

Dear Sirs,

Please find below the response of North Hertfordshire District Council to the consultation entitled Land Registry: new service delivery company. This response is submitted following review of the consultation paper by members of the legal, estates and finance team. As is apparent from the response, this authority is opposed to the principle of the proposal and for that reason has not responded to the specific questions in the consultation, which appear to be largely directed to the detail around implementation.

As is acknowledged in the consultation paper, the Register maintained by the Land Registry is part of the Critical National Infrastructure. To introduce any element of privatisation in respect of maintaining the Register inherently carries with it a risk that its integrity will be jeopardised. Although the consultation identifies control measures that seek to mitigate the risk of the Register not being fully within state control, these cannot eliminate the associated risks

Given the national importance of the asset, it is imperative that the benefits of privatisation far outweigh the risks associated with the process. NHDC is not satisfied that sufficient benefits have been identified by the consultation to justify a partial privatisation of a Critical National Asset.

A change of this magnitude must satisfy the requirements of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and it seems clear that the first of these is over-riding the other two. We would also question whether even economy will subsequently be satisfied once genuine control has been lost. Furthermore, the Land Registry information must reflect the most complete, up to date and accurate data possible, regardless of the profitability or otherwise of aspects of this information. We regard this as a crucial consideration and therefore a key risk.

Yours sincerely,

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