

# CONVEYANCING SEARCHES FACT SHEET

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## Why are searches carried out?

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As part of the conveyancing process, when acting for a Buyer we carry out “conveyancing searches”. These reveal a large amount of information available to the public concerning the property being purchased and the land around it and as such, the searches are a crucial part of the due diligence undertaken before a buyer commits him or herself to a purchase.

## The local search

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The local search reveals whether any planning consents or building regulation approvals have been obtained in respect of the property and will provide details of these if applicable. It will also indicate if the property is a listed building or in a conservation area. Importantly we can see from the search whether the Council have issued any notices in respect of the property. It also confirms whether the street is adopted and maintained by the local authority and whether there are any proposed road works or changes to the layout etc. of the road.

## The Environmental Search

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An Environmental search will reveal whether the property has been built on land previously subject to industrial use, e.g. a landfill site, which could cause contamination, or is close to a potentially hazardous site which could give rise to future health problems. You, as the owner of the property, could be liable for the cost of the clean-up process. The environmental search also reveals whether the property is, or could be affected by flooding and/or subsidence. We can carry out a more thorough contamination investigation if you wish and will inform you of the cost of this if required. However, we would also recommend that you ask your Surveyor/Valuer to advise you of any potential problems in this area whilst inspection of the property is being made.

Please note that this environmental search is a desk top search, not a physical inspection or survey of the property itself and accordingly will not give details of any unreported localised contamination issues on site, e.g. any contamination caused by a leaking oil tank. We would only be able to address those issues by way of a physical inspection and soil testing which we do not undertake and, if you have any specific concerns on contamination on site, you should please speak to your surveyor sooner rather than later. It would be helpful if you could let me know, as soon as possible, if you intend to commission a specific environmental report/assessment otherwise I will put in hand my desk top search which will give us an environmental assessment of the area in which the property is situated, which will be a useful tool as part of the process of purchasing the property.

## The Planning Search

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The local search will provide details of any planning matters relating to the property you are buying, but does not cover neighbouring properties. We therefore obtain this information about adjoining land by having a Planning search carried out. This will give details of any planning applications over the last five years relating to land within a 250 metre radius of the property, and will provide a summary of the Council’s policies for future development and land use, and details of any floodplains, within a 500 metre radius.

## The Water Search

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The local search no longer provides drainage details for the property. A Water search, however, will show whether the property is connected to the public system for both sewerage and mains water supply, and will include a plan showing the location of the nearest public sewer and mains.

## The Chancel Search

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A Chancel search will reveal whether there is any possibility that the property you are purchasing could be subject to a chancel repair liability. This means that you may be required to contribute to the cost of repairing your local church. The risk in most instances is very minimal and if a potential liability is revealed then an indemnity insurance policy can be obtained.