

PFCC Decision Report

Report reference number: 065-24

Classification: Not protectively marked

Title of report: Public Perception / Views and Experience Survey – Contract Award

Area of county / stakeholders affected: Countywide

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Date of report: 24th May 2024

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The PFCC and Essex Police have jointly procured a public perception survey since 2017. This has provided valuable insight into the public's confidence in Essex Police, the perceptions of victims and how different groups perceive Essex Police and the service they receive from them.
- 1.2. As we move towards the conclusion of the current contract (due to end in October 2024), the PFCC and Essex Police have gone out to tender for a provider to continue running this valuable longitudinal survey.
- 1.3. This decision report seeks agreement from the PFCC to award a new contract to SMSR Ltd to continue to run this survey.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the PFCC approves the allocation of ██████████ (£█████████ for year 1 and ██████████ for year 2) for the two-year contract (50% to be funded by Essex Police and 50% by the PFCC each year). The PFCC's contribution will be allocated from the Community Safety Fund (CSF) to SMSR Ltd to deliver an ongoing public perception survey. Essex Police's contribution will be funded from the Force Surveys Budget which is included in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).
- 2.2. That the PFCC agrees to execute a two-year contract with SMSR Ltd with the possibility of two one-year extensions. Approval for any extension will be sought via an additional decision report.

3. Background to the Proposal

- 3.1. The aim of the public perception survey is to seek to understand, on an ongoing basis, the public's views and experiences of policing and criminal justice services in Essex. The survey provides information about the service provided to victims, including their engagement with the police, specialist support agencies, community safety services and their experiences of the wider criminal justice system. The survey shows how people with different characteristics or located in different areas of Essex perceive Essex Police and allows for services and broader engagement with the public to be improved.
- 3.2. The results from the survey provide useful insight into the reasons and drivers for the public's perception, which can be used to support improvement. The outcomes allow Essex Police and the PFCC to ensure compliance with the Victims' Code, delivery against their equality, diversity and inclusion objectives, to increase public confidence and improve the services delivered and commissioned.
- 3.3. The contract with SMSR Ltd will commence in October 2024 for a period of two years with the possibility of two one-year extensions. The current contract expires at the end of October 2024. A full tender was completed by the PFCC and Essex Police in May 2024 supported by 7F Procurement Services. The timing of the tender was designed to ensure sufficient time to mobilise the new contract and develop a new set of questions to align with the Police and Crime Plan 2024-2028 and the Force Plan. The successful tender costed the services requested at ██████████ for two years (█████████ for year 1 and ██████████ for year 2). The tender specifically sought a service that provides both continuity and the opportunity to undertake innovative research to develop a deeper understanding in key areas.
- 3.4. The new specification is similar to the previous service, to ensure continuity of service and analysis of data. The provider will deliver:

- An understanding of the public's views and experience of policing and criminal justice in Essex.
- An electronic version of the raw data to enable the commissioners to undertake bespoke analysis and interrogation.
- Descriptive analysis of the results presented in an easily understood and accessible way.
- The results must be available and presented on a quarterly basis and be analysed at a county and district level, with annual confidence intervals of less than 4% per district.
- Quarterly reports should be clearly presented in an easy-to-understand format and be accessible and relevant to a range of senior stakeholders.
- Quarterly reports must include:
 - o A presentation of quantitative results.
 - o A presentation and visualisation of descriptive statistics including geographic or demographic variations and trends.
 - o Any qualitative data captured.

3.5. The initial contract term is 31 October 2024 to 30 October 2026.

3.6. The full value of the contract over two years is ██████████. Essex Police and the PFCC split the cost equally, therefore the PFCC allocation is ██████████ over two years (██████████ in the first year and ██████████ in the second) with Essex Police's allocation being the same.

4. Proposal and Associated Benefits

4.1. Public confidence is fundamental to policing by consent. Understanding the public's views and experiences of policing and the criminal justice system is vital to maintaining a service that holds the public's confidence and is well positioned to deliver for local communities.

4.2. The information and data gathered through the survey is used by Essex Police and the PFCC to inform their policy agenda and strategic objectives, and to design community engagement initiatives and service provision. Without this insight, the decisions taken would be poorer, less informed and at greater risk of failure.

4.3. SMSR Ltd was the successful bidder through a fair procurement process. They demonstrated strong experience and knowledge in market research within the criminal justice sector.

4.4. SMSR Ltd also provides flexibility in supporting the delivery and development of the survey. This has already been demonstrated during the previous contracts won by them and successfully delivered. It is worth noting that, during the coronavirus pandemic, they were able to continue to deliver and add additional COVID-related questions without any further cost or difficulty.

4.5. SMSR Ltd being both the current provider and the successful bidder also means there will be no break in service or data collection. This provides a

continual stream of data that will enable the production and scrutiny of longitudinal trend information.

5. Options Analysis

- 5.1. The PFCC and Essex Police could decide not to award this contract. They could decide not to continue with the survey or to seek public views in a variety of different ways. However, the recommendations set out in this report provide the best opportunity to continue to receive useful, insightful data that can be compared over time with confidence levels since 2017. A decision to cease this survey would reduce the ability of the force and the PFCC to identify and respond to concerns of the public and would reduce their ability to understand how people with different characteristics and victims perceive the police and the services commissioned by the PFCC.
- 5.2. The PFCC and Essex Police could decide to undertake a survey 'in house', utilising internal resources. However, in order to ensure consistency in reporting and accuracy of the results, this would have to be of a similar size and depth as the previous tendered survey. This would not be possible as there are insufficient resources within the PFCC's office and Essex Police to undertake a piece of work of that size.

6. Consultation and Engagement

- 6.1. This service has been procured in partnership and has been collaboratively designed by the PFCC and Essex Police teams.

7. Strategic Links

- 7.1. The public perception survey gives the PFCC and Essex Police insight into how the residents of Essex feel about local policing and criminal justice activity. This helps review existing activity and inform future systems and processes. The survey is used as a key performance indicator in the Police and Crime Plan and has been used extensively when designing new systems, strategies, and processes. Its impact is felt across Essex Police and the wider criminal justice and community safety system in Essex.
- 7.2. The proposal also aligns with the commitment made to communications and engagement within the Police and Crime Plan, whereby the PFCC commits to "Giving the public a voice in local policing so they feel they are heard, feel able to come forward and report crime and anti-social behaviour and have confidence in the way that the police protect them."

8. Police operational implications

- 8.1. Essex Police uses the information secured through the survey to inform their district level public engagement and their communications activity, and as an input into how they shape and deliver operational policing across Essex.

9. Financial implications

- 9.1. The full value of the contract over two years is [REDACTED]. Essex Police and the PFCC split the cost equally, therefore the PFCC allocation is [REDACTED] over two years ([REDACTED] in the first year and [REDACTED] in the second) with the Essex Police contribution mirroring this.
- 9.2. The PFCC element of this cost will come from the CSF. [REDACTED] was originally budgeted from within this budget per year so, over the two-year contract, there is sufficient funding allocated to cover this cost. If this decision is made, there will be [REDACTED] left in the CSF for the 2024-25 year. The Essex Police contribution will come from the Force Surveys Budget for the 2024-25 year (which has allocated up to [REDACTED]).
- 9.3. As we work through the detail of the provision, it may be necessary to broaden slightly the services being provided. If this is the case, then further appropriate approval will be sought as required.
- 9.4. This tender was completed in line with 7F procurement procedures.

10. Legal implications

- 10.1. All legal obligations are identified within the contract, which is a Matrix MM product completed by the 7 Force Procurement team.

11. Staffing implications

- 11.1. There are no known staffing implications.

12. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications

- 12.1. The contract seeks to gain the views of Essex residents. The provider is required to monitor and report on key demographic and geographic information as well as the protected characteristics of respondents to ensure the views of a representative group are used to inform future planning. This insight is vital to inform the PFCC's and Essex Police's performance of their Public Sector Equality Duty and to ensure they can deliver against their equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.
- 12.2. The survey will engage a representative sample of the public of Essex. A representative sample includes but is not limited to:
 - Clear demographic and geographic representation of the landscape of Essex.
 - Traditionally less heard groups such as ethnic minorities, and those with protected characteristics.
 - Victims of crime and various cohorts defined by the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

12.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is appended to this decision report. The assessment found that data the survey provided previously did not support a more detailed breakdown of responses based on protected characteristics or economic activity, which was felt to be a gap and is being rectified in the tender for the new contract.

12. Risks and Mitigations

12.1. The Matrix Framework requires applicants to have public indemnity insurance of █████ while our SEERPIC agreement sets a recommended level of █████. This risk has been mitigated by agreeing with SMSR Ltd to increase their public indemnity insurance up to █████ which they have agreed to do at no additional cost.

12.2. If we decide not to do the survey, there would be a risk that Essex Police and the PFCC would become disconnected from their residents and fail to understand the views and perceptions of different communities. This could undermine confidence in policing and erode the force's legitimacy. This decision, if taken, will mitigate this risk.

12.3. The allocation of this budgeted spend would reduce the CSF to █████ which will limit the PFCC's options to use this for the remaining year. This risk will be raised with the PFCC's SMT by the PFCC's Chief Finance Office and report author.

12.4. There are no additional risks associated with the award of this contract. The current supplier was successful in bidding for the contracted service through an open and transparent procurement process.

13. Governance Boards

13.1. The procurement process and procedure were discussed at the PFCC's Senior Management Team (SMT) meeting on 13th February 2024. It was agreed to proceed to the tender process and that a formal decision on the successful candidate would be recommended to the June 2024 Strategic Board. This will allow sufficient time to review the questions with the new supplier and ensure mobilisation is in place for the end of the current contract at the end of October 2024.

13.2. This decision report was also discussed by the Essex Police Chief Officer Group on 15th May 2024.

14. Links to Future Plans

14.1. The survey results will inform assessment of performance against the Police and Crime Plan and help inform engagement plans, operational plans and the delivery of key services across the criminal justice and community safety environment.

16. Background Papers and Appendices

Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Regulation 84 Report

Appendix C – Draft contract

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:

Print: P. Brent-Isherwood

Date: 30 May 2024

Chief Financial Officer

Sign:



Print: Janet Perry

Date: 30 May 2024

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*)

None

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. Of Appendix?	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>		NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Pricing should be redacted as is commercially sensitive.

Date redaction carried out:

Chief Finance Officer / Chief Executive Sign Off – for Redactions only

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

Sign: 

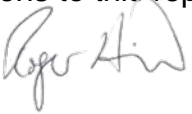
Print: Darren Horsman - Deputy MO

Chief Executive / Chief Finance Officer

Date signed: 11/7/2024

Decision and Final Sign Off

I agree the recommendations to this report:

Sign: 

Print: Roger Hirst

PFCC

Date signed: 25/06/2024

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: