
Working with the voluntary sector

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| Committee considering report: | Executive on 30 th April 2020 |
| Portfolio Member: | Councillor Lynne Doherty |
| Date Portfolio Member agreed report: | 11 th March 2020 |
| Report Author: | June Graves |
| Forward Plan Ref: | EX3903 |

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform the Executive of the outcome of the recent Executive Member Strategy Board on working with the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector and present recommended actions for approval to progress.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the recommended actions as set out in this report.
- 2.2 *To note the current situation in relation to Corona virus and the impressive response of the VCSE through the work of the Community Hub, will undoubtedly reshape the relationship of the Council with the sector and therefore the proposed recommendations maybe need to be revisited to reflect this when the time is right. As the situation is so fluid they have been left 'as is' for the purpose of progressing this report.*

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

| Implication | Commentary |
|-------------------|--|
| Financial: | <p>There will be financial implications arising from the implementation of the recommended actions. A budget for one-off funding will be required to support the engagement and facilitation of working with the VCSE sector. This potentially could be found in the balance of the Community Solutions Fund which closed at the end of the last financial year. Budget of £20k is estimated to be required for facilitated engagement events and resources to manage the co-production of the strategy.</p> <p>Revenue budget will also be required to cover the cost of commissioning a Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO). Joint commissioning opportunities could exist with the CCG. Funding requirement estimated to cover the cost of at least one</p> |

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| | <p>post to co-ordinate activities etc at £30k p.a.</p> <p>At this point it is not possible to say whether the implementation of the strategy will result in savings. It is however likely there will be the opportunity for cost avoidance by accessing the capacity in the VCSE to support the achievement of Council Strategy priorities.</p> | | | |
| Human Resource: | <p>The plan is to progress through a cross Council project team and to use existing resources from within this structure to do the work. Where additional resources are required the allocated budget for engagement and facilitation will be utilised to bring in additional specialist resources that maybe required.</p> | | | |
| Legal: | <p>There are no specific legal implications identified apart from the procurement of the Local Infrastructure Organisation which will be managed by the Commissioning Service.</p> | | | |
| Risk Management: | <p>To maintain the existing good relationship with the sector recommendations reflect an aspiration for co-production, the need for full and proper engagement throughout the development and implementation of the strategy and the procurement of the Local Infrastructure Organisation.</p> | | | |
| Property: | <p>N/A</p> | | | |
| Policy: | <p>N/A</p> | | | |
| | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Commentary |
| Equalities Impact: | Y | | | <p>The development and implementation of a strategy for working with the VCSE, supported by the commissioning of a Local Infrastructure Organisation, will enhance local arrangements for people with protected characteristics.</p> |

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| <p>A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?</p> | | | <p>Positive impact from increased provision in the VCSE sector.</p> |
| <p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p> | | | <p>Positive impact from increased provision in the VCSE sector.</p> |
| <p>Environmental Impact:</p> | | | <p>Potential for positive impact on the environment from more localised support services.</p> |
| <p>Health Impact:</p> | | | <p>Potential for positive impact on the people's health and wellbeing from more localised support services.</p> |
| <p>ICT Impact:</p> | | | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Digital Services Impact:</p> | | | <p>N/A</p> |

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|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p> | | | | <p>The implementation of the strategy will have a positive impact on the achievement of Council Strategy Priorities – specifically those identified below. This will be achieved through an enhanced and potentially increased access to the capacity of the sector and the support that will be provided to make it more sustainable in the longer term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships • Ensure our vulnerable children and adults achieve better outcomes • Support everyone to reach their full potential • Maintain a green district |
| <p>Core Business:</p> | | | | <p>Improved sustainability of the sector will benefit the delivery of those services commissioned by the Council from the VCSE to deliver statutory functions as part of core business.</p> |
| <p>Data Impact:</p> | | | | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Consultation and Engagement:</p> | <p>Conservative Group and Leader</p> | | | |

4 Executive Summary

4.1 The Councils Executive Strategy Board held on 20th February 2020 considered the issue of the Councils strategic working relationship with the Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. The Strategy Board was convened with the primary aim of setting the direction for the strategic approach to our future relationship with the VCSE sector. The output has been developed into the following recommendations for approval:

1. Establish a project to develop a strategic approach to working with the VCSE sector that reflects a number of key points identified by Members in the Strategy Board.
2. Project to be governed by the Corporate Programme with agreed actions contained within a cross service project, with identified resources and agreed time frames.

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3. Undertake a high level mapping exercise of VCSE provision to inform the development of the emerging strategy - what is being provided, to who and where, levels of income/spend, capacity and support for the Council Strategy – scope and resources to be identified/agreed as part of the overall project.
 4. Commission a Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) in a process that will require careful consideration of the context of current arrangements which are outside of Council funding. Source of revenue budget to be identified/agreed.
 5. Ownership will sit within the Resources Directorate for the period of development, supported in the project by the other Directorates, VCSE sector representatives and overseen by the Leader.
- 4.2 Members concluded this is important work and must be done within an ethos of trust, respect, integrity and fairness. Universally it was agreed there is a need to do the ground work to understand the context and challenges of the sector to have confidence the agreed strategy is deliverable.
- 4.3 It was agreed the absence of a LIO is a gap and therefore once budget has been agreed, work should commence to start the process for commissioning one in West Berkshire. The LIO could support the development of the strategic approach and take a leading role in the implementation of the resulting strategy.
- 4.4 It was acknowledged doing this well will take time, but there is a need for the work to be done at pace, as the absence of an agreed strategic direction has the capacity to cause issues in the relationship with the sector.
- 4.5 Doing this in coproduction with the VCSE with shared decision making every step of the way is crucial to a successful outcome. It was agreed on the need to create space and time to listen, develop new ideas and thinking. Key to this will be an alignment of respective strategic visions to build a perspective of 'shared endeavour' to take us forward.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 The primary purpose of the Councils Strategy Board is to bring together the Executive, Chief Executive, Executive Directors and other attendees as required to provide a forum for strategy development and review. The Board is supporting the development of a 4 year work program across a range of themes, one of which is the working relationship of the Council with the VCSE sector.
- 5.2 Strategy Board in February concluded with a number of proposed actions to be taken forward to support the development of the strategic relationship of the Council with the VCSE sector. This report provides background information, a summary of the Member position and recommendations for actions for approval to progress.

Background

- 5.3 West Berkshire spends just over £1.5m p.a with the VCSE sector across both statutory and non-statutory services. Grant funding is available through the Community Solutions Fund forecast to have a balance of just over £100k at the end of 19/20 when it is planned to close. Volunteering is strong with hours of in excess of 25,000 recorded across libraries and BBOWT alone. Many hundreds more are delivered via a range of VCSE organisations across the district including the Volunteer Bureau who have just under 250 volunteers available.
- 5.4 The Community Wellbeing model for social prescribing as set out on the NHS ten year plan is developing well and has been supported in its deployment locally through the recent award of funding via the Voluntary Sector Prospectus 2020 - 2023. The Building Communities Together team have delivered some excellent result in working with neighbourhoods.
- 5.5 The absence of formal arrangement for a Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) is viewed as a 'gap' which has the potential to be problematic when the relationship with the sector comes under pressure. Overall current arrangements are considered to be in a good place providing a solid base to build on.
- 5.6 The model of working with the VCSE in West Berkshire is mixed with no specific approach adopted and in contrast to some other local authorities who have moved firmly in the direction of models such as:
- Community Asset Transfer
 - Citizen Deals
 - Grant Funding
 - Social Prescribing
 - Community Commissioning

Strategy Board

- 5.7 Members supported by key officers of the Council discussed current position with the VCSE based on background information provided and their own knowledge. They fed back their views and suggestions for how to move forward as summarised in the following sections.
- 5.8 In general there was a view that before we do anything we need to be clear about what it is we are trying to fix. Current arrangements work well and there is concern these could be unhelpfully disturbed if we are not clear about what we hope to achieve through any changes made implementing a strategy, or other actions taken.
- 5.9 It was felt there is a real need to understand if the sector itself feels they need a strategy and what they would want to get from one if it existed. There was a view that given the scale and diversity of the sector a 'one size fits all' approach may not work and that it is possible more than one strategy could be needed, or something at a very 'high level'.

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- 5.10 As a start point there is a need to gather better information about what the sector is actually comprised of and a mapping exercise should be undertaken to understand what is out there, what it provides and the level of spend and income etc. It was suggested this would assist in segmenting the market into groups of organisations that have things in common such strategic vision, client groups, locations, service models, size and/or requirements, to identify where services are aligned to the Council Strategy and where there are gaps.
- 5.11 In response to four specific questions asked in group work Members gave the following feedback.

We have our strategic aims in the Council Strategy 2019 – 2023 is this our vision?

- Support everyone to reach their full potential
- Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships

- 5.12 Most agreed the existing Council Strategy priority outcomes (above) were a good starting point and could form the basis of an overall strategic vision for the delivery of the VCSE sector in West Berkshire. It was felt however, that to agree an overarching vision more work would be needed to understand if, and how, these could align to VCSE organisational agendas.

What are we looking for from the sector – key message on priorities?

- 5.13 There was general agreement it would be a priority for our work with the VCSE sector to focus on the delivery of the West Berkshire 2036 vision and any identified gaps in the Council Strategy delivery plan. Members gave a steer towards the specific areas of the environment, culture and health/social care.
- 5.14 It was agreed maintaining VCSE service delivery is a priority and as is support for them to keep doing what they are already doing very well - not supporting the sector was not considered an option.
- 5.15 Members recognised the need to make some changes in how we regard VCSE partners and it would be beneficial to establish a more equitable relationship. It was felt that money can 'get in the way' and while it may be believed this can give an element of control, in reality this control is limited as funding often becomes the single issue in the dialogue between us. It was therefore agreed that getting the relationship right is a fundamental priority.
- 5.16 Members felt different approaches would be needed and we should not attempt to 'straight jacket' charities into service delivery models. Acknowledging the Voluntary Sector Prospectus approach has broadly been successful, Members were keen we have flexibility in commissioning approaches that are realistic, focus on outcomes and support for smaller organisations to bid.
- 5.17 Accessing the capacity of the sector in meeting the needs of the people of the district was considered to be extremely important and that work is needed to quantify what any untapped capacity might be available. Key messages were confirmed that the Council would be looking to the sector to build community resilience and self-help to provide cost effective services that are safe and focus on 'hard to reach' groups.

What are the preferred models of delivery?

- 5.18 There was a firm view the role of the Council should be to facilitate the VCSE sector across the district and this would be best done with a LIO in place.
- 5.19 The potential to move as other councils have in the direction of adopting a specific model such as large grant funding or wholesale asset transfer was discussed. This did not result in agreement to take a significantly different direction, more a preference to maintain and build on current arrangements in a facilitative role.
- 5.20 It was suggested not all funding for VCSE services need to go through a commissioning/contract process and we should consider 'just funding' some things – It was felt that this could be risky but might be worth it to show and build confidence in the sector.
- 5.21 Where possible co-production was favoured for discretionary outcomes in areas such as environment. Overall it was felt there is room for both formal and less formal approaches.
- 5.22 There was some discussion about where the ownership of future VCSE development work should sit. This did not conclude any change to the current arrangements where Commissioning have the overall lead, but acknowledged this may require further debate at some point in the future.

Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIO)

- 5.23 Members agreed on the need for a funded LIO as essential to developing our relationship with the sector and that it would be particularly important in areas of co-production. A specification for what we might want a LIO to cover was suggested for the following areas:
- Represent and advise the council acting as an 'expert' intermediary where needed
 - Represent the views/perspective of the VCSE to the Council
 - Provide support such as admin, finance, skills development and training
 - Identify and broker opportunities for VCSE groups to work together
 - Attract funding
 - Provide effective governance
 - Recruit and manage volunteers
 - Network with relevant statutory bodies and other potential collaborators
 - Know what's going on and disseminate knowledge at a local level.

Identify what are the opportunities and where are the threats?

- 5.24 Members identified the follow areas to be considered in the ongoing development of a strategy and a productive relationship with the sector to be used to inform the implementation.

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| Opportunities | Threats |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harness local people and resource to deliver council services • Engage with community and address gaps • More resilient communities • Relationships with parish councils develop further • Centralisation of some aspects at scale • Training and safeguarding • Cross fertilisation/collaboration of ideas and innovation • Streamlining | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro management and too much control • Can't cover all groups so will need to be clear on scope • May not have capability or motivation to deliver what we want • Loss of privative services result in additional costs and no savings • Move from 'traditional' mode could feel like loss of control |

5.25 On the basis of the work done to date and the direction provided by Members in Strategy Board, a number of recommendations were made with supporting actions proposed. It is possible there may be challenges arising due to interdependencies of recommended courses of action which may result in the requirement for parallel pieces of work.

Proposals

- (a) Establish a project to develop a strategy for working with the VCSE that reflects the following key points identified by Members:
- Support for the delivery of the 2036 Vision and the Council Strategy
 - Develops the role of the Council as a facilitator of the VCSE
 - Understands, maintains and builds on what is already in place
 - Supports the sector to grow, thrive and be sustainable
 - Services promote community resilience, self-help, 'hard to reach' groups and 'social value'
 - Focus on joint working in whatever guise – not just the traditional models
 - Recognises the value and role of a LIO
- (b) Project to be governed by the Corporate Programme with agreed actions contained within a cross service project, with identified resources and agreed time frames.
- Project will require PM support (corporate trainee) funding and external facilitation. Project Group to include Commissioning, BCT, People and Environment reps, VCSE representative.
 - Strategy development will require external facilitation with sector through planned milestone workshops/engagement events to support co-production for a shared implementation.
 - Budgetary requirements for the associated work to consider the use of the balance of the Community Solutions Fund for as one-off funding for expenditure on activities such as facilitating engagement with the sector.

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- (c) Undertake a high level mapping exercise of VCSE provision to inform the development of the emerging strategy - what is being provided, to who and where, levels of income/spend, capacity and support for the Council Strategy – scope and resources to be identified/agreed as part of the overall project.
- (d) Commission a LIO. Process will require careful consideration of the context of current arrangements which are outside of Council funding. Source of revenue budget to be identified.
- (e) Ownership will sit within the Resources Directorate for the period of development, supported in the project by the other Directorates and overseen by the Leader.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 It is possible that we could chose to do nothing, but at a national and local level policy is increasingly steering Councils towards use of the VCSE in meeting local need. Many of the priorities outlined in the West Berkshire Vision 2036 and Council Strategy 2019-2023 require a strong VCSE to support community resilience and help reduce demand on public services. To have this in place will require a more strategic approach to the relationship with the sector to set out with clarity how we will work with them, what they can expect from us and how we can best work with them to achieve our shared priorities. Therefore do nothing is not considered an option.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Overall Members concluded this is important work and must be done within an ethos of trust, respect, integrity and fairness. Universally it was agreed there is a need to do the ground work to understand the context and challenges of the sector to have confidence the agreed strategy is deliverable.
- 7.2 It was acknowledged that doing this well will take time and but that there is a need for the work to be done at pace as the absence of an agreed strategic direction has the capacity to cause issues in our relationship with the sector and that this must be avoided as much as possible.
- 7.3 Taking this forward in coproduction with the VCSE with shared decision making every step of the way is crucial to a successful outcome, so will need to create space at the table to listen develop new ideas and thinking. Key to this will be to align respective strategic visions to build a perspective of ‘shared endeavour’ to take us forward.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment

Background Papers:

N/A

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

Wards affected: All

Officer details:

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Job Title: Head of Commissioning
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Document Control

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| Author: | | | |
| Owning Service | | | |

Change History

| Version | Date | Description | Change ID |
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| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:**
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;**
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:**
 - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;**
 - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;**
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.**
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.**

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality:

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- (The relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them)
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy, or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

| | |
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| What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make: | Approve recommendations as set out in the proposals section of the report. |
| Summary of relevant legislation: | |
| Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's key strategy priorities? | No |
| Name of assessor: | June Graves |
| Date of assessment: | 31.3.20 |

| Is this a: | | Is this: | |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Policy | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | New or proposed | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strategy | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Already exists and is being reviewed | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Function | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Is changing | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Service | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

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| What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it? | |
| Aims: | Establish project to develop |
| Objectives: | Develop s |
| Outcomes: | Sustainable and diverse VCSE |
| Benefits: | All residents of West Berkshire |

| <p>Note which groups may be affected by the proposed decision. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this.</p> <p>(Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)</p> | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Group Affected | What might be the effect? | Information to support this |
| Age | Positively | It is not possible to predetermine how the VCSE will evolve through the delivery of the recommendations of this report which are intended to support the development and sustainability of the sector in the district and therefore anticipate the effects to be |

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| | | positive across any or all of the identified groups. |
| Disability | Positively | |
| Gender Reassignment | Positively | |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | Positively | |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | | |
| Race | Positively | |
| Religion or Belief | Positively | |
| Sex | Positively | |
| Sexual Orientation | Positively | |
| Further Comments relating to the item: | | |
| | | |

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| Result | |
| Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Please provide an explanation for your answer: | |
| Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Please provide an explanation for your answer: | |

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered 'yes' to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

If a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and Stage Two template.

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| Identify next steps as appropriate: | |
| Stage Two required | No |
| Owner of Stage Two assessment: | |

| | |
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| Timescale for Stage Two assessment: | |
|--|--|

Name: June Graves

Date: 31.3.20

Please now forward this completed form to Rachel Craggs, Principal Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity) (rachel.craggs@westberks.gov.uk), for publication on the WBC website.

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

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| Directorate: | Resources |
| Service: | Commissioning |
| Team: | Commissioning |
| Lead Officer: | June Graves |
| Title of Project/System: | Working with VCSE |
| Date of Assessment: | 31.30.20 |

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

| | Yes | No |
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| <p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><small>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</small></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |
| <p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><small>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</small></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |
| <p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><small>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</small></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |
| <p>Will any decisions be automated?</p> <p><small>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual’s input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</small></p> | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |

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| | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|-----------|
| Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public? | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |
| Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data? | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |
| Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes? | <input type="checkbox"/> | x |
| <small>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</small> | | |

If you answer “Yes” to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.