

HM Land Registry

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Matthew Pennycook MP
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Dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 4 February 2025.

We greatly appreciate your recognition of HM Land Registry's (HMLR) foundational role in the economy. Whether facilitating homeownership, securing investment, or enabling business growth, our mission is to ensure that property ownership and information are reliable, secure, and accessible.

Delivering a Land Registry and Property Market that Works for Everyone

We fully share your vision for a property market that underpins economic growth and supports the government's ambition to deliver 1.5 million new homes. HMLR plays a critical role in enabling this, not just through service delivery but by modernising data and systems to remove friction from the market. Our objective is clear: to improve accessibility, transparency, and efficiency for all who rely on property transactions—homebuyers, developers, businesses, lenders, and policymakers alike.

To reinforce this commitment, we will provide quarterly updates on our progress, starting at the end of this financial year, and we would welcome the opportunity to host you at one of our offices to showcase our work. In parallel, we will highlight specific examples of how our services have supported developers in acquiring land and accelerating progress towards development.

We also recognise the need to use our data more effectively to support your priorities. We can help identify land that has been acquired but remains undeveloped for extended periods. We can provide you with evidence to challenge those slowing progress. This is a significant opportunity to reinforce accountability and ensure land is being used effectively to meet housing demand.

Our people are at the heart of our ability to deliver. Their expertise, dedication, and deep understanding of land registration and property transactions are invaluable. Ensuring we have the right capacity and skills within HMLR to support the market—regardless of economic fluctuations—remains a top priority.

Our customers, who fund our services, rightly expect their fees to be invested in improvements that deliver tangible benefits. We appreciate your continued support in ensuring a clear link between our income and the reinvestment needed to modernise our services.

Strategic Priorities in Support of Government Policy

1. Digitising Data and Modernising Systems

We welcome your backing for our work to create a fully digital, geospatial land register that is fit for an AI- and data-driven economy. This is an ambitious undertaking, but it is fundamental to improving speed, accuracy, and accessible information in the property market.

The **Local Land Charges (LLC) programme** remains a flagship project, and we are actively exploring ways to accelerate delivery. We are particularly keen to apply our expertise to the broader property data

landscape, including through the newly announced MHCLG pilot on **local authority property data**. These pilots are a vital opportunity to demonstrate how digitisation can streamline the entire homebuying process.

Next year, we expect to:

- Digitise 36 local authorities' LLC data
- Start/complete the **MHCLG local authority property data pilots**
- Introduce **AI-driven services** to support casework and improve efficiency
- Implement a **new digital ID standard** under DSIT's Data (Use and Access) Bill
- Enhance **public access to property data**

2. Transforming the Home Buying and Selling Process

A more efficient home buying process requires coordinated action across all property sectors—residential, commercial, agricultural, and infrastructure. The **Digital Property Market Steering Group** provides an essential forum for driving this transformation, and we remain fully committed to playing an active role.

We believe there is real momentum behind industry-wide adoption of **open data standards, digital ID, electronic signatures, and greater data accessibility**. With your leadership, we have a unique opportunity to make meaningful progress over the coming year.

3. Enhancing Transparency and Unlocking the Power of Property Data

Making property data **findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable** is central to our mission. We will prioritise digitisation efforts based on the economic and social value they unlock, while ensuring that data security, integrity, and privacy remain paramount.

We are particularly keen to work with your department to complete the picture of the ownership of **unregistered land**—currently 11% of all land in England and Wales. Our teams have several practical ideas to accelerate progress.

The introduction of **contractual control arrangements** will be a major step forward in market transparency. We will work quickly with your officials to define the service design and delivery plan, ensuring it is digital by default and aligned with wider housing market reforms.

4. Reforming Our Charging Model

We are committed to **simplifying and modernising our pricing structure** to make it fairer, more transparent, and more aligned with customer needs. This will strengthen the link between service improvements, data accessibility, and the fees our customers pay.

We appreciate your continued support in ensuring a sustainable financial model that allows us to reinvest in digital modernisation while maintaining service excellence.

5. Supporting Leasehold and Commonhold Reform

We continue to work closely with your department on leasehold reform and will apply the same collaborative approach to **commonhold**, ensuring it is digital by design from the outset. This is a significant opportunity to improve consumer experience and market efficiency.

6. Strengthening Governance and Alignment with Government Strategy

We fully support the objectives of the **UK Geospatial Strategy** and the development of a **National Data Library**. Cross-government collaboration is essential to maximising the value of property data, and we will continue to work closely with public sector partners to drive progress.

We also welcome the appointment of a **Non-Executive Director from MHCLG**, which will further strengthen alignment between HMLR and government priorities. As key Non-Executive Board Members complete their terms, I would like to extend my gratitude for their contributions and welcome the expertise that the new appointees will bring.

Delivering Our Business Plan and Driving Operational Excellence

Ensuring **the timeliness of our services** remains our customers' highest priority, and it is therefore ours too. The Board receives **regular progress reports** and is unwavering in its focus on improving speed and efficiency. We have made **significant improvements** to our current performance which reflects the momentum we have created this year that we can now take into next year. Automation will play a key role in ensuring long-term resilience to market fluctuations.

The insights from the **Customer Care Review Committee** will be instrumental in shaping further improvements, and the Board is fully committed to implementing its recommendations.

Spending Review: Securing Investment for Modernisation

The investment required to modernise our services is significant, particularly as we work to overcome inherited **technical debt** and transition to **AI-driven, automated processes**. These foundational improvements are essential to delivering the efficiencies, transparency, and market resilience that both government and industry need.

We appreciate the close working relationship between our teams and the alignment of our **strategy, business plan, and Spending Review submission** with your department's objectives. Your continued support in maintaining a **strong link between our income and reinvestment** will be crucial to ensuring long-term success.

Conclusion

I look forward to sharing further updates with you over the coming year and working closely with your department to deliver the government's housing ambitions. As always, we remain available to provide any additional support or information you may require.

Best wishes



Neil Sachdev
Chair, HM Land Registry