Board Meeting Paper		
Mar 16 BM C 4.0		
Purpose of report	☒ Decision[1] ☐ Discussion / debate ☐ Information only[2]	
Sensitive Information?	☒ Yes ☐ No	
If sensitive, protective marking[3]	Commercial sensitive	
Date of Meeting	17 March 2016	
Agenda Item	Launch of Online Panel	
Report Title	C 4.0	
Sponsor	Ian Wright	
Author(s)	Douglas Dalziel	

1. Summary

The online panel offers exciting opportunities to reduce our research costs through in-house management of online surveys, and the opportunity to develop an additional revenue source through developing online products.

This paper provides an update of progress on the implementation.

2. Recommendations / decision required

The agreement of the Board to proceed with the proposed governance arrangements for the online panel.

3. Further details

The benefits of the online panel
The two main benefits of the online panel are:

1. Reduce the costs of conducting online research by managing the process internally through the online panel manager, and our own software licence.

2. It is also expected that the online panel will begin to deliver revenue through selling online research.

Update on progress
Progress on the online panel using NRPS re-contacts has been relatively swift:

- We have appointed an online panel manager (Steve McGee) for a 6 month contract (ends July 14th)

- We have collated a sample of 50,000 NRPS re-contacts

- We have conducted a review of the various suppliers of online panel software and have selected a preferred supplier

- We will be testing different approaches to the initial contact emails to invite respondents to signup to the Panel (see below for more details)

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[1] If a decision is required, or you are asking for the paper to be formally noted, please set this out in section 2
[2] If for information only, please make clear in section 1 **why** this information is being provided
[3] ie **OFFICIAL/SENSITIVE**: plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / MANAGEMENT-STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

- We are developing the initial set of profile questions – including some data fusion questions - which will shortly be reviewed by the Insight Team

- We have held three communications sessions – one with the Insight team and one with all staff in Manchester and one with all staff in London. The presentation is attached for information. Not everyone was able to attend and Steve is happy to arrange further sessions if required.

- We are developing an external communications plan which involves telling stakeholders about the forthcoming survey through Passenger Voice and Road User Voice and through the Transport Focus website.

Next steps

The next steps are to set up the panel software, and invite/recruit panellists to participate in the first survey/s. The plan is to have the online panel up and running by April 2016.

Recruitment

A sample of the re-contacts will be recruited to the panel in one of two ways:
1. They will receive an invitation to join the panel (variations to the wording of this email invitation will be trialled)

2. They will receive a survey and be asked at the end of the survey whether they would like to participate in the panel.

This approach will test the best approach to recruitment for the remainder of the panel.

Opting out

All respondents will be able to opt out of the panel/survey by clicking on a link. All correspondence with those opting out will be managed online.
There is a risk that some of the re-contacts may wish to complain about the invitation to participate in the panel. In the first place we will manage this through an online approach. However, it may be that some re-contacts seek to call Transport Focus – we will manage this by a three stage approach:

First stage
- Providing information to all staff

- Briefing Ventrica

Second stage
- Referring to the Panel Manager

Third stage
- Written response from Transport Focus

The profile surveys

The panel manager has compiled a list of our standard demographic and travel behaviour questions on the trackers and other surveys. He has condensed this list and has put together the list of profile questions we need to ask to segment panellists. The profile information is detailed and will go out in two or more surveys. The profile surveys will help us understand the composition of panellists and their representativeness as well as to identify gaps in the profile.

Incentives

We do not generally plan to use incentives. We plan to provide information and feedback to what we hope will be a motivated and engaged panel members. We may also award points based on the number of surveys that individuals complete – so that panellists receive 'recognition' for their completions. For some panel tasks it may be necessary to offer a financial incentive – for example, if the task is specialised, onerous or particularly time-consuming.

Data protection
The company that provides the software will maintain the database of respondents and their responses to surveys. The database will be held on servers located in Europe. Transport Focus will be the data owner, but we will not have direct access to personal data. Only the software company will have access to personal data about panellists. We will ensure that the appointed company complies with the Data Protection Act.

Governance
In addition to the existing arrangements relating to governance for projects, it is proposed that an Online Panel Group (OPG) is set up to:

- Advise on the suitability of using the online panel

- Agree procedures for using the online panel

- Sign-off of questionnaires placed on the online panel

- Help develop communications for staff and external stakeholders

- Guide the future development of the online panel

The composition of the OPG needs to be responsive and capable of making prompt decisions. The initial proposal, for discussion and agreement, is that the OPG comprises:

- Panel Manager

- Head of Insight (or appointed team member)

- Head of Communications

- Head of Business Innovation

- A Board Member

The agreement of the Board is sought for these arrangements.

4. Implications – Financial, Risk, Legal, Staffing

Financing the Online Panel
The software for the online panel will be provided by Confirmit – a leading UK provider. After considerable negotiation with them it will cost £8k set up and £50k licence costs per annum. In addition. The funds to set up the online panel comes from multiple sources. The Management Team have already signed off £75k for the provision of a six month contract for the Panel Manager and a contribution to the licensing of the required software support. DfT have agreed to funding of £40k this year, and we also plan to use some of the available funding from the Innovate UK project.

Staffing
Skills to deliver online research currently sit with the Panel Manager and bureau services from the software company. A few members of the Insight team have some experience of using online software in previous jobs. It is intended to offer training to members of the Insight team to use the software. Some members of the team have raised questions about this. The presentation of the opportunity will require careful handling, and planning.

5. Background information

Description	Web Link

6. Equalities screen

Sometimes, an equalities impact assessment (EIA) is required for a given report, proposal or project. To help decide whether an EIA is required, a screen must be undertaken based on the information provided above. The screen seeks answers to four questions which are used to determine impact on the protected characteristics – major, minor or none (default). Please choose the correct impact value and, if **major**, link it to an explanation below.

Gender	Age	Sexual orient'n	Disability	Marital status	Political belief	Religious belief	Racial group
1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?							
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?							
None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?							
					None	None	None
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?							
					None	None	None

*Summary of **major** impacts*

1	Development of a product to generate a revenue stream
2	
3	
4	

Conclusion (the board's consideration of this paper may result in a change of conclusion)

Based on the information above, and having regard to the guidance below, the sponsor and author of this paper agree that (√)	
(a) A full equalities impact assessment is **not** required	√
(b) A full equalities impact assessment is **not** required at this time but the impact values above suggest the matter should be kept under view during the lifetime of the project	
(c) A full equalities impact assessment is required and should be completed during the lifetime of the project	
(d) A full equalities impact assessment is required and should be completed immediately	
Please provide a brief explanation of why you have arrived at this conclusion	
The proposal has little no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations and / or is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.	