Report to CABINET

Contractual Arrangement – IDOX Uniform Case Management Software

Portfolio Holder:

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2 November 2026

Reason for Decision

The Council's contract with IDOX LTD for the Uniform application is due for renewal. This report seeks approval to enter into a 36-month contract with IDOX LTD procured via Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Framework Agreement ID RM6259.

Executive Summary

Approval is sought to enter into a 3-year contract with Idox for the provision of the Uniform and TLC software solutions. Uniform is a business-critical application supporting a range of statutory regulatory services. The system is deeply integrated within existing business processes and technology platforms and contains significant volumes of operational and historical data. Transition to an alternative solution would result in substantial cost, resource requirements, and operational risk. Continued use of Idox Uniform and TLC ensures service continuity, maintains compliance with statutory obligations and provides ongoing access to supplier support, maintenance and product enhancements.

IDOX have confirmed that the annual cost of the system through the CCS Framework. The contract will maintain all existing services, support, and maintenance arrangements without any reduction in service provision.

In addition, two new modules are required to support reporting of data and statistics from Uniform and to monitor and manage the new Building Safety Levy:

- Idox Insights; and
- Exacom Building Safety Levy module.

Recommendations

To approve a 3-year direct award contract with IDOX Ltd via Crown Commercial Framework RM6259, including two additional modules.

Contractual Arrangement – IDOX Uniform Case Management Software

1 Background

1.1 In 2018, approval was granted for the migration from the Acolaid system to Idox Uniform. The Council subsequently entered into a three-year contract with Idox Software Ltd in November 2018. Since then, two contracts have been agreed, with the most recent extension coming to an end on 29 November 2026.

1.2 The migration project took longer than originally anticipated due to challenges associated with extracting data from Acolaid and mapping it accurately into Uniform. Following successful implementation, Uniform was approved to go live in October 2020 and has since become a business-critical application for Oldham Council. The system provides case management functionality for Planning, Building Control and Land Charges services.

1.3 Over the past eight years, the Council has made significant investment in the Uniform platform, including user training, software patches, and both minor and major version upgrades. This investment has ensured the system remains secure, up to date, and aligned with service requirements, while embedding Uniform within the Council's operational processes.

1.4 Having an appropriate software such as Idox Uniform and its associated programs (such as TLC for Land Charges) is crucial to delivering the council services that use the software, and those council services are all essential in delivering the Corporate Plan and its Priorities. Therefore, this contract is necessary to help deliver the Corporate Plan and its Priorities.

1.5 There are no new IT implications arising from this decision as it continues the Council's existing Idox Uniform arrangements and does not introduce a new system or immediate technology change. The renewal will maintain a secure, supported and resilient business-critical service while the Council reviews its future requirements and considers longer-term options. This supports the Council's Digital, Data and Technology Strategy by protecting service continuity and existing data in the short term, while providing the time needed to ensure any future solution is appropriately governed and aligned with the Council's plans for modern cloud-based, integrated and resident-focused services.

2 Current Position

2.1 The Council requires continued access to a Business-critical piece of software and to ensure continuity of service; approval is sought to enter into a new 3-year contract.

2.2 For information, the Council intends to review its requirements over the coming months with a view to initiating a project to define its future needs and commence a procurement exercise.

2.3 Given the timescales typically associated with a procurement of this nature, including requirements gathering, pre-market engagement, completion of the procurement process,

data migration, and implementation, it is anticipated that the end-to-end process will take approximately 24 months.

2.4 Therefore, the intention is to agree a three-year contract term with IDOX to ensure continuity of service for the Council while this work is undertaken. This approach will provide sufficient time to complete the review, procurement, and implementation of activities (including transfer of data should an alternative provider ultimately be identified) without introducing undue service or operational risk.

2.5 In addition to renewing the contract with IDOX for services and software as already provided, there are two additional modules that the council require to improve the services supported by Uniform and to meet a new legislative requirement (the Building Safety Levy).

2.7 The Idox Insights module is an add-on module to the standard system that allows better extraction, reporting and monitoring of data from Uniform (for both Planning and Building Control). Once set up, officers will be able to extract all data fields from Uniform and do so more easily, allowing more comprehensive monitoring of data related to applications for reporting on service improvement. At the moment, officers cannot extract all data fields, and those they can require manual extraction, requiring significant officer time to achieve.

2.8 Exacom (a separate software provider) have created a module to manage the new Building Safety Levy for local authorities that is compatible with Uniform (linking Building Control application data to the Building Safety Levy charges) and available through Idox. The Building Safety Levy is being introducing from October 2026 to place a levy on developments of 10 or more homes that will help fund the removal of unsafe cladding from historic developments following the findings resulting from the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. Local Authorities are required to collect the Levy through Building Regulations before passing to the Government on a quarterly basis, but they can retain funds from the Levy to cover the costs they have incurred in managing the Levy (such as this Exacom software) and new burdens funding has been provided to help the set-up of the Levy.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1. Approve direct award and enter into a 3-year contract with IDOX and include the Technical Managed Service. In addition, purchase and install the two additional modules for Idox Insights and Exacom Building Safety Levy.

This is the preferred option addressed in this report.

Option 2. Approve direct award and enter into a 3-year contract with IDOX and not include the technical managed service. In addition, purchase and install the two additional modules for Idox Insights and Exacom Building Safety Levy.

This option is not recommended as the management of this bespoke software by the council independent of the provider Idox would be challenging and the benefits of a Technical Managed Service from Idox would result in less disruption, and a smoother running, of the software than if we managed the technical updates and issues that arise ourselves.

Option 3. Go out to market for a new application

This option is not recommended. There is insufficient time to undertake a full Procurement exercise before the existing arrangements expire. In addition, replacing a business-critical application would result in significant procurement, implementation, and change management costs.

The IDOX system is deeply embedded within the Council's service delivery and operational processes. Implementing a replacement solution would require a comprehensive transition plan, including detailed requirements of gathering, procurement, configuration, testing, data migration, user training, and post-implementation support. Developing and delivering such a transition programme would take considerably longer than the time currently available and could introduce significant operational and service continuity risks.

Proceeding with a new system at this stage could therefore adversely impact service delivery and place additional pressure on both service and ICT resources. As a result, this option is considered impractical at the present time and does not represent a viable solution without a substantially longer lead-in period.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1. Approve direct award and enter into a 3-year contract with IDOX and include the Technical Managed Service.

5 Consultation

5.1 N/A

6 Financial Implications

6.1 Financial Implications are covered in the Part B report.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council may enter into a call-off contract under an appropriate framework agreement, subject to compliance with the framework requirements and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. Contract documentation should be completed prior to commencement of the new arrangements.

Sukie Kaur – Solicitor

8. Procurement Implications

8.1 Commercial Procurement Unit supports the recommendation: approve a direct award to IDOX Software Ltd for the continued provision, support, maintenance, and associated managed services for the Uniform software solution through the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Vertical Application Solutions Framework Agreement RM6259, Start date 07/03/2023 End date 06/03/2027 Regulation PCR2015 Agreement type PCR15 Framework.

8.2 Uniform is a business-critical system supporting a range of regulatory and environmental services functions, including planning, building control, licensing, land charges, and related service areas. The system is deeply integrated into existing business processes and contains significant volumes of operational and historical data essential to service

delivery. IDOX is the incumbent supplier, software owner, and sole provider of the Uniform application and associated proprietary support services. The CCS Vertical Application Solutions Framework (RM6259) provides a compliant route to market for the procurement of software solutions, support, maintenance, and associated professional services, including through direct award where the framework criteria are met. Uniform is a critical operational system that supports statutory services. A direct award ensures continuity of service, minimises operational disruption, and maintains access to essential supplier expertise. Any transition to an alternative solution would involve significant implementation of risk, resource requirements, retraining costs, and potential impacts on frontline service delivery. IDOX owns the intellectual property rights to the Uniform platform and is uniquely positioned to provide software updates, security patches, maintenance, and technical support. As the original developer and provider, IDOX possesses the specialist knowledge required to maintain and optimise the system effectively. Procuring through the CCS RM6259 Framework enables the Council to access pre-competed framework rates and terms, providing assurance that pricing has been benchmarked through a compliant public procurement process. The direct award represents value for money when considering the significant costs and risks associated with replacing the existing system, including procurement, implementation, migration, data conversion, testing, and user training. CCS Framework RM6259 explicitly permits purchasing through either direct award or further competition depending on customer requirements. The framework has been established specifically for sector-focused software solutions and includes support and maintenance services relevant to local authority systems such as Uniform.

8.3 The direct award to IDOX through CCS Framework RM6259 is justified on the grounds of business continuity, technical necessity, operational risk mitigation, and value for money. The arrangement provides a compliant procurement route while ensuring the continued support and effective operation of a business-critical system that underpins key statutory and regulatory services. The proposed contract represents the most economically advantageous and lowest-risk option for the Council.

8.4 Commercial Procurement Unit will ensure all required notices are published in accordance with PCR2015 Regulations

Senga Henstock, ICT Senior Buyer, 3rd September 2026

9 **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young People**

9.1 No

Key Decision

10.1 Yes

11 **Key Decision Reference**

11.1 KDD-26-03

12 **Background Papers**

Not Applicable

13 **Appendices**

Not Applicable