



## Response to Request for Information

Reference EIR 0815118  
Date 24 August 2015

### ***Regulation 9 Statement***

#### **Request:**

Could you please send me a copy of your latest Regulation 9 (CPSR) statement?

Wolverhampton City Council (The Council) does not have a current 'Regulation 9 statement'. Consequently, the Council are unable to provide any information relating to this, and are informing you of this as required under Regulations 4-5 of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

To give some background, when the Charges for Property Search Regulations (CPSR) came into force a significant piece of work was undertaken analysing search processes, establishing associated costs and search volume data.

The resulting fees calculated were compared to those set by a number of local authorities, either of similar size or close geographically.

The fees set by the Council were amongst the lowest set at that point.

When the CPSR came into force, property search fees imposed were immediately subjected to legal challenge.

That legal action remains on-going, with a final decision from the European Courts on a range of issues pending. The Council has been reluctant to review charges annually given the legal uncertainty.

This means that the charges set six years ago therefore remain in place. They have not even been subjected to an inflationary uplift. During this time however comparative fee exercises have been regularly undertaken.

The latest exercise (conducted in September 2015-please see details in the table below) reveals that the Council's charges are still significantly lower than in neighbouring authorities.

## Property Search Fees Comparison

Local Authority	Full Search	Commercial Rate	Cancellation Fee
Walsall MBC	£131.50	£174.50	£50.00
Dudley MBC:			£42.35
Postal	£92.45		
Electronic	£90.45		
Sandwell MBC	£91.00		
Birmingham CC	£100.00		
Shropshire CC	£80.00	£100.00	
Worcester CC	£110.50		
Wolverhampton:			
Postal Request	£61.00		
Electronic Request	£54.00		

The Council's Land Charges service has also received extremely positive feedback from a number of property search companies regarding the fees and the speed with which searches are expedited.

Moving forward, it seems an appropriate time however, with a European court decision imminent and the Council's property search fees clearly much lower than those set by comparative authorities, to undertake a thorough review of the whole property search process and charging regime.

This review is already underway. It will run alongside the annual estimate production process and should be completed by the end of November.