

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

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### **SUBJECT: DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

#### Purpose of Report

To seek approval to proceed with the purchase of a document management system to enable the planning function to operate more efficiently and to provide for full online public access to planning applications.

#### Background

The Development Management department at the National Park Authority currently does not have a document management system (DMS), to allow online public access to planning applications. PCNPA currently make plans relating to major planning applications available via a direct link from the website, however, the details of the majority of applications are not available electronically for inspection due to the absence of a DMS. PCNPA are one of only three Welsh Local Planning Authorities remaining which does not yet provide this service. The provision of such a facility is seen as been an indicator of a good planning service by Welsh Government.

#### What will the DMS do?

A DMS would allow for following improvements to the Development Management service:-

- Enable details and plans of all planning applications to be electronically available via the website resulting in an improved level of customer service;
- Enable officers to work remotely; and
- Efficiencies in procedure – reduction in printing/postage, file storage etc.

The Development Management and IT departments have attended presentations from two DMS providers, Idox and Agile. Both providers offered a similar product, however it is considered that the most appropriate and cost effective system for PCNPA is Agile. Agile is the existing provider for the 'back-office' system used within the Development Management department. It is, therefore, considered that by using the DMS provided by Agile there will be less disruption to service during its implementation. Additionally, Pembrokeshire County Council and Snowdonia National Park also use Agile for their 'back office' systems, which will provide continued opportunities for shared working.

#### Hosting the service

To maximize efficiency of use, it is proposed that whilst this DMS is being installed we also take the opportunity of introducing additional equipment which will allow officers to undertake remote working.

### Financial Considerations

The awarding of all contracts in excess of £25,000 is subject to the Authority's financial regulations relating to Major Contracts and the awarding of this contract will require a suspension of this regulation. Ensuring that the DMS being purchased is compatible with our existing system has limited our options. While we have reviewed alternative options and given consideration to introducing a whole new system it is considered that the most effective approach is to recommended staying with APAS and purchasing the bolt-on DMS.

The cost of the DMS is set out below:-

<b>Product/Service</b>	<b>Implementation (£)</b>	<b>Maintenance (£)</b>
Trapeze ( document Management system)	20,100	2,012
Hosting	11,600	10,120
Audit	3,500	
Improvement days	8,000	
Remote working equipment/scanning	<b>20,000</b>	
	<b>63,200</b>	<b>12,132</b>

### Risk considerations

The reputation of the Park Authority is a consideration in respect of the level of customer service provided in terms of public access to its planning service.

While there is the potential for hosting costs increase overtime, we are in dialogue with other users to develop joint approaches in the future.

### Equality considerations

Online access to planning applications will increase accessibility to the general public.

### Conclusion

The implementation of a document management system will improve PCNPA customer service and provide efficiencies within the development management department. It will bring it in line with most other local planning authorities in Wales.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Members resolve to approve the variation to financial standards and the request to purchase of a document management system and ancillary items/equipment for the Development Management service as set out in the above report.**

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