

MEETING	Decision Making Meeting
DATE	18 June 2021
TITLE OF REPORT	Moving OPCC website to Single Online Home
SUBMITTED BY	Nigel Atkins, Communications Manager, OPCC
PURPOSE OF REPORT	Outlining proposal to use SOH as the new website provider for the OPCC website
DECISION(S) REQUIRED	Agreement to creating a new website to be hosted by SOH
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	No additional expenditure. Potential re-design savings of circa £15,000-20,000. Plus saving of future annual Recite Me accessibility plug in of £2,500 per annum
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	None. All Specified Information Order requirements would be transferred to new site.
EQUALITIES IMPACTS	SOH would enable enhanced compliance with the Public Bodies Accessibility Regulations 2018
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION EXEMPTION SECTION IF APPLICABLE	n/a

INTRODUCTION

The existing OPCC website was designed and created by current provider Fluid Studios during the Commissioner’s first term in office. Its visual design is now somewhat dated and in need of a refresh. Usability is compromised by regular failures to function and display correctly through the latest website browsers and devices, such as laptops, phones and tablets.

Initial estimates for the creation of a new website are circa £15,000-£20,000. But there is the opportunity to have a new OPCC website created on the Single Online Home (SOH) platform at no extra cost for the office or the Constabulary.

The Commissioner has also committed to Hertfordshire Constabulary joining SOH.

BACKGROUND

1. The Senior Leadership Team have been discussing the need to commissioning a new website for the past year, with a proposal to take it forward following the 2021 elections.

2. The current website now has limited functionality and does not reflect the openness and simplified design style preferred by users. Also, years of additions and changes have resulted in a confusing array of extended menus and sub-menus which are difficult to navigate.
3. Our website currently does not meet all the required Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1) which have been introduced since it was designed. Although this has been improved with the purchase of the Recite Me plug last year, this does not address all of the flaws in the layout of the site. The Recite Me subscription is due to renewal in October 2021 at a cost of £2,500 +vat.
4. SOH is being adopted by more forces across England and Wales. A decision was taken at the Joint Chief Officer Board last month for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire to fully onboard their websites to SOH, effective from early 2022.
5. Discussions with the SOH national onboarding team has resulted in an offer to design, build and support at Herts OPCC site free of charge. It is being offered to us as part of the package of BCH signing up for the full SOH service. Initial estimates to have a similar service conducted by an external firm would cost circa £15,000-20,000 in expenditure.
6. Three OPCC's already use SOH including [Kent](#), [Cheshire](#) and [Wiltshire](#). Their comms teams they have recommended the provider. Benefits they have highlighted include more accessible and cleaner pages for public to engage with. A high standard of technical support and security of sites. Also the national roll-out of SOH and subsequent standardisation of the police and PCC websites will enable more familiarisation and increased usability for visitors. Despite this there is ample flexibility in the design process for us to differentiate the Herts OPCC website from their sites, as well as from the Constabulary's website.
7. The OPCC's Complaint Resolution Team staff are already communicating with the BCH SOH onboarding team on how the complaints reporting procedure will work on the new platform for the public and staff. They report it offers more options and better signposting.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE

Agree proposal to adopt SOH as for the design and operational platform of the new OPCC website.

It will enable The OPCC can take advantage of a considerable cost saving with the offer of the free set up service on offer.

The new website would be more resilient to hacking or cyber crime with government level of security and back up. The new website would comply to the latest Accessibility regulations.

With an established framework in place we can have the new website operational by the end of the 2021.