012).

3. As a result there is a very real possibility that the Council may be declared a Non Contributing Authority in terms of Address Updates Quality Criteria, Maintenance and Update Schedule as set out in the Data Co-operation Agreement (DCA). In addition GeoPlace has the right in terms of this agreement to invoke "Emergency Measures" to implement an "Essential Support Plan" within such timescales and costs as are reasonable. The penalties that may be invoked range from sending a team of specialists to correct our Addressing Management Information at £500 per person per day to charging the Council for all Ordnance Survey Mapping (currently free of charge) which could be as high as £40 000 - £60 000 per annum.

4. Whilst these appear to be extreme remedies, they have to be seen in the context of the DCA. All local authorities used to have individual licenses with Ordnance Survey and operate their own mapping systems. The costs of licensing were becoming prohibitive, and therefore Government negotiated to provide a national service. In effect, the system now is that all local authorities, and indeed a range of other agencies including the emergency services, have access to Ordnance Survey mapping data free of charge, but in return, through the DCA, local authorities agree that the gazetteer and address database will be kept accurate and up to date. This updating process is critically important for the emergency services who are being required to discard their own bespoke systems, and use those provided via the DCA, and therefore rely upon the integrity of the underpinning gazetteer and address database.

5. It has been made clear by GeoPlace that they are very concerned about the accuracy of our LLPG, and that they require the Council to meet the required standards by the end of March 2013, or risk their intervention. It is important to note at this time that the Council is not only failing to meet the current standard, but will also need to attain the new standard, which is even higher, and comes into effect from April 2013.

6. At a recent meeting with GeoPlace a number of procedural changes were agreed with them, whereby the Council would at least ensure that no more errors to the gazetteer were generated. However, at the current level of resourcing the Council will be unable to meet the deadline for improving the gazetteer, and short term additional resources will be required.

## **Resource Implications:**

7. At the meeting referred to in paragraph 6, an assessment was undertaken of the scale of the gazetteer errors and the resources required to eliminate them. Although additional resources have been applied to date, and progress has been made, it is clear from appendix A that this is not sufficient and we still have a long way to go with a short timeframe to get there. It has been estimated that some 150 days of work will be required just to meet the existing standard and probably nearer 250 days to place the Council into a position whereby it is able to meet the new standard which commences in April next year.

8. Due to the nature of the work, this updating exercise requires people who are knowledgeable of gazetteers and related systems. Furthermore, the time pressures in achieving the deadline do not afford the opportunity to appoint someone with aptitude and then train and bring them up to the necessary skill level. Therefore, the options available are:

- (a) seek to appoint, on a temporary basis, persons with the requisite experience;
- (b) obtain resources from GeoPlace, having negotiated a reasonable daily rate; or
- (c) seek assistance from a neighbouring local authority who has already achieved the required standard and is able to provide us with skilled personnel, at a reasonable daily rate.

9. The costs of not updating are potentially significant, ranging from GeoPlace placing us under special measures and inserting a team to undertake the required work at a cost of £500 per day, to excluding us from the DCA which would require us to enter into separate licensing arrangements with Ordnance Survey at a cost of between £40,000 and £60,000 per annum. These costs do not of course allow for the associated reputational damage to the Council.

10. It therefore seems prudent to take immediate steps to correct the gazetteer and address database through an injection of DDF funding. At this stage it would be prudent to apply funding based upon the worse case scenario, which is GeoPlace applying special measures at £500 per day, but taking into account the existing available resources. Based upon the estimated 250 days to achieve not only the existing required standard but also enable us to meet the later updated standard, this will require funding of £125,000. It is very likely that the costs will be less than this, either through negotiation with GeoPlace or through obtaining specialist assistance through one of the other routes. The existing resources referred to earlier will reduce that overall demand. Therefore, to provide certainty for the 2013/14 budget and as importantly the necessary outcome, it is suggested that £100,000 be sought from Council as a supplementary DDF estimate.

11. The issue of adequately resourcing this work into the future, once the immediate problems have been overcome, is also important. However, it is proposed to leave this issue for now, pending any future structure considerations by the Chief Executive.

## **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Council is contractually obligated through the Data Sharing Agreement to maintain its LLPG to the required national standard. As set out in the main body of the report, GeoPlace has the authority to intervene if standards are not attained and maintained.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Access to accurate mapping and address information underpins a lot of the Council work in respect of the Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative (e.g. crime data analysis, street cleansing zones, planning policies etc)

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

None.

### **Background Papers:**

Report to Mapping Project Team (14 December 2012).

### **Impact Assessments:**

#### Risk Management

The accuracy of the gazetteer and its associated address database is essential not just for the Council but for other agencies who are being required to use it. The effects of inaccurate data range from the relatively inconvenient to very serious should an emergency services vehicle be unable to find a premises or location due to those inaccuracies. At the more serious end of this scale, the Council's reputation could be at significant risk if an incident was attributed to a data inaccuracy. There could also be associated financial consequences.

#### Equality and Diversity

*Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?* No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* No

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*  
N/A.

*How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?*  
N/A.