

Freedom of Information – Response – 27090

I am writing to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. To make this as straightforward as possible to respond to, I have set out the request in a numbered questionnaire format below. Where a question asks for a document, please provide a copy in electronic format.

Please note that this request relates specifically to the software systems used by your **Regulatory/Environmental/Planning Services** teams for processing applications (commonly referred to as the “back-office system”).

Section A – Current System

1. What is the name of the back-office software system currently used by your planning service for processing planning applications?

(e.g. Idox Uniform, Agile Planning, DEF, Arcus, Northgate M3, BOPS, other)

Answer: MasterGov – supplied by DEF Software Ltd

2. What version of this software is currently in use?

Answer: v02.0700

3. How is the system hosted? Please select one:

- On-premise (hosted on council servers)
- Cloud-hosted by the software supplier
- Cloud-hosted by a third-party provider
- Other (please specify): _____

4. What date did the current system go live at your authority?

Answer: November 2018

5. Which of the following services or functions use the current back-office system? Please tick all that apply:

- Planning application processing (householder)
- Planning application processing (major)
- Planning application processing (minor / other)
- Planning enforcement
- Planning appeals
- Pre-application advice
- Planning policy / local plan monitoring
- Building control
- Land charges
- Tree preservation orders
- Listed building consents
- Conservation area consents
- Environmental health
- Licensing

Other (please specify): _____ S106 Legal Agreements, Road Adoption (S278 and S38 Legal Agreements and LPA response module _____

Section B — Contract and Costs

6. What is the start date of the current contract?

Answer: ___ 14/11/2024 _____

7. What is the end date of the current contract (excluding any extension options)?

Answer: ___ 13/11/2026 _____

8. Does the contract include options to extend? If so:

(a) How many extension periods are available and of what duration?

Answer: ___ 2 extensions of 12 months each _____

(b) Have any extensions already been exercised?

Yes (please state how many and the revised end date): _____

No

(c) What are the cost implications of each extension period? Is the extension at the same annual rate, or does the cost change?

Answer: ___ Same as the annual rate _____

9. What is the total contract value over the full contract term (Please set out costs for any extension periods separately)?

£: _£102,496 for 2-year contract and £45,590 for first 12-month extension and £46,509 for second 12-month extension if required _____

10. What is the current annual cost of the system to the authority? Please break down if possible:

(a) Annual licence / subscription fee: £ ___ User licences £7500 one off charge _____

(b) Annual support and maintenance fee: £ ___ 45,590 _____

(c) Annual hosting fee (if separate): £ ___ n/a _____

(d) Any other recurring annual costs (please specify): £ ___ n/a _____

11. Please provide a copy of the current contract (or most recent contract) between the authority and the back-office system supplier, including any schedules, service level agreements, and data processing agreements.

12. Please provide a copy of any variation agreements, change orders, or contract extension agreements that have been executed since the original contract was signed.

Section C — Procurement

13. How was the current contract procured? Please select one:

Open tender

Restricted procedure

Framework call-off (please specify which framework): Schedule 6 VAS(Vertical Application Solutions) Framework _____

Direct award - from the VAS framework

Other (please specify): _____

14. Is a reprourement or contract renewal currently planned or underway?

Yes — please provide the expected procurement timetable: _____

No — please state when reprourement is next expected: 2028

15. Has the authority undertaken any market testing, soft market testing, or preliminary market engagement in relation to the future procurement of planning back-office systems in the last 24 months?

Yes (please provide details or a copy of any published notice)

No

Section D — Project Delivery and Transition

16. Was the current back-office system delivered and go-live achieved on time against the originally agreed project timetable?

Yes

No — please state how long the project was delayed beyond the original go-live date:

(e.g. 3 months, 6 months, over 12 months)

17. Was it necessary to run the previous back-office system and the new system simultaneously during the transition period (parallel running)?

Yes

No

If yes:

(a) How long did the parallel running period last? _____

(b) What was the additional cost of maintaining the previous system during this period?

£ _____

(c) Were there any additional licence, hosting, or support fees payable to the previous supplier during parallel running? If so, how much? £ _____

18. When the authority transitioned off the previous back-office system, did the previous supplier charge any exit fees, data extraction fees, or any other costs associated with the transition away from their system?

Yes

No

If yes:

(a) What was the total amount charged? £ _____

(b) Please provide a breakdown of what the charges were for (e.g. data extraction, data migration support, early termination, licence wind-down): _____

(c) Were these charges set out in the original contract, or were they imposed at the point of exit?

Section E — Integration and Third-Party Access

19. Does the current system receive planning applications electronically from the Planning Portal via a direct feed / connector (sometimes referred to as the “1APP feed” or “Submit-a-Plan” connector)?

Yes

No — please describe how Planning Portal applications are received: _____

20. Does the current system receive applications (whether planning, building control, licensing or any other) electronically from any source other than the Planning Portal?

Yes (please specify which sources): __Pre-applications submitted through SC web page_____

No

21. Has the authority received any request from a third-party submission platform (other than the Planning Portal) to integrate with or submit applications to your back-office system in the last 12 months?

Yes (please provide details of the request and the authority's response)

No

22. Has the back-office system supplier indicated any restrictions on third-party platforms integrating with or submitting data to the system?

Yes (please provide details or a copy of any relevant correspondence)

No

Have not made that request to our supplier.

Section F — Performance and Issues

23. Please provide a list of currently open / unresolved support tickets, issues, or service requests logged with the back-office system supplier as at the date of this request. For each, please provide:

(a) A brief description of the issue

(b) The date it was first reported

(c) The current status (e.g. open, in progress, awaiting supplier response)

(d) The priority or severity level assigned

24. How many support tickets or service requests have been logged with the back-office system supplier in the last 12 months?

Answer: 83

25. Has the authority experienced any unplanned system outages or significant service disruptions in the last 12 months?

Yes — how many, and what was the total downtime? __1 outage lasted 2 days_____

No

26. Has the authority formally escalated any performance, service, or contractual issue with the back-office system supplier in the last 24 months?

Yes (please provide details or a copy of any relevant correspondence)

No

Section G — Digital Planning Programme and Open Digital Planning

27. Is the authority a member of, or participant in, the Open Digital Planning (ODP) programme (formerly known as the RIPA / BOPS / PlanX programme)?

Yes — please state when the authority joined and in what capacity (e.g. funded council, pathfinder, associate member): _____

No

28. How much funding has the authority received from MHCLG (or its predecessor departments) for digital planning programmes in total, and for each programme or grant individually? Please list each programme, the amount received, and the period it covered:

(e.g. RIPA funding, Local Digital Fund, PropTech Innovation Fund, ODP pathfinder funding, Planning Software Improvement Fund, or any other MHCLG digital/planning technology grant)

n/a no funding provided

(a) Programme name: ___n/a_____ Amount received: £ _____
Period: _____

(b) Programme name: _____ Amount received: £ _____
Period: _____

(c) Programme name: _____ Amount received: £ _____
Period: _____

(d) (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Total MHCLG digital planning funding received: £ ___n/a_____

29. For each programme or grant listed in question 28, how much of the funding has been spent to date, and on what? Please provide a breakdown by programme:

(a) Programme name: ___n/a_____ Amount spent to date:
£ _____

Brief description of what the funding was spent on: _____

(b) Programme name: _____ Amount spent to date:
£ _____

Brief description of what the funding was spent on: _____

(c) (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Not applicable — the authority has not received any MHCLG digital planning funding

Note on exemptions

I understand that some of the information requested may be subject to exemptions under the Act, in particular the commercial interests exemption under section 43(2). However, I would ask that the authority applies the public interest test to any proposed exemption, noting that there is a strong public interest in transparency around public expenditure on technology systems and the extent to which incumbent suppliers may restrict competition in the planning technology market.

Scope and cost

If any part of this request is unclear, or if you anticipate that responding would exceed the cost limit under section 12, I would be happy to discuss narrowing the scope. I would prefer to receive a partial response rather than a refusal on cost grounds.

FOI_Mastergov open tickets_300326_To Send.xlsx

Summary	Status	Created	Priority
Application response - record deletion	Waiting for support	30-Mar-2026	Medium
MasterGov Fatal Error	Awaiting Patch	25-Mar-2026	Medium
Fw: New comments for application	Waiting for customer	19-Mar-2026	Medium
Accessing Confluence	Waiting for customer	27-Feb-2026	Medium
Data Error - expression types must match	Waiting for customer	29-Jan-2026	Medium
Unable to paste images into word documents in Application Response	Waiting for support	21-Jan-2026	Medium
QGIS not loading	Waiting for customer	13-Jan-2026	Medium
Shutdown Event Tracker message when logging in	Waiting for support	12-Jan-2026	Medium
RE: IT-8874 GUI issue on Legal Agreement search output	Resolution Provided	24-Dec-2025	Medium
Filing on documents tab - additional folders created (LA module)	Waiting for support	23-Dec-2025	Medium
QGIS - not opening	Waiting for customer	19-Dec-2025	Medium
.msg files not converting to .pdf files when uploaded	Waiting for customer	15-Dec-2025	Medium
Problems with mgov	Waiting for customer	12-Dec-2025	Medium
SQL report query	Waiting for customer	7-Nov-2025	Medium
MasterGov Error Message - Application Response	Waiting for customer	6-Nov-2025	Medium
FATAL DISK ERROR	Waiting for customer	26-Sep-2025	Medium
Obligation lines not updating in Legal Agreements Module	Resolution Provided	22-Sep-2025	Medium
Issue with 1APP Import	Waiting for customer	15-Sep-2025	Medium
Address Tab add person opening full screen	Waiting for customer	12-Aug-2025	Medium
word not working for some officers in letters	Waiting for customer	10-Jul-2025	Medium
some merge fields not working	Waiting for customer	2-Jul-2025	Medium
Automatic highways selection	Waiting for support	6-Jun-2025	Medium
Application Response - Standard Paragraphs list missing from template	Waiting for customer	30-Apr-2025	Medium
Unable to open e-mail attachment when filed in documents	Waiting For Build	4-Mar-2025	Medium
Issues with 1APP uploading new application from Planning Portal	Waiting for customer	27-Feb-2025	Medium
Issue with using Microsoft word in MGov	Waiting for customer	27-Feb-2025	Medium
Connection Failed MG error	Waiting for customer	30-Aug-2024	Medium
Importing BNG Metric not working	Waiting for customer	19-Jun-2024	Medium
Planning Register Not Working - urgent	Waiting for customer	25-Apr-2024	Medium
Issue adding plans to Plans Tab	Waiting for customer	2-Apr-2024	Medium
Public Access to Planning Resgister using Chrome	Waiting for customer	11-Jan-2024	Medium
GIS issues & improvements at Suffolk	Waiting for customer	24-Oct-2023	Medium
Access to Geoserver data	Waiting for customer	24-Oct-2023	Medium
New IP Address for access	Waiting for customer	4-Sep-2023	Medium
QGIS Raster Maps not working	Waiting for customer	29-Jun-2023	Medium
Request to download data from the site	Waiting for customer	21-Apr-2023	Medium
FW: Changes to SCC Planning Register web pages	Waiting for customer	26-Jan-2023	Medium