

PFCC Decision Report

Please ensure all sections below are completed

Report reference number: 001-22
Classification (e.g. Not protectively marked/restricted): Not protectively marked
Title of report: Proposal to engage Granicus to continue to provide the PFCC digital newsletter platform
Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide
Report by : Darren Horsman Date of report: 5 January 2022 Enquiries to: Darren.Horsman@essex.police.uk

1. Purpose of the report

To engage Granicus to provide the PFCC with a digital newsletter platform.

2. Recommendations

To engage Granicus, formally GovDelivery, to provide their online newsletter platform so the PFCC can continue to build their digital engagement with the public in order to both inform and to receive feedback.

To sign the contract (Annex A) with Granicus for £3004.74 for the provision of their service for 12 months from 30.1.2022. The contract included as Annex A will be completed and provided for signature by the PFCC signed via docusign.

3. Benefits of the proposal

Since 2018 the PFCC has been using the Granicus online platform to deliver weekly external newsletters. The platform has also been used to deliver targeted news from about the Violence and Vulnerability Partnership and Business Crime Team as well as ad hoc announcements and news.

The service provides an easy to use and accessible delivery system that is fully compliant with the PFCC's accessibility requirements and data protection obligations. It provides full access to reporting and analytics via the live interface (opens/clicks/engagement/unsubscribes/subscriber growth). The platform is accessible 24/7 and there is full access to the Granicus support desk for any admin and technical assistance.

The platform also provides full bounce and email management and there is no local hardware or software needed to run the application taking pressure off internal resources.

Subscriptions to the PFCC newsletter and alerts has grown steadily from 2000 in 2018 to 9,500 at the end of 2021. This provides a strong platform to reach our engaged audiences and has proven of great value when seeking to gain their views on issues such as potential precept increases or the formation of new strategic plans.

4. Background and proposal

GovDelivery is the only digital marketing platform built exclusively for public sector organisations and is designed to promote usage of online services, enhance public awareness, and increase the contributions and involvement of the public.

More than 180 public sector organisations in the UK use Granicus, from major central government departments to small district councils.

At the heart of the GovDelivery service is an extensive collaboration network which enables clients to cross-promote each other's subscriptions. Clients can build impressive subscriber lists with the help of this cross-promotion capability. Cross-promotion enables the public sector to collectively benefit from surges in visitors to a particular website. For example, nearly 90% of subscribers to UK Space Agency alerts signed up through another government agency via the GovDelivery Network. These are subscribers who didn't visit the UK Space Agency website directly in the first instance; they discovered it via a link from other public sector agencies' alerts which they had already signed up to receive.

The contract with Granicus started in 2018 and has been used to deliver a regular weekly newsletter from the PFCC as well as a range of other newsletters and news items. Over that period reach has grown from 2,000 to 9,500 with continued regular growth month on month.

5. Alternative options considered and rejected

There are a variety of alternatives to Granicus available, which range in price, usability and ability to target, analyse and develop our communications:

Mail Chimp

Mail Chimp uses a basic 'drag and drop' platform to allow quick and easy creation of email communications on its website, mailchimp.com.

The platform allows you to send up to 12,000 emails a month for free, though this is limited to a maximum of 2,000 subscribers (or recipients) only. However, this offers no access to comparative reporting or in-depth analysis of campaigns.

A 'professional' package is available at a cost of \$199 per month (or more than £1800 a year) which includes the facility to send unlimited emails to an unlimited number of subscribers. This offers analysis features including delivery and compliance insights.

Mail Chimp is a platform designed for e-commerce and online trading. This means that their demographic breakdowns rely entirely on the connection to an account of a store or external website where the information is input by the user – severely limiting its capability.

Because Mail Chimp is based in the United States, there are also fewer assurances over the support facilities compared to the more local account executives of Granicus. Mail Chimp's support is primarily offered via online chat and email.

Constant Contact

Constant Contact is another platform with e-newsletter functionality. Like Mail Chimp, it is also based in the United States and is primarily centred on online sales and supporting private sector companies' marketing.

Constant Contact offers a package of up to 35,000 recipients for £2,400 a year. This package is limited to 10 users and a file storage of two gigabytes and a default storage limited to just five files.

While it is considered a good entry level platform, Constant Contact offers minimal flexibility with scheduling of campaigns and timed sending of individual messages.

That would limit our capabilities to reach a range of demographics, based on consumption trends (for example middle-aged parents who check their personal emails more commonly in the evening).

Emma

Emma uses a similar template-based 'drag and drop' system to several other email management platforms. This makes it easy to use and customise to suit a particular style without requiring extensive software or design training.

Offering analytics that compare mailing with previous newsletters and messaging, as well as highlighting what content is being most engaged with specifically, the platform offers an iOS / Android app called Metric which offers live updates of opens, clicks and all other recipient engagement.

Pricing for Emma is somewhat more expensive than other competitors, with 'Emma HQ' (the professional package) allowing for unlimited users to use the platform simultaneously to send messages to up to 75,000 contacts available from \$729 a month or more than £6,700 a year.

Not to use an online platform

The PFCC could choose not to use an online platform to reach and communicate with the public, however, this would limit their ability to engage with this audience and hear their views This would be directly opposed to the Police and Crime Plan 2021-2024 and Fire and Rescue Plan 2019-2024.

6. Police and Crime Plan

Contracting Granicus to provide the PFCC's digital marketing platform will help to embed a flexible programme of engagement, providing all communities with the opportunity to participate fully in the debate and decision making around policing and fire and rescue policy and practice in the county and will uphold the established engagement principles of:

- Being open and transparent, ensuring that the OPFCC gives the public all the information it can, and as often as possible
- Using all the methods available to deliver information to the public and consult with them including online and social media where appropriate

Contracting Granicus will help to achieve the following defined aims of the Engagement Strategy:

- Making the public voice evident in the Police and Crime Plan, and all decision making by the PFCC
- Increasing public awareness of and confidence in the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner among all communities
- Engaging with larger online and social media audiences through community organisations and groups

7. Police operational implications

There are no operational policing implications.

8. Financial implications

[REDACTED]

PFCC

Discounted Annual Fee: [REDACTED]

These figures have not been agreed on an 'introductory offer' basis.
The standard contract term is 12 months from the date the contract begins.

9. Legal implications

The contract (Annex A) clearly sets out the legal arrangements of this service and covers the PFCC's data protection obligations. The service itself is designed to support the PFCC in manage its subscriptions safely and legally and provide additional reassurance to the PFCC in this regard.

10. Staffing implications

There are no perceived negative staffing or other resource implications. The recommendation should enable staff to continue to work more efficiently and effectively.

11. Equality and Diversity implications

The digital engagement capability provided by Granicus is as accessible to all members of the public as our website and Facebook and Twitter accounts.

12. Risks

While there is a risk with any contract that the supplier may fail Granicus is a reputable company with many clients within the public sector and a good reputation. They have been used by other partners in Essex for many years successfully.

13. Governance Boards

The use of Granicus was discussed at the PFCC's Senior Management Team on the 4th of January 2022 as part of the discussion on the Communications and Engagement Strategy. At this stage the proposal was to secure agreement through a single combined decision report 172-21. However, given the fact that this decision also required approval for the signing of a contract by the PFCC it was felt it would be clearer to provide this additional decision report for the Granicus contract. This has also provided the opportunity for the cost to be updated as discussions have progressed with Granicus.

14. Background papers

Annex A – Granicus Contract

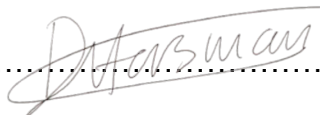
Annex B – 172 – 21 Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024

Annex C – 147 – 18 Granicus online platform

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.

Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: 

Print: ..Darren Horsman - Deputy MO.....

Date: ..6.1.2022.....

Chief Finance Officer / Treasurer Sign: Julia Berry.....

Print: Julia Berry.....

Date: 6 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: 7 January 2022

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: .. Julia Berry

Chief Executive/Treasurer

Date signed: .. 7 January 2021

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 7 January 2022

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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Sign:

Print:

PFCC/Deputy PFCC

Date signed: