Notice of Non-Key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Adobe ETLA
Decision Maker:	Mark Duff, Director of IT, Digital and Customer Services
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Sean McMahon, Cabinet Member for Customer Services
ELT Lead:	Kathy Freeman, Strategic Director of Resources
Report Author and contact details:	Hannah Smith 01708 431291 Hannah.smith@havering.gov.uk Amaka Nwosu 01708 431800 Amaka.nwosu@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	IT & Digital Strategy Customer Services Strategy Commercial Strategy
Financial summary:	2.5 year contract with Bytes Software Services Ltd for an estimated £69,461.05 excl VAT. To be funded from a combination of A44730 Software Licence core funding and A50320 Havering IT Service Delivery budget A50320
Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Sub Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny Board
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	***The decision will be exempt from call in as it is a Non key Decision***

<u>Non-key Executive Decision</u>

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy

Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council X

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

The director of IT, Digital and Customer Service is recommended to agree to:

Approve the award of a contract to Bytes Software Services Limited through the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework RM6098 for Adobe products under an Enterprise Level Agreement (ETLA) for a period of two years and six months commencing on 30th September 2026. Total estimated contract value of £69,461.05 excluding VAT, circa £27,784.42 per annum (£83,353.26 including VAT).

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3.3.3
4.2 To award all contracts with a total contract value of below £1,000,000 other than contracts covered by Contract Procedure Rule 16.3. This delegation shall include the ability to extend or vary a contract up to and including a value of £1,000,000 (provided that the extension is in line with the existing contractual provisions.)

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

To agree to direct award a new contract to Bytes Software Services Limited for Adobe products including Acrobat Pro, Acrobat Sign, Acrobat Studio and Premium Edition Apps under one Enterprise Level Agreement from the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) framework for two years and six months. This will cover the period 30 September 2026 to 31 March 2029 for a total estimated cost of £69,461.05 excluding VAT.

An ETLA contract will provide greater security around access for those products previously under the VIP contract as well as gaining access to greater support and training resources from Adobe. It will combine services currently commissioned under two separate contracts – Adobe Professional Licences and Adobe Acrobat Sign.

Adobe Professional Licences
Adobe software is used extensively across the Council to support document creation, editing, publication, digital design, content creation and electronic document management.

Through the Adobe Enterprise Term Licence Agreement (ETLA), the Council has access to a range of enterprise products including Adobe Acrobat Pro, Acrobat Studio, Creative Cloud applications such as Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign, together with additional products and services including Adobe Express, Adobe Stock, FrameMaker, RoboHelp and other Adobe enterprise solutions where required.

The CCS aggregation framework provides access to all Adobe software products and supports future changes to the Council's Adobe estate as business requirements evolve.

The current Adobe VIP contract was awarded to Bytes Software Services Limited through the KCS Software Products and Associated Services Y20011 Framework from 22 October 2023 to 22 October 2026. The existing contract costs £27,070.19 per year based on 129 licences, which are purchased centrally through the A50320 Service Delivery cost centre. The estimated proposed contract increases this to 133 licences at a cost of £22,281.71 per year, delivering a saving of £4,788.48 even with the increase in license quantities.

Awarding the contract through the CCS Adobe aggregation framework provides several benefits over continuing under a standalone Adobe VIP agreement. The aggregation combines demand from a large number of public sector organisations, enabling participating authorities to access preferential pricing, fixed pricing arrangements for the contract term and enterprise level discounts that would not typically be available through individual purchasing routes.

The ETLA also provides a simplified licensing model, annual true-up arrangements, the ability to add licences throughout the contract term, enhanced security features such as Single Sign On (SSO), dedicated account management and licence optimisation support to help ensure the Council maintains an appropriately sized and cost effective Adobe estate.

Adobe Acrobat Sign
Adobe Sign will be funded from the core budget in A44730 Software Licence cost centre in IT Digital & Transformation. Product will be managed by IT Service Delivery.

The current Adobe Sign contract was awarded through the G-Cloud 13 framework from 31st May 2023 to 31st May 2026, with a five-month extension agreed to 22nd October 2026 to allow a new contract to be put in place. This will now be combined with the Adobe VIP contract into a single Enterprise Level Agreement covering all Adobe products.

The current Adobe Sign contract costs £22,503.76 per year (£90,015.04 over the full term including the extension period) for 10,000 transactions annually. The proposed contract reduces this to 5,000 transactions at an estimated cost of £5,502.71 per year, delivering a saving of £17,001.05. If an additional 5,000-transaction bundle is needed, the total cost would still be lower at an estimated £11,005.42 for 10,000 transactions.

The initial agreement allowed for 10,000 transactions per contract year. A transaction means any document sent for electronic signature, including those later cancelled or expired. Over the life of the contract, usage was around 30% of the annual allocation. This reflected several factors, including the absence of an agreed onboarding process, limited system administration support within IT, and a weak organisation-wide rollout. Despite this, several services have adopted the product and now rely on it as a key part of their business processes, including Direct Payments and Integrated Commissioning in Social Care and Homelessness in Housing Demand.

There is now renewed focus on e-signatures as a key tool for supporting processes and streamlining services. Earlier issues with onboarding and system administration have been resolved. Adoption is increasing across the organisation, including in Travel Assistance and Building Control. As a result, contract usage is expected to rise to around 6,000 transactions per year. With a continued shift towards hybrid working, it is no longer practical or sustainable to rely on wet signatures. This is particularly evident in processes such as contract signing with external suppliers, where obtaining physical signatures can be time consuming, costly, and logistically challenging. There is also scope to look at digitising the process for contract sealing which is currently a costly and time consuming exercise. Initially the contract will be for 5,000 transactions in order to keep costs low with an additional bundle of 5,000 only being purchased once the increased shift to digital signatures is achieved.

Volume

The following table shows the volume of use during the initial three-year contract period:

	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Total**
Commissioned	10,000	10,000	10,000	**30,000**
Actual	2,584	3,454	3,104	**9,142**
% Use	26%	34%	31%	**30%**

Across the three year contract period a total of 10,000 documents were sent to 12,000 individuals for signature. These documents contained a total of 126,000 pages.

Benefits

Based on typical UK office printing costs (estimated at 2-6p per page for internal printing, rising to 10p+ when considering external or fully absorbed costs), this represents an indicative cost avoidance of approximately £6,000–£12,500 for printing over the period.

This does not include additional cost avoidance for postage, scanning and staff time, which would materially increase the overall financial benefit.

	Year 1	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Total**
No. of pages	25,000	59,000	42,000	**126,000**
No. of documents	3,000	4,000	3,000	**10,000**
No. of recipients	3,000	5,000	4,000	**12,000**

The use of electronic signatures provides a measurable environmental benefit by eliminating the resource intensive lifecycle of paper documents, including printing, transport, and disposal. Over the initial contract period, the use of e-signatures is estimated to have avoided approximately 10.8 tonnes of CO_2 emissions (c.89%) compared to traditional paper based processes based on Adobe's independently developed carbon footprint methodology.[1] This is comparable to removing around 4-5 cars from the road for a year. As adoption of e-signatures increases across services, these environmental benefits are expected to grow proportionally.

The environmental benefits of e-signatures can be quantified using standard methodologies. Based on an average annual saving of 42,000 printed pages, the table below sets out the equivalent reductions in resources and emissions from moving to digital processes.

Amount Saved	Resource	Equivalent to:
6.3 tonnes	Wood	45 trees
1,011kg	Waste	446 reams of paper
15.4 tonnes	Co2	1,124 days of driving
153,056 litres	Water	1,064 loads of laundry
14,100 kWh	Energy	20,896 days of refrigerator use

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Other options considered for Adobe Professional Licences

Do Nothing:

This option was rejected as the current Adobe licensing arrangements expire on 22 October 2026. Failure to renew or replace the licensing agreement would result in the Council losing access to essential software used for document management, content creation, graphic design and digital publishing activities, impacting service delivery across multiple Council departments.

Standalone Adobe VIP Agreement:

This option was considered but rejected as it would not provide the commercial, licensing and management benefits available through the CCS Adobe ETLA aggregation. The ETLA delivers enterprise-level pricing, improved licence management and enhanced security features, providing better value for money and governance of the Council's Adobe estate.

Other options considered for E-Signatures:

Desk based market research was completed to review potential options for an e-signature solution in Havering.

[1] Carbon Footprint of e-signatures: Documentation of methods: Adobe_Acrobat_Sign_Carbon_Footprint_Estimates_Methodology_2022.pdf

Prices in the table below (other than Adobe Sign) are indicative based on publicly available information on the G Cloud 14 framework. Suppliers in the table below are all on frameworks and have enterprise contracts available.

Supplier / Product	Alignment with Requirements	Indicative Annual Pricing
Proposed supplier	Meets all requirements – 5/5	£5,502.71 volume based (5k signatures)
Supplier A	Meets all requirements – 5/5	~£82,800 licence model (300 users)
Supplier B	Meets most requirements – 4/5	~£176,400 licence model (300 users)
Supplier C	Meets most requirements – 4/5	~£10,000 volume based (5k signatures at £2 per transaction)
Supplier D	Meets most requirements – 4/5 (integration with Microsoft is less developed)	~£32,400 licence model (500 users) or ~£2,050 for 5k signatures
Supplier E	Meets most requirements – 3.5/5	~£18,000 licence model (300 users at £5 pp pm)
Supplier F	Meets some requirements – 3/5 (enterprise and SSO are less mature)	~£45,600 – 100k signatures and 400 users. Inclusive of £7.6k for enterprise
Supplier G	Meets some requirements – 3/5 (integration with entra ID are less mature)	~£64,800 licence model (300 users)

Adobe Sign meets most functional and non-functional requirements, including secure authentication, audit trails, legal compliance, workflows, templates, status tracking and sender controls. It also meets key technical requirements such as SSO with Entra ID, Microsoft 365 integration, data export and GDPR-aligned hosting. The quoted price from Bytes is also among the lower-cost options and offers added value through alignment with the council's wider Adobe licensing arrangements.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

No formal consultation undertaken

Non-key Executive Decision

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER
Name: Hannah Smith Designation: Business Analyst Signature: Hannah Smith (Aug 24, 2026 11:56:23 GMT+1) Date: 24/08/2026

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Council has a general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual may generally do subject to any statutory limitations. The Council has the power under this section to agree to the proposals in the recommendations.

Under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA), contracting authorities which include local authorities, can call off to award contracts.

The CCS Adobe Aggregation Framework allows for direct award of contracts subject to compliance with the Framework rules. It appears that the Framework rules have been complied with. The direct award is in accordance with the Council Contract Procedure Rules (as amended in 2026).

Legal has been consulted on this matter.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This report seeks approval to award a contract to Bytes Software Services Limited through the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework RM6098 for Adobe products under an Enterprise Level Agreement (ETLA) for a period of two years and six months commencing on 30th September 2026. The total estimated contract value is £69,461.05 excluding VAT, circa £27,784.42 per annum (£83,353.26 including VAT).

The costs will be funded from A44730 Software Licence and A50320 Havering IT Service Delivery budgets.

Utilising the framework seeks to achieve best value by utilising the combined demand from a large number of public sector organisations, thus providing access to preferential pricing, fixed pricing arrangements for the contract term and enterprise level discounts that would not typically be available through individual purchasing routes. This is further demonstrated by the cost comparison exercise to other suppliers and a comparison with the existing 2 separate contract prices set out below.

	Professional Licences	Adobe Sign	Total
Existing contract	£27,070.19	£22,503.76	£49,573.95
Proposed Contract - initial	£22,281.71	£5,502.71	£27,784.42
Initial saving (5000 trans)	**£4,788.48**	**£17,001.05**	**£21,789.53**
Proposed Contract (addit 5000 trans)	-	£5,502.71	£5,502.71
Revised savings (10,000 trans)	**£4,788.48**	**£11,498.34**	**£16,286.82**

The savings arising will be used to offset pressures elsewhere within the ICT Service budgets as part of overall budget management.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

There are no identifiable direct workforce implications for the Council in relation to the recommendation within this report.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The proposal relates to the continuation and consolidation of existing Adobe products already used by the Council, including Adobe Acrobat Sign, Acrobat Standard/Pro and Adobe Creative Cloud applications. The decision does not introduce any changes to Council policy, service eligibility or access to services and no direct adverse impacts have been identified in relation to any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

The continued use of Adobe products has the potential to positively support equality of access by enabling residents, partners and staff to interact with the Council through accessible digital documents and electronic signatures. The solution reduces reliance on travel, printing and postal services and may particularly benefit disabled people, older residents, people with caring responsibilities and those with limited mobility. Acrobat products also provide accessibility features and tools that support the creation and review of accessible documents.

There is a potential risk of digital exclusion for individuals with limited access to digital technology or lower levels of digital confidence. This could disproportionately affect some older residents and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage. To mitigate this risk, services will continue to provide alternative methods of engagement and reasonable adjustments where required. The Council will also continue to promote accessible document design and make use of the accessibility features available within Adobe products to support users who rely on assistive technologies.

The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on social inclusion by improving access to digital services and enabling services to produce more accessible communications and documentation. It supports the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty by helping to remove barriers to engagement and promote equality of opportunity. An Equality and Health Impact Assessment (EHIA) is not considered necessary as this decision relates to the renewal and consolidation of existing software products and no significant equality impacts have been identified. This position should be reviewed if the scope or use of the service changes materially in the future.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

While environmental impact is not the primary objective of this decision, the continuation of a digital signing solution is assessed as having a positive environmental impact when compared to traditional paper based and face to face processes.

The proposal supports the Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions, minimising waste, and future-proofing services, in line with Havering's ambition to become carbon neutral by 2040 or sooner.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Havering Council is committed to protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of residents. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from the proposed contract.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A	***detail***	***Open***
Appendix B	***detail***	***Open***
Appendix C	***detail***	***Open***

Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed ☐

Proposal NOT agreed because ☐

Details of decision maker

Signed

Name: Mark Duff

Cabinet Portfolio held:
CMT Member title:
Head of Service title Director of IT, Digital & Customer Service
Other manager title:

Date: 24/08/2026

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to Committee Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration
This notice was lodged with me on ________________________________
Signed ____