Report to:	QSMTM
Report by:	Claire Stephen, Head of Policy and Information (HOPI)
Meeting Date:	26 May 2023
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	Website Statistics Report Q4 2022-23 committee report (VC187257)
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	Website Statistics Report Q4 2022-23 VC187257

Purpose of report

To report on performance of the Scottish Information Commissioner's website in Q4 of 2022-23 and a summary of performance for the year 2022-2023.

Recommendation and actions

I recommend that:

The Senior Management Team (SMT) notes the contents of this report and the attached paper

(i) This committee report and attached paper are published in full as set out in the publication section below.

Executive summary

The attached document reports on activity on the Commissioner's website during Q4 2022-23 and provides a summary of the performance of the website over 2022-23.

Performance figures remain healthy and as expected. There are some notable differences between Q1 and Q2 statistics, but this can be attributed to the launch of the new website which fell within Q1.

User, Session and Page views have all increased in Q4, with bounce rate also increasing. Bounce rate can indicate that the user has found all of the information they require on that page, it also indicates the engagement rate of our website. A low bounce rate is a measure of good performance for a commercial site, but for the purposes of our website, our bounce rate is satisfactory.

The most viewed pages of the website during Q4 2022-23 included the Homepage, 'Briefings and Guidance' pages, and the decisions database. The most accessed pages throughout 2022-23, remained consistent with our Homepage, 'Briefings and Guidance', 'Appeal' and the decisions database consistently appearing in the top 5.

Notable that we've had zero downtime with our website over the last year.

Risk impact

The website is the Commissioner's principal communication tool. The risks associated with lack of effective communications are identified within existing risk management mechanisms, and are mitigated by actions set out in our communications planning and strategy tools.

Equalities impact

Across 2020-21 work took place to identify and address issues regarding accessibility of the Commissioner's website for as many people as possible, in line with requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The findings from this work fed into the development and build of the new website.

We continue to work on improving the accessibility of the content of our website.

It is noted that not all people in Scotland can or wish to use the internet, and as a result the Commissioner provides information in alternative formats including via the enquiries service, wherever possible.

Privacy impact

No new privacy implications arise from this report.

Resources impact

The website is currently maintained within planned operational resources, and the content of this report does not in itself give rise to any additional resource impact.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

The performance of the Commissioner's website is critical to delivery of several strategic and operational priorities. This report's findings do not highlight any new impacts.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

None identified.

Consultation and Communication

Relevant policy and information officers have been involved in preparation of the report. This report provides detail to the SMT about performance of the Commissioner's website.

Publication

I recommend that this committee report and the attached paper are published in full.

Website Statistics Report Q3 2022-23

Background and introduction

1.   This report provides data from the Scottish Information Commissioner's website (**www.itspublicknowledge.info**), although the report focusses on for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2023 (Q4 2022-23), it also reflects on the annual overall performance of the website

2.   As previously noted, Google Analytics data from the previous website appeared unreliable and inconsistent. The new website was launched on 7 April 2022 and therefore Q1 figures remain marginally impacted by previous analytics.

3.   Over the last year, we experienced no service disruption with regard to the availability of our website and minimal technical issues.

Key website metrics: Annual summary 2022-2023

2022-23 Website performance stats	Q1*	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Users	10,769	8'613	8,280	9,915	37,577
New Users	8,446	6,241	6,133	7,555	28,375
Sessions	18,130	15,230	14,958	17,424	65,742
Return visitors (%)	51.2	64	66	68	
Pageviews	61,265	44,239	45,708	49,879	201,091
Unique page views	42,774	35,142	36,747	39,852	154,515
Bounce rate (%)	40.49	46.82	49.35	52.34	
Acquisition Search engine (%)	53	46	56	59	
Direct (%)	32	37	35	30	
Referral (%)	13	15	8	9	
Social (%)	2	2	1	2	

 *New website launched on 7 April 2022.

4.   New user numbers have increased steadily from Q2. A new user is someone who has visited our website for the first time. However, its important to note that this is based on browser cookies, people who have cleared their cookies or accessed the website using a different device will be counted as a new user.

5. Sessions also show a trend upwards over the year. A session is a single visit to our website, consisting of one or more pageviews. However, a session timeout is 30 minutes – if the user is on longer than 30 mins, it will be counted as two sessions.

6. Unique page views extracts pages that are viewed multiple times in a single session. Again, this is showing a steady increase from Q2 onwards.

7. Bounce rate has increased to 52.34% over the year. Bounce rate is the percentage of sessions with a single page view. If our aim is to direct people to other pages on our website, then we should aim to lower the bounce rate. However, its important to apply context when looking at bounce rate as we may wish some pages to deliver all of the information that somebody is looking for. We've previously referred to industry standards of 55% or lower representing adequate performance, this standard is clearly more relevant in the context of commercial sites. Q4 recorded a 52.34% bounce rate, which indicates good engagement with our website, but further consideration of the purpose of our website content is required with setting bounce rate goals.

8. Acquisition figures tell us how people are finding our website. Our figures indicate that, increasingly people are using search engines to locate our site. In Q4, nearly 60% of activity on our website was as a result of search engine search.

9. Direct refers to typing the URL directly (may be saved as a favourite) or clicking on a link in an email application. Direct sessions also includes other cases where Google Analytics is unable to identify the source of the click. This figure has remained relatively consistent throughout the year despite fewer newsletters issued in Q3 and Q4.

10. Referral is where a user is directed to our website from a third-party website. There has a been a dip in the % of users coming to us through referral. The most common referral for Q4 can be attributed to the Scottish Government's intranet site, followed by WhatDoTheyKnow.com.

11. Users accessing our site via social media remains low but steady. As an organisation we are limited to the use of Twitter, if we were to launch a LinkedIn channel this year, it is likely that acquisitions from this medium will increase.

Most accessed content

Top 10 pages in Q4:

No.	Page	Q4 Sessions
1	Home	4,741
2	/foisa-exemptions	2,179
3	/briefings and guidance	1,039
4	/foi-law	889
5	/decisions	684
6	/appeal	490
7	/eir-exceptions	476
8	/publication schemes	434
9	/response calculator	414
10	/who can I ask	383

Top 10 pages in 2022-23:

No.	Page	2022-23 Sessions
1	Home	19,904
2	/foisa-exemptions	6,458
3	/briefings and guidance	4,042
4	/foi-law	3,323
5	/decisions	2,755
6	/appeal	1,608
7	/response calculator	1,510
8	/publication schemes	1,461
9	/statistics	1,441
10	/who can I ask	1,203

1. The tables above show that the most accessed parts of our website remain fairly consistent throughout the year, with the top five remaining static throughout the year.

2. Noteworthy pages which appeared outside the top 10 in Q4, include:

    a. Decision 004/2023

    b. FOI Consultation update

    c. Highlights from our workshop to improve PA's FOI performance

    d. Consultation responses

    e. Decision 146/2016