

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE	DATE 21/09/2023
TITLE Direct award of contract to Idox Software Ltd	WARD(S) All
CHIEF OFFICER Director of Finance	CABINET MEMBER Finance, Resources & Social Value
DECISION CLASSIFICATION Non-key decision Not subject to call-in Non-exempt appendix	IS THE FINAL DECISION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS REPORT TO BE MADE AT THIS MEETING? Yes

1. **Decision required**

This report makes the following recommendations to the decision-maker:

- 1.1 To approve a waiver from Contract Standing Order (CSO) 7 and award a 12-month contract without competition to Idox Software Ltd (company registration number 02933889) in accordance with CSO12.1(a) ('where additional deliveries by the original supplier are required') for the provision of the Authority's Community Directory.
- 1.2 To note that the contract value is £37,436 for one year.
- 1.3 To further note that the contract period will commence from 29 September 2023 till 28 September 2024.

Agreed/Not Agreed..... 

Date:

Damon Cook, Director of Finance

2. **Links to Our Greenwich missions**

2.1 This report relates to the Council's agreed missions as follows:

- People's health supports them in living their best life
- Those in financial need can access the right support, advice and opportunities to improve their situation
- Children and young people can reach their full potential
- Neighbourhoods are vibrant, safe and attractive with community services that meet the needs of local residents
- The voluntary, community and socially motivated sectors in Greenwich are strengthened and able to provide more support to the most in need

2.2 The Greenwich Community Directory is provided by the council, and contains details of local services provided by the public, private, and voluntary sectors to help residents live well. These services are quite broad, ranging from childminding to advocacy, from care homes to exercise groups, from help with filling in forms to the SEND Local Offer.

2.3 The Community Directory is used by residents, officers, and social prescribers to connect residents in need of support to the right organisations.

3. **Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

3.1 This report seeks permission in accordance with to CSO 12.1a to award a contract to Idox Software Ltd without competition.

3.2 A team in Digital has been working on an in-house Community Directory to replace the product supplied by Idox Software. However, this project has been delayed.

- 3.3 The Directory is a legal obligation on the Authority, and as a result, the contract should be renewed for one year so that legal obligations can be met. At the end of this additional year, the in-house Directory will be in place.

4. **Introduction and Background**

- 4.1 The Community Directory currently provided by Idox Software Ltd for Royal Greenwich is known to have several issues. It is not user friendly or built to modern standards, and the information contained in the Directory is not kept up to date by service providers because they find it difficult to use.
- 4.2 The Digital team has set up a project to replace the directory with one built in-house, to modern standards and with a fresh look in line with our new corporate website. This project is using an open-source product and is part of a wider project on directories with other councils. DLUHC has funded the majority of the work.
- 4.3 The project timetable has slipped due to circumstances outside the control of the project team, and it is agreed that the team cannot have the new Directory ready in time for contract expiry on 29 September 2023. This is despite the best efforts and risk mitigations of the team.

5. **Available Options**

- 5.1 Option 1 – Do nothing. This is not an option as the Authority would then not have a community directory, which is a legal requirement.
- 5.2 Option 2 – Procure on the open market. While this may potentially result in a more attractive price, this option is ruled out because:
- there is not enough time to run an open tender or framework exercise before the expiry of the current contract;
 - even on the basis of a “three quotes” exercise, the time available would be not enough to mobilise a supplier other than the incumbent.

- 5.3 Option 3 – approve a waiver to allow a direct award for one year to the incumbent provider (Idox Software Ltd) as an interim arrangement to allow enough time for the Council to bring this service in-house.

6. **Preferred Option**

- 6.1 Option 3 – Approve a waiver to allow a direct award to the incumbent supplier, Idox Software Ltd. This will give continuity of service with no mobilisation period, while giving the project team the necessary time to complete the new product. This can be done quite quickly, and a quotation has already been received.

7. **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 7.1 A direct award through a waiver is the least-risky option to ensure the Authority meets its legal obligations to provide a Community Directory. It will ensure continuity of service with a supplier with whom we have had a long relationship and have been working with on the build of the new in-house directory.
- 7.2 The project team has been managing the risk of not meeting the contract deadline very closely over the last months and have used several other levers to reduce the risk. For example, the minimum viable product (MVP) has been simplified and additional people have been brought into the team.
- 7.3 However, the team has experienced a number of blockers which have slowed them down. One example is the availability of the AWS hosting platform; the team could not do its first deployment until late July. As we are now in the holiday season, capacity is also reduced.
- 7.4 The team has also had to forge a new path in many areas. The underlying technology stack is completely new to RBG and that has come with a learning curve. It is also our first project to need a Design System, and the team has needed to create that as well as the Directory; this is also a new toolset that developers have had to learn. The team should be proud of what they have achieved.
- 7.5 These delays and blockers have shifted the timetable by about two months, which is longer than we have before the contract expires.

Without an extension, the Authority will be in breach of its legal obligation to provide a directory of community services.

- 7.6 The team is confident that the Idox service can be withdrawn in its entirety around early summer 2024. The additional time may allow the team to restore some features to its planned MVP and will allow for more usability testing with residents and officers before it is released.
- 7.7 To balance the expenditure on the Idox contract, the team will look to see where savings could be made, such as reducing the involvement of contractors.

8. **Consultation Results**

- 8.1 No consultation has taken place, beyond discussions between the Head of Product and the digital team. Stakeholders in Public Health & Adults and in Children’s & Families will be informed.

9. **Cross-Cutting Issues and Implications**

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Legal including Human Rights Act</p>	<p><i>The Director of Finance is requested to authorise the award of a contract without competition to Idox Software Limited for 12-month term from 29 September 2023 for the values as set out in the report in accordance with Contract Standing Order 12.1(a) competition is absent for technical reasons (to ensure inter-operability with previous work).</i></p> <p>Compliance with Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) and Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCRs)</p>	<p>Mohammed Patel, Contracts and Procurement Lawyer</p> <p>06/09/2023</p>

CSO 3.1 states that every contract made by or on behalf of the Council must comply with National Law, these Standing Orders and the Council's Financial Regulations.

This procurement process falls outside the Public Contract Regulations (PCRs) 2015 as the overall contract value for this contract award is below the relevant FTS threshold for services contract.

CSO 13.2 states that Chief Officers may enter into contracts where the estimated value is:

- £25,000 or more but less than the relevant National threshold for a services or supplies contract, and up to £500,000 for works contract, after seeking at least 4 written quotations. Two of the firms to be invited to quote should be from local firms in accordance with Standing Order 13.3.*

CSO 12.1(a) provides that competition is not required where a waiver from compliance with CSO 13.2 is granted under CSO 7 in one or more of the circumstances set out in CSO 12.1 (a), In this case, the report outlines that competition is absent due to technical reasons so as to ensure interoperability of Idox's previous work.

	<p>Best Value</p> <p><i>Under the Local Government Act 1999 the Council is required to achieve best value in the exercise of its functions. In reaching a decision, the Chief Officer must take into account the reasons for the award of this contract as set out in the body of Report and the Council's fiduciary duty to achieve Best Value.</i></p> <p>Human Rights</p> <p><i>Under the Human Rights Act 1998 local authorities have a duty to promote and protect human rights. The award of this contract does not have legal implications under the Human Rights Act 1998.</i></p> <p>Consult with Legal</p> <p><i>No further action necessary.</i></p>	
<p>Finance and other resources</p>	<p>This report requests that the Director of Finance approves the direct award for the provision of the Council's Community Directory for a one-year period to the incumbent provider, Idox Software Ltd, in accordance with CSO 12.1a. This is an interim arrangement to allow enough time for the Council to bring this service in-house.</p>	<p>Margaret Barrow</p> <p>Business Change Manager</p> <p>30/08/23</p>

	The contract will commence on the 29 th September 2023 and terminate on the 28 th September 2024. The cost of this extension will be £37,436 and can be contained within the current Digital Services funding envelope.	
Equalities	<p>The decision recommended through this paper has a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no apparent equality impact on end users.</p> <p>This report does not contribute to the Council's Equality and Equity Charter and the Council's Equality Objectives 2020-2024.</p>	<p>Darren McCormac</p> <p>Snr Delivery Manager</p> <p>17 Aug. 2023</p>
Climate change	This report does not contribute to the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan agreed by Cabinet on 18 November 2020.	<p>Darren McCormac</p> <p>Snr Delivery Manager</p> <p>17 Aug. 2023</p>
Procurement & Social Value	<p>Procurement endorses the recommendation to seek for a waiver via a direct award to Idox Ltd (the incumbent provider) to allow the Council, bring this service in-house within the year.</p> <p>Social Value: Not required for this contract.</p>	<p>Shola Oke</p> <p>Senior Strategic Procurement Business Partner for Children's Services, Digital & Finance.</p> <p>29.08.23</p>

Digital	<p>This decision will support the current direction of travel of developing an in-house Greenwich Community Directory and the underlying technology to allow community organisation and service providers to list their services more easily.</p> <p>We have already got DLUHC funding to deliver this with a provisional go-live period before the end of 2023.</p> <p>Extending the IDOX contract will give us the time required to complete the product and content migration.</p>	<p>Kit Collingwood Assistant Director, Digital and Customer Services 23/08/23</p>
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11. Report Appendices

11.1 There are no appendices

12. Background Papers

12.1 There are no background papers.

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