

New Connections Legal Process Improvements

Collaborative Partnership Protocol

1. **Adopt a collaborative working approach**

Break the traditional lawyers' 'them and us' mind-set

- Emphasise the importance of co-working to achieve shared outcomes.
- Avoiding the use (and associated mind-set) of confrontational labels such as 'the other side' in favour of 'customer's legal representatives'.
- Adopting a 'help and assist' attitude to break the traditional lawyers' 'them and us' mind-set. Lawyers tend not to do this and we think it could have a transformational effect.

2. **Focus on the connection target date**

Ensure customers' lawyer is aware of the target connection date

- The majority of customers' lawyers are unaware that there is a connection target date and so Geldards will explain this at the start of the transaction. All too often, realising that the date is fast approaching, customers push their lawyers into action when it's too late.
- We will explain to our customer the importance of instructing lawyers about the connection target date. Even when Geldards mention the connection date, it is often met with indifference - the point being that unless and until our customer instructs their lawyer to act by a certain date, improvements in completion times are going to be hard to achieve.

3. **50 days to completion**

Geldards' aim is to complete within 50 days of instruction

- Geldards will set out their intentions at the start of the transaction as a framework for management and monitoring of the transaction timeline.
- Geldards will send Collaborative Partnership progress reports to customers' lawyers which will identify whether a transaction is on track for completion by the target connection date.

4. **Chase intelligently and creatively**

As a tag team, with WPD chasing the customer

- Adopting a common sense, pragmatic and results-based approach.
- Breaking with the traditional lawyer protocol of written chasers, if these aren't effective Geldards will use the phone. If that doesn't work, Geldards will ask WPD to contact the customer and use that customer's feedback to re-engage the customer's lawyer.

5. **Improved procedures and standard documents**

We will drive continuous *time to complete* improvement through incremental changes to Geldards' procedures and standard documents.

- Geldards' initial communication to our customers' lawyers will ask them to adopt the Protocol and it will include a guidance note to assist them in dealing with the documents and procedures. This will avoid delays in completing the transaction

New Connections Legal Process

- Geldards will issue draft engrossments which are pre-populated with owner and property details drawn from the Land Registry. Currently a watermarked draft is issued with a request for our customers' lawyer to fill in the blanks.
- At the same time, title queries/requisitions will be raised.
- Standard heads of terms for WPD's principal legal transactions are being produced for use in landowner negotiations and to form the basis of landowners' instructions to their lawyers.
- A suite of authorised variations from WPD's standard terms will be agreed to reduce the number of requests for instructions made back to WPD.
- WPD's standard legal documents will be continuously reviewed to identify efficiency improvements.

6. Dispense with cost undertakings from our customers

We will no longer require cost undertakings before starting the legal process

- Waiting for cost undertakings from our customers' lawyers distracts attention away from the main transaction and delays the start of the legal process.
- To rely on trust that costs will be paid by our customer is a radical change, as it leaves WPD potentially exposed in cases which do not proceed.

7. KPI measures of comparative performance

We will measure the relative performance of Geldards' and our customer's lawyers to identify where delays are happening so that we can focus our efforts

- We will measure the following KPI points in our legal transactions:

Geldards			Customers' Lawyer		
	2017/18 Target	2016/17 actual	2017/18 Target	2016/17 Actual	
Action new instructions	2 days	Day zero	5 days	31 days	Reply to Geldards' initial letter
Give cost undertakings	2 days	3 days	10 days	21 days*	Respond to title queries
Execute documents under POA	2 days	4 days	10 days	28 days	Execute and return documents
Avg days to complete	20% improvement on 2016/17	75 days			

(*2017/18 YTD measure as no data available for y/e 2017)