

**HOUSING MARKET**

**Councils holding back recovery, says search firm**

● NATALIE HOLT

Private property search company OneSearch Direct has attacked local authorities for taking to up to 44 days to deliver property searches.

The firm analysed local authority information requests for June and compared how long it took councils to provide searches.

Among the worst culprits are London's Lambeth Council with an average turnaround time of 43.67

days, and Milton Keynes Council which takes an average of 29.35 days to turn searches around.

Ronnie Park, managing director of OneSearch Direct, says: "The ongoing battle between property search firms and local authorities is severely impeding the process and ultimately holding back housing market recovery."

But Jan Boothroyd, chief execu-

tive of Land Data, says the manual searches that OneSearch Direct refers to are time-consuming compared with electronic searches.

Boothroyd says: "National Land Information Service data shows that the same local authorities mentioned by OneSearch Direct turned around searches electronically over the same period in a fraction of the time."