HM Land Registry
Local Land Charges



Hyndburn Borough Council

Local authority profile

Local Authority: Hyndburn Borough Council

Work started: 18 October 2021

Served notice: 18 May 2026

Date of migration: 15 June 2026

Data type: Paper and Microfiche

Number of charges migrated: 21,022

Software supplier: NA

Migration Supplier: HMLR

Delivery Model: HMLR delivered

Live Operating mode: GUI

Before the programme

Before Hyndburn Borough Council migrated its local land charges (LLC) its process was largely manual, with data held in an Access Database. The register relied on Address Point, a system controlled by Royal Mail. Under their procedure, properties that had been empty for several months were deleted from their records. This caused significant issues for the local authority (LA), because live LLC registrations often still existed against those properties.

In 2018, Royal Mail stopped maintaining Address Point, forcing the LA to create a register to capture new developments. However, the new system did not include a plotting function. This meant that a single charge covering a development of several houses had to be entered against each individual property.

Gail Wilcock, LLC Officer at Hyndburn, explained the practical impact: “You could have one planning application added 400 times, and a highway agreement duplicated 400 times. It got way out of hand.”

Before migration began, HM Land Registry (HMLR) attended an initial council meeting, with representatives from all relevant departments. The size of their dataset came as a shock to many in the room, highlighting the significance of the migration project. Senior leaders across the LA gained a clear understanding of the migration, the work involved and the importance of their cooperation. The first task was to review the registrations and provide the LLC team with timely responses to queries.

“You could have one planning application added 400 times, and a highway agreement duplicated 400 times. It got way out of hand.”

Gail Wilcock
LLC Officer at Hyndburn Council

During the programme

The data cleansing and migration work was carried out by Gail and her colleague Lorraine, who knew the records well. Lorraine was brought into the team specifically to support the migration.

Work was split between the two of them, with Lorraine starting at the top of the Access register and Gail the bottom. Their specialist knowledge helped them to divide tasks by type. As Lorraine's background is in planning, she dealt with this and answered searches. Gail focused on Sundry Debts, housing and environmental health work, using her knowledge to locate information and physical files.

When HMLR extracted and analysed the data, the initial figure was 100,031 registrations. After cleansing, this was reduced to 21,022. Many of the duplicates were linked to the Address Point system. Understanding the cause helped the team to make progress faster.

Hyndburn's planning records dated back to 1 August 1977, but only records from 1998 onwards had been plotted electronically. As a result, every record from 1977 to 1998 had to be plotted from scratch. Working together the team at Hyndburn and HMLR completed the work. "It was excellent to get it all done. We felt such a great sense of achievement when we finished," said Gail.

When HMLR extracted and analysed the data, the initial figure was 100,031 registrations. After cleansing, this was reduced to 21,022

The team also completed a systematic cleansing exercise with each department. Finance provided spreadsheets for review, and Gail responded with questions requiring documented proof for every debt on the register. If it could not be proved, it was removed from the register.

The work uncovered a significant gap in the Enforcement team's charges. Some notices were held physically and had not been added to the enforcement register. The location plans and front sheets were then scanned and passed to the Enforcement department so the records could be updated. The migration also revealed outdated re-inspection dates in some departments, some dating back to 2008. As a result, departments began improving their internal procedures.

The transition payment was used to fund overtime for both individuals during the intensive cleansing period.

Throughout the migration the team kept personal search companies and solicitors informed by adding standard wording to their emails. This helped manage expectations around availability and timescales.

After the programme

Going live on the LLC Register brought immediate benefits. For the first time, the team could plot registrations electronically. HMLR's system also provided a more intuitive process, guiding users through each stage with prompts and drop-down menus.

"The system always asks you a question before you move onto the next stage, it's so straightforward," said Gail.

Personal search queries have reduced significantly, as search agents and solicitors can now access information through the HMLR Portal. Queries are now directed to the relevant department, meaning quicker results and time saved within the LA.

Overall, working relationships across the LA have improved. Departments now respond to queries quicker and have a better understanding of the importance of keeping their records up to date. Departments are also becoming more self-sufficient. For example, Building Control now maintains a spreadsheet of dangerous structures and contacts informing the LLC team when a registration can be removed. This did not happen before migration.

Registrations that previously took considerable time to complete are now registered in minutes when teams provide the information upfront. This is possible because a standard process requires departments to provide the relevant legislation, notice number, date served, and location plan.

"Working with HMLR has taught departments what is needed to successfully manage the register, and identify gaps within their datasets," said Gail.

"Working with HMLR has taught departments what is needed to successfully manage the register, and identify gaps within their datasets"

Gail Wilcock
LLC Officer at Hyndburn Council

What advice would you give to other authorities?

Ensure departments are fully engaged before you begin reviewing your data. Involve all relevant teams from the start and explain what the migration means for the whole organisation, not just the LLC team. Gail's advice is clear: "Start the work early and get everybody on board before you even begin the process. Introduce regular meetings with all the departments so they can ask questions and gain understanding. Maintaining visibility and engagement throughout the organisation is key."

Where possible, identify a senior manager with oversight of all relevant departments. At Hyndburn, having the Assistant Director be responsible for planning, housing, environmental health, and legal was a significant advantage. "As long as senior managers and department leads are on board you shouldn't have a problem," said Gail.

Start cleansing your data now. Do not wait for HMLR to prompt you. Ask departments whether each registration is still live and whether it can be removed. Work through departments one at a time and request documented proof for every notice or debt. If it cannot be proved, it should come off the register.

Be clear about what is held electronically and what has been plotted. Data existing within a system is not the same as data being plotted. Understanding your starting point early will help you plan the work more effectively.

The initial data analysis results can appear daunting but do not be intimidated by the number of charges. Many of these may be outdated or duplicates with a straightforward explanation. When you understand the reasons, the numbers reduce faster than you expect.

Communicate with search agents and conveyancers from the start. Consider adding standard wording to emails and correspondence when migration begins, so customers understand that responses may take slightly longer than usual.

The initial data analysis results can appear daunting but do not be intimidated by the number of charges