Meeting	Decision Making Meeting
Date	17 August 2021
Title of report	Proposed platforms for public consultation on refreshing the PCC's Volunteering Strategy
Written by	Nimat Jaffer, Policy and Project Officer
Purpose	To propose appropriate platforms for the consultation
Decision(s) required	Approve the recommended consultation platforms listed at section 8 and the finances in section 7
Financial implications	Finance in section 7
Risk implications	None identified
Legal implications	None identified
Equalities impact	EIA, section 5
Freedom of information exemption section if applicable	N/A

Purpose

This paper explores appropriate types of data collection and platforms for the public and stakeholder consultation of the PCC's refreshed Volunteering Strategy 2020 – 25. It considers the suitability of each suggested platform in consulting the public and wider stakeholders and recommends a mixed method is pursued to ensure a maximum demographic reach

Data collection

The consultation will provide an opportunity to set out the PCC's proposals and seek partners' and the public's views on the proposed strategy, areas of prioritisation and direction of travel. In doing so, it will help to shape a strategy that partners and the public endorse as the right vision for volunteering. It will be helpful to seek to understand the following:

- What they agree with?
- What areas they disagreed with or take a differing view on?
- Any areas to consider?

Quantitative

This data can be collected via a traditional survey using a scale to rank agreement or satisfaction of a statement or using multiple choice. For this consultation, it would be best designed by breaking it down by the five sections contained in the strategy:

1) Strategic Aims
2) Strategic Priorities
3) Our Impact and Our Ambition
4) Developing Volunteering Opportunities
5) Volunteering in Hertfordshire

This method will enable data analysis to understand the satisfaction / agreement levels as a measure. Numeric results mean the analysis will be simpler process to draw conclusions and share with partners and the public. If the improvements section is in the form of free text rather than a selection of options, this will provide raw data to analyse which can both refute and support the quantitative results.

Qualitative
The qualitative approach is exploratory which can provide an insight into how people think and feel, which is becoming more prominent in both policing and volunteering. This approach will enable an understanding of the reasons, opinions and motivations to why respondents feel how they do which can produce action based outcomes. If this approach is used without leading questions, it can reveal areas of the strategy respondents engaged with.

Outcome
Quantitative surveys which use the ranking method to measure outcomes are structurally confined, which is ideal for scoping a theory or proposal. As the Volunteering Strategy has more layers, this means that all 5 sections would be designed the same in order to collect the data consistently and therefore repetitive for the respondent. The Volunteering Strategy requires a more qualitative outcome as this consultation needs to be able to capture the aspects that are important to the public and stakeholder and not what the OPCC may see as important. The qualitative approach can provide action based feedback, this is favourable as it can be followed up with a "you said, we did" campaign upon publication of the strategy.

Platforms and Accessibility

Various aspects have been considered with particular focus on accessibility to maximise reach and inclusivity.

Audience
The traditional age profile for volunteers is the over 65s which is reflective of the OPCC volunteer cohort, however the volunteering profile has become more mixed since the Government lockdown in April. For the first time, we have seen Generation x and Millennials volunteering including more professionals due to the time saved on commuting and furlough circumstances. Locally, over 10,000 volunteers signed up to offer their volunteering services therefore it is important that the consultation reaches this new wider audience.

Capturing demographic information is not possible for all platforms, however an accessible consultation is likely to maximise reach and inclusivity if promoted through a variety of channels. An assortment of 25 public channels and 43 stakeholder channels have already been identified. (Appendix A)

The priority audience will be existing volunteers and volunteering centres as they can offer experience led feedback and ideas as well as collaborative opportunities. As noted in the attached document in Appendix A, existing volunteers will be contacted via the new newsletter, mailing list and post / phone call where Reasonable Adjustments are required.

Engagement

As face to face engagement events have been suspended due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the respondent journey is important to consider. This would include the respondent;
- being notified of the consultation
- accessing the online platform
- reading the refreshed Volunteering Strategy
- providing feedback

This process should be a positive experience for the respondent with the ability to effortlessly feedback what they feel is important to them.

Digital interactions have become the bedrock of communications since the pandemic begun, this can be seen in schooling through videocalls, making bookings ahead of visits and track and trace via QR codes. It is helpful to consider how these digital methods are being used to apply these tools to ensure the respondents digital journey is accessible. Accessibility can be in many forms;
- not burying an online survey link within another online link
- clean interface to aid navigation and avoid incompletion
- having a copy of the volunteering strategy in the same place as the feedback function for reference
- time spent on reading the volunteering strategy and completing feedback
- using familiar tools, for example; email, QR codes, online link
- using tools which can be shared widely, for example; newspaper, OWL, email, letters etc

Legal

It is also important to consider whether the software meets the forces data governance. For example, *Survey Monkey* is not compliant, therefore it is unlikely that similar platforms such as *Bang on the table* will conform to the necessary guidelines. The platforms in the Overview section are compliant with the forces data governance.

Platforms Overview

Figure 1 shows the features of 6 core consultation platforms and data collection abilities.

Figure 1.

	Pros	Cons
Microsoft Forms	✓ Survey with free text answers ✓ Run real time poll ✓ Generates data for analysis ✓ Acquire demographic information ✓ Accessible via scanning a QR code ✓ Clean interface	✗ Lengthy respondent journey ✗ Cannot upload a copy of the Volunteering Strategy ✗ Does not generate the data of open answers
Meeting Sphere	✓ Digital white board which can be titled ✓ Open questions ✓ Can have more than one white board, ie 5 sections ✓ Free text answers (visibility settings for public and private)	✗ Data is raw ✗ Layout is meeting style ✗ Questions buried ✗ Cannot acquire demographic information
Focus Groups	✓ Purposeful engagement ✓ Acquire demographic information ✓ Can be done virtually ✓ Acquire subjective and objective data	✗ Data is raw ✗ Streamlined audience ✗ Additional time resource required
Echo	✓ Maximum 2 questions, time efficient ✓ Open questions ✓ Generate in depth analysed data from free text ✓ Generate actions (respondents call to improvements) ✓ Enable an understanding of *why* ✓ Accessible via scanning a QR code ✓ Can upload copy of Volunteering Strategy	✗ Maximum 2 questions, may not capture the entirety needed
Infographics / Email	✓ Interactive infographics to summarise the Volunteering Strategy ✓ Can have more than one infographic, ie 5 sections ✓ Free text answers via email	✗ Data is raw ✗ Maximum 1 question to prompt email response from respondent
OWL	✓ Survey with free text answers ✓ Generates data for analysis ✓ Acquire demographic information ✓ Survey link is shareable	✗ Lengthy respondent journey ✗ Cannot upload a copy of the Volunteering Strategy ✗ Does not generate the data of open answers ✗ May result in specific questions which is a response feature of OWL

Equality Impact Assessment

The refreshed volunteering strategy is a relevant policy change to all protected characteristic groups, as everyone can volunteer. The impact of the refreshed strategy should not result in any dis-advantage or discrimination as it builds upon the previous strategy and enhances diverse opportunities. Nevertheless, figure 2 shows an initial Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to demonstrate any needs and adjustments.

Figure 2.

Protected Characteristic	Positive	Adverse	Neutral
Age	✓	✓	
Sex			✓
Gender Reassignment			✓
Sexual Orientation			✓
Race including gypsies and travellers			✓
Religion or belief		✓	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			✓
Disability		✓	
Pregnancy / Maternity			✓

Age

Age has been identified to have both a potential positive and adverse impact, depending upon the age group. As mentioned, the volunteering age profile is now mixed, this combined with predominately internet based communications mean engagement with the consultation may lean on the respondent's ability to use the internet. Almost all adults aged 16 to 44 years in the UK were recent internet users (99%) in 2019, compared with 47% of adults aged 75 years and over[i] therefore a non technology and internet based approach will need to be considered to reach this audience.

Religion or Belief

Religion or Belief has been identified to have potential adverse impact as language and religion and beliefs have a significant relationship, therefore there could be potential language barriers. The Consultation Principals from the Cabinet Office advises that clear language and plain English is used to make it easier for members of the public to be involved in consultations.[ii] An offer should also be made to make the refreshed Volunteering Strategy and consultation feedback available in different language formats.

Disability

Disability has been identified to have potential adverse impact as disabled people are likely to have a below average level of access to information. This may be due to financial reasons, limited mobility or because absorbing information can require extra effort. Accessible format versions of the Volunteering Strategy should be made available, namely braille, audio and large print. Providing alternative contact points such as telephone, textphone, email address, fax number or postal address increases inclusivity. [iii]

Outcome

People with Protected Characteristics will fall into more than 1 group. For example, a member of the public might be over the age of 65 where English is not their first language and they have a hearing impairment. The difference between internet use in disabled and non-disabled adults was greater in the older age groups which reinforces the need to adopt a mixed method approach to engagement and the channels used to consult.

Costings

Translated / Braille formats

Print force use two suppliers that will be able to translate the Volunteering Strategy into another language, it would cost 45p per word per language. There are almost 4,500 words in the document therefore a translated version would cost £2,025. A braille format would require specified quote. Both suppliers only work with certain print industry design software therefore print force would have to reset the document which would incur an additional charge.

The demographic information available is from 2011, this data reports that 3.2% of households in Hertfordshire do not speak English as a main language which is most common in Watford. This data may not be reflective of 2020 demographics therefore demand is difficult to forecast. It would be financially more responsible to offer a translated / braille version upon request. This approach is factored into Appendix A.

Interactive Infographics

To add a new interactive infographic webpage to the PCC's website, the following will be needed;

- Duplicate previous infographic - hertscommissioner.org/plan
- Source new images
- Add new content to infographic from document provided and amend layout to fit new content
- Check infographic responsively

Fluid Studios have quoted a total to be priced at an hourly rate of £60 + VAT which will take approximately 3 - 5 hours. The costings including VAT will vary between £216 - £360.

Finance

Please see the table below which outlines the retrospective finances from the consultation.

	Details	**Total**
Echo	Feedback platform asked one question and had a link to a copy of the Volunteering Strategy.	£0.00
Infographics	Interactive infographic was created with Fluid but was not ready to the published.	£504.00
OWL	2 OWL messages were sent to members.	£0.00

Email / RAG briefings	Information with a blurb, Echo QR code and link was widely shared via email and included in the RAG briefing.	£0.00
PCC Webpage	Consultation webpage was created with links to the Volunteering Strategy and Echo.	£0.00
Social Media	Promoted on OPCC and Constabulary platforms. Blurb was also shared with partners along with the Echo QR code and link.	£0.00
Translated / Braille formats	None requested.	£0.00
Printed copies	None requested or sent to public spaces due to the pandemic lockdown.	£0.00
Print Force	Created a branded digital PDF copy of the Volunteering Strategy and made the requested amendments.	£106.25

The projected finances for the final publication of the strategy are listed in the table below.

	Details	**Total**
OWL	An OWL message to be sent with launch information and a link to the copy of the final Volunteering Strategy.	£0.00
Email / RAG briefings	Launch information with a link to a copy of the final Volunteering Strategy to be shared widely via email and included in the RAG briefing.	£0.00
PCC Webpage	Volunteering Strategy page to be updated with the refresh.	£0.00
Social Media	Promote on OPCC and Constabulary platforms. Blurb to be shared with partners along with a link to the final copy of the Volunteering Strategy.	£0.00
Translated / Braille formats	Made upon request, see section 6 for quotes.	TBC
Printed copies	Dissemination of 600 copies, to be sent to; • 480 copies to the 48 libraries in Hertfordshire • 50 copies to the accredited Volunteer Centres (Dacorum, Broxbourne and East Herts, Hertsmere and St Albans, Welwyn and Hatfield and the University of Hertfordshire Student Union) • 10 copies to #TeamHerts • 10 copies Communities 1st • 50 copies in reserves for requests	£540.00
Print Force	Update the branded digital PDF copy of the Volunteering Strategy to reflect the final copy.	TBC

Evaluation

The Volunteering Strategy consultation requires us to understand *why* the public and stakeholders feel the way they do about the strategy's expectations, and needs to be accessible.

<u>Multiple platforms</u>

Echo automates and categorises qualitative data produced from free text which enables an understanding of *why*. The platform asks maximum 2 questions, which are open and not leading so that it resonates with the respondent. The question/s would need to be carefully framed to capture the entirety of the Volunteering Strategy. This approach would be time efficient after the respondent reads the long document and can tell us what matters to them. In addition, due to track and trace practices, QR Codes are now widely used and are therefore familiar to more individuals. This method has maximum accessibility as there is no link, buried in a link.

Interactive infographics summaries key areas of the strategy allowing the respondent to navigate through the sections which resonate the most with them. Feedback through use of email is familiar to most people, including those who are over 65 years old which is the traditional age profile for those who volunteer. This feedback will be free text which can be inputted into Echo to generate the analysis consistently.

To meet the needs of respondents with hearing and / or sight impairments, the constabulary has a textphone service. We would also ensure that the content is screen reader friendly. Respondents can also be offered a paper copy of the Volunteering Strategy on request, this includes translated and braille versions upon request.

Respondents will have the option to post their free text feedback. Again, the free text can be inputted into Echo so the data analysis is in one place and is consistent.

<u>Channels</u>

The QR Code for Echo and the webpage short link for the infographics / email feedback can be promoted through multiple channels. The postal option is more limited and would see traditional channels used such as newspapers and radio which would reach this audience. More information on how these platforms can be shared can be found in the attached document in Appendix A.

Recommendation

This paper seeks your approval on the design and finances to deliver a public consultation on the refreshed PCC Volunteering Strategy using a mixed method approach that will adopt the following specific consultation platforms in order to reach as wide and diverse a part of the population as possible:

a) **Echo**
b) **Interactive infographics with feedback via email**
c) **Post**
d) **Textphone**

Employing this mix of platforms will be complimentary as all these methods will be free text for consistent analysis and inclusivity.

The total spend is £1,150.25 which is for the infographics and Print Force to brand the digital Volunteering Strategy PDF, as well as print 600 copies for distribution to volunteering centres and libraries. Please note this total does not include the changes required for the

final version of the document or any requests for translated or braille copies that could be made.

Appendix A – Volunteer Strategy Consultation

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Strategy Consultation

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[i] Office for National Statistics, Internet Users UK: 2019

[ii] Cabinet Office, Consultation principles: guidance, updated 2018

[iii] Office for Disability Issues & Department for Work and Pensions, Guidance: Using a range of communication channels to reach disabled people, 2018