

## PFCC Decision Report

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

<b>Report reference number:</b> 172-21
<b>Classification:</b> Not protectively marked
<b>Title of report:</b> Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 and associated costs for 2022-2023
<b>Area of county / stakeholders affected:</b> Countywide
<b>Report by:</b> Darren Horsman <b>Date of report:</b> 05 January 2022 <b>Enquiries to:</b> Darren.horsman@essex.police.uk

### 1. Purpose of the report

To approve the Communication and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 and the allocation of £9,389.94 from the PFCC's communications budget for the annual subscriptions and expenses used to hear from and talk to the public as set out in the strategy.

### 2. Recommendations

That the PFCC approves the Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

That the PFCC approves the allocation of £9,389.94 from the PFCC's 2022 - 2023 communication and engagement budget to fund the services used to support the strategy as set out in section 4 during the 2022-2024 financial year. Further decision reports will be provided to cover individual items throughout the year and future year's expenses.

### 3. Benefits of the proposal

Listening to the public, hearing their concerns and using this insight to provide strong governance and oversight of policing, crime and fire and rescue services is vital if we want to maintain public confidence and ensure efficient and effective services are provided for the public.

Good communications and engagement is also fundamental to the delivery of both the Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan.

#### 4. Background and proposal

The Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 sets the strategic direction of the Commissioner's Comms and Engagement activity during the 2021-2024 electoral term.

The Communication and Engagement Strategy 2017-2020, which was extended to 2021 following the postponement of the election, positioned communications and engagement as a strategic level function supporting the Commissioner to deliver their vision as well as the underlaying constitutional purpose of the role.

The purpose of the Commissioner's role was articulated by the government when they introduced the role of PCCs, with the essence being that PCCs should be:

*'The local link between the police and communities, working to turn the desires and ambitions of the public in terms of policing and crime reduction, into action.'*

*'PCCs need to make sure the policing needs of their communities are met as effectively as possible, bringing communities closer to the police, building confidence in the system and restoring trust'*

While this focus needs to be broadened to reflect the increased remit of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, including responsibilities for Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, the intent behind this statement is still at the heart of the role of PFCCs which is *'to give communities a voice, to give effect to their desires in relation to community safety, bring communities, police and fire and rescue services closer together and build confidence in the system'*.

At the heart of our strategic approach to Communications and Engagement both in the 2017-2021 strategy and the 2021-2024 strategy is the principle that public involvement in community safety underpins safe and secure communities and that by working together, communities and the emergency services will create better societies where people can prosper and live fulfilling lives.

Our approach to communications and engagement is based on this ongoing involvement and participation - by building awareness of the Commissioner's role and then working with communities to demonstrate trust, accountability and delivery, we can foster confidence and drive increased levels of public participation.

This builds on the democratic nature of the role and demonstrates the public accountability that both Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service has through the elected role of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The strategy sets out three broad areas of work:

- Listen and engage with the public
  - regular ongoing engagement directly with the public and through partners
  - focused engagement with priority groups including rural, youth and business audiences

- analysis of correspondence (quarterly reports), media (Roger's Radar) and informal intelligence
  - use surveys on key issues to foster engagement and discussion
  - data and intelligence (confidence survey, audience specific evidence)
- Build trust and accountability
    - demonstrate we have acted on feedback
    - provide clear, understandable public information
    - use our statutory documents to engage the public and tell our story
  - Share what is being delivered,
    - provide engaging content aligned to Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan
    - promote PFCC and DPFCC commentary on public safety messages (e.g. COVID, legislative change, VAWG, EDI issues etc)

To support the implementation of the strategy a number of services are used to listen and engage with the public as well as share what is being delivered, many of these are covered by multiyear agreements and where this is the case or where there may be higher levels of public interest in the decision separate decision reports are provided. The items below include a range of low-level expenditure on services or activity to support the implementation of the strategy. These include:

Activity	Cost
Hootsuite – This platform allows us to schedule and coordinate social media activity across our various social channels.	£600
Canva – This app supports the development of basic visuals for use on social media	£120
Kinemaster– This basic video editing software supports the development of videos in house.	£150
Browsealoud - This service helps our website be accessible to people with a sight impairment.	£2,400
SmartSurvey– This online survey tool is used to gain public feedback on a range of subjects throughout the year from our annual precept survey to feedback on strategic plans and activities.	£1,000
Annual Report Development - To support the public scrutiny of	£3,000

Commissioner and the Services the Commissioner has a statutory duty to produce an annual report each year. This cost is associated with the design and printing of the report.	
Venue hire – The Commissioner undertakes a large number of public engagement events each year some of these are virtual other are face-to-face. Where necessary we pay to hire venues such as village halls or sports centres.	£700
Microsoft 365 & Antivirus software – To continue to engage with the public during the pandemic the Commissioner has run several online engagement events via facebook and zoom. To run these sessions external laptops are used that are outside of the Essex Police IT system. For these to work effectively for this engagement Microsoft 365 and antivirus software is purchased. Given the effective reach of these activities it is proposed that a mix of online and face-to-face engagement will be used in the future.	Microsoft 365 - £79.99 x 3 = £239.97 Antivirus - £59.99 x 3 = £179.97
Social Media promotion – To ensure as many members of the public as possible are able to attend the Commissioner’s public meetings and provide their views on strategic plans and activities a small amount of paid social media advertising is used to promote each public meeting and certain surveys. The spend per meeting is between £10-£50.	£1000
Total	£9389.94

**5. Alternative options considered and rejected**

There are a wide range of options that we could have chosen in deciding our strategic approach to Communication and Engagement, however, the current strategy is based on sound insight and previous experience as well as being underpinned by the statutory purpose of the role of PFCCs.

A decision to do nothing would also be a possible option but this would not support the commissioner in fulfilling their strategic role, building public confidence in the services or delivering for the public.

**6. Police and Crime Plan**

Effective communications and engagement are integral parts of both the Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan. They support the delivery of both Plans but also an important in developing these plans and building support for them.

**7. Police operational implications**

No direct operational implications.

**8. Financial implications**

While the Communications and Engagement Strategy itself will be delivered within the existing communications and engagement team there are several costs, as outlined above, which support delivery of the strategy. The total cost set out within this decision report is £9,389.94. Further costs for specific activities and projects which are aligned to the Strategy will be presented throughout the year in separate decision reports. The items included within this decision report are limited to those reoccurring costs which implementation of the strategy is reliant on.

**9. Legal implications**

There are no direct legal implications, but all of the services listed above have been checked and are compliant with GDPR. As a precaution, sensitive information is only shared where this is appropriate and necessary. All Terms and conditions or contracts have been reviewed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer and the use of IT systems or hardware has been agreed with Essex Police IT Security.

**10. Staffing implications**

There are no staffing implications.

**11. Equality and Diversity implications**

The Commissioner has a duty to develop clear and accessible information and help groups with protected characteristics understand and engage with the Service and the work that the PFCC does. This strategy supports this important work and is part of engaging with all the people across Essex.

**12. Risks**

There is no specific risk associated with this project.

**13. Governance Boards**

The strategy has been discussed at the Commissioner's Senior Management Team on the 26.10.2021 and 4.1.2022 with the decision report being submitted at the second of these meetings.

**14. Background Papers**

Appendix A – Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

**Report Approval**

The report will be signed off by the OPFCC Chief Executive and Treasurer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Deputy M.O. Sign: D. Horsman

Print: Darren Horsman

Date: 13 January 2022

Chief Finance Officer / Treasurer Sign: Julia Berry

Print: Julia Berry

Date: 13 January 2022

**Publication**

Is the report for publication? YES  NO

If 'NO', please give reasons for non-publication (Where relevant, cite the security classification of the document(s). State 'None' if applicable)

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If the report is not for publication, the Chief Executive will decide if and how the public can be informed of the decision.

**Redaction**

If the report is for publication, is redaction required:

1. Of Decision Sheet? YES  NO  2. Of Appendix? YES  NO

If 'YES', please provide details of required redaction:

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Date redaction carried out: .....

**Treasurer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only**

If redaction is required, the Treasurer or Chief Executive is to sign off that redaction has been completed.

**Sign:** .....

**Print:** .....

**Chief Executive/Treasurer**

**Decision and Final Sign Off**

I agree the recommendations to this report:

**Sign:**  .....

**Print:** Roger Hirst

**PFCC**

**Date signed:** 13 January 2022

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

.....  
.....  
.....

**Sign:** .....

**Print:** .....

**PFCC/Deputy PFCC**

**Date signed:** .....