

REPORT OF ESTATES OFFICER

**SUBJECT: REGULARISATION OF LAND OWNERSHIP ABUTTING
WHITESANDS BEACH**

Purpose of Report:

To seek Members' approval for the acquisition of the freehold interest of the land shown edged blue on the photo below at Whitesands Beach.



Background

In 1972 the owner of the land shown edged blue (the subject land) dedicated a public footpath running north/south across their land which forms part of the coastal slope to create a new section of footpath. Today, that path forms part of the Coastal path.

In the mid 1980s the Authority acquired its freehold ownership of the land edged red and in circa 2001 it gained control of the foreshore shown hatched green under a lease from the Crown Estate. These parcels of land have a collective importance for landscape, nature conservation, archaeology and public access.

Your officers have recently established that in 1990 the owner of the subject land (and son of the original footpath grantor) agreed terms to gift its ownership to the Authority. Whilst our practical actions of managing the subject land over the last 30 years as an extension of our land holding edged red support our practical acceptance of that gift, for reasons unknown its documentation by legal transfer of title was never completed and remained a 'forgotten issue' until recent events drew your officers' attention to this historical oversight. The recent enquiries that we have made to the land owner (who is incidentally the same individual that we dealt with 30 years ago) has confirmed their requirement that the legal transfer should now be completed without further delay subject to the Authority bearing their legal costs which will not exceed £550. The Authority's own legal costs are likely to be a similar amount.

Financial, Risk & Compliance Considerations

The overwhelming risk that runs with the subject land and to which the Authority is already fully exposed is the maintenance and repair of the public footpaths which traverse the land (including the steep flight of steps that descend down to the beach below).

There would be a risk of reputational damage to the Authority if we were not to regularise the formal transfer of the lands ownership.

Human Rights/Equality Issues

No issues

Biodiversity Implications/Sustainability Appraisal

No issues

Welsh Language Statement

No issues

Recommendation

That Members authorise the freehold acquisition of the subject land by way of documented legal transfer at a nominal consideration of £1 and a contribution towards the transferor's legal costs not exceeding £550.