

## PFCC Decision Report

**Please ensure all sections below are completed**

**Report reference number: 023-23**

**Classification (e.g. Not protectively marked/restricted): Not protectively marked**

**Title of report: Communications Spend 2023-24**

**Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide**

**Report by: Emma Thomas**

**Chief Officer: Darren Horsman**

**Date of report: January 27, 2023**

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### 1. Executive Summary

To approve the allocation of £29,480 from the PFCC's Communications and Public Engagement budget to deliver the communications and engagement activity for the Commissioner as agreed in the Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021-2024 in decision report 172-21.

This figure covers a summary spend for the Communications and Engagement Team for the financial year 2023-2024 advertising, subscriptions and professional support such as specialist communications expertise to reach specific audiences, specialist advice to meet the PFCC's Data Protection and GDPR obligations and graphic design.

### 2. Recommendations

That the PFCC approves the allocation of £29,480 from the PFCC's 2023 - 2024 communication and engagement budget to fund the services set out in section 3 that are required to support the strategy.

### **3. Background to the 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 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 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. legislative change, VAWG, EDI issues etc)

To support the implementation of the strategy several services are used to listen and engage with the public as well as share what is being delivered. The items below include a range of expenditure on services or activity to support the implementation of the strategy.

Activity	Cost	2022-23 costs / estimates
Hootsuite – This platform allows us to schedule and coordinate social media activity across our various social channels.	£600	£600
Canva – This app supports the development of basic visuals for use on social media	£120	£120
Adobe Premier Pro– This video editing software supports the development of videos in house.	£150	£150
TextHelp/Reachdeck - This service helps our website and information to be accessible to all and meet AAA accessibility standards. It also offers a service to test the accessibility of our website, documents ensuring we are producing information in an easy read format. This	£4,835 (cost for two years)	£2,400 (two year cost paid last in 2021-22)

product has changes to align to new accessibility standards since we last paid.		
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	£1,000
Annual Report Development - To support the public scrutiny of 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.	£3,000	£3,000
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	£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	Microsoft 365 - £79.99 x 3 = £240 Antivirus - £59.99 x 3 = £180	Microsoft 365 - £79.99 x 3 = £240 Antivirus - £59.99 x 3 = £180

engagement will be used in the future.		
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.	£1,000	£1,000
PAM Licence - used for monitoring, filing, and responding to correspondence.	£10,000	£8,500 (last agreed in 2020)
Granicus newsletter subscription – platform used to create and distribution our weekly newsletter which has 10,000 subscribers.	£3,155	£3,005
DPO mentoring/specialist advice	£2,500	£2,500
Rural Crime Network subscription	£2,000	£2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£29,480</b>	

#### 4. Proposal and Associated Benefits

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.

#### 5. Options Analysis

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. Consultation and Engagement**

The options and suppliers have all been researched and proposed by the Communications and Engagement Team.

## **7. Strategic Links**

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.

## **8. Police operational implications**

There are no direct operational implications.

## **9. 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 £29,480. 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.

## **10. 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.

## **11. Staffing implications**

There are no direct staffing implications although workloads will increase and become more difficult if the Communications and Engagement are without access to platforms such as Granicus, PAM and Hootsuite.

## **12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 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.

### **13. Risks and Mitigations**

There is no specific risk associated with this although not to spend money would risk the Commissioner's ability to communicate and engage with residents and stakeholders.

### **14. Governance Boards**

The Communications and Engagement Strategy was 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. The strategy includes references to these costs. The PFCC and SMT receive regular updates on deliverables in the strategy throughout the course of the year and at the PFCC's engagement meetings.

### **15. Links to Future Plans**

Delivering our Communications and Engagement objectives helps the PFCC to communicate how the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan are being delivered. Listening and engaging effectively with our residents and stakeholders will help to develop future versions of these plans for the PFCC.

### **16. Background Papers and Appendices**

Decision report 172-21 available at the link below [172-21-Communications-and-Engagement-Strategy-2021-2024.pdf \(pfcc.police.uk\)](https://www.pfcc.police.uk/172-21-Communications-and-Engagement-Strategy-2021-2024.pdf)

**Report Approval**

The report will be signed off by the PFCC's Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer prior to review and sign off by the PFCC / DPFCC.

Chief Executive / M.O.

Sign: .....DHorsman.....

Print: .....Darren Horsman - Deputy Monitoring Officer.....

Date: .....8.2.2023.....

Chief Finance Officer

Sign: ..........

Print: .....Janet Perry.....

Date: .....13 February 2023.....

**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: .....

**Chief Finance Officer / 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 / Chief Finance Officer**

**Decision and Final Sign Off**

I agree the recommendations to this report:

**Sign:** 

**Print:** Roger Hirst

**PFCC/Deputy PFCC**

**Date signed:** 21 February 2022

I do not agree the recommendations to this report because:

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.....  
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**Sign:**

**Print:**

**PFCC/Deputy PFCC**

**Date signed:**