

# INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION

## Procurement of Planning and Building Control database, Gazetteer management and associated modules/add-ons via CCS VAS Framework

### Report of Chief Officer Planning and Climate Change

PURPOSE OF REPORT			
That the Council intend to award a contract for the continued provision of its Uniform Planning and Building Control database and associated modules via a direct award under the CCS VAS Framework from 1 May 2024 for a 5-year term and that the authority to award the contract be delegated to the Chief Executive.			
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Non-Key Decision</b>	<b>Referral from Cabinet Member</b>
<b>Date of notice of forthcoming key decision</b>	21 December 2023		
<b>This report is public</b>			

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That following the Council award a contract via a direct award under the CCS VAS Framework from 1 May 2024 for a 5 year term.
- (2) That the authority to award the contract be delegated to the Chief Executive.

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Lancaster City Council uses the Idox and its Uniform software system as a comprehensive case management to administer all stages of the planning application, planning appeal, pre-application, planning enforcement and building regulation processes. Critically, the system is fully hosted in the cloud and it provides access to a depth of geospatial data that is critical for a modern local planning authority.

1.2 The current call off agreement with software provider Idox is due to expire at the end of April 2024 and the services need to be procured under a new framework.

#### 2.0 Functionality

2.1 Idox continues to be the industry leader amongst local planning authorities, with approximately 75% of the national market share of authorities using their cloud-hosted Uniform system. This system is constantly kept up to date with 2

major updates being delivered every year (for example, one of this year's updates includes incorporating changes to the system as a consequence of the new, national Biodiversity Net Gain requirements).

- 2.2 Uniform is delivered in partnership with ESRI, who provide direct linkage to their global mapping services and who are similarly a market leader. This partnership ensures that the authority benefits from real-time (i.e. live) mapping changes, including any Ordnance Survey updates.
- 2.3 A major part of the Uniform system is the improved Public Access to Planning system, which provides our residents with access to all planning applications and enables them to comment online. All planning records, site constraints mapping, letter/formal notice production, automated statutory consultation and history map plotting take place via this system. The Uniform system has provided a comprehensive approach to all of the Service's workstreams and has resulted in simpler work processes and improved public access.
- 2.4 Given that Idox Uniform with ESRI are at the forefront of data and mapping services for local planning authorities, and the level of support provided is excellent, there is no requirement to switch to a different provider. No other operator in the sector offers such a comprehensive product across all planning, building control, appeal, enforcement and plan-making activities.

### 3.0 Proposal Details

- 3.1 Subject to agreement of a waiver to procurement rules by the S151/MO that the Council utilise the Crown Commercial Services Vertical Application Solution (VAS) Framework lot 3 - Housing, Environmental and Planning Solution to procure IDOX for a 5 year term.

### 4.0 Details of Consultation

- 4.1 None - this would be a formal procurement exercise via a framework direct award.

### 5.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

	<b>Option 1:</b> Procure from the CCS VAS Framework using direct award to secure a 5 year term contract	<b>Option 2:</b> Procure from the CCS VAS Framework via further competition to all suppliers in the relevant LOT	<b>Option 3:</b> Council conducts its own open procurement exercise.
Advantages	Ensures continuation of service provision and allows the service to continue plans to expand and improve services improving functionality,	Provides opportunity for the Council to compare current service provision with other providers.	Provides an open opportunity to bid for the service

	streamlining and reducing administrative time for officers and members of the public.		
Disadvantages	No opportunity to review the wider marketplace through further competition.	Insufficient time and officer resource to complete when Service is satisfied with current products and a procurement compliant direct award route is available.	Insufficient time and officer resource to complete when Service is satisfied with current products and a procurement compliant direct award route is available.
Risks	That the Council is unable to complete the direct award exercise is sufficient time before the existing contract expires.	That the Council is unable to complete the direct award exercise is sufficient time before the existing contract expires.	That suitable submissions are not received.  That the Council is unable to complete the direct award exercise is sufficient time before the existing contract expires.

**6.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

The officer preferred option is Option 1.

**7.0 Conclusion**

The preferred option ensures that the Council secures its Planning and Building Control Services database and associated modules in order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities as Local Planning Authority and Building Control Authority. As well as to the continual improvement offered by regular updates to all modules throughout the year, the retention of this system continues to ensure that the local planning authority has access to the most up to date mapping , thus reducing the likelihood of out of date data.

**RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Corporate Priorities: The priorities directly contribute to the Council's approved priorities, which includes informing sustainable building methods and net zero carbon approaches in line with government guidance.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and concludes no adverse impact.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The officer has sought advice from the framework that a direct award is a compliant route under this framework and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Legal have been consulted throughout the process and have nothing further to add. If the proposal is approved a waiver from the Contract Procedure Rules will be required.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Reprofiling of the current budget over the next five years will result in an overall saving of £46.6K as tabled below.

	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
Current Budget	£126,400	£128,400	£130,200	£132,100	£134,000
EDMS contract	£78,200	£21,200	£22,000	£22,900	£23,800
IDOX contract	£79,000	£83,000	£87,100	£91,500	£96,000
<b>Variance</b>	<b>(£30,600)</b>	<b>£24,200</b>	<b>£21,100</b>	<b>£17,700</b>	<b>£14,200</b>

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS****Human Resources:**

n/a

**Information Services:**

Reduced reliance on IS for support and services related to current systems in addition to reduced license requirements creating further potential savings.

**Property:**

n/a

**Open Spaces:**

n/a

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no additional comments to add.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has nothing further to add noting the requirement for a waiver of the Council's contract procedure rules.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

n/a

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