



Why do I need a Local Authority Search

Almost all transactions involving the transfer of ownership of dwellings, commercial properties, or unoccupied land, will require a Local Authority Search to be conducted as part of the conveyancing process. The search is carried out on the specified property only, and whatever the transaction a Local Authority Search is a vital link in the conveyancing process. The search can reveal information which will guide a prospective purchaser on whether to re-negotiate the deal or even pull out all together.

A Local Authority Search is intended to protect purchasers from nasty surprises after they have bought a new house and this search is usually conducted by your solicitor.

Why You Need One?

A Local Authority Search is needed because you do not want to discover a few months after you have moved into your dream home that there are plans to turn your quaint little road into a dual carriageway or to replace the little shop on the corner with a giant supermarket.

The search looks for planning proposals such as new roads, changes to road layouts, building developments in the vicinity and alterations to land use or public rights of way. It could also warn a prospective buyer of extra planning restrictions that might lie ahead, such as putting your new home into a conservation area.

Things to check

As a buyer you must be aware that the search will generally be only on the property you are purchasing, so do not make assumptions that developments a few streets away will necessarily show up on a local search. If you have any additional enquiries you may wish to raise these as separate questions with the seller's solicitors.

The Local Authority Search is carried out on your behalf, so it is important to make sure that the information is what you think it is- because any problems afterwards are going to be difficult to rectify.

How long does it take?

Local Authorities are not the fastest in returning searches, they can generally take two- three weeks, which is why it is important to order searches early on in the conveyancing transaction.

In terms of the timetable for moving, it is worth remembering that searches soon become out-of-date. If there is a long delay in the house buying process your search could be months old by the time you move in - and any recent planning proposals will not be covered.

