

		Executive 18 March 2009.	Agenda Item No.
Title		Legal Services - update	
For further information about this report please contact		Peter Oliver	
Service Area		Legal Services	
Wards of the District directly affected		None	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006		No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number			
Background Papers			

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director	25.02.09	Mary Hawkins
Chief Executive	25.02.09	Chris Elliott
CMT	26.02.09	
Section 151 Officer	25.02.09	Mary Hawkins
Legal		Peter Oliver
Finance	25.02.09	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	03.03.09	Cllr. Bernard Kirton
Consultation Undertaken		
None		
Final Decision?		No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		
Further report in six months		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates members on progress being achieved on a number of projects in Legal Services

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the progress towards Lexcel accreditation and with the Land Registration project be noted, and a further report be submitted in six months

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Members have requested that they be kept advised on the progress of these projects

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The only alternative is to abandon the projects which is not recommended

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Budgetary provision exists for these projects

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 None

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The Council is committed to achieving Lexcel accreditation as a recognised standard for the provision of Legal Services. A mock inspection was carried out in December 2007, which highlighted a number of matters which required attention if the Council were to be granted accreditation after a full inspection. Progress has been made since then on these matters, and it is considered that the matters highlighted in the previous mock inspection have been addressed. However, as there have been some changes in the standard since December 2007, it is considered prudent to have a further mock inspection, and this is being arranged for April 2009. Subject to the outcome of that mock inspection, it is hoped to move to a full inspection in the summer.
- 7.2 The project of voluntary registration of all the Council's land holdings is proceeding according to target. With full co-operation from the Land Registry, a timetable has been agreed to complete the process by September 2009. This is being monitored on a monthly basis by the Interim Head of Legal Services, and remains on target.
- 7.3 A report on re-structuring of the establishment of the Legal Section was considered by the Employment Committee on 10 March, and appears elsewhere on this agenda for consideration of the budgetary implications.