

DUE DILIGENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Purchase



Guidance Notes

Purpose and Status of Due Diligence Questionnaire

The purpose of the Due Diligence Questionnaire is to provide the Seller and the Seller's solicitors and advisers with a comprehensive list of the Purchaser's and the Purchaser's solicitors' due diligence requirements at an early stage of the transaction. The use of the standardised agreed format of Due Diligence Questionnaire should encourage the anticipation at the outset of any transaction of the requirement for these items and encourage Sellers and their advisers alike to anticipate the need to produce this information and make records, information and documentation available in as comprehensive a format as possible.

This Questionnaire is an information gathering exercise and is not a substitute for the normal conveyancing procedures. The Replies given are limited to matters within the Seller's actual knowledge after consultation with its solicitors and other advisers as identified in the reply to Question 19. The Questionnaire is not intended to form part of the Sale/Purchase contract, save where, or to the extent that they are expressly incorporated in any missives or contract following.

How to use and reply to the Questionnaire

Although the Questionnaire can be completed manually or replies contained in a separate document or separate correspondence, it has been designed to permit responses, and also incorporate further questions and further responses (which can be distinguished by the use of a different font or colour if wished) to be inserted within the body of the document, after the relevant Question, so that by the end of the transaction, a full record of the exchange of information may be preserved in a single document.

The F11 keystroke should be used to move from Reply box to Reply box. This will highlight any text already inserted, which will be removed automatically once the date and Reply are inserted.

The main body of the Questionnaire deals with general fairly comprehensive commercial property enquiries relating to such matters as titles, property enquiries, fire certification, planning and building control matters, insurance and the like. The detail of more specialised areas which may not necessarily apply to all transactions, namely VAT treatment of the transaction, Capital Allowances, Staff/TUPE matters and occupational leases are dealt with by way of an initial Question in the main body of the document followed by a referral to an appropriate detailed Annexe, if these considerations apply. As well as avoiding repetition of "Not applicable" to a number of questions this also allows the recipient to detach the appropriate schedule and pass it to specialists in tax and employment, both within the solicitors' and the clients' offices, or to their managing agents or other advisers, to respond to or deal with specific areas of enquiry.

If desired you can tailor the Questionnaire to the circumstances of a particular transaction. However it is recommended that, to assist familiarity by users of the format and layout of the standard Questionnaire, the standard format be left untouched and where queries are "not applicable", that this be stated in the Replies

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with, if necessary, a brief explanation. **Changes should not be made to the main text of the Questionnaire and amendments should be restricted to replies inserted in appropriate Reply boxes.**

To maintain consistency and encourage familiarity with the format, as well as maintaining the integrity of the paragraph numbering, any additional Questions should be added at the end of the main part of the Questionnaire.

In providing information in response to specific Questions, please bear in mind, where appropriate that in terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, information relating to an individual who can be identified from that information should generally not be disclosed without the consent of that individual.

Introduction

Points A to H confirm and clarify the purpose of the Questionnaire. .

Question 1 - Title

These Questions are fairly self-explanatory and standard. Where a negative response is required (for example where there is already an adequate plan within the titles or the property is land registered), a simple “N/A” is all that is required in the response box. However avoid an “N/A” response where a “no” or “none” response would be more appropriate.

Question 2 - Moveables

The response to this Question should identify at the outset what items the Seller intends to remove and obtain an assurance that there are no leasing, hire purchase or credit arrangements affecting any of the moveables.

Question 3 – Public Utilities

As much information as possible should be provided in relation to utilities, services and supplies and where available copies of supply contracts produced. This section should also identify whether there is a requirement for a servitude or other right permitting pipes, cables or other conduits to pass through land lying outwith the Property, and the nature of any consents required to ensure full legal entitlement to uninterrupted supplies of services.

Question 4 – Postcode

If available the postcode should be given. This is an item of information about properties which is being used more and more as a key or portal to more detailed information about that property.

Question 5 – Planning etc

This section is designed to be a combination of a shopping list for documentation and enquiry in relation to breaches or outstanding or uncompleted matters. It is anticipated that, depending upon the nature or complexity of the transaction, the documentation produced in response to this Question may be considered by specialists.

Question 6 – Fire Certification

In addition to production of any appropriate Fire Certification documentation this Question also elicits information about fire escape routes and whether or not evidence of rights of escape over adjoining property are required, possibly necessitating examination of other title documentation.

Question 7 – Property Enquiries

This section covers provision of both Local Authority and Coal Authority enquiry reports. It is up to the parties to decide whether for this purpose property enquiry reports from the local authority will be accepted or, as an alternative, reports from private searchers.

Question 8 – Compliance with Statute

The fact that responses made are limited to matters within the Seller's actual knowledge after consultation with its solicitors and other advisers should be borne in mind in relation to this Question. Full disclosure of any enforcement or other documentation should be encouraged.

Question 9 – Reports etc

As far as possible, full copies of all Reports should be made available. Consideration may need to be given at this stage to whether or not Reports require to be re-addressed to the Purchaser. Similarly, where Reports and other investigations carry a duty of care, consideration should also be given at an early stage to whether assignments or novations of collateral warranties will be available to a purchaser.

Question 10 – Works/Alterations etc

Again as full a disclosure of available documentation as possible should be made at this stage. It is anticipated that the majority of documentation elicited by this Question will be passed to Construction specialists for consideration. They may well have additional questions or requirements to make after an initial perusal of the documentation. Depending upon circumstances evidence of professional indemnity cover etc may also require to be produced.

Additional requirements ought to be imposed where the Property is subject to an ongoing development both as to statutory consents and building contract and team appointment documentation

Question 11 – Rates and Other Outgoings

Factual information and relative records are sought in relation to this section. All available information should be provided.

Question 12 – Insurance

Although the Purchaser will usually be responsible for arranging new cover from the date of settlement or other appropriate date, it is always of use to have details of existing cover, exclusions etc as well as ensuring that cover is in force in the period between conclusion of missives and the date of completion. Details of circumstances in which cover have been refused, or claims made are also of relevance and interest to a Purchaser.

Question 13 – Anticipated VAT Treatment

The general Questions raise a single query on the likely treatment of the transaction for VAT purposes. Annexe 1 contains more detailed Questions where the property is potentially standard rated and to cover circumstances where the transaction may be treated as a TOGC.

Question 14 – Capital Allowances

Again the general Questions identify whether or not there are items of plant and machinery or industrial, scientific research or hotel buildings forming part of the Property on which Capital Allowances could be claimed. If there are, Annexe 2 contains more detailed Questions and requests for information.

Question 15 – Environmental

This section is a fact finding section containing requests for copies of authorisations and permits and details of actual notices, proceedings etc as well as requesting details of any breaches, whether actual, alleged or potential. It is not seeking information or warranties which are outwith the Seller's knowledge. If a Seller is cautious about making environmental disclosures then negative responses to this section should flag at a comparatively early stage the requirement for a Purchaser to make other enquiries or to press specific points with the Seller.

Question 16 – Management/Maintenance/Service Contracts

Self-explanatory request for all relevant contracts.

Question 17 – Staff/TUPE

This section asks to general questions in the general section of the Questionnaire. In the event that staff and transfer of undertakings regulations are an issue, Annexe 3 contains more detailed Questions and requests for information.

Question 18 – Tenancies

Question 18 is self-explanatory. If there are no occupational leases or other similar document, Annexe 4 can be ignored. Where the Property is affected by occupational leases, Annexe 4 should be completed.

Question 19 – Miscellaneous

This section specifically requests confirmation of who the Seller consulted in connection with preparation of the Replies. This will clarify, for example, whether parties such as managing agents who have not been consulted ought to be consulted to provide more detailed or relevant information.

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