

Report to	Policy & Programme Committee
Date	25 May 2017
By	ICT Strategy Manager
Title of Report	Planning Administration Systems

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Agree that SDNPA aim to consolidate into a single contract the existing Planning Administration System contracts that are due to expire on 31 March 2018.**
- 2) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to undertake the procurement process, to involve a competitive process carried out under the terms of the Crown Commercial Services Framework agreement, and award the contract(s) for the Planning Administration Systems .**

1. Summary and Background

- 1.1 South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the statutory planning authority for the National Park and is the 8th largest planning authority in the country in terms of the number of planning applications received each year.

Idox Ltd are the current supplier of the systems that SDNPA and its partner authorities (under delegated arrangements) use to deliver the administration of planning and other applications across the National Park.

The current contracts with Idox Ltd are coming to an end on 31st March 2018 and new contractual arrangements need to be in place by 1st April 2018.

2. Current Services & Products contracted with Idox Ltd

Description

- 1) Hosted infrastructure
- 2) Uniform Software suite
- 3) Uniform Upgrades & Patches
- 4) Maintenance
- 5) Public Access
- 6) Consultee Access
- 7) Document Management System (including hosting)
- 8) Scanning Managed Service
- 9) Redaction Licences
- 10) Exacom CIL software

- 2.1 The first six lines in the table above are currently delivered under a single contract and now is an opportunity to consolidate (where possible) the additional products and services listed, which notably includes the Scanning Managed Service, into a single contract.
- 2.2 Based upon figures from the current contracts the estimated value of the consolidated contract over a period of four years is £752,000.

3. Hosting Options

- 3.1 The principle hosting consideration is simply whether to host any solution in-house or not. Given the size of the organisation, SDNPA will never be in a position to purchase and maintain a fully supported, robust and resilient IT infrastructure of its own, so in order to take advantage of highly efficient and highly available platforms the strategy at SDNPA has, for some time, been to use hosted and/or cloud services wherever possible.
- 3.2 The secondary hosting consideration that follows is whether to host the solution with the system supplier or on the infrastructure of another third-party provider. Hosting on the infrastructure of the system supplier is preferable as the support model is much simpler and exposes SDNPA to significantly less risk. The supplier themselves are generally best able to provide the most robust and timely support (of what is their system) at every level of the solution from the base infrastructure, rising up through the various software and technology components to the delivered user interface(s). The alternative where the system supplier supports the system remotely on the infrastructure of another third party introduces much more complexity, and consequently risk, into the support model of what is a business critical system for SDNPA.

Note, the infrastructure supplied by SystemHOST to support SDNPA's file and mail servers isn't suitable for the purpose of hosting of our business critical planning system as the contract with SystemHOST wasn't scoped with that in mind.

- 3.3 The current systems are in a hosted environment being supported and maintained by the same supplier, Idox Ltd, and have proven to be extremely robust and reliable.

4. Scanning

- 4.1 Approximately 60% of applications are now received through the Planning Portal and the Scanning Managed Service ensures that these documents are indexed and stored into a document management system (DMS) that is accessible by the planning system and are available for access by the public after review by the relevant support team.
- 4.2 The solution currently in place is extremely well 'joined up' and successfully delivers the above functionality albeit under separate contractual arrangements with the same supplier. Tight integration of the systems for document capture, storage and subsequent access is a key requirement and separation of the above elements into multiple contracts with different suppliers is something we seek to avoid as it would introduce complexity, and consequently risk, into the support model of what is a business critical system for SDNPA.

5. Supplier Options

- 5.1 Whilst IDOX Ltd are the current supplier, there are other suppliers that may potentially be capable of providing a suitable planning solution and they include:

- Arcus Global Ltd
- DEF Software Ltd
- Tascomi Ltd.
- Agile Applications Ltd
- Civica UK Ltd

- 5.2 SDNPA has quite unique requirements of a planning system and it is essential that any proposed solution:
- a) is able to accommodate the seamless processing of large numbers of planning applications by local host authorities on behalf of SDNPA using SI01 agreements.
 - b) is hosted by the supplier.
 - c) includes tight integration between the component systems of the proposed solution.
 - d) includes details with costings of the migration path from the existing solution to any proposed new solution and should include, but not be exclusive to, data transfer and training for a wide user base.

6. Risks in changing the Solution

- 6.1 Changing the solution that is critical to the delivery of SDNPA's Purposes and Duty would come with significant risks including, but not limited to, the following:
- a) Data problems resulting from the transition – missing, different and/or inconsistent.
 - b) Reporting problems resulting from the transition - delays, inconsistencies and/or unavailability.
 - c) Planning application information for staff, hosted authorities, Members and/or the public not being available, or delayed, when required.
- 6.2 Should a new supplier be chosen it will be ensured that appropriate mitigations to all the identified risks are put in place.

7. Route to Procurement

- 7.1 The Crown Commercial Services framework contract 'RM1059 Local Authority Software Applications' will be used. A mini-competition will be held that allows suppliers who have signed up to the framework to propose a solution that meets our unique requirements.
- 7.2 The evaluation criteria that will be used are defined within the framework contract.

8. Other Implications

Implication	Yes/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Yes – as is generally the case, the procurement process will require the input of time by SDNPA officers but this will be absorbed within the current staffing levels.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The use of a Crown Commercial Services framework and a mini-competition ensures that competitive proposals are openly sought from suppliers that have signed and accepted the terms and conditions of the pre-negotiated framework agreement.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Has due regard been taken of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes – it will be ensured that public access elements of the contract are compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None.
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy: 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance	Having robust planning systems in place contributes towards principles 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. 1 – applications recorded in the systems are considered against environmental factors. 2 – officers use the data recorded in the systems to consider the environmental impact on the health and wellbeing of the communities.

5. Using sound science responsibly	<p>3 – the systems are used to determine applications that can benefit local and regional economies.</p> <p>4 – the systems are used to meet and follow statutory provisions.</p> <p>5 – applications recorded in the systems are considered against environmental factors using professional feedback from ecologists, water authorities and the Environment Agency.</p>
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9. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
The price objectives aren't achieved up front or costs arise during the term of the awarded contract.	Low	High	An outcome based specification will be used for suppliers to develop their costed proposals against. A mini-competition using a Crown Commercial Service framework contract will help achieve our price objective.
Inability to specify the desired outcomes or suppliers on the market being able to deliver to the specification.	Low	High	The incumbent supplier (Idox Ltd) has shown that the required outcomes are deliverable in the current contracts. Other suppliers in the market are signed up to a framework contract from Crown Commercial Services who are potentially able to deliver the outcomes required.
The supplier fails to deliver the required outcomes over the course of the contract.	Low	High	Key Performance Indicators and regular service monitoring will be used to monitor performance over the term of the contract.
Unable to remedy the shortcomings in the contractors' performance without severely damaging the contract and unable to avoid relying on the contracted supplier as the contract develops.	Low	High	This is difficult to mitigate effectively with a contract of this nature – several suppliers are in the market but switching suppliers at any time, mid-contract or otherwise, would be both difficult and costly.

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SDNPA Consultees	Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services
External Consultees	None.