

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18TH JUNE 2008

EXECUTIVE – 23RD JUNE 2008

Annual report by the Economic Development Officer on the work of the Economic Development Office for 2007/08 that relates to the voluntary sector.

SUMMARY

This report reviews the Economic Development Office's (EDO) work in relation to the voluntary sector in 2007/08, incorporating the out-turn budget and performance measures for 2007/08 compared to the targets set at the start of the year.

The overall EDO net revenue budget was overspent by a small amount. The number of people advised was considerably above target. The target for the number of VCOs helped was exceeded. Although the overall target for the number of volunteers placed by WVSDA was exceeded, WVSDA did not exceed the baseline number of people volunteering for over 100 hours and only slightly improved on the base of hard to reach volunteers.

During 2007/08, the EDO secured a third Charter Mark. Satisfaction with the EDO's services remained very high at 93%. This report also reports that there was a high take-up of the EDO's services by people with disabilities, from black minority and ethnic communities and women.

The report comments on the Council's relationship with the voluntary sector. Funds allocated to the voluntary sector are estimated to be worth over £25 million in 2008/09.

Lastly, the report seeks approval to the EDO's future priorities to support Borough residents and the voluntary sector over the next three years. For the first time, some longer-term priorities are described which will be the subject of further consultation as part of the process of preparing Wandsworth's Sustainable Community Strategy

GLOSSARY

BME - Black and Minority Ethnic
EDO – Economic Development Office
LAA – Local Area Agreement
LC - London Councils

TCP – Thessaly Community Project VCO - Voluntary and Community Organisations VIS - Voluntary Information Service WCAB - Wandsworth Citizens Advice Bureaux WLSP – Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership WVSDA - Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency
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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to support the recommendations in paragraph 3.
2. If the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approve any views, comments or recommendations on the report, these will be submitted to the Executive for their consideration.
3. The Executive are recommended to:-
 - (a) note the contents of the Economic Development Office's Annual Report, including the outturn performance measures in the Appendix;
 - (b) endorse the priorities set out in paragraph 25; long-term priorities in paragraphs 28 and 29 and the performance indicators in paragraph 30 for 2008/09; and
 - (c) instruct the Economic Development Officer to take all necessary steps to implement the Economic Development Programme for 2008/09.

INTRODUCTION

4. This report updates the Committee and the Executive on the outturn results of last year's Economic Development Programme regarding the Economic Development Office's (EDO) work in relation to the Committee's remit, and in particular in relation to the voluntary sector. The report also seeks approval to the priorities for the next three years. A separate report on the proposals for EDO's work on economic development and regeneration in 2007/08 was submitted to the Regeneration and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd June 2008. That Committee's views, comments and recommendations on that report, were submitted to the Executive for their consideration on 9th June 2008.

AIMS OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

5. On 26th June 2007, the Executive agreed (Paper No. 07-652) revised corporate objectives and sub objectives. The relevant objective for the EDO is to lead the corporate objective of "building a prosperous, vibrant and cohesive community in Wandsworth". Building a more prosperous and vibrant Wandsworth includes:-

- (a) encouraging volunteering and promoting the benefits for individuals and host organizations; and
- (b) working with the voluntary and community sector to help provide better services and information for Wandsworth residents.

EDO'S CUSTOMERS

- 6. The voluntary sector customer base is wide-ranging including:-
 - (a) the EDO's voluntary sector contractors who provide advice and volunteering services to Borough residents; and
 - (b) all voluntary and community organisations (VCO) in the Borough supported through the Council's voluntary sector information service and who are members of the Borough's key partnerships.

EDO SERVICES

- 7. The services provided by the EDO to the voluntary sector are:-
 - (a) Wandsworth Advice Service delivered by Wandsworth Citizens Advice Bureaux (WCAB);
 - (b) Wandsworth Volunteering Service delivered by Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency (WVSDA); and
 - (c) Voluntary Sector Information Service (VIS) delivered by WVSDA.
- 8. The EDO is also responsible for the Council's payments to the London Councils (LC) to operate the London-wide scheme for grants to the voluntary sector. In 2008/09, the LC will distribute about £28 million to more than 350 organisations which serve a number of London Boroughs.

2007/08 RESULTS

- 9. Financial and performance measures for 2007/08. Detailed financial and performance measures for 2007/08 are included in the Appendix to this report and summarised below:-

Key Inputs	2006/07 Target	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Target	2007/08 Actual
Payment to LC (£'000)	987	987	994	994
Gross programme revenue costs (£'000)	691	666	675	751
Total (£'000)	1,678	1,653	1,669	1,745
Income (£'000)	-17	0	76	91

Volunteers placed	1,300	1,248	1,580	2,030
Volunteers placed for over 100 hours per annum	N/a	N/a	Baseline + 250	0
Hard to reach volunteers placed	N/a	N/a	Baseline + 120	48
People advised	15,300	17,466	8,200	13,183
Voluntary organisations helped	120	170	150	160
All EDO funds to the voluntary sector £'000 (excluding LC payment but including EDO payments for Regeneration and Community Safety services, etc.)	1,661	1,653	1,705	1,301
Overall satisfaction with EDO's services	90%	95%	95%	93%

10. Performance against targets. The overall EDO net revenue budget was overspent by a small amount, which was partly offset by higher income. The number of people advised was considerably above target. The target for the number of VCOs helped was exceeded. Although the overall target for the number of volunteers placed by WVSDA was exceeded, WVSDA did not exceed the baseline number of people volunteering for over 100 hours and only slightly improved on the baseline of hard to reach volunteers.
11. Key achievements in 2007/08. The key achievements for the voluntary and community sector were:-
- (a) WCAB exceeded their key targets for the Advice Service contract and satisfaction with their service was high;
 - (b) WVSDA exceeded their targets for volunteers placed (by 315) and for hard to reach volunteers (by 13) in their core contract, but did not exceed the baseline number of people volunteering for over 100 hours and only slightly improved on the base of hard to reach volunteers which is part of their contract designed to achieve the reward targets included in the Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership's Local Area Agreement (for which the Council is the Accountable Body);
 - (c) the General Purposes Committee agreed (Paper No. 07-901) to create a new part-time post in the Economic Development Office to support WVSDA to achieve the reward target for volunteering. This post has now been filled and the post holder is implementing an action plan to ensure that the reward volunteering target is met by, for example, recording existing volunteering activities already happening in a wide range of voluntary organisations but which have not been placed by WVSDA. This is part of the Council's contribution towards achieving the LAA Reward Target;

- (d) a highly successful volunteering event was held on 27th February 2008. Over 150 people attended the conference, over 50 groups displaying volunteering opportunities, and 405 residents attended the Fair;
- (e) the Council offered an interest free loan of up to £20,000 to the Thessaly Community Project (a youth, information and communication technology training and community centre with café and crèche based at Thessaly Road, SW8 (Lambeth)) to resolve a severe cash shortfall to enable the project to continue to operate key services (in particular childcare services) in this deprived part of the Borough;
- (f) a new managing agent (Careers Development Group) was secured to help the Thessaly Community Project;
- (g) the VIS contract continues to run smoothly. The VIS data-base now contains information on 903 different VCOs. 14 briefings were held for the Borough's VCOs;
- (h) the Council spent £25 million with the voluntary sector in 2007/08;
- (i) the Council continued to campaign against proposals to close eight post offices in the Borough. This campaign involved a poster campaign; distributing campaign postcards to every household in the Borough; setting up a post offices campaign web site and on-line campaign postcard; Brightside articles; holding public meetings in each Parliamentary Constituency; supporting the actions of the Covent Garden Market Authority and the Covent Garden Tenants Association to retain the post office at New Covent Garden Market, SW8 (Queenstown); and visiting each post office offices threatened with closure to provide business support;
- (j) the Executive agreed (Paper No. 08-274) proposals for a Wandsworth Community Fund (WCF) including a draft partnership agreement, proposed grant criteria (reflecting the priorities in the Wandsworth Community Strategy) and arrangements for a Grants Panel. The proposals are designed to support a thriving voluntary and community sector in the Borough. It was also agreed in principle to make a long-term loan of £1,000,000 to establish the WCF;
- (k) the new annual survey of voluntary organisations was carried out, the results of which were reported to this Committee in June 2007 (Paper No. 07- 659). Overall, the survey shows the extent of volunteering in the Borough and that more groups expect to grow than to decline in 2008;
- (l) as a result of budget decisions taken by London Councils (LC), the Council's contribution to LC for 2008/09 has decreased by 1.6%;
- (m) LC have agreed to link its grant expenditure more closely to needs. Wandsworth would benefit from an increase in 'target benefits' of about £166,000. New sub-

regional monitoring and scrutiny arrangements have been put in place to ensure that grant arrangements support local and sub-regional priorities; and

- (n) the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Heaster) wrote to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sports (Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell, M.P.) and Wandsworth's three Members of Parliament expressing concerns about the Government's decision to divert £425 million of Lottery funds to support the 2012 Olympic Games in London. The Government's decision will adversely affect the Lottery distributors and those VCOs who are the main beneficiaries of this funding after 2009.
12. Staff sickness. The number of days lost (0.9 days per head) due to sickness was significantly below the Council's target of 6.2 days and the EDO's target of 4 days. This compares with (3.8 days in 2006/07, 3.8 in 2005/06, 1.7 in 2004/05, 1.8 in 2003/04, 2.5 in 2002/03 and 5.5 days in 2001/02).
 13. Take up of services by racial minorities. Residents from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities made up 61% of all users accessing the Advice Service. During 2007/08, 45.5% of the volunteers who need additional support were identified as being from BME groups.
 14. Take up of services by people with disabilities. The EDO continued to support the Adult Social Services Department implement the Welfare to Work Joint Investment Programme for people with disabilities to help them secure improved training and development and job opportunities. The EDO funded the Fredericks Foundation to assist individuals (aged over 18) suffering from mental health problems wishing to start their own business, but who lack business support. 9.9% of the EDO's service users have declared themselves as having a disability.
 15. Take up on services by women. During 2007/08, 56.8% of participants who signed up to receive support with volunteering opportunities were women.
 16. Complaints. During 2007/08, the EDO experienced an increase in the number of complaints (21) compared to the previous year (11) but below that of 2005/06 (28). None related directly to the EDO's services to the voluntary sector.
 17. Compliments. The number of compliments received was more (28) than the previous year (17) but less than 2005/06 (35). Over half of the compliments emanated from events put on by the EDO during the year, including the Volunteer Fair referred to above.
 18. Suggestions. Six suggestions were received in 2007/08, including three concerning EDO office accommodation and one concerning the best way to destroy CD roms containing personal data. The EDO's office accommodation issues are being dealt with and the suggested way of destroying CD roms has been followed up.

19. Customer research. During the last year, the EDO carried out a number of customer research studies and sought feedback from users of the EDO's services. This included the first survey of local voluntary organisations. As part of the Biennial Residents Survey, residents were asked about their own involvement in VCOs. Respondents were shown a long list of organisations, including religious groups, sports and social clubs, voluntary groups, etc. and asked if they are currently an active member of any of them. More than three-quarters (77%) of respondents were not an active member of any of the organisations, while 21% were current active members. The three organisations they were most likely to be a member of were a sports club (8%); a religious group or church organisation (4%); and Neighbourhood Watch (3%). Further to this, all respondents were asked to rate their level of interest in being involved with local community groups. Once again, the majority indicated a lack of interest (50% not interested); followed by one fifth (21%) who are interested and the same proportion (20%), who are ambivalent and a further 8% do not know. Other surveys have shown that residents support a strong and independent voluntary sector. They value their independence in helping those residents, who lack the necessary skills to find their way through the intricate maze of public sector services, to get the best out of 'the system'. The VCS can often reach parts of the community, particularly the most deprived parts of the Borough. The VCS play an important role on behalf of vulnerable members of society and help them receive the support that they need.
20. Customer satisfaction and feedback. The customer satisfaction survey for the Wandsworth Advice Services over the last 12 months, 2007/08 showed that 94.5% (86% the previous year) of their clients were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received. 80.9% of volunteers gave WVSDA a score of 1 or 2 out of 7 (where 1 is excellent and 7 is poor), whereas 44.2% of volunteer involving organisations gave WVSDA the top two marks for satisfaction. For the VIS service, 93% of users awarded WVSDA the top two marks for satisfaction.
21. Quality. In October 2007, the EDO was awarded a Charter Mark; two partial non-compliances were given for not publishing the type of compliments and number of suggestions received. An action plan has been put in place to ensure these are resolved.
22. Use of Council property. The TCP deliver a range of services, including a Children's Centre, in one of the most deprived parts of the Borough from a site owned by the Council and rented at a peppercorn rent.

THE COUNCIL'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

23. The EDO has a Council-wide role in co-ordinating the Council's relationship with the voluntary sector. During 2007/08, the Council funded 344 VCOs in return for the provision of a wide range of services, outputs, outcomes and benefits for the Council and Borough at a total cost estimated to be about £25 million. The table below summarises the information provided by service departments on the Council's expected expenditure with the voluntary sector in 2008/09.

Service	Total 2007/08 £	2008/09				Total 2008/09 £
		Major contract £	Minor contract £	Small funding £	Other funding £	
Economic Development	1,300,833	639,913	130,000	0	1,010,000	1,779,914
Payment to LC	994,337	978,591	0	0	0	978,591
Children's Services contracts	3,776,990	935,430	701,503	4,775	0	1,641,708
Children's Services - widening participation	100,000	0	41,642	5,053	0	46,695
Children's Services - Surestart*	1,364,455	1,346,157	371,644	0	0	1,717,801
Housing	67,966	105,750	56,173	19,000	0	180,923
Housing - support for tenant management organisations and housing co-operatives	2,713,140	3,330,000	0	0	0	3,330,000
Leisure and Amenity Services	371,617	87,300	206,233	2,410	60,000	355,943
Policy Unit	108,831	149,500	0	0	0	149,500
Policy Unit - Drug Action Team*	833,761	795,059	0	0	0	795,059
Adult Social Services**	6,365,087	6,222,319	75 578,018	0	0	6,800,337
Technical Services	269,200	193,150	126,100	6,150	6,700	332,100
Sub Total	18,266,217	14,783,170	2,211,313	37,388	1,076,700	18,108,571
Mandatory Business Rate Relief	5,703,935	6,092,651	0	0	0	6,092,651
Discretionary	981,235	1,049,183	0	0	0	1,049,183

Business Rate Relief						
Total	24,951,387	21,925,004	2,211,313	37,388	1,076,700	25,250,405

*Fully funded from external sources.

** These figures include some spend which was transferred to Children's Services.

24. The Council has developed a wide variety of different relationships with the Borough's VCO and has progressively spent more with VCO. This relationship has changed from a largely grant-aiding relationship in the 1980s to a much more varied series of arrangements. These arrangements include contracts to deliver services, funded from a variety of different Council mainstream and externally funded budgets, and not just from the traditional departmental 'grants to the voluntary sector' budgets. The VCS are playing an increasing role in contributing to policy making in the Borough. They are also valued partners on the many partnerships in the Borough alongside the public and private sectors. The VCS now has a strengthened position on the Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership.

FUTURE PRIORITIES

25. The EDO's future priorities for the voluntary sector over the next three years are:-
- (a) publish and circulate a revised Advice Service Directory with a wide range of information about advice services to local residents, as needed;
 - (b) ensure the smooth running of the Wandsworth Advice Service delivered by WCAB;
 - (c) ensure the smooth running of the core contract delivered by WVSDA for the VIS and volunteering services;
 - (d) start the process of reviewing the specification for contracting for a new volunteering and VIS service from 1st April 2010;
 - (e) prepare, agree and implement an action plan to ensure the delivery of the LAA Reward Target for enhanced volunteering;
 - (f) publish and circulate a revised volunteer guide showing how residents can volunteer in the Borough;
 - (g) organise a Volunteer Awards event in late 2008 to promote volunteering to a wider audience;
 - (h) continue to promote volunteering opportunities in public services and other organisations via suitable publicity campaigns, and contribute to the target of increased community participation in volunteering;
 - (i) establish the Wandsworth Community Fund by October 2008 with a view to making the first grant offers from April 2009;
 - (j) continue to support and develop a strong and relevant local voluntary sector, using the principles set out in the Voluntary Sector Compact;
 - (k) carry out an annual sample survey of Wandsworth's voluntary organisations;

- (l) work with other public sector agencies to ensure they deliver quality services to Wandsworth's voluntary organisations and community groups;
- (m) help local voluntary organisations and community groups to access external funding through the VIS;
- (n) work with local people to prevent further closures of post offices and chemists;
- (o) continue to support the Administration Department's Head of Quality and Review Co-ordination in developing the WLSP links to other appropriate voluntary and community sector networks, help them function effectively, provide essential support and develop the WLSP's links to other relevant networks;
- (p) ensure that the Equality Standard work programme is progressed with the aim of working towards BV2(a) level 4 by March 2009 and making contributions to attaining level 5 as soon as possible thereafter; and
- (q) prepare an equality impact statement for voluntary sector services by the end of September 2008.

DRAFT LONGER TERM PLANS

- 26. The following long-term proposals are the subject of further consultation. The results will be put to the WLSP and partners for approval.
- 27. Vision. "A borough of where there are more active citizens supporting a vibrant, inclusive, independent and strong voluntary and community sector delivering services which meet the needs of our diverse community."
- 28. Priorities. The long term priorities for the period to 2020 are:-
 - (a) to grow the proportion of residents who affirm that they have engaged in formal volunteering and on an average of at least two hours per week over the last year;
 - (b) promote volunteering opportunities in public services and other organisations;
 - (c) develop the capacity and skills of Wandsworth's VCOs to deliver improved services for Borough residents that contribute towards a vibrant, diverse and cohesive community;
 - (d) help the VCS to access external funding and to develop their own independent sources of income; and
 - (e) support the development of a range of appropriate voluntary and community sector networks, help them function effectively so that they contribute to the WLSP's Community Strategy;

29. Specific long-term plans. Over the period to 2020, the partners will:-
- (a) work towards improving the support infrastructure, including a fully accessible resource centre, for the Borough's VCS; and
 - (b) establish the Wandsworth Community Fund, which attracts funds from a range of sources, so that it can act as a new source of funding for the Borough's VCS which would then contribute more to the delivery of the Community Strategy.

2008/09 BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

30. The budget and performance indicators for this year are summarised below:-

Key inputs	Target 2008/09
Payment to LC (£'000)	979
Gross programme revenue costs (£'000)	737
Income (£'000)	51
Net total (£'000)	1,665
Performance output measures	
Number of volunteers placed	1,500
Number of hard to reach volunteers placed	445
Standard volunteers placed for over 100 hours per annum*	600
Hard to reach volunteers placed*	167
Number of people advised	8,200
Number of voluntary organisations assisted by the EDO	150
All EDO payments (£'000) to the voluntary sector (excluding LC payment, but including EDO payments for Regeneration and Community Safety projects).	1,760

* Includes shortfall from 2007/08

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

31. The proposals contained within this report can be met from within the approved budgets for the voluntary sector part of the Economic Development Programme.

CONCLUSION

32. There are a large number of voluntary organisations, community groups and other not-for-profit organisations in the Borough providing a wide range of valuable services and activities to the Borough's residents. The results of the first annual survey of voluntary sector gives a positive picture of the extent of volunteering in the Borough and shows that more groups expect to expand than decline in the coming year. The EDO and its partners will continue to foster a diverse and healthy voluntary sector in Wandsworth. During the current year, the Council will provide substantial funds estimated to be worth over £25 million to these groups.

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MIKE BROOK
Economic Development Officer

10th June 2008

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

1. BMG Research Topline Results May 2007 – available from Christopher Blyth, tel. 020 8871 7810 or email cblyth@wandsworth.gov.uk
2. Sustainable Community Strategy Story of Place (Draft as of 18th April 2008). Available from <http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/Home/CouncilandGovernment/Communitystrategy/Sustainable/Profile+of+Wandsworth.htm>.

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/moderngov) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Committee Secretary (020 8871 6021 email: gcollins@wandsworth.gov.uk) can supply it if required.