

ROCKET SCIENCE

The London Borough of Wandsworth

Voluntary Sector Needs Analysis and design of infrastructure and capacity building support

Final report

November 2023

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Throughout the co-production of this Needs Analysis, we used a variety of forms of engagement and consultation. This included two reference groups and a range of opportunities for partners to participate in the research: one-to-one and small group interviews; thematic workshops; an online survey and a community event. We are very grateful to all those who took part, and further details of those who contributed are included in a separate Annex to this report. The Rocket Science team are particularly grateful to the Council’s Voluntary Sector Development Manager, Amelia Willis, and to Iryna Karaban, Voluntary Sector Development Support Officer, for their help and support throughout the project.

Executive summary



What makes for a vibrant civil society in Wandsworth?

“In every corner of our lives and our country, civil society can be found. In every community and every city and town, civil society plays its vital triple role: bringing people together, campaigning to solve pressing problems, and providing services – particularly to those who are otherwise marginalised and overlooked. And from improving the nation’s health to boosting economic growth, when it comes to achieving the change that everyone agrees is needed, civil society is essential to each and every goal.”

Unleashing the Power of Civil Society, Final Report, the Law Family Commission on Civil Society, 2023

What does a civil society, fit for the new demands of the post-pandemic, mid-twenty-first century look like? And what can a place partnership led by a local authority do to support voluntary and community sector organisations, comprising one of the pillars of civil society, to galvanise the best use of local assets and public money?

As well as charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises which deliver essential public services to residents, a vibrant civil society means a significant role also for smaller groups, community associations and micro-activity – i.e. far wider than the traditional voluntary sector agenda. A particular set of interventions will be needed to support and sustain this in Wandsworth; there is also a strong case for the application of “subsidiarity” principles to identify what support is available at national, regional, local, and hyper-local levels (including self-help), before deciding what Wandsworth Council itself is uniquely or best placed to provide.

Context of the Needs Analysis

The London Borough of Wandsworth has a [diverse, skilled and resilient voluntary and community sector \(VCS\)](#) which is already an integral part of local civil society. These facets were clearly apparent when helping to shape the borough’s emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequently supporting local communities through the cost-of-living crisis and presenting Wandsworth as a borough of sanctuary.

The council’s aim is to strengthen its relationship with the sector and build upon the partnerships and joint working which, whilst forged in crisis situations, it now regards as integral to the collaboration required to deliver a new vision for Wandsworth. It wants to understand the needs and aspirations of the local voluntary sector and how the council and its partners can work with the sector better to enable civil society locally to thrive.



This Needs Analysis has been commissioned at a time when Wandsworth Council is already rethinking its role; how it transitions from the local authority's long-held reputation and singular purpose of providing cost-efficient public services ("the Wandsworth Way") to becoming a leader of a place-based partnership with a collective focus on ensuring local growth is more equitable and inclusive of existing communities.

A recent [peer review](#) led by the Local Government Association (LGA) noted the progress being made in the council's working with partners, including the VCS, but suggested there is more work to do to harness the potential of these relationships. It is against this backdrop of change in the Wandsworth story and the new ambition of the local authority that this Needs Analysis identifies how the Council can engage and work together with the local VCS to [unleash the full potential of civil society](#). The research has focused on the considerable [strengths, assets and opportunities](#) within the local VCS, whilst not ignoring some of the inherent weaknesses and systemic challenges which have held the sector back.

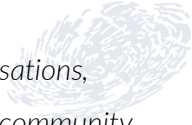
This is a journey which some have identified as part of a [fundamental shift in the role of the state](#) and its relationship with civil society which, as [Locality](#) recently identified in its work for the LGA, local councils choose to approach in different ways. For Wandsworth, the Needs Analysis is only the start of this change process for which local partners have high expectations, but which they also recognise will not happen overnight. Nevertheless, momentum and continued engagement are critically important which is why we intentionally co-designed the research and co-produced the analysis with a wide range of local stakeholders; why we identified and drew on the experiences of other boroughs so that the council has a network to continue to learn from, and, in our [Call to Action](#), based on the research findings, we have included both some quick wins as well as longer-term outcomes.¹

Key findings

The Needs Analysis focuses in turn on the core functions of local voluntary and community sector infrastructure, as defined by the [National Association for Voluntary and Community Action](#).²

¹ Appendix B which accompanies this report describes four stages of the journey local partners have undertaken in order to arrive at the proposed action plans which are informed by the Needs Analysis.

² Infrastructure in this context is a place-specific mix of capital assets and revenue-funded support services which enable a diverse ecology of local voluntary and community sector to thrive



Leadership and advocacy – *leading and advocating across diverse communities and organisations, bringing people together to have a stronger voice and influence, mobilising and encouraging community ambition and aspiration as a connector and ‘door opener’.* The analysis found:


- Effective community leadership and advocacy are compromised by the absence of a shared strategic vision for Wandsworth which fully engages the local VCS as equal partners - alongside individuals, statutory organisations and local businesses - in realising new place-based ambitions for the borough based on a thriving civil society.
- Patchy application and interpretation of data and intelligence, contributes to an under-appreciation of the size, reach and contribution of the VCS to civic life across Wandsworth. Accurate and accessible data tools are key to ensuring effective advocacy for the sector and the design and targeting of cost-effective support services.
- Evidence of under-resourcing and support for certain parts of the borough and left-behind communities which lack sufficient voice and influence to effect change. Our recommendations suggest the council considers a more targeted approach to redress this long-term underinvestment.

Partnerships and collaboration - *bringing together networks and connecting local voluntary and community organisations with each other and with strategic and systems partners, to create, pursue and implement opportunities for joint working.* At present:

- Local governance and partnership arrangements are insufficient to enable cross-sectoral collaboration and deliver shared outcomes for Wandsworth.
- The council's commissioning and procurement arrangements do not allow sufficient VCS participation in service co-design, co-production and co-delivery.
- There is an opportunity to co-design with the sector appropriate infrastructure and support, based on existing assets and resources, rather than superimposing a traditional model of a Council for Voluntary Service.

Volunteering - *encouraging and nurturing opportunities, leading and generating an expectation and culture in which volunteering can thrive, using the full skills of the local community.* However, locally:

- As is the case nationally, the number of volunteers has fallen post pandemic and continues to do so in the wake of the cost-of-living crisis. The current volunteer cohort is not diverse, particularly lacking those from younger age groups and ethnic minorities.
- Individual organisations have developed volunteer networks and pathways, but shared infrastructure is lacking – smaller VCISOs in particular need guidance on supporting and managing volunteers, which would reduce their frictional costs and free up time and resources to focus on service delivery.

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- More could be done to raise local awareness of the opportunity and value of volunteering and social action; that volunteering is a two-way relationship that benefits individual volunteers as well as their host organisations and local communities.


Community organisational development and practical support - *strengthening spaces and opportunities for people to come together to develop their capacity, goals and aspirations for their communities.* We found:

- Frustration at the lack of access to affordable community buildings and spaces including those owned by the council, statutory sector partners and the growing number of empty retail units in Wandsworth's town centres.
- The need for a comprehensive map of community spaces, facilities and different types of premises (event space, meeting rooms, hot desks) which are accessible by local voluntary and community organisations.
- For longer-term letting and premises management, smaller VCOS need access to affordable independent advice and expertise as part of a local support service.³
- The principal capacity building and support needs of smaller voluntary and community organisations which comprise the bulk of the sector locally have not shifted significantly in recent years and remain income generation and fundraising; HR support and access to affordable specialist training.

Funding and resources – *understanding the financial health and funding profile of the sector to enable a more collaborative, place-based approach to resourcing the local VCS and evidence-based targeting of investment.* We found that:

- The local VCS is bringing in significant levels of external funding to the borough which can complement the council's own grant and commissioned service investment as well as bring wider benefit to the community. Nevertheless, with increased competition for grant funding, there is a growing need among smaller organisations for access to bid-writing and fundraising support.
- There is a widely perceived opportunity for the sector to benefit more from the considerable Community Investment Levy contributions from developers in the borough which is currently the subject of a separate review by the council.

³ Our consultations with other boroughs identified that this was a service provided by LB Southwark through its contract with the local Council for Voluntary Service Community Southwark

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- There would be benefit in identifying and exploring with other local funders the opportunity to collaborate, share intelligence and best practice in investing in local VCISO's that can provide strategic support to the wider voluntary sector.

Civil society infrastructure in Wandsworth

The Covid-19 pandemic rapidly followed by the Cost of Living crisis has thrown into sharp relief the importance and value of local infrastructure and capacity building support for the work of local front-line community organisations. Making sure that organisations had somewhere to turn to in order to get the basics in place (such as volunteer policies, safeguarding measures and training) fell on the limited resources of community anchors and other local capacity building bodies, supported by regional infrastructure. However, as a recent report from 360 Giving makes clear, over the preceding 10 years, “spending on infrastructure has not matched growth in the voluntary sector.” For example, at its peak, the regional support body, London Voluntary Service, had an income of nearly £1.9m (2008). It closed in 2017 and its nearest equivalent today, London Plus, has a reported income currently of <£500k a year.

Wandsworth currently has a patchwork of different infrastructure support bodies, ranging from its Voluntary Sector Coordination Service, co-funded by the council and the Integrated Care Board and delivered by Wandsworth Care Alliance with a particular focus on public health and wellbeing, to community-development, capacity and networking support provided in particular localities of Battersea (Katherine Low Settlement) and Roehampton (My Roehampton), plus the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network, the last surviving of 88 networks established as part of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal back in 2001.

In the wake of the pandemic, funders' realisation of the importance of investing in local infrastructure combined with local authorities' renewed appreciation of the value of a vibrant voluntary and community sector represents a timely co-incidence for the new administration in Wandsworth. The Greater London Authority recently recognised that the borough is a comparative “cold spot” in terms of the sufficiency of its infrastructure, based on a combination of 10 indicators⁴:

⁴ [Civil Society Roots 3: Identifying cold spots – Rapid Evidence Group](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_civil_society_roots_3_-_rapid_evidence_review_short_write-up_.pdf)
https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_civil_society_roots_3_-_rapid_evidence_review_short_write-up_.pdf



- Number of BAME-led organisations based on BAME population
- Number of women-led organisations based on overall population
- Number of disabled-led organisations based on disabled population
- Number of LGBT-led organisations based on LGBT population
- Per capita 360 Giving funding
- Per capita London Community Response funding
- Whether a Council for Voluntary Service (or similar infrastructure support body) exists?
- Civic Strength Index score for social support
- Civil Strength Index score for community action
- Civic Strength Index score for financial resources

And, if you were only to do three things now?

The extensive sector engagement and consultation which informed the five themes of this Needs Analysis has identified a wide range of potential solutions for further consideration by the council, its partners and the sector itself. In the spirit of partnership, and the continuation of the principles of co-design which have been at the heart of this work, we recommend initially that the council should:

1. Report back and re-engage the sector in order to develop a shared understanding of the findings and **co-design a partnership response to the Needs Analysis** – use the first anniversary of Councillor Kemi Akinola’s “meet the sector” event to this effect.
2. Commit to the co-production of a succinct **Civil Society Strategy for Wandsworth** which sets out the vision and shared commitments of all partners (LB Wandsworth, the Integrated Care Board, business and the voluntary sector) to making this happen.
3. Co-develop the specification of a **new VCS support service for Wandsworth** which largely builds on the existing assets, infrastructure and support needs [identified in this Analysis](#), but forensically uses evidence and data presented here, and in the accompanying [data dashboard](#), to target underserved communities across the borough.

Call to action – High-level Outcomes Framework



Impact for Wandsworth	Long term outcomes	Short term outcomes (including quick wins)	THEME	Actions of partner organisations, incl. LBW
A vibrant and thriving civil society lies at the heart of Wandsworth's new place-based partnership	The local authority and its partners are enablers of a civil society which is fully representative of all needs and diverse communities in the borough	The are regular and meaningful points of contact between partners focused on the place partnership and its priorities and a shared vision for Wandsworth	Leadership & Advocacy	Introduce strategic “points of contact” within the sector ie VCS link officers/champions across all service areas; enable and resource VCS voice and representation on the key policies and scrutiny panels
Wandsworth's communities are able to influence local policies and services which respond to local needs		The local VCS ecosystem is better mapped and understood, and local data/intelligence made available as a shared partnership resource		Host and develop the Wandsworth VCS data-dashboard as part of suite of local data and intelligence tools
A local voluntary and community sector which is equipped and empowered to partner the council, statutory partners and local business on the co-design and delivery of shared vision for Wandsworth	The local VCS has an equal voice in the governance and delivery of the vision and work of the Wandsworth place partnership	Key principles are adopted which define place-partnership working and support VCS participation	Partnership & Collaboration	Develop a similar set of principles to those adopted by LB Southwark and its community partners and set out in its State of Sector research and call to action report (2023)
		Partners commit to review commissioning and procurement practices to make them more accessible to local VCSOs		Adopt a shared outcomes framework which works equally for all partners as a way of driving change, performance and enhancing community wellbeing
A flexible range of infrastructure and support services which address local sector needs, reduce the gaps and inconsistency in current provision and build on existing networks	The place partnership coordinates a range of support offers which help to build organisational capacity, networks and sustain a healthy and vibrant civil society	Identify potential area-based and thematic clusters of VCSOs to share capacity-building resources	Organisational Development	Maximise the Council and local partners' roles as ‘anchor institutions’ in the interests of community wealth building and maximising local assets in different parts of the borough
		Develop a combined place-partnership offer of infrastructure and support services linked to the funding/contacting of VCSOs		Support the co-located working with VCS partners and the potential to involve ICB, Housing Associations, faith groups and businesses in widening access to community buildings and spaces
A range of diverse and flexible opportunities exist to (re)activate resident and employee volunteers inspired by the place-partnership's vision for Wandsworth and its active citizenry	Wandsworth has above average rates of volunteering which appeals to a diverse cross section of both residents and local employees, alongside a range of social action programmes linked to the place-partnership's vision and priorities	Promote Wandsworth as a borough of civic activism centred on a range of volunteering opportunities and social action linked to the partnership's vision of a vibrant civil society	Volunteering	Support and build-on existing tools, including digital platforms, apps and local/regional brokerage services
		Develop the place-partnership's ask of Wandsworth-based businesses offering a menu of opportunities to volunteer/engage in local communities and/or support local VCSOs which address clearly evidenced local needs		Develop an accessible 'menu' of different ways “corporate citizens” can engage with local VCSOs based on community need not corporate expectations; Lead by example in the Council – support more of LBW's own staff to engage in social action and volunteering
A strategic approach to using grants and contracts to deliver the shared vision for Wandsworth and, where appropriate, support the local VCS to bis to deliver services and leverage other external funding	Funder collaboration has increased the totality, range and complementary nature of funding coming into Wandsworth to support the VCS – through core, project and infrastructure funding	Raise the profile of the capacity and reach of the local VCS and how it can enable the Wandsworth place partnership to meet its priorities and goals for the borough	Funding & Resources	Explore using some of your grant funding, potentially augmented by CIL to invest in a core-group of local VSSOs organisations with the requirement to build VCSOs' capacity, including fundraising, bid writing and consortia building; collaborate with the ICB to develop joint/complementary place-based grants
		Establish a Funders Forum to develop a strategic approach to VCS funding in Wandsworth; reduce duplication, increase efficiency, support collaboration and enhance impact		Establish a local funders forum modelled on similar forums in other boroughs to raise the profile of the sector and attract additional investors locally; Link grant funding to a borough-wide “funder plus” offer of related capacity building support

1. The Wandsworth story in context



The most recent national [Civil Society strategy](#) envisages five foundations of social value, which can enrich lives and build a fairer society for all. They are: people, places, the private sector, the public sector and the social sector. Over the last twelve months, and in response to the outpouring of mutual aid and local emergency responses to the pandemic, we have seen the development of both new evidence of the needs of the social sector (ie including voluntary and community organisations) and strategic recommendations about how the sector can continue to work with other partners at a local level to create and sustain place-based social value.

In terms of evidence, the longitudinal Third Sector Trends study, established in 2010, produced a series of reports between November 2022 and February 2023 on the most recent of its three-yearly surveys of third sector organisations (TSOs) in England and Wales. Most pertinently the final of these reports was on [relationships, influencing and collaboration](#). This concluded that there was a great deal of engagement between TSOs and the public sector locally, but noted that there needs to be substance behind this engagement for this to be effective: *“Buttering up the sector with flattery in policy statements does not mean, therefore, that organisations will rush in to provide assistance unless objectives are aligned with their own interests, that they are incentivised or supported to do so.”*

[Unleashing the power of civil society](#) – The final report of the Law Family Commission on Civil Society was published in January 2023. The Commission was established by Pro Bono Economics with funding from Andrew Law and the Law Family Charitable Foundation. Seventeen commissioners drawn from business, the public sector and the civil society sector have brought forward a range of approaches to tackle the systematic challenges that stop civil society from delivering on its potential. The Commission summarises its six key recommendations as: *“calling for strategic investment from funders, this government and the next, in the productivity of the social sector, the data available to and about it, and in the changes needed to unlock philanthropy. This must be accompanied by a dramatic acceleration in the partnership between civil society and business, and a reset of the relationship between civil society and government.”* In effect the Wandsworth Needs Analysis is an opportunity for the borough and its partners to get ahead of the game and implement a range of measures which unleash the power of the VCS locally.

Around the same time (December 2022), the LGA published its [research into the relationships between councils and their local VCS](#). The report identifies the main barriers to productive




partnership working, five different types of relationship, and a set of four principles which are fundamental to building successful relationships:

- **Shared foundations** - Clarity of purpose, values, and roles, built on shared understanding, knowledge and a commitment to partnership working.
- **Relational culture** - Behaviours and ways of working that enable the power of community to flourish, with both sides giving generously to the process and being open to receiving feedback.
- **Effective structures** - Systems, mechanisms and processes that are fit for purpose and enable innovation and sustain long-term commitment.
- **Capacity and resources** - Having the wherewithal to take action.”

We looked at each of these in the course of our consultations with partners in Wandsworth – from building specific questions about the principles into our survey, to focusing on their application to the five themes: Leadership and Advocacy; Partnership and Collaboration; Volunteering; Community Development; Funding and Resources.

State of the sector

	Number of voluntary organisations 798	Total annual income £624.8m
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There is no single administrative database for all voluntary organisations either locally in Wandsworth or nationally. The most comprehensive available is the Charity Commission database, which is used by NCVO to produce their annual UK Civil Society Almanac. The Almanac estimates that that charities account for only 40% of broader civil society organisations.

The analysis in the Civil Society Almanac does not go down to a local authority level. However, it is possible to download the Charity Commission data used by NCVO and filter this for Wandsworth-based organisations (although the data is not in an easily accessible format). To support the VCS Needs Analysis project, an analysis has been done on this filtered Charity data to produce an open source [interactive dashboard](#) which gives a geographic breakdown of voluntary sector organisations by location, beneficiary type and income size. The dashboard also includes summary and contact information supplied by charities to the Charity Commission.



Most voluntary organisations in LB Wandsworth are small

Table 1 – Voluntary organisations based in Wandsworth by income band

Category	Income range	Charities (n)
Very small / No income	£0-£10k	309
Small	£10k-£100k	262
Medium	£100k-£1m	178
Large	£1m-£10m	36
Major	£10m-£100m	12
Super major	£100m+	1
Total		798

Source: Rocket Science analysis of Charity Commission data

The income of charities by their registered address is skewed by the location of a small number of very large national charities – particularly Marie Curie, with a latest reported income of £165.8m, which recently relocated its national headquarters to Nine Elms.

There is no clear correlation between deprivation and number of voluntary organisations in a ward

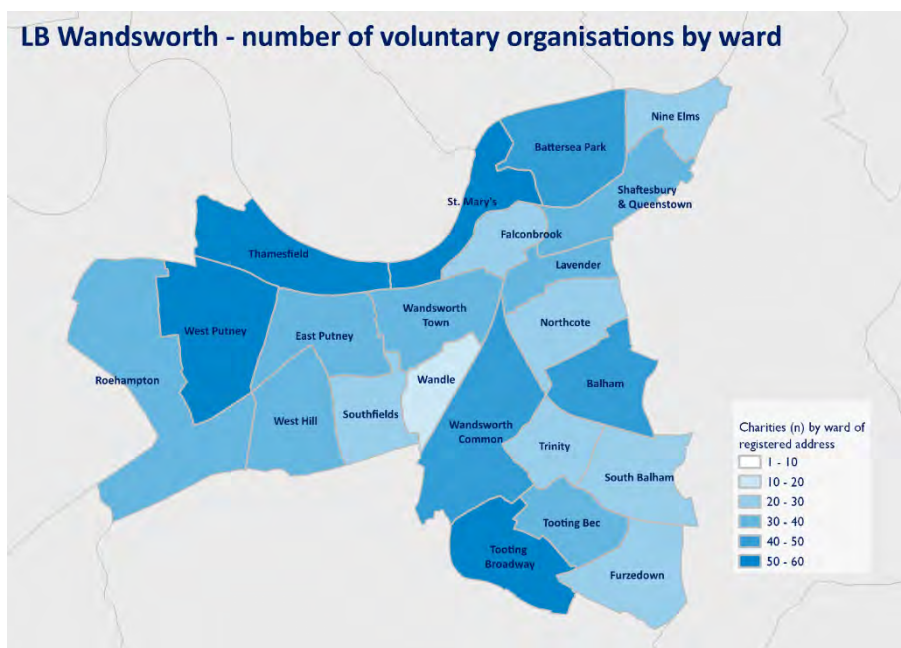
Table 2 – details of voluntary organisations by LB Wandsworth ward

Ward	Deprivation decile	Voluntary organisations	Income
West Putney	6	56	£13.5m
Tooting Broadway	5	53	£13.3m
St. Mary's	6	53	£56.9m
Thamesfield	8	52	£22.4m
Balham	8	47	£33.4m
Wandsworth Common	7	46	£7.6m
Battersea Park	5	45	£17.4m
East Putney	7	38	£28.9m
Lavender	8	36	£18.8m
Wandsworth Town	7	35	£13.3m
Tooting Bec	5	34	£6.3m
Roehampton	4	32	£47.6m

West Hill	6	32	£46.4m
Shaftesbury & Queenstown	5	31	£8.3m
Nine Elms	3	30	£240.2m
Southfields	9	29	£2.5m
Furzedown	5	28	£4.9m
Trinity	7	28	£14.4m
Northcote	9	27	£1.6m
South Balham	5	24	£19.1m
Falconbrook	3	22	£6.6m
Wandle	6	20	£1.4m
Total		798	£624.8m

Source: Rocket Science analysis of Charity Commission data

Figure 1 - number of voluntary organisations by ward in LB Wandsworth



Source: Rocket Science analysis of Charity Commission data

Wandsworth has fewer VCOS per capita than the national / London average

In comparison to both London and national averages, Wandsworth has fewer charities per 1,000 people, and also lower levels of income than the London average.


Charity Commission data is, however, heavily skewed by the 'headquarter effect'; the postcode locations of charities analysed in Table 3 below are based on the registered address of each charity on the Commission's database. There are a substantial number of large, national charities based in LB Southwark, particularly around London Bridge and these account for the large majority of the voluntary sector income in the borough. In total in Southwark, there are 203 large charities (those with an annual income of over £1m) with a combined income of over £2.2bn. The equivalent figures for Wandsworth are 49 large charities with an income of £551m.

Table 3- Comparison of number and £ income of voluntary organisations by specified area

	Charities (n) [A]	Income (m) [B]	Population (1000s) [C]	Charities per 1,000 people [A/C]	Income per per person [B*1000/C]
LB Wandsworth	798	£625	328	2.4	£1,908
LB Hounslow	555	£140	288	1.9	£484
LB Southwark	1,334	£2,405	308	4.3	£7,817
London - all	31,950	£34,506	8,797	3.6	£3,923
England & Wales - all	183,589	£86,141	59,597	3.1	£1,445

Source: Charity Commission, February 2023 data

Survey findings – summary of responses



77 responses from 57 unique VCS organisations in LB Wandsworth

As a central part of our research, we developed a survey asking local VCS organisations about their relationship with LB Wandsworth and the current enablers and barriers that they face. Key findings from the survey have been included under the relevant themes of Leadership and Advocacy, Collaboration and Partnership, Organisational Development, Volunteering, and Funding and Resources and are analysed in sections 2-6 of the report. Here we give a brief overview of the range and type of organisations responding to the survey:

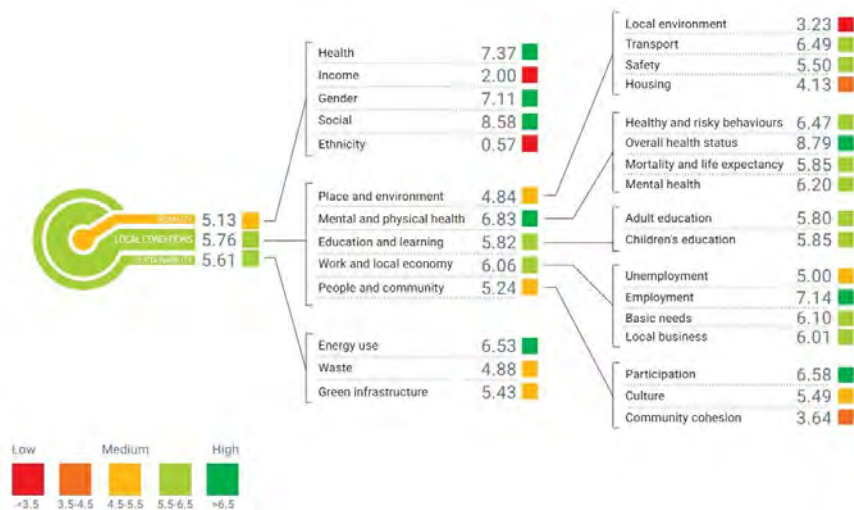
- In total, we received 77 responses, with respondents representing 57 unique organisations (from 67 respondents who listed their organisation).
- 41 registered charities (55% of 75 responses that provided an 13 organisation type).
- 55 local VCS organisations (71% - 34 local and 21 neighbourhood-level from 77 responses).
- 53% smaller VCS organisations (37 of 70 organisations had an annual income under £100k).

- 17% large VCS organisations (12 respondents had an annual income over £1m).
- The three most common fields that organisations operate in are health, education, and economic / community development.
- 59% of organisations work primarily with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities (41 of 70 responses).
- 56% have received either (or both) grant funding or contractual funding from LB Wandsworth in the last 12 months (41 of 73 responses).
- 46% of organisations have been established within the last ten years (35 of 76 responses).

Thriving Places Index data suggests that LB Wandsworth is broadly comparable to other similar London boroughs, with good Local Conditions and Sustainability scores

It is important to consider the local context in terms of assets as well as deficits, and on these measures, LB Wandsworth often performs well. First, the Centre for Thriving Places produces a Thriving Places Index, which ranks Wandsworth as medium for Equality and above average for Sustainability and Local Conditions, as shown in Figure 2 below. These ratings are broadly comparable with the two comparator boroughs used for this report – LB Hounslow and LB Southwark, as shown in table 4.

Figure 2- Thriving Places Index overview for Wandsworth, 2022



Source: Centre for Thriving Places [Thriving Places Index](#)

Table 4- Thriving Places Index 2022 – main indicators for LB Wandsworth and comparison London boroughs



Thriving Places indicator	Rating for each indicator		
	Wandsworth	Hounslow	Southwark
Equality	5.13	6.74	5.96
Local Conditions	5.76	5.11	4.68
Sustainability	5.61	5.48	5.79

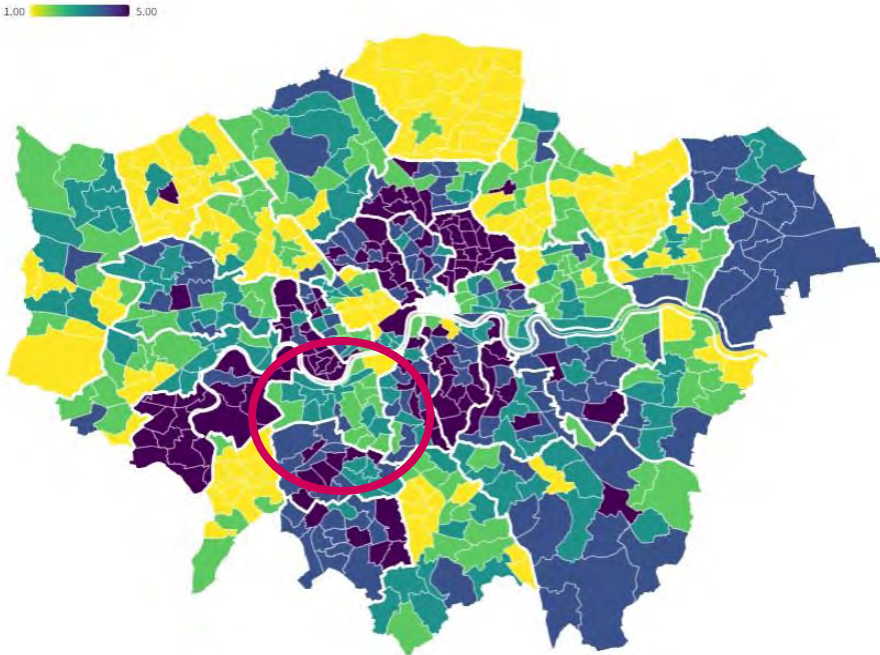
Source: Centre for Thriving Places [Thriving Places Index](#)

London’s Civic Strength Index ranks most Wandsworth wards as low to medium

In October 2021, the Young Foundation produced [A Civic Strength Index for London](#) report, funded by the GLA, which maps civic strength at a ward level by three primary domains: (1) Relationships and Social Capital; (2) Democratic Engagement and (3) Public and Social Infrastructure

Figure 3 (below) shows the ward ratings by combined scores across all three domains. It shows that Wandsworth generally has low-to-medium scores in comparison to most London boroughs (light green is the 2nd quintile and darker green is the 3rd quintile). The map has been produced using the pre-2022 ward boundaries, with the former Queenstown ward in the north east of the borough the lowest index rated (1st quintile) and the former Earlsfield ward the highest rated (4th quintile).

Figure 3: London Civic Strengths Index, 2021 – map of wards by combined scores across all domains of civic strength (with 1 [yellow] being the bottom and 5 [purple] being the top quintile)



Source: [London Civic Strength Index](#), The Young Foundation, October 2021

Figure 4 - SWOT analysis – drawn from separate consultations with the Voluntary Sector Partnership Group and the LBW Officers’ Steering Group for the Needs Analysis



<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breadth of (local) knowledge and experience • Resilience and responsiveness (Covid, Cost of Living and Borough of Sanctuary experiences) • Area/ward partnerships in certain localities (eg Battersea; Roehampton) • Diversity/adaptability of VCSOs – staffed by skilled, dedicated people • Networks – place-based; communities of interest 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure (ie second-tier support for frontline VCSOs) is patchy • Many VCSOs are small; lack capacity to engage statutory partners • Ineffective voice/engagement in borough-wide partnerships – perception in the Council that the sector lacks coordination • Inconsistent communication between Council and the sector • Staff/trustee recruitment/retention • Staff and volunteer burnout • Understanding of (trustees’) legal responsibilities • Lack of affordable space (accommodation/meeting rooms) • Short-term nature of much of the funding of the sector • Patchy access to and use of data to evidence need and demonstrate impact
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater collaboration between funders/commissioners (LA/health) around the design and delivery of shared outcomes • Develop and invest in area/thematic networks which can begin to change systems and support genuine co-production • Focus on local communities and target gaps/cold spots • Council ambition to engage and collaborate with the VCS and explore new ways of working together to benefit the local community. • Collaboration - streamline work practices and share resources • Integrated Care System – developing new ways of working with the Integrated Care Board and Wandsworth Place Partnership • Access to enhanced data to evidence and support programme design and the sector’s applications for funding • Review and adapt commissioning/procurement processes to enable a stronger local voice in designing commissioning priorities and a strength based approach that recognises the social value of VCS providers • Work in partnership to attract increased external funding into LBW • Engage more businesses as partners in Wandsworth’s vision of civil society 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of consistent and comprehensive infrastructure and support which could provide quality assurance for sector partners and investors • Unrealistic expectations of the sector to be able to plug gaps in local services and meet rising community and social needs • Increasing competition for funding - pits VCSOs against one another • The state of the economy and rising cost of living • Lack of consistent and strong relationships and partnership approach between the Council and the VCS • Out of borough providers undermine local sector organisations • Duplication of services within the sector whilst some communities remain overlooked /underserved • Funders continue to require innovation, rather than supporting core costs and funding continuation • Continued budgetary pressure on statutory services and the impact on the VCS in terms of demand for their services • Ageing (and reducing numbers of) volunteers



2. Leadership and advocacy

Definition

Leading and advocating across diverse communities and organisations, bringing people together to have a stronger voice and influence, mobilising and encouraging community action and aspiration as a connector and “door opener.”⁵

Key findings

- Wandsworth lacks a shared vision for the future supported by a common outcomes framework which all partners buy into and contribute towards delivering.
- There is a need for clearer and more regular points of contact between the VCS, the council, the ICB and other partners.
- There is a need to support and nurture more diverse leadership in local communities, particularly among groups who have been underrepresented in leadership roles.
- In its place-leadership role, the council can be bolder and more creative in its use of social value levers to help advocate for and resource a vibrant civil society.

Context

At the elections in May 2022, there was a change of political control of the council, with the Labour Party taking control and forming the administration for the first time in 40 years. The new administration set out its ambition to be ‘fairer, compassionate and more sustainable’, whilst making Wandsworth a ‘fantastic place to live’ with a stronger focus on clear outcomes for residents.

The borough also saw the arrival of a new Chief Executive of the council in October 2022 who has stated his aim to create a more enabling environment of community action and participation; strengthening the council’s relationship with the local charitable and voluntary sector by building on existing partnerships and joint working which, though forged in crisis situations, are integral to delivering a new vision for Wandsworth. The Infrastructure and Capacity Building Needs Analysis (Needs analysis) has been commissioned at a time when Wandsworth Council is rethinking its role, beyond delivery of council services, to convening a place-based partnership that can unlock the full potential and capacity of the borough to deliver more inclusive growth and support to communities.

⁵ Definition taken from [NAVCA](#), which identifies the ‘Four Functions of Local Infrastructure.’ For the purposes of framing this Needs Analysis, we added a fifth “Funding and Resources.”



This has brought new leadership to the borough following a decade of unprecedented pressures on local communities compounded by austerity and cuts in public spending, the fallout from Brexit and the impact of Covid. This unique sequence of circumstances has been instrumental in shaping civil society and relations between the voluntary and community sector and local authorities.⁶

Interviewees spoke of how relations between the council and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) were shaped by the political priorities and culture of the previous administration. As a consequence, we found that the council is viewed with some distrust by more long-standing representatives of the VCS, while others are hopeful that the relationship can be reset following the recent change of administration; most expressed optimism about the chance to co-produce this needs analysis and to help shape future support for the sector which is conveyed in the SWOT analysis (see Figure 4).

Relationships between the council and the VCS have been further tested and forged by a succession of shocks and external challenges, beginning with the emergency response to COVID, before coping with the post-pandemic Cost of Living crisis at the same time as providing a Borough of Sanctuary for families fleeing violence and persecution in Syria and Afghanistan and supporting refugees from the conflict in Ukraine. New ways of working often developed at pace, demonstrated what could be achieved when a common goal shapes the delivery of services to residents in need. Interviewees have unanimously commented on how lessons from these experiences of working collaboratively towards a shared vision should not be lost.

The Roehampton Community Box project is one such example. It is the community arm of national charity, Rackets Cubed and was formed in response to COVID-19 in March 2020. Rackets Cubed recognised that some families were already experiencing food insecurity in Roehampton and set up the Community Box project to deliver food parcels to local families identified in partnership with local primary schools.

Assessment

⁶ Local Government Association. (2022). The State of Strategic Relationships Between Councils and Their Local Voluntary and Community Sector. [Link.](https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/state-strategic-relationships-between-councils-and-their-local-voluntary-and-community#_edn1)
https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/state-strategic-relationships-between-councils-and-their-local-voluntary-and-community#_edn1



There are pockets of good practice in leadership and advocacy, highlighting what can be achieved through strong partnership and investment at a local level. This tends to be more visible among the larger organisations in the borough. Battersea is a good example with the Katherine Low Settlement (KLS) and the Battersea Alliance providing a central focus and strong leadership for the area. The Battersea Alliance comprises six organisations working together to tackle social exclusion. They fund other organisations and provide business and community development support. KLS also provides leadership in the area through incubating 5-10 smaller organisations each year. They offer a desk, advice, fundraising support and mentoring. The Chief Executive of the KLS described their aim as ***“not trying to do it all, but to enable others to develop the resources they need”*** to become leaders and build social capital.

Battersea’s success in developing community leaders and supporting community organisations is not experienced in all areas of the borough. We heard from interviewees about different types of leadership that exist; leadership of issues, places and communities. Whilst Battersea has a strong network of VCS groups with the KLS ***“at its heart,”*** acting as the enabler, neighbouring Nine Elms is a new community which will need a lot of support. Roehampton has active citizens but suffers from a lack of physical space for organisations to come together and Tooting is fragmented lacking one dominant group or anchor organisation and consequently less cohesive than Battersea and Roehampton.

Interviewees emphasised the challenges that smaller organisations face in trying to replicate the leadership roles or models of the larger organisations. These include the lack of staff time and funds to attend networking events. One director of a typical small organisation reported that with only two members of staff, it was hard to attend meetings and suggested paying VSC organisations to attend. Other consultees were aware of a training need in leadership and advocacy skills, but lacked the funds to send staff on courses.

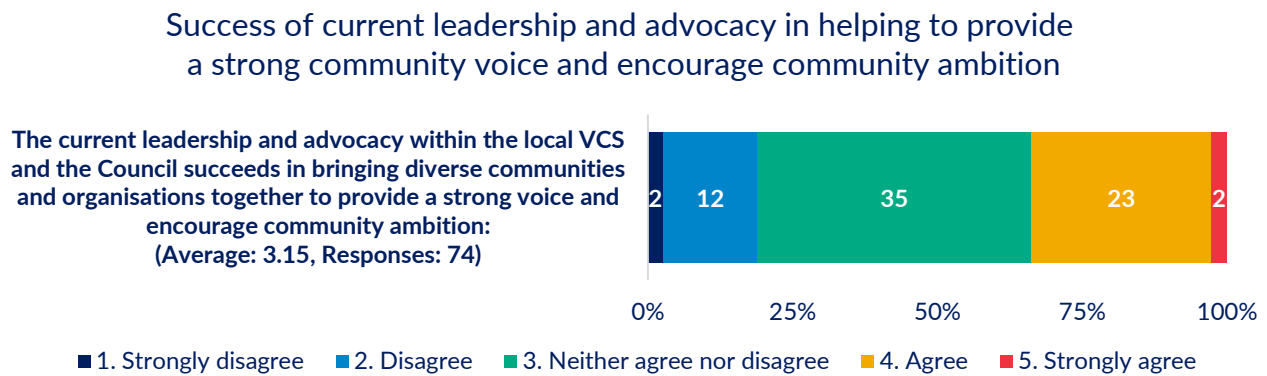
“We had the Roehampton Response Network during COVID. That was great – that allowed people in the immediate area to work together. Age UK, Citizens Advice Wandsworth and Wandsworth Foodbank.” – VCS organisation working in Roehampton.

Our survey included a rated scale question on the success of current leadership and advocacy locally in bringing diverse communities and organisations together to provide a strong voice and encourage community ambition. The question intentionally asked about leadership in the context of a place-based partnership between the local authority and the VCS. There were 25 positive responses to the question



(i.e. Agreed or Strongly Agreed) compared to 14 negative responses, but almost half of responses (35 out of 74 responses – 47%) were rated as Neither Agree or Disagree.

Figure 5- Rated scale survey question on current leadership and advocacy success (n = 74)



Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

Interviews and focus groups revealed a more nuanced picture of how leadership and advocacy are perceived in Wandsworth. Both statutory and voluntary sector representatives spoke of a leadership vacuum in the local VCS. After years of what they viewed as underinvestment in the sector, it lacks a cohort of strong leaders. They spoke of a need for investment to attract, recruit and retain a new tranche of leaders to the borough. Some highlighted concerns about a lack of diversity in the voices represented.

“I would agree that there is a leadership vacuum in the VCS. In place-based communities there is and there isn’t, and that’s down to the randomness of where people live. There is also a lack of BAME voices and different disabilities. The WCA has a focus on health, but overall the voice of the VCS is a bit bitty”

We looked to other boroughs and organisations to understand and identify different ways that community groups, voluntary organisations and statutory bodies work together. Community Southwark is the borough’s umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector. In 2021, Community Southwark launched a two-part event called *We are not Going back to Normal* where twenty minoritized community organisations were invited to meet and share concerns about community engagement with council officers. Community groups developing a series of asks of the council that they felt would make a difference to community engagement.⁷ The Local Authority subsequently launched the Southwark Civic

⁷ Community Southwark. What is your preferred action? [Link.](https://communitysouthwark.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/GetImage8d28.jpg)
<https://communitysouthwark.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/GetImage8d28.jpg>



Leadership Programme, initially running from July 2023 for one year. Its aim is to *“raise the aspirations of residents from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and inspire community driven solutions in areas of health, education, policing, crime and bettering our communities. It is also about developing a diverse leadership for our civic institutions that have a huge impact on the quality of life of the people of the borough.”*

The diversity of the sector in Wandsworth presents a challenge to any umbrella organisation seeking to speak on behalf of the sector with one voice. One senior council officer felt there was *“no real go-to in the sector”* when the council needs to engage with the VCS *“particularly the smaller organisations.”* This was a view shared by an interviewee from the ICB, whose role involves working to bring the VCS, the council and health services together to deliver person-centred care across the borough. They reported confusion over how best to engage the sector and also expressed doubts whether a single representative body can speak for the sector with one voice.

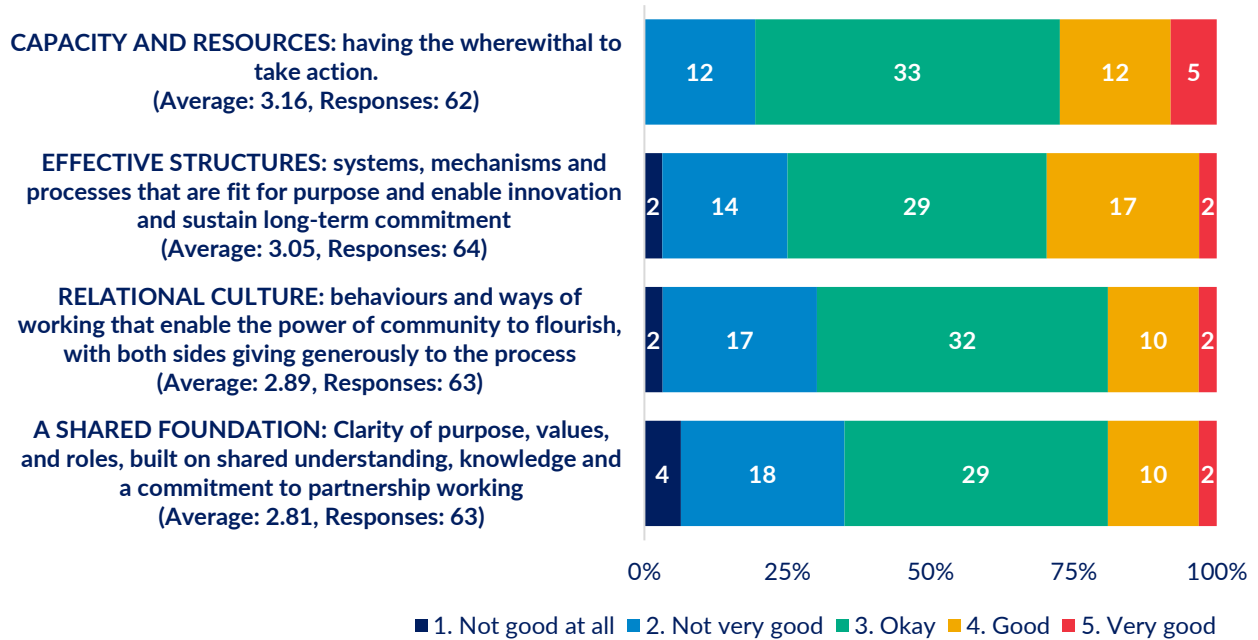
The survey asked about various factors that underpin effective leadership and advocacy. Figure 6 below suggests that:

- There were more positive views on the relationship with the council in terms of organisations having Capacity and Resources to lead and advocate (average rating 3.16) and Effective Structures (average rating 3.05).
- There were fewer positive views in terms of there being the relationships required (average rating 2.89) and a Shared Foundation/Clarity of Purpose (average rating 2.81).

Figure 6 – Rated scale survey questions on factors affecting leadership and advocacy (n = 62-64, depending on question)



How would you rate the following factors in terms of your relationship with the council?



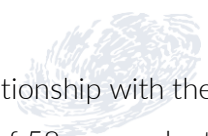
Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

Respondents feel more positive about there being effective structures to support leadership and advocacy than they do about the strength of relationships, the necessary culture and sense of common purpose. This finding was echoed by several interviewees who spoke of the need for a cultural shift within both the VCS and the council, whilst recognising this would take time.

“There needs to be a massive culture shift – there needs to be a way of embedding the thinking that we [can be] an extension of their offer” – CEO, local VCS organisation

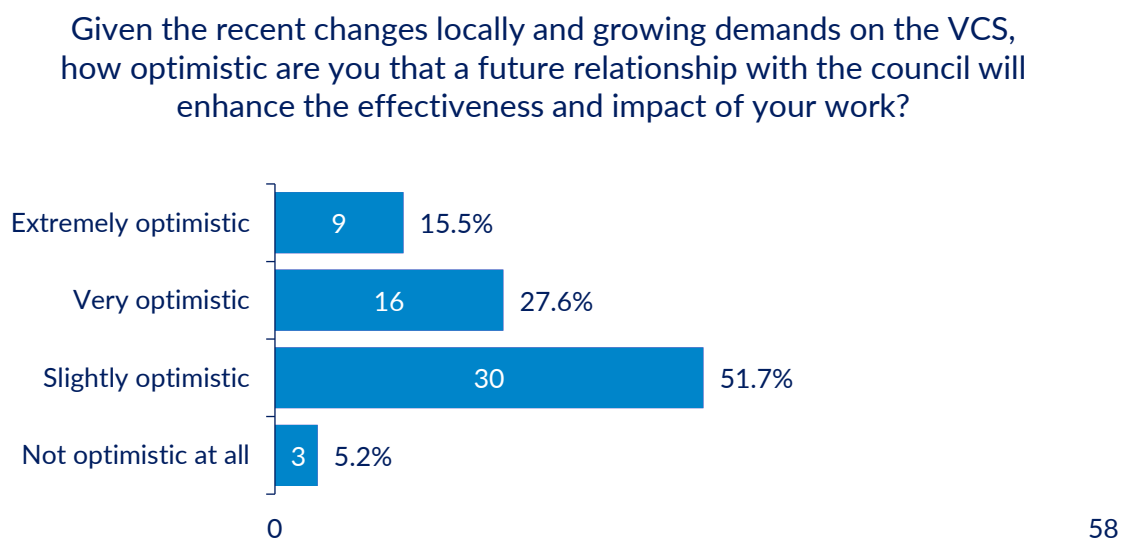
Another consultee from the local VCS noted a difference in the culture of council officers working directly with the sector and those in senior leadership positions:

“Cultural shift is really slow [within the Council]. There is a disconnect between the top of the council and junior officers. What there isn’t is, ‘Here’s the problem – how should we fix it?’ We would like them to call us in and help them fix it. There is no feedback loop from us to policy/strategy setting.” - CEO, VCS



Nevertheless, there is a strong sense of optimism about VCS organisations' future relationship with the council, with just under half (43%) either very or extremely optimistic, and only 3 out of 58 respondents (5.2%) reporting that they were not optimistic at all.

Figure 7 – Survey question on optimism about future relationship with the council (n = 58)



Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

These ratings from the survey of the sector correlate with the levels of optimism expressed during interviews. The following comment was typical of this sense of positivity associated with a new more outward-looking administration which has shown keen interest in engagement with the sector:

“There was a reputation of the ‘Wandsworth Way’ (that nothing would change), but more recently it feels more positive. People now want to meet me, that’s new! The Head of Children’s services has been great.” LGBTQ+ youth organisation

Several spoke of their confusion over how to access the council and what they interpreted as siloed working practices. There was unanimous support for the creation of two new posts (Voluntary Sector Development Manager and Support Officer) and the early indications that these will provide a clearer access route into the council and create stronger feedback loops.

“[The Sector Development Manager] role is now the link – we do work with the council, but it is often piecemeal – even within the council they don’t know each other. The council is a big operation. People don’t know where to go. It’s very closed. It’s hard to know whom to talk to or to go to.”
– VCS organisation



The apparent lack of a shared vision and ambition for Wandsworth is seen as a major challenge for the borough. One respondent noted that while organisations are understandably focussed on their immediate neighbourhood, there remains a need for a collective vision that brings organisations together, working to deliver joined-up services, in partnership across the borough.

“Here in Battersea – all organisations have the same goal of wanting to support the residents, but we need a wider strategy goal. I couldn’t tell you what the council’s vision is.” VCS organisation

Conclusion and Recommendations

The legacy of the “Wandsworth Way” which many in the sector tend to describe in terms of “them and us” implies that it will take time to establish new ways of partnership working on the basis of shared goals and mutual understanding. This is compounded by the perception among both Council officers and many across the local VCS that the sector’s leadership is neither particularly strong nor representative of what is a highly diverse set of predominantly small, community-based organisations. In terms of future leadership and advocacy for the sector, the challenges for local partners exist at two levels: (1) in terms of its full engagement in a future cross-sectoral place partnership which is the focus of the following recommendations, and (2) at the individual organisational level where leadership development needs to be a feature of future capacity building and sector support.

- Develop a VCS Strategy and shared outcomes framework along with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure progress and ensure greater accountability for its delivery
- Introduce strategic “points of contact” with the sector ie VCS link officers/champions across all service areas of the Council; enable and resource VCS voice and representation on key policies and scrutiny panels
- Host and develop the Wandsworth VCS data-dashboard as part of a suite of local data and intelligence tools which will enhance the visibility and evidence of the sector’s work
- Combine and use community-level intelligence on both local needs (demand) and local provision (supply) creating a single “go to” resource which enables connecting of the two and greater engagement of the local VCS
- Target and invest longer-term in building the capacity and voice of underserved communities in Wandsworth; consider ringfencing allocation of grant awards to underserved groups and communities based on evidence in the needs analysis of their long-standing underfunding.

3. Partnerships and collaboration



Definition

Bringing together networks and connecting local voluntary and community organisations, both with each other and with strategic and systems partners to create, pursue and implement opportunities for joint working

Key findings

- There is a legacy of mistrust between the VCS and the council which recent changes have already begun to redress.
- There is a lack of knowledge among the local VCS about how to access the Integrated Care Board and the NHS's local Wandsworth Place Partnership.
- Improved data and local intelligence could significantly enable better cross-sector collaboration and partnership working.

Context

Partnerships and collaborative working are the foundations of a healthy civil society, creating “social capital” by supporting relationships between individuals, active citizens (including corporate citizens), the VCS and statutory agencies. During our interviews and focus groups, consultees spoke about the challenges they currently experience in achieving this, gave examples of local successes and what they felt was needed to build on, and sustain high-quality partnership and collaborative working in Wandsworth.

In the past, partnership working between Wandsworth Council, other statutory bodies and the VCS has been challenging. Both council officers and VCS representatives characterised the relationship as transactional, rather than collaborative. It required a moment of crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic to forge new ways of working between the council and the sector, demonstrating the agility of the sector and its capacity to design and deliver services to those in need more quickly than statutory agencies.

“COVID-19 gave us something to unite behind and work towards. People came to the table with a different approach. It was here’s the problem, what can we do to manage this problem, collectively together? The most fundamental thing is that, on all sides, people were willing to listen.” - CEO, local VCS organisation



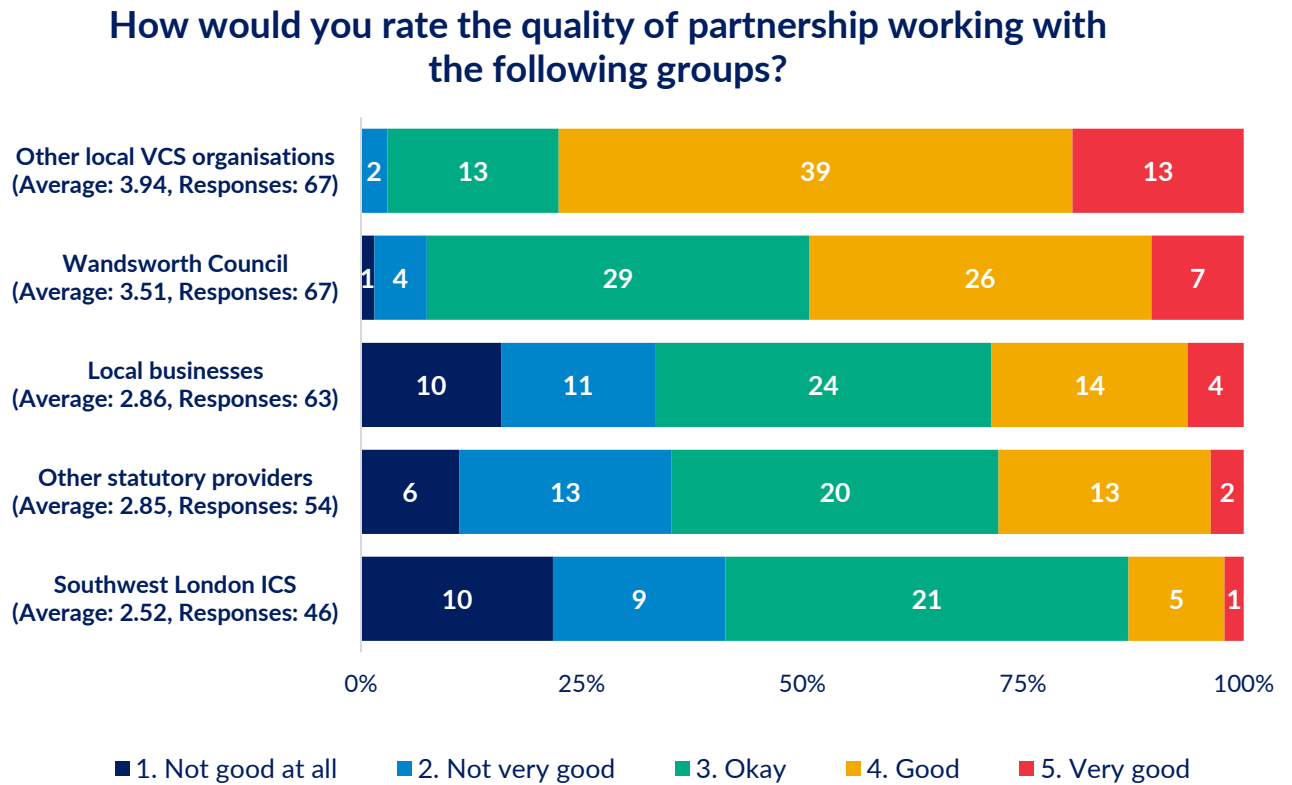
Contributors to this needs analysis unanimously welcomed this new way of working together; they expressed hope that this degree of common purpose post pandemic might be sustained, in spite of local structures and recently reformed health-care systems which many working in the local VCS admit to finding impenetrable.

Council and VCS consultees were aware that they needed to enhance partnership working within the framework of the new Integrated Care System, but many expressed uncertainty if not some anxiety about how to achieve this. This is reflected in the comparative responses to the survey question about experiences of different types of partnership working in Wandsworth (Figure 8).

A lack of awareness around how to work with the ICS is also recognised by members of the Integrated Care Board. They were aware that local VCS organisations were unsure how to access the ICBand its funding (the Inequalities and Innovation fund) and were trying to improve this.

“The Investment Fund (the Inequalities and Innovation Fund) for me was fantastic because it gave me a better connection with our VCS, but some of them fed back to me that they do not know what the ICB is and they do not know what it is about. The Katherine Low Settlement, Citizens Advice Wandsworth and Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network all know who to contact if they need us – but most organisations in Wandsworth do not know how to do that.” - Wandsworth Place Partnerships, ICB

Figure 8 - Survey question on the quality of partnership working in Wandsworth (n = 67)



Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

Access routes exist for the VCS to get involved with the ICB, but awareness of them is not widespread. For example, the ICB has set up a Thinking Partners group, which is a subcommittee of the Communications and Engagement group. This invites 35 different VCS organisations to come together, share news and updates and maintain networks. However, among our consultees, this was not mentioned.

The ICB’s Health and Care Committee meets monthly and should act as a conduit to keep partners updated of what is happening across the borough, but representatives of the ICB do not underestimate that this represents a significant culture shift which will take time to take effect:

“This is a real change of culture for us in the NHS. We are very used to telling people what the problem is. That is how the NHS used to work with organisations. These things take time – through the Innovation and Inequalities Fund last year, the learning that came from it has enabled this next step.” - Wandsworth Place Partnership, ICB




The Wandsworth Care Alliance (WCA) acts as a liaison point between Wandsworth communities, the NHS and Wandsworth Council. Among other projects, it runs the Volunteer Brokerage service, Healthwatch Wandsworth and the Voluntary Sector Coordination Service. The Coordination Service meets every quarter at the WCA Forum in a community setting, bringing groups together to network and collaborate.

Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network (WCEN) was set up in 2001 and seeks to bring about systems change through connecting active citizens, communities and public institutions to facilitate collaborative, co-produced solutions and interventions that tackle complex challenges such as health inequalities. The WCEN is successful at connecting with faith communities across Wandsworth and has informally filled this role when the borough's previous Multi-Faith Network ceased to exist. It serves to be a forum for talking about shared social priorities and issues. The WCEN networks with 96 Black Pentecostal churches and Mosques in the borough. The multi-faith community could be a source of community networking and partnership working if trust was developed and established between the community and the council and statutory partners.

Assessment

Consultations on the topic of Partnerships and Collaboration identified **four particular areas of need**:

- The diversity of the sector means that smaller organisations tend to struggle to access appropriate training, compete for funding and attract volunteers compared with larger organisations. Informal support mechanisms have developed within the sector as examples of collaborative working that could be built upon. These include the incubation service offered by the KLS and efforts made by Citizens Advice Wandsworth to aid smaller organisations with making funding applications.
- VCS consultees wanted improved connections with groups and opportunities to connect across topic areas. Online had been useful during lockdown, face-to-face interactions were thought to offer a faster route to establish and grow networks.
- VCS organisations want more opportunity to work alongside council officers to problem solve *upstream* which they see as key to transforming the relationship between the sector and the council from a transactional to a more collaborative one and a way of focusing more resources on prevention and earlier intervention.
- A review of different sources of available funding was identified as an enabler of partnership and collaborative working in terms of anticipating opportunities to build consortia and collaborative



bids around key policy priorities and shared goals such as the [London Borough of Culture award](#) or the [Propel funding](#) which enables organisations to explore, develop and lead collaborative approaches to tackle some of London’s biggest challenges.

The sector expressed a need for training resources that could be shared across the sector to raise quality standards. A local LGBTQ+ organisation for young people spoke about how their Youth Council had developed a Top Tips training programme to inform professionals how to be more inclusive.⁸

Consultees wanted more opportunities to connect face-to-face as well as across topic areas and specialisms. They reported enjoying good relationships with groups working on the same issues but identified a need to engage with groups working on different issues and in other parts of the borough. Officer feedback from the council commented on this issue, identifying that there are limitations to many organisations’ reach and of the networks they currently rely on:

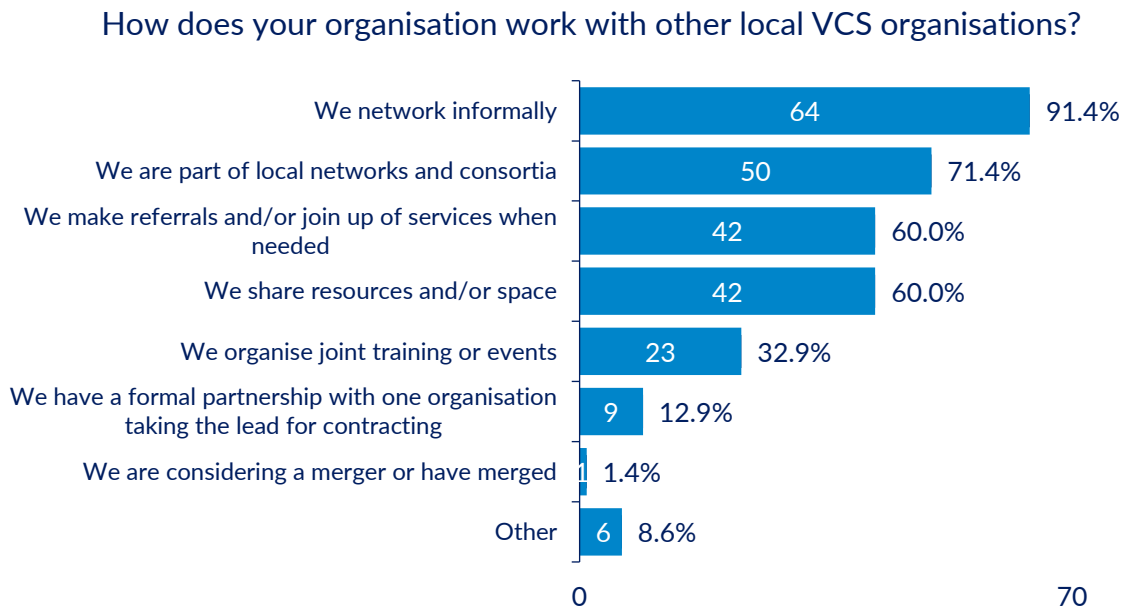
“ . . . organisations tend to connect with like-minded services (health with health etc.) and insulate with their own group. [In] the same way we have MDT [Multi-Disciplinary Team] boards, the VCS needs to get into that mindset. It makes more sense for organisations to work across the spectrum to offer a comprehensive service. . . . If you provide a patient with services across their whole journey, you don’t want to be one bus stop, you need to be the bus for the whole journey.”

“There is a much more joined up approach in Battersea – there are a lot more organisations that are more visible. It is very different in Roehampton [which] . . . is much more isolated so there is definitely disparity there. The coordination is a huge need.”

Our survey asked how respondents worked with other local VCS organisations.

⁸ [Inclusion – Free2B](https://free2b.lgbt/inclusion/).
<https://free2b.lgbt/inclusion/>

Figure 9 – Survey question on working in partnership with other local VCS organisations (n=70)



Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

We found several well-established examples of organisations working in partnership including the Advice First Aid project, delivered by WCEN and Citizens Advice Wandsworth. The project started in 2015 and was funded by the Henry Smith Foundation to provide one FTE Advisor and training for food bank volunteers to deliver accurate and relevant debt advice. It also trains food bank volunteers to make appropriate referrals to the Advisor. The project has since received further funding from the Trussell Trust, Asda and the Wimbledon Foundation and today comprises four FTE Advisors. Another involves Citizens Advice Wandsworth and the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network which together deliver the Help through Hardship Crisis project. The project trains trusted community volunteers to deliver accurate and relevant debt advice to people in community and faith settings and to make referrals to a Community Advisor.⁹

A third need identified by consultees was the opportunity to work more collaboratively with council colleagues to problem-solve issues. Many consultees felt that their service users could offer valuable insights to help co-design people-centred solutions.

“It would be helpful if they came to us and said, ‘tell us about it’. Invite me to a steering group and invite me to problem-solve. It would be really nice to be part of the conversation.” – CEO, VCS Organisation

⁹ Citizens Advice Wandsworth. Help Through Hardship Crisis. [Link](https://cawandsworth.org/our-projects/crisis/).
<https://cawandsworth.org/our-projects/crisis/>



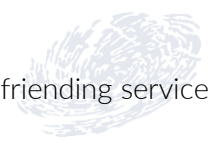
An example where the council is working with the VCS is in Adult Social Care and Commissioning for Mental Health and Wellbeing Services. The Wandsworth Mental Health Stakeholder Forum brings together between 60 and 70 organisations, including the council, the ICS and the Mental Health Trust to share information, best practice and draw on people's lived experience. Changes to the council's procurement procedures could encourage and enable greater engagement by the local VCS in the design and delivery of services. Consultees expressed frustration that proven practice and approaches to procurement (ie soft market testing; consortia building and bid support) have not been adopted in Wandsworth. Others commented on the contrast with other local authorities which have long used Meet the Buyer events and Forward Plans that allow sufficient lead in time for procurement whilst trying to demystify the tendering process. Currently in Wandsworth, the council does not track where contracts are placed, but this could change when new software makes this possible, allowing for the monitoring of contracts awarded to local SMEs and VCS organisations.

The council recognises that there are opportunities to consider how it can extract greater social value from its lead suppliers, not only by varying the price/quality ratios in the assessing of tenders, but also by better monitoring of approved suppliers to ensure they deliver and follow through on their offers. Battersea Arts Centre was cited as an example where the council gets '10 times' return on in its contracted spend through the Centre's activities with schools and the delivery of training and apprenticeship opportunities. Making available an online directory of potential local VCS partners and subcontractors would enable bidders to develop local consortia and partnerships which, if successful, ultimately retains more of council's investment within the borough.

In summary, consultees spoke to us about different challenges that hinder partnership and collaborative working, but we also heard examples about partnerships already delivering to residents in need. Trust is steadily being rebuilt between the council and the VCS and the addition of the ICB since 2022 offers yet more ways to embed partnership and collaborative working.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There is a tangible sense of optimism, particularly in the local VCS, but also among Council officers and partners across the Integrated Care System, about the opportunity to reset relationships and ways of working in Wandsworth. This is expressed by those who are impatient to find new ways to ensure the sector complements Council and health and wellbeing services; engaging earlier and as a trusted partner in the identification of local needs and the co-design of community-based responses which have a more preventative, early-intervention focus. There are just as many who see the opportunity simply to raise



awareness of the sector's crucial and varied role in local civic life, such as providing befriending services, running local sports clubs, friends' groups and cultural activities.

- Co-develop a strategic place-based partnership with the Council, statutory partners, business and residents
- Introduce an appropriate governance and shared outcomes framework which works equally for all partners as a way of driving change, performance and enhancing [community wellbeing](#) and fully engages different networks and engagement mechanisms (for example see the [LB Southwark model](#))
- Use Social Value instruments to leverage more investment in the local VCS sector and community resilience
- Maintain an online directory of local VCS partners/sub-contractors for lead providers
- Explore the potential of a Wandsworth partnership approach to community wealth-building enabling local spending/community reinvestment (eg see [Preston Model](#))
- Work with contracted service providers to integrate 'single point of access'/one front door service model by partnering local VCSOs

4. Volunteering

Definition

Encouraging and nurturing opportunities, leading and generating an expectation and culture in which volunteering can thrive and use the skills of the local community.

Key findings

- There is local enthusiasm for volunteering and a huge array of volunteering opportunities, but there needs to be a focus on engaging particular groups, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds and younger age groups who volunteer far less.
- Corporate volunteering is underused and not obviously community or needs led.
- Local organisations require extra guidance and capacity to support their volunteers.
- More could be done to reward and celebrate local volunteering.

Context

Although volunteers are integral to the work of most charities and voluntary and community organisations, the sector has lacked borough-wide infrastructure support around volunteering.



However, local volunteering has thrived, and many organisations have successfully engaged residents. This was particularly the case during the Covid-19 pandemic when community organisations galvanised public support and capitalised on the outpouring of local volunteering in order to support those most in need across the borough. For example, volunteers at Age UK Wandsworth delivered more than 3,500 food parcels and made more than 1,600 welfare calls and more than 11,000 befriending calls across 2020/21. Organisations were also active at local and hyperlocal levels too. Tooting Community Kitchen, for example, was established in response to Covid-19 and has since provided thousands of hot meals and delivered care parcels through a local network of 30 volunteers.

When the council announced a call for volunteers in March 2020, it received almost 300 responses within the first 24 hours. There has, however been a post-Covid-19 decline in volunteering take-up, both nationally and locally. Nearly two-thirds of small charities nationally recently cited volunteer recruitment as a major organisational concern.¹⁰ Research from NCVO shows the proportion of the UK population which had volunteered at least once a month fell to 16% in 2021/2022, down from a peak of 23% in 2019/20 a figure which was boosted by lockdowns and people on furlough.¹¹ There has also been a shift in how people volunteer, with nearly a third reporting they choose to volunteer online or over the phone, and 18% volunteering exclusively via these methods.

Nationally, several factors have contributed to the reduction in numbers of volunteers. The cost-of-living crisis is having a discernible impact with non-volunteers concerned about related expenses. A perceived lack of flexibility within volunteer roles is another factor, with individuals not wanting to make an ongoing commitment. Catering to these shifting demands will be a task for Wandsworth organisations too. The new WCA volunteer brokerage platform could be an avenue for this. The platform, funded through a three-year grant of £128,000 from City Bridge Trust (2023-26), acts as a first point of contact for organisations and volunteers and helps to connect the two alongside the existing Link Up London platform which originated in Wandsworth.

Assessment

We consulted the VCS, council and NHS staff on current practices around volunteering and volunteer management to understand some of the key challenges which local organisations are facing. Many

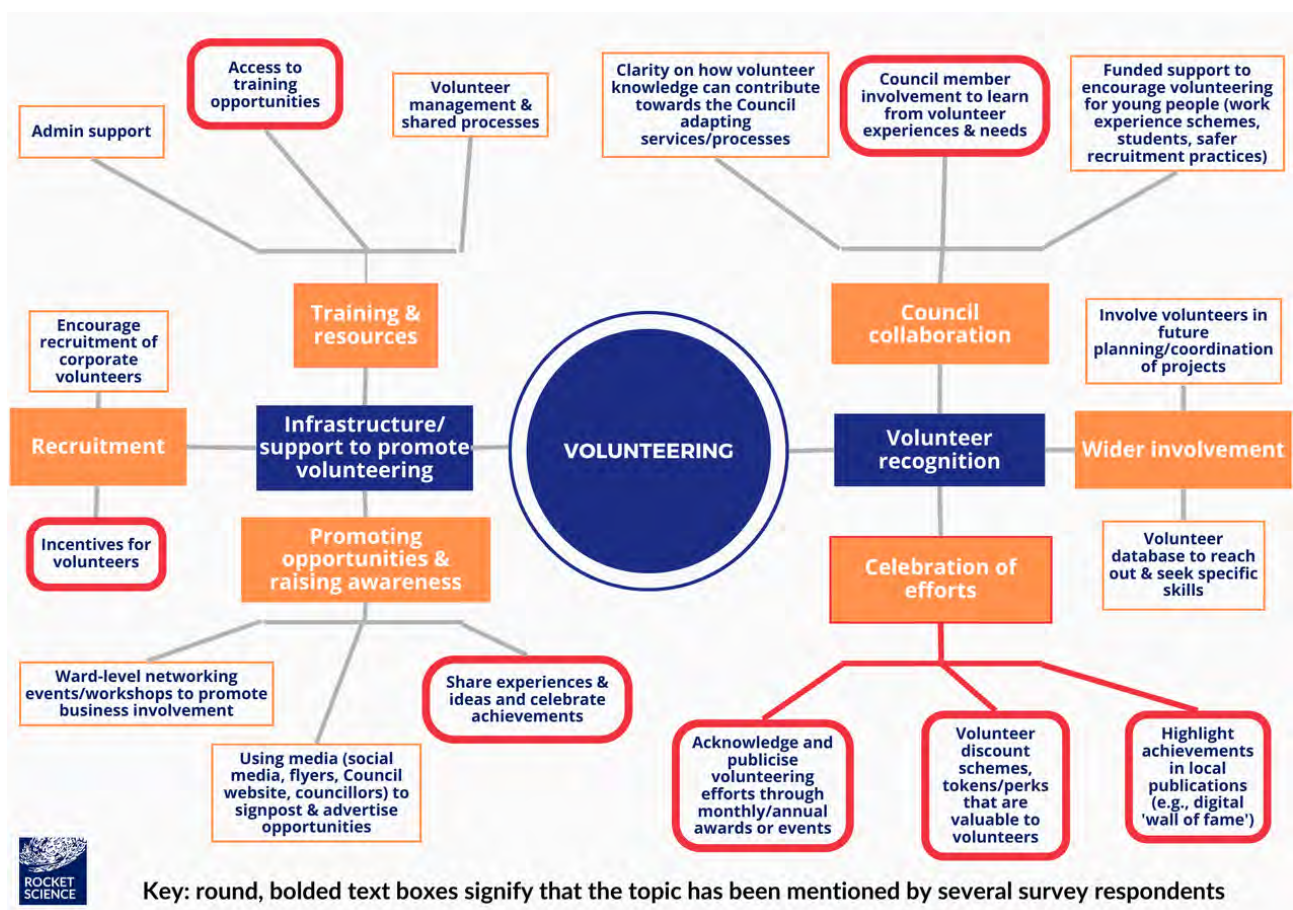
¹⁰ Pro Bono Economic. (2023). Shifting Out Of Reverse. [Link](https://www.probonoeconomics.com/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=e02585be-c7d7-48c4-9d10-83f1902cf8cc).
<https://www.probonoeconomics.com/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=e02585be-c7d7-48c4-9d10-83f1902cf8cc>

¹¹ NCVO. (2023). Time Well Spent. [Link](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/time-well-spent-2023/#/).
<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/time-well-spent-2023/#/>

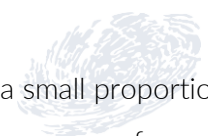
commented on the high levels of enthusiasm for and engagement with volunteering amongst residents. Prior to the recent roll-out of the WCA brokerage platform, many local organisations were reliant on developing their own volunteer network and had done so successfully. Organisations cite the diversity of volunteering opportunities across the borough as an asset which appeals to residents. However, the new borough-wide platform is an opportunity to develop a piece of shared infrastructure which can deliver efficiency gains for both the sector and its partners, as well as further increasing opportunities for resident and employee-volunteers alike.

Interviews and workshops on volunteering identified a wide range of issues (see Figure 10), although three key areas of need stood out: insufficient infrastructure to support local volunteering; the lack of a concerted offer and structured support to activate corporate/employer-enabled volunteering, and a lack of reward and recognition for residents who engage in volunteering.

Figure 10: Survey question on volunteering requirements



In terms of volunteer recruitment, the sector locally is encountering many of the same challenges which are seen nationally. Local organisations report falling volunteer numbers, and a lack of diversity among

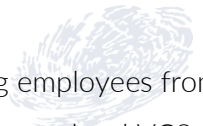


residents who do volunteer. Despite Wandsworth's relatively young population, only a small proportion of volunteers are aged 18-25; organisations also report only a small number of volunteers come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Infrastructure such as the WCA platform and Link-Up London's volunteering service offer possible paths to diversifying the volunteer cohort, but their take-up and subsequent success relies on public awareness of the services, which requires a 'marketing' push from the partners and capacity within the VCS to spend time on understanding the platforms and how to use them. Given these brokerages exist online, reaching digitally excluded residents is likely to remain a particular challenge.

VCS staff also struggle to manage volunteers owing to time and capacity constraints. While the sector recognises that volunteers need support and/or safe spaces in order to share their experiences of volunteering and discuss challenges they encounter while doing so, few organisations have the capacity or capability to do this sufficiently. The rigidity of volunteering opportunities, such as a requirement to commit a certain number of hours, or to be present in person, can make it difficult for staff to attract sufficient volunteers with a variety of sign-up processes and procedures being deployed by different organisations and charities across the borough; many of these processes are administratively burdensome for both staff and prospective volunteers. There are also indications that the increase in social needs during the pandemic, which have been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis, has placed added burdens and expectations on volunteers which may ultimately deter them from continuing and others from signing up. This was noted especially by foodbank workers, who referenced a larger proportion of residents accessing their services with higher levels of need than previously seen.

"A big gap for me is support for me and volunteers. In the old days once a month there was a crisis situation – now it's on a weekly basis. Guests coming in talking about suicide, domestic violence, grief. Because we're voluntary we don't have systems to debrief [and support our volunteers]."- Foodbank manager

There are also opportunities to engage more with employers in the borough, particularly capitalising on those involved in the investment and regeneration in the north of the borough around Battersea and Nine Elms. While there is some existing corporate employee engagement – for example companies including Savills, White Stuff and John Lewis supporting HomeStart Wandsworth through fundraising and volunteering – it remains limited; businesses, including new inward investors like Apple, may also be approaching the council and the VCS seeking proposals aimed at meeting their corporate priorities (e.g. more akin to team building days) when there is an opportunity to build a relationship with corporate partners that deepens their understanding of local issues and where best their resources can be deployed within the community. While investment has brought new employers to the borough, the



three largest employers are still the council, the NHS, and the university, and mobilising employees from these three would set an example and help towards tackling the capacity and resource gaps local VCS organisations face.


To coordinate existing businesses' and encourage more employees' volunteering, the council might consider commissioning an expert brokerage to provide the requisite service and ensure best practice. For example, the [Works 4U free guide](#) provides employers with a framework for embedding meaningful employee volunteering opportunities within their companies. Similarly the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development provides [guidance](#) for implementing an employer-supported volunteering programme which includes short-term and long-term options for employers. At a hyper-local level, Wandsworth's BIDs potentially offer an additional form of infrastructure which can broker and support employee volunteering and pro bono community engagement with local civil society organisations.

The final gap identified was an apparent lack of recognition and celebration of local volunteering and social action. VCS organisations acknowledged the need to ensure that volunteering is mutually beneficial to both hosts and volunteers, but that limited volunteer management capacity makes this difficult. Systems and events to recognise and reward volunteers can help to stimulate and drive-up levels of local volunteering. Other local authorities, such as Lewisham and the City of London, have rolled out borough-wide reward schemes via the likes of discount cards and [Tempo Time Credits](#),

Conclusion and Recommendations

The following recommendations focus on enhancing the existing local volunteering infrastructure and support in order to capitalise post-Covid changes in the nature of volunteering and the shifting availability of resident and business resources, including both social capital at the grass roots and local employers' offers of specific skills/time (ICT; trustees; mentors)

- Support and build-on existing tools, including digital platforms, Apps and local/regional brokerage services
- Engage local companies (incl. large firms based here and SMEs) use a local "good work/employer" standard to appeal to responsible businesses and their interest in community engagement
- Develop an accessible "menu" of different ways "corporate citizens" can engage with local VCSOs based on community need not corporate expectations
- Lead by example in the Council – support more of LBW's own staff to engage in local social action and volunteering linked to their professional development and for their well-being

- 
- Establish higher profile volunteer celebration events coordinated between the Council and the VCS
 - Investigate the roll-out of a borough-wide reward scheme that includes local SMEs, eg providing local discounts to volunteers.

5. Community & organisational development

Definition

Empowering individuals, local groups and organisations with the skills and capacity to come together to develop their goals and drive aspirations for their communities.

Key findings

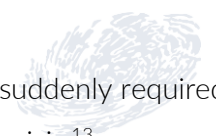
- Mixed perspectives on the council's and partners' support for organisational development, with certain communities and groups feeling excluded if not discriminated against.
- Three particular areas of need were identified: the nature of local commissioning practices; the lack of available and affordable physical assets; the disjointed nature of communication and collaboration among organisations and with statutory and health sector partners.
- Hyper-local collaboration is seen as a way to develop a system where knowledge and expertise can be shared more freely and comprehensively across the sector.

Context

Community development requires empowering individuals, local groups and organisations to take collective responsibility for cultivating the health and wellbeing of local communities with support from local agencies and partners. In common with London's voluntary and community sector, Wandsworth's VCS faces numerous challenges and pressures owing to decreasing availability of public funds exacerbated by rising core costs and demand from service users.¹²

Investing in the local infrastructure and capacity building support plays a pivotal role in coordinating the sector and enabling its work alongside local statutory and health sector partners. There is strong anecdotal evidence, for example, to show that those councils which, in the face of austerity measures,

¹² London Plus. (2023). London CVS Network Impact Report. [Link](https://londonplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/London-CVS-Network-Impact-Report.pdf).
<https://londonplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/London-CVS-Network-Impact-Report.pdf>



continued to invest in civil society infrastructure reaped the benefits when they were suddenly required to mobilise a community response to the Covid-19 pandemic and now a cost of living crisis.¹³

Continuing to support a diverse range of community-based, grassroots and volunteer-run groups to meet the needs and amplify the voices of local communities will necessarily be a joint effort task for the Wandsworth VCS, the local authority and ICB partners. Ensuring open communication around partners' respective priorities, processes and available resources will be key to developing a symbiotic relationship between the VCS and the local statutory sector.

Assessment

Opinions within the local VCS vary on how effectively the council and statutory bodies engage with their community partners. Several of the more established VCS organisations do not feel empowered or listened to; communication with the sector has tended to be one sided, with little opportunity for the community to challenge constructively or to feedback.

Sector representatives are aware of the disparity in resources and assets between different Wandsworth communities, with places like Roehampton feeling left behind by the council and its partners, and the perception that the council works in a selective way choosing to work with certain organisations. The absence of a fully-resourced, borough-wide Council for Voluntary Service is also noted:

"It is difficult to criticise partners, but I would say that we have filled a vacuum that [a CVS or equivalent] should be doing. Through our work we train people . . . who then go back to their communities to spot signs of people in trouble and we also deliver this training to council staff." - Chief Executive of national charity network delivering in Wandsworth

In terms of organisational capacity building support, results from the survey confirm that financial sustainability is the biggest need, with the following also cited as major areas of support:

- Human resources and staffing
- Access to specific training including impact reporting

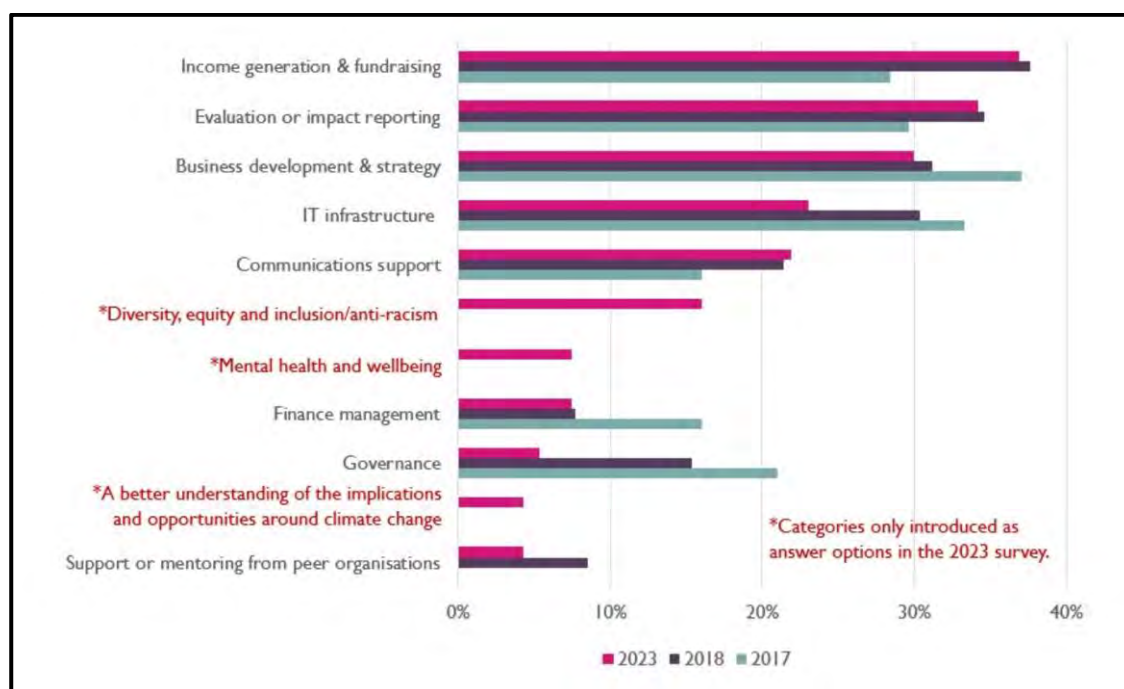
¹³ Resource for London. (2023). Capacity to Change: The State of London's Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Organisations in the 2020's. [Link](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55c48182e4b03ca91f267647/t/646e26ca78e7d02ca197d421/1684940494271/Capacity+to+Change.pdf).
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55c48182e4b03ca91f267647/t/646e26ca78e7d02ca197d421/1684940494271/Capacity+to+Change.pdf>



- Engaging and developing relationships with the local community
- Marketing and communications

The survey findings are echoed in similar surveys of the sector and its needs, including other London boroughs and regular national longitudinal surveys which have been updated post pandemic.¹⁴

Figure 11 Funder Plus survey 2023 (Esmee Fairbairn Foundation) – comparison of types of funder plus support that VCS organisations would most value by category in 2023, 2018 and 2017 Funder Plus surveys

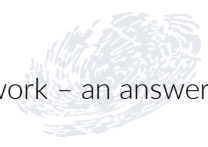


There is no change in the top three areas of need identified, pre-pandemic, in 2018.

- Income generation and fundraising ranks highest (37%).
- Evaluation and impact (34%)
- Business development and strategy (30%)

Needs related to governance have fallen by two-thirds since 2018 to 5% in 2023. Demand for support or mentoring from peer organisations also fell by over half to 4%. Sixteen (16%) of organisations stated

¹⁴ See for example Community Southwark's [State of the Sector](#) (2022-23). The graph is from the [2023 Funder Plus survey](#) which is undertaken by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation <https://communitysouthwark.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/State-of-the-Sector-Research-Research-Findings-and-Call-to-Action.pdf> https://esmeefairbairn.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/2023_Funding_Plus_survey_summary.pdf



they would benefit from support towards diversity, equity, and inclusion/anti-racism work – an answer option only introduced in this year’s survey

Our own consultations with local sector representatives on their community and organisational development needs identified three main areas: (1) making commissioning and procurement of local services more accessible and transparent in order to engage VCS as partners as well as potential suppliers, (2) the lack of available and affordable physical assets within the borough and (3) disjointed communication and collaboration among organisations and with the statutory and health sector.

The commissioning process

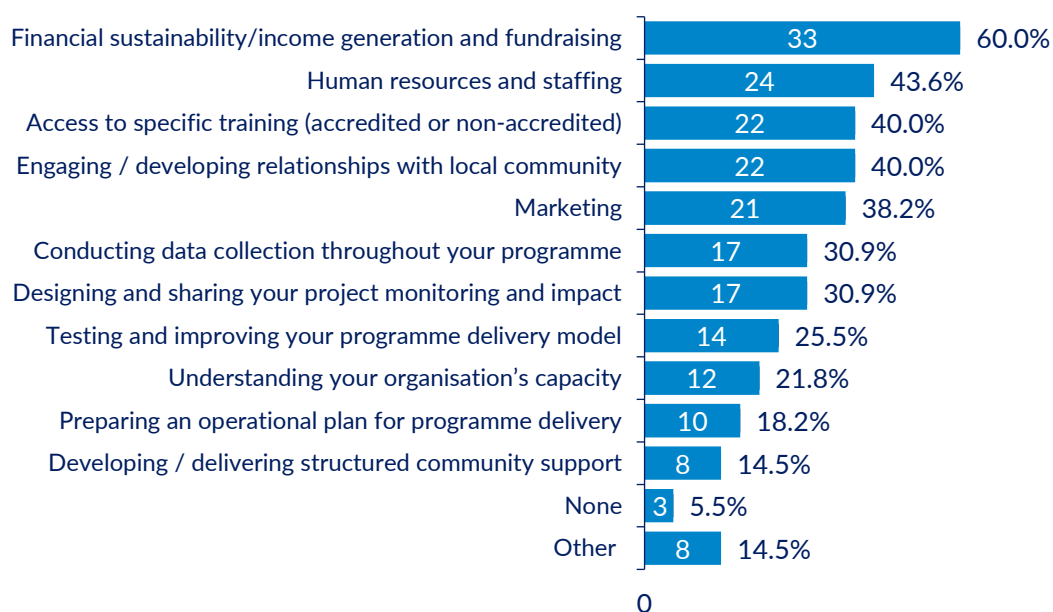
Organisations commented on how they could positively contribute to different stages of the commissioning cycle,. For example, they would welcome the opportunity to represent the particular needs of the communities they support to commissioners in order to deepen their understanding of local needs so that service models can be co-designed around those needs. Securing funds for ‘core’ costs remains difficult and smaller, grass-roots organisations especially report struggling with the short-term nature of funding and funders’ reporting requirements, which are often disproportionate to the size of the grant amount. This apparent skewed distribution of resources and development opportunities towards more established organisations and subsequent competition between smaller grassroots groups is not lost on council officers who are keen to engage the sector:

“We spend a lot of time trying to develop the sector – but then that can all unravel when the tendering process opens and we ask the sector to compete among itself. Procurement regulations can undermine capacity building, we need to consult the community and ask whether what the council is asking for is realistic, affordable and if it’s clear what is being asked of them. Give the onus to the lead provider to retain and nurture partners.”- Adult Social Care Commissioner



Figure 12 12- Survey question on capacity-building support requirements (n = 55)

What areas do you currently need capacity building support in?



55

Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

Affordable spaces and premises

Focusing on physical assets, organisations discussed the lack of affordable spaces or buildings locally, and a lack of capacity building initiatives to support small organisations and groups to be able to afford to rent premises locally. The borough benefits from a plethora of available premises, but there seems to be a lack of awareness on how to access these, with a centralised hub advertising venues and transparent subsidy arrangements being possibly beneficial measures.

“There's a lot of . . . spaces that groups can use, but there is no list of them that we can access. There is so much information in the borough, but no efficient way of accessing it.”- Food Charity Partnership Coordinator

The Economic Development team recognise how despite the current levels of vacancies in the borough's town centres and high streets (e.g. Wandsworth Town, Putney and Clapham Junction) engaging landowners and keeping centres open is proving particularly challenging. There also appeared to be consensus regarding the discrepancy between parts of Wandsworth which do not have the same quality or availability of premises compared to more affluent areas, which restricts the development and capacity building opportunities of VCS organisations and groups.



“Battersea is well knit, they work closely together and is well connected to Wandsworth. Roehampton however is treated like its own country, it’s very difficult to engage absentee landowners and hard to develop meanwhile uses let alone longer-term subsidies.”- Coordinator in the Housing and Regeneration Department

Communication and collaboration

The final gap identified reflected a need for tiered collaboration both between VCS organisations and between the VCS and statutory partners. A tiered model of collaboration would ensure that organisations and groups of different sizes and influence will be able to communicate with the council and partners based on individuals’ needs and collaborate and signpost amongst themselves, without structural barriers. This will allow each organisation to decide their level of involvement, ranging from informal networking with flexible relationships, to more coordinated involvement where roles are defined and formalised and organisations develop joint systems and programmes¹⁵. VCS staff acknowledged that developing a system where skills, expertise and knowledge can be easily shared among organisations will ensure borough-wide understanding of which groups are leading on different areas and avoid unnecessary overlap or duplication.

“The big inefficiency in the sector overall – everyone is doing the same thing but doing it differently. We had volunteer organisers, IT support, web design, marketing, finance, building maintenance upkeep. We are looking at drawing that together and outsourcing it. That would release capacity and the council could co-produce that with us as an efficiency drive. Train people up to do IT and web design, and then service all the organisations.”- Project coordinator of a resident-led group

Effective collaboration requires the involvement of the whole VCS such as ‘friends of’ organisations, non-crisis or arts and culture groups, and not just those whose main focus is to deliver remedial or emergency services. This subsequently limits the likelihood of organisations insulating within their own specialism or area, and promotes better connection and collaboration with a spectrum of diverse services across Wandsworth.

“The same way we have multidisciplinary team (MDT) boards, the VCS needs to get in that mindset. It makes more sense for organisations to work across the spectrum to offer a comprehensive service, you need to provide a service user with services across their whole journey.”- Coordinator in the Housing and Regeneration Department

¹⁵ Frey, B. B., Lohmeier, J. H., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring collaboration among grant partners. [Link.](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1098214006290356)
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1098214006290356>



Conclusion and Recommendations

Community and organisational development need to be a particular focus of the proposed VCS Strategy (see above) given the following opportunities to use existing resources, assets and levers at the Council's disposal in order to signal the central role of the VCS in new place-based partnership:

- Review the Council and local partners' roles as “**anchor institutions**” – maximising use and adaptation of buildings, including a possible “meanwhile (re)use” plan to reinvent vacant shops in town centres. Ensure transparent, informed allocation of available space
- Support co-located working with VCS partners and the potential to involve ICB, Housing Associations, faith groups and businesses in widening access to community buildings and spaces.
- Encourage long-term investment and support from the Council and ICB partners so that VCS work (eg on prevention/early intervention) can have measurable impact
- Facilitate ways in which VCSOs can have more engagement with the Council in future commissioning plans, open procurement and bidding opportunities
- Build area-based and thematic clusters of VCSOs to build sector capacity in fundraising, bid writing, financial management, evaluation and reporting
- Offer local VCSOs access to relevant professional training provided to Council and other local statutory sector staff (ie a branded Wandsworth partnership professional development package)
- Develop a core-funding approach which will enable VCSOs, particularly those which are smaller and minority-led, more time to invest in their organisational resilience and sustainability


6. Funding and resources

Definition

Understanding the financial health and funding profile of the sector in the borough.

Key findings

- The absence of a coordinated partnership approach to resourcing the local VCS means at a time of increased competition within the sector, but when funders have a heightened interest in local, place-based collaboration
- The sector brings in considerable external funding and investment to the borough which may not be fully appreciated by partners
- Analysis of the borough's grants funding reveals significant “cold spots” and indications of relative underfunding of minoritised groups

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- The prevalence of smaller, community organisations means a continued need for bid-writing and fundraising skills which needs to be included in the commissioning of any future support and capacity building services (see above)

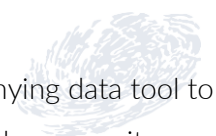
Context

The local voluntary and community sector which is predominantly made up of small, grassroots organisations report that too many funding processes remain overly complicated and resource intensive; this despite many high-profile funders (e.g. City Bridge Trust, Esmée Fairbairn and Lloyds Bank Charitable Foundation) signing up to the [IVAR flexible funding commitments](#) to make grants in a way that reflects the realities facing charities now and for the foreseeable future. There is clearly a demand for support with fundraising, bid writing and income generation – three distinct but complementary aspects of organisational and business development.

Analysis of the council’s grant funding over the last 5 years provides evidence which confirms the widely held perception of “cold spots”, both areas of Wandsworth which are underfunded relative to their levels of deprivation, and particular communities which have tended to be overlooked in recent years and has perpetuated a perception of discrimination.

The council’s own grant programme is regarded as insufficiently flexible and responsive to local conditions post Covid. The amount of bureaucracy is off putting, particularly for smaller organisations which are looking for greater appreciation of the need for core as well as longer-term funding (the recent Cost of Living grants were seen as a positive step in this direction).

Our research challenges the perception that there are not many funders investing in the local voluntary and community sector. The sector brings in significant levels of external funding to the borough and there is an opportunity to explore how external funding streams are maximised using other funds as leverage such as start-up funding from the Wandsworth Grant Fund, enhancing a Council and/or ICB-contracted service or CIL funding. The framing of a Wandsworth Civil Society Strategy is an opportunity to reposition local grant funding alongside external funding in order to deliver a future shared vision for Wandsworth and, where appropriate, support the VCS to bid to deliver services. This could be enabled through the establishment of an independently run Wandsworth funders forum to redress LBW’s cold spots, increase the diversity and equity of local funding and, through initiating shared data and processes, reduce the frictional costs attached to applicants’ bid writing and fundraising.



We recommend that the council and its partners use the needs analysis and accompanying data tool to help raise the profile and understanding of the capacity and reach of the voluntary and community sector in Wandsworth, and how through closer collaboration, it can enable statutory sector partners to identify and meet locally shared priorities. Support for the sector can extend beyond grant funding in order to:

- Create the conditions and address the support requirements which enable local VCS collaborations and consortia to bid for particular council/NHS commissioned services.
- Use social value instruments more concertedly to leverage greater investment from your suppliers and their supply-chains in the sector and local infrastructure.
- Promote the idea of “funder plus” investment and support in the sector by developing a set of asks, based on the sector’s identified needs, of Wandsworth’s business community including employee volunteers, pro-bono expertise, access to premises and resources.
- Address the needs of the local VCS for flexible and affordable space in the council’s current assets and premises review and any future strategy.
- Ensure that the needs of the sector are prioritised in the reframing and reprioritising of the borough’s Community Infrastructure Levy and the Neighbourhood CIL element.

Assessment

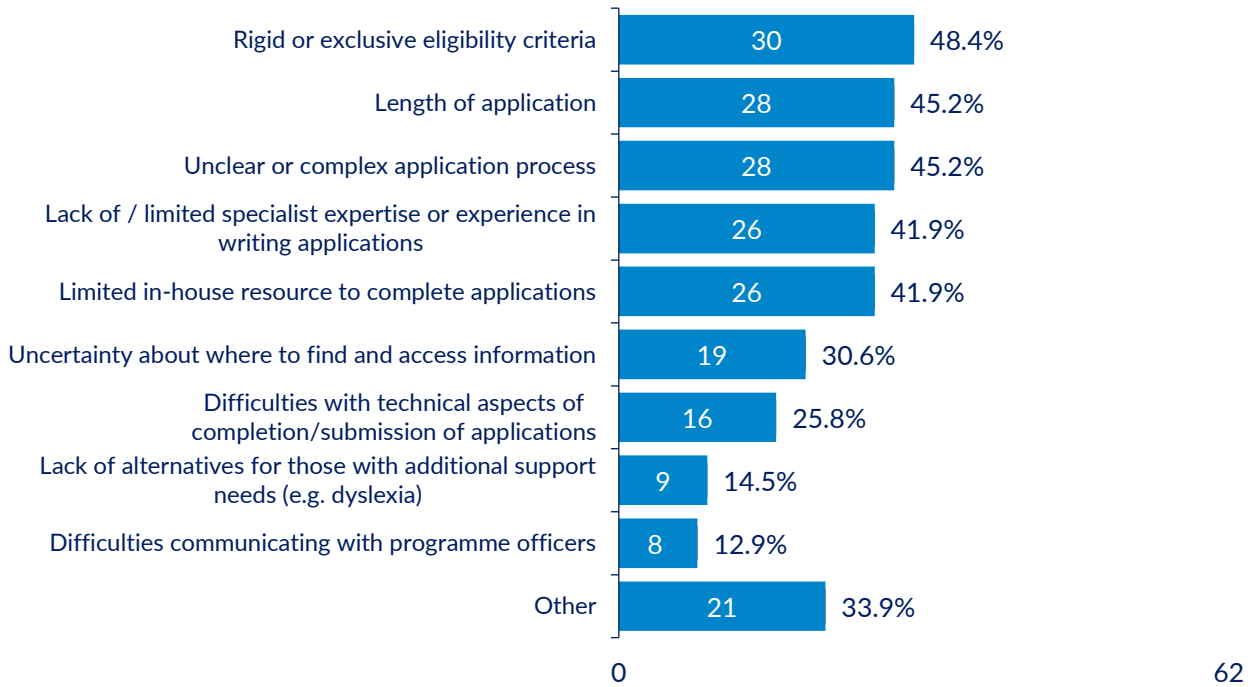
In terms of accessing funding and support from the council, the survey suggested that issues associated with funders’ processes and criteria were more of a barrier than internal expertise and resources to complete applications, with the three most commonly cited reasons being:

- Rigid or exclusive eligibility criteria
- Length of application forms
- Unclear or complex application processes

Figure 13- Survey question on main barriers to accessing funding and support from the council (n = 62)



What are the main barriers the sector faces in accessing funding and support from the council?

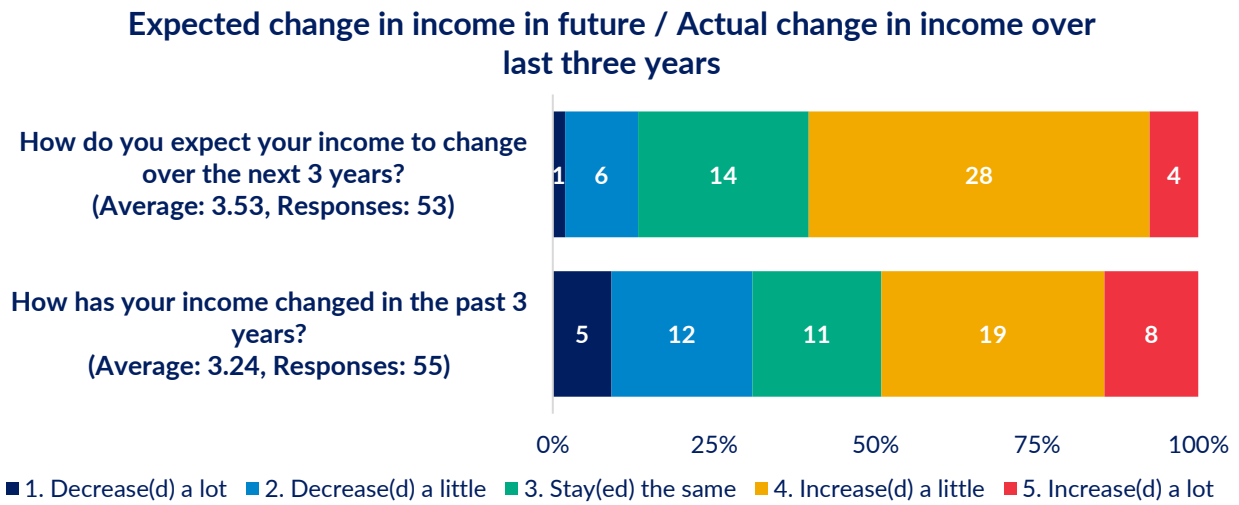
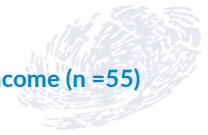


Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

There was a notably positive sentiment about organisational income:

- More organisations (27 out of 55) report that their income has increased over the last three years than report it has decreased (17 out of 55), probably as a consequence of their accessing one-off, Covid-related grants.
- Most organisations still reported that they expect their income to increase a little (28 out of 53) or to increase a lot (4 out of 53) over the next three years.

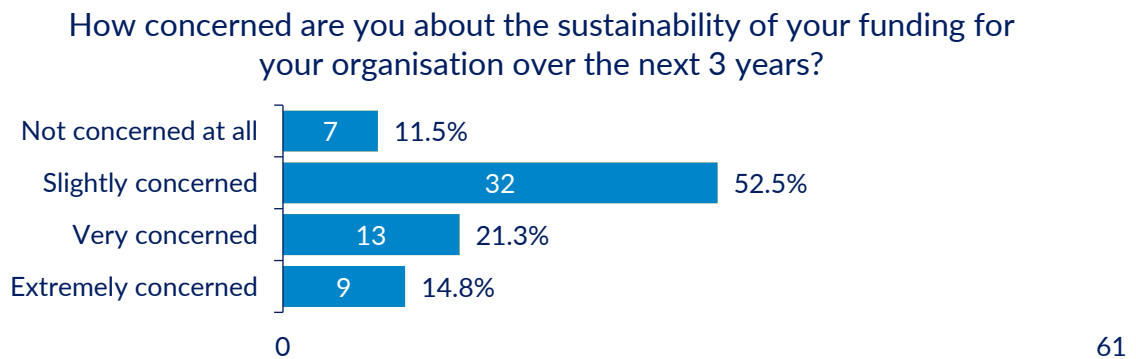
Figure 14- Rated scale survey questions on expected change in income (n = 53) and actual change in income (n =55)



Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

However, in terms of sustainability of future funding, a notable proportion of respondents (22 out of 61, 36.1%) reported that they were either ‘Very Concerned’ or ‘Extremely Concerned’.

Figure 15- Survey question on level of concern about sustainability of funding (n = 61)



Source: VCS Needs Analysis survey of local VCS organisations

LB Wandsworth funding of the voluntary sector

We have analysed two main sources of information on LB Wandsworth’s funding of the VCS:

- Grant funding awards made by LB Wandsworth during the period 2018-23, primarily through the Wandsworth Grants Fund. These were almost entirely directed at smaller, local voluntary and community sector organisations based and operating in the Borough.
- Contracts awarded by LB Wandsworth to VCSE organisations (based on the latest annual award value for each current contract). These are likely to be awarded to larger organisations, including

national charities headquartered outside the Borough, but which have the capacity and reach to provide local services commissioned by the council.



Grant funding: Almost £2m over five years

We have aggregated grants data provided by LB Wandsworth as part of the [interactive dashboard](#) which supports this report. This includes data primarily from the Wandsworth Grants Fund, but also for a number of other grant programmes, including the C19 Response Fund, C19 Food Essentials, Capacity Building 2022, Warm Space and Food.

Analysis shows that over the last five years (including grant awards made up to February 2023), there has been almost £2m awarded in grants, with a notable peak in both 2020 and 2022, as shown in Table 5. There is also a noticeable concentration of funding awards made in the north and centre of the borough, as shown in the map in Figure 16.

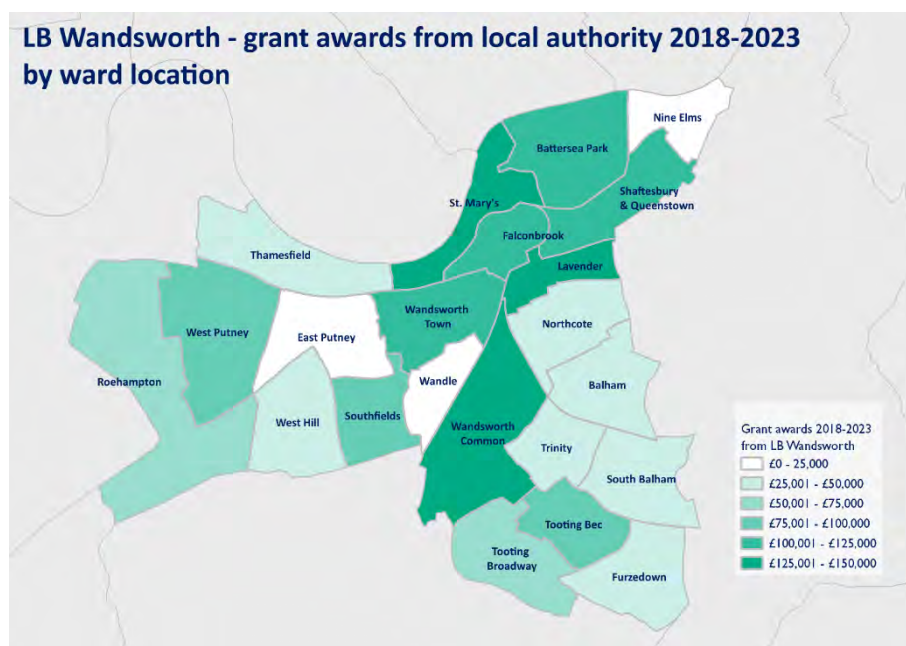
Table 5- LB Wandsworth grant funding awards

Year	Awarded (n)	Awarded (£)
2018	46	£269k
2019	37	£177k
2020	108	£573k
2021	58	£327k
2022	84	£578k
2023	10	£62k
Total	343	£1,987k

Source: Rocket Science analysis of LB Wandsworth grant funding information



Figure 16- LB Wandsworth grant awards by ward location 2018-2023



Source: Rocket Science analysis of LB Wandsworth grant funding information

Contractual funding of VCSE: Almost £28m annual value

Details of contracts awarded by LB Wandsworth are available on the council’s online [contract register](#). This currently does not differentiate those contracts awarded to VCSE organisations, though with the imminent introduction of a new database there are plans to do so. At this juncture, we have reviewed the list of awards with LB Wandsworth officers in order to analyse:

- The Wandsworth specific element of contracts which have been awarded across LB Wandsworth and LB Richmond upon Thames (i.e. applying a 68%:32% ratio).
- Contract awards made to known VCSE suppliers.

Table 6 below shows that the annual value of contracts to VCSE suppliers is almost £28m. Note that many of the large contracts awarded to VCSE are for statutory service delivery, or for services that may have previously been delivered by the local authority itself, and are therefore not directly comparable with grants awarded to local VCSE organisations for community activities. For example, Greenwich Leisure Limited, a charitable social enterprise based outside the Borough, is the supplier of Wandsworth’s managed service for libraries, with an annual contract value of £4m. Set alongside this, there are a range of locally-focused VCSE organisations that also receive LBW grant-funding as well as contract-funding, such as Age UK Wandsworth and Citizens Advice Wandsworth, so clearly contract funding is still an important element of the VCSE funding picture.



Table 6- Annual value of contracts awarded to VCSE suppliers

Procurement category	Annual funding
People	£22.5m
Environment	£4.4m
Corporate	£0.9m
Total	£27.8m

Source: LB Wandsworth contracts register

National Lottery and Charitable Foundation funding of the VCS in Wandsworth



£27.6m over five years 2018 to 2022 from 65 different funding organisations

A key source of information on local funding of the VCS is the 360 Giving open grant-making database. This gives details of every funding award made by a broad range of funders (including both public-sector funders and charitable trusts and independent foundations), with grants information in some cases going back to the 1990s.

For this report, we have undertaken analysis of funding awards made by all the Charitable Foundations and also the National Lottery distribution bodies that provide grants information on 360 Giving. The time period analysed has been the five calendar years 2018 through to 2022 (only very limited grants data has been uploaded to the 360 Giving website for 2023 awards).

Table 7- Funding to VCS organisations in LB Wandsworth from 20 largest funders over the period 2018-2022

Rank	Funder	Funding 2018-2022
1.	The National Lottery Community Fund	£9.2m
2.	Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	£2.2m
3.	City Bridge Trust	£1.9m
4.	The Henry Smith Charity	£1.9m
5.	Sport England	£1.8m
6.	Paul Hamlyn Foundation	£1.7m
7.	Pears Foundation	£1.2m
8.	BBC Children in Need	£0.8m
9.	The National Lottery Heritage Fund	£0.7m



10.	Trust for London	£0.6m
11.	The Trussell Trust	£0.5m
12.	Wolfson Foundation	£0.5m
13.	The London Community Foundation	£0.5m
14.	Gatsby Charitable Foundation	£0.3m
15.	The Rayne Foundation	£0.3m
16.	Lloyds Bank Foundation England & Wales	£0.3m
17.	Co-operative Group	£0.2m
18.	Michael & Betty Little Trust	£0.2m
19.	Wimbledon Foundation	£0.2m
20.	The Dulverton Trust	£0.2m
21-65.	45 other funders	£2.5m
	Total	£27.6m

Source: 360 Giving database



Figure 17- Proportional representation of funding of VCS organisations in LB Wandsworth from 20 largest funders – 2018 – 2022



Source: 360 Giving database



Comparison with other boroughs

As well as the analysis of 360 Giving for funding awards in LB Wandsworth, we have also looked at data from other boroughs to give a comparison between LB Wandsworth and the two comparator local councils, LB Hounslow and LB Southwark. For this analysis, the grants data has again been filtered for the five calendar years 2018-2022 and grants from central government departments have also been excluded. Grants awarded by external funders (National Lottery distributors and charitable foundations) are considered in Figure 18 and then 360 Giving data for grant awards made by LB Hounslow and LB Southwark are compared to grants data provided by LB Wandsworth.

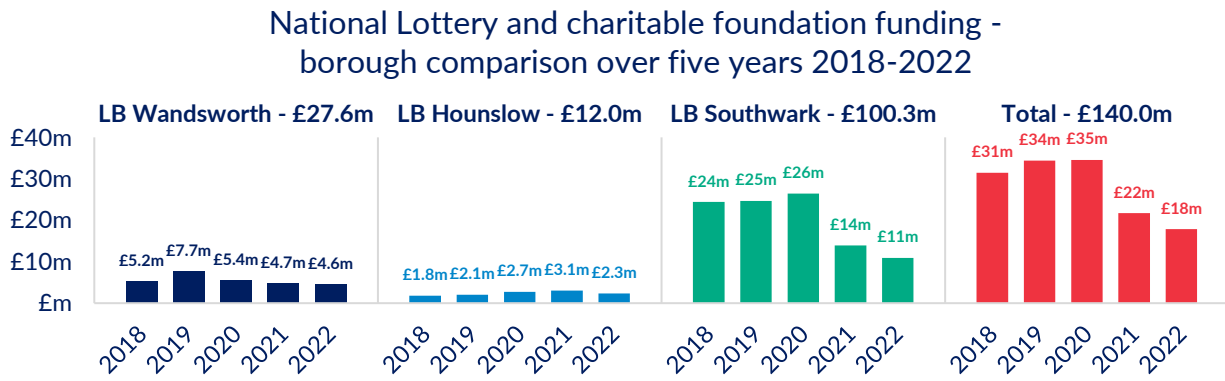
Figure 18 below shows that there is a marked contrast between the three boroughs, with VCS funding in LB Wandsworth being consistently much higher than funding in LB Hounslow, but lower than funding in LB Southwark. Furthermore, there is a consistent picture of different funders awarding more funding to VCS organisations in LB Southwark. Table 8 below shows that for all 20 of the largest VCS funders, the largest amount of funding has gone to the VCS in Southwark, rather than LB Wandsworth or LB Hounslow. A substantial part of the disparity is caused by the HQ effect – as noted in Section 1 of this report, there are many more large, national charities based in Southwark than in Wandsworth or Hounslow. In terms of the 20 largest recipients of funding:

- Fifteen are based in LB Southwark.
- Four are based in LB Wandsworth (Youth Access - a national charity registered in LB Wandsworth when grant was awarded in 2019, Little Village, Nightingale Hammerson – a residential and nursing care provider , Battersea Arts Centre).
- One is based in LB Hounslow.

Figure 19 considers grant awards made solely by the local authority in the three boroughs. LB Southwark has provided the most in grant funding of VCS organisations (even though data is not available for 2021); LB Wandsworth has provided the least.



Figure 18- VCS funding from NLCF and Charitable Foundations in Wandsworth, Hounslow and Southwark



Source: 360 Giving database

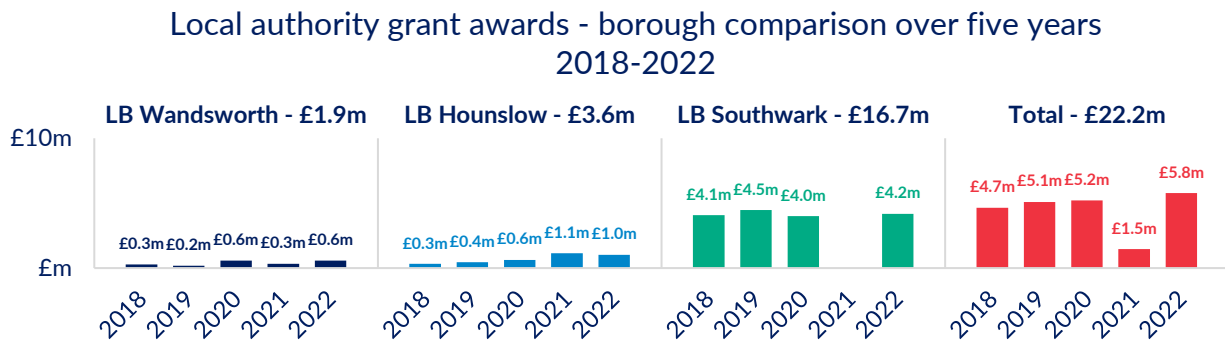
Table 8- Comparison of funding awards by borough and by 20 largest funders for five years 2018-2022

20 largest VCS funders - 2018-2022	Wandsworth	Hounslow	Southwark	Total
The National Lottery Community Fund	£9,180k	£5,090k	£22,097k	£36,368k
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	£2,221k		£9,741k	£11,962k
The National Lottery Heritage Fund	£710k	£866k	£9,480k	£11,057k
Pears Foundation	£1,150k		£9,240k	£8,127k
Sport England	£2,262k	£1,286k	£4,580k	£7,810k
City Bridge Trust	£1,936k	£750k	£4,096k	£6,782k
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	£1,661k	£150k	£4,840k	£6,651k
The Henry Smith Charity	£1,979k	£1,074k	£2,853k	£5,906k
Trust for London	£636k	£176k	£3,479k	£4,290k
BBC Children in Need	£779k	£494k	£1,903k	£3,175k
Wolfson Foundation	£533k	£241k	£2,228k	£3,002k
Barrow Cadbury Trust	£59k	£77k	£2,270k	£2,580k
John Ellerman Foundation		£250k	£1,712k	£2,407k
Nesta	£105k	£50k	£1,774k	£1,962k
United St Saviour's Charity			£1,739k	£1,929k
The Dulverton Trust	£205k	£76k	£1,283k	£1,739k
The London Community Foundation	£466k	£257k	£742k	£1,564k
Lloyds Bank Foundation England and Wales	£275k		£1,170k	£1,465k
The Tudor Trust	£162k		£1,216k	£1,445k
The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington	£92k	£154k	£1,090k	£1,378k

Source: 360 Giving database



Figure 19- Comparison of grant awards made by the local authority in Wandsworth, Hounslow and Southwark



Source: 360 Giving database; LB Wandsworth grants data

Conclusion and Recommendations

We recommend that the council and its partners use the needs analysis and accompanying data tool to help raise the profile and understanding of the capacity and reach of the voluntary and community sector in Wandsworth and how, through closer collaboration, it can enable statutory sector partners to identify and meet locally shared priorities.

- Consider grant funding a core-group of local VCSE organisations (eg via Strategic Partnership Grants) with expectations to collaborate and build community capacity across the sector
- Collaborate with the ICB to develop joint/complementary place-based grants
- Invite **London Funders** to establish a local funders forum modelled on similar forums in other boroughs and use the forum to raise the profile of the sector, coordinate investment and attract additional funders locally
- Link grant funding to a borough-wide “funder plus” offer of related capacity building support
- Apply **IVAR’s flexible funding** principles to reduce the administrative burden and frictional costs to local VCISOs
- Develop shared resources (eg collaborating on due diligence) in order to maximise the proportion of funding which goes into the sector and to frontline services
- Promote investment in the sector by developing a set of asks, based on the sector’s identified needs, of Wandsworth’s suppliers and business community including employee volunteers, pro-bono expertise, access to premises and resources.
- Ensure that the needs of the sector are prioritised in the reframing and reprioritising of the borough’s Community Infrastructure Levy and the Neighbourhood CIL element.

7. Recommendations and call to action



Drawing on the needs analysis, the following five action plans and recommendations are the product of co-development and testing with local partners which we conducted throughout the consultation process (February-July 2023). This culminated in a Community Event attended by around 100 individuals on 10th July. More detail on our methodology, including the co-design of the needs analysis, can be found in the Annex to the main report.

Each of the themed plans is set out in four columns:

1. **What** – are the key issues/priorities emerging under this theme?
2. **Why** – what is the evidence of need underpinning these?
3. **Where** – do we want to get to as a partnership (ie shared outcomes)?
4. **How** – what solutions or actions will deliver these outcomes?

In addition to each of the high-level Action Plans, we used the Community Event to drill down in more detail on possible solutions to two outcomes under each theme. The outputs from the three rounds of table discussions at the Event are recorded in the Annex; we have also suggested possible timeframes and resource implications for delivering each of the solutions, whilst recognising that these are just “a starter for ten” and will require more detailed scrutiny to form an outline business case.

The following five Action Plans sit underneath the [Shared Outcomes Framework](#) (Page 8 on this report). They are also included in Appendix B which goes alongside this report.

1. Leadership and advocacy

Definition: Leadership and advocacy across diverse communities and organisations; bringing people together to have a stronger voice and influence, mobilising and encouraging community ambition and aspiration.

Issue/Priority	Evidence of need	Outcomes	Solutions
A shared vision for Wandsworth which fully engages the local VCS as equal strategic and delivery partners - alongside individuals, statutory organisations and local business - in realising new place-based ambitions for the borough based on a thriving Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy of underappreciation of the value and contribution of the VCS to local wellbeing and a vibrant civil society in Wandsworth • Lack of trust and mutual understanding perpetuated by siloed working and poor communication • Sector representatives refer to a desire to work upstream with LBW and partners; VCSOs have expert knowledge and seek opportunities to contribute to policy making and problem solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling participation by the VCS as equal partners in delivering the vision • Ensuring regular and meaningful points of contact and communication between sectors • The local VCS is thriving and supported which attracts a new cadre of diverse civic/community leaders for LBW • Devolving leadership to communities in recognition of local area differences and opportunity to redress historical imbalances in resourcing and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a VCS Strategy and shared outcomes framework along with KPIs to measure progress and ensure greater accountability for its delivery • Introduce strategic “points of contact” with the sector i.e. VCS link officers/champions across all service areas; enable and resource VCS voice and representation on key policies and scrutiny panels
The collation, interpretation and application of current data and intelligence on the local sector and its needs is inconsistent and patchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apparent lack of appreciation of the size, reach and contribution of the voluntary and community sector to civic life across Wandsworth. Missed opportunity to use data more engagingly to tell the Wandsworth story and relaunch a cross-sectoral partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the local VCS eco-system is better mapped and understood • Using local intelligence to engage the VCS in policy making, priority setting, service delivery, impact measurement and analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host and develop the Wandsworth VCS data dashboard as part of a suite of local data and intelligence tools • Combine and use community-level intelligence on both local needs (demand) and local provision (supply) creating a single “go to” resource which enables connecting of the two and greater engagement of the local VCS
Address DEI challenges and the evidence of under-resourcing and support for certain Wandsworth communities (ie of place, interest and identity)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of recent LBW grants data shows the underfunding of areas of the borough and VCSOs serving minoritised communities. Anecdotal evidence from consultees supports the data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the Council and its partners are inclusive funders and enablers of a civil society sector which is fully representative of all needs and communities in the borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other funders of the sector in Wandsworth to share data and intelligence • Target and invest longer-term in building the capacity of underserved communities in Wandsworth • Consider ringfencing allocation of grant awards to underserved groups and communities based on analysis of LBW Grant funding since 2019



2. Partnership and collaboration

Definition - Partnership and collaboration bringing together networks & connecting local voluntary and community organisations with each other and with strategic and systems partners; pursue, create and implement opportunities for joint working.

Issue/Priority	Evidence of need	Outcomes	Solutions
<p>Local strategic partnership and governance arrangements do not sufficiently enable cross-sectoral collaborative working and deliver a shared vision and outcomes for Wandsworth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations identify the extent of the legacy of the “Wandsworth Way” of working as a weakness • Experience of responding to Covid 19, CoL crisis and the City of Sanctuary has evidenced the value, capability, and potential of the sector . . . but also to be more than simply an emergency responder and safety net • Sector reports a lack of coordinated engagement with LBW and trust, but signs of positive change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A borough which is known for the strength and vibrancy of its civil society – building on the 5 core pillars and ensuring strong connections across them • A sector which is sufficiently encouraged, equipped and empowered to partner the Council, statutory sector partners and local business on the co-design and delivery of a shared vision for Wandsworth • For the local VCS to have an equal voice in the governance and delivery of the vision of the borough’s place-based partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-development of a strategic place-based partnership with the Council, statutory partners, business, and residents • An appropriate governance and shared outcomes framework which works equally for all partners as a way of driving change, performance and enhancing community wellbeing
<p>LBW’s procurement and commissioning arrangements do not enable VCSOS to participate in service co-design, coproduction and co-delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of frustration around short term funding cycles and declining amounts of money; limits strategic planning and best use of funds. • Recognised opportunity to build on existing infrastructure, place-based and service-related networks (rather than superimposing a model CVS) • Frustration that proven practice and approaches to procurement (soft market testing; consortia building and bid support) have not been fully adopted in LBW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better shared understanding of LBW and local partners’ commissioning intentions linked to the partnership’s medium/longer-term vision for Wandsworth • Increase the proportion of direct spending via local VCSOs to maximise the multiplier effect of the Wandsworth ££ (ie following a Community Wealth Building approach) • Ensure LBW contracts with existing external providers (eg Hestia, Enable etc.) encourage their working with local VCSOs and social enterprises in their supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Social Value instruments to leverage more investment in the local VCS sector and community resilience • Maintain an online directory of local VCS partners/sub-contractors for lead providers • Explore the potential of a Wandsworth partnership approach to community wealth building enabling local spending/community reinvestment (e.g. see Preston Model) • Work with contracted service providers to integrate ‘single point of access’/one front door service model by partnering local VCSOs
<p>Develop and commission relevant capacity building & support services to ensure an effective infrastructure to support local VCS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both VCS and council staff recognise that smaller organisations do not have equity in terms of resources/skills and knowledge to compete for funds and the need for a “shared infrastructure” which can help grow skills and capacity in sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the local VCS in service planning and design of sector support services which respond to local needs and address gaps/cold spots identified in this review • Use improved data and local intelligence to target resources, enhance and seed local collaborations and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and agree the gaps in existing provision and how these can best be filled within existing budgets and collaborative arrangements

3. Volunteering

Definition - Volunteering encouraging and nurturing opportunities, leading and generating an expectation and culture in which volunteering can thrive and utilise the skills of the local community.

Issue/Priority	Evidence of need	Outcomes	Solutions
Insufficient infrastructure and support for local volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual organisations have developed volunteer networks, but there is no centralised structure or process The number of volunteers is falling post pandemic/emergency response The current volunteer cohort is not diverse and lacks younger individuals and those from ethnic minority groups Local organisations need guidance on supporting and managing volunteers, which would free up time to focus on their strengths: project delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activating a new cohort of Wandsworth volunteers inspired by the partnership’s vision for Wandsworth’s communities Developing a range of different social action and volunteering opportunities – formal/informal; short/long term; virtual/in-person (Re)activating local residents who volunteered during the pandemic Ensuring access to shared infrastructure (support; training; brokerage) to ease burden on individual organisations recruiting and managing volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the local volunteering infrastructure and support to capitalise on resident resources, both social capital at the grass roots and offers of specific skills/time (ICT; trustees; mentors) Support and build-on existing tools, including digital platforms, Apps and local/regional brokerage services
Opportunity to promote corporate/ employer-enabled volunteering locally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only a small number of local businesses currently engage with volunteer opportunities but have expertise in leadership and governance which could support the sector Inward investors (Nine Elms) are approaching LBW/VCS with inappropriate proposals for volunteer time, seeing volunteering akin to team building days. – ie meeting their needs rather than the community’s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seize the opportunity to tap into new and existing Wandsworth business community and their attachment to place Different touch points with local business are better co-ordinated so that there is a strategic ask of local businesses to lever the requisite skills, in-kind support and financial investment into the VCS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage local companies (incl. large firms based here and SMEs) use a “good work/employer” standard to appeal to responsible businesses and their interest in community engagement Develop an accessible “menu” of different ways “corporate citizens” can engage with local VCSOs based on community need not corporate expectations Lead by example in the Council – support more of LBW’s own staff to engage in local social action and volunteering
Enable and recognise volunteering and local social action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebration events raise awareness and sustain engagement, but there are few events doing so across the borough Not enough organisations or residents recognise volunteering as a two-way relationship that benefits volunteers as well as organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wandsworth volunteers feel recognised, supported, and rewarded The Council is fully sighted on the broad array of volunteering taking place across the borough and its value in supporting services Residents understand how volunteering can benefit them, their development/wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of volunteer celebration events coordinated between the Council and the VCS Investigate the roll-out of a borough-wide reward scheme that includes local SMEs, eg providing local discounts to volunteers

4. Community /organisational development

Definition – Community/organisational development strengthening organisations’ capacity so that people come together to develop sustainable solutions and lasting change for their communities

Issue/Priority	Evidence of need	Outcomes	Solutions
Co-design a community/civil society strategy for Wandsworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration at the lack of affordable access to community buildings and spaces, including those owned by LBW, as well as empty retail units in Wandsworth’s town centres • Need to create and sustain boroughwide community networks to share best practice and pool resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fit for purpose asset management strategy, aligned to the Borough’s vision and corporate plan • An audit and database of local assets/spaces accessible to the VCS to help ensure more efficient and equitable allocation and use of local assets in the interests of community development • Organised opportunities to liaise, collaborate and share knowledge within communities and sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Council and local partners’ roles as “anchor institutions” – maximising use and adaptation of buildings, including a possible “meanwhile (re)use” plan to reinvent vacant shops in town centres. Ensure transparent, informed allocation of available space • Support co-located working with VCS partners and the potential to involve ICB, Housing Associations, faith groups and businesses in widening access to community buildings and spaces.
Harness the recent development of parts of the borough to maximise wider community benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frustration at the inaccessibility of community levies arising from recent development of the Borough • Lack of knowledge around Council policies and available resources for communities e.g. minoritised groups or communities applying for funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear and practical policy for allocating Community Infrastructure Levy to benefit local communities and support the sector • Increased transparency around commissioned work and the engagement and involvement of community leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage long-term investment and support from the Council and statutory partners so that VCS work (eg on prevention/early intervention) can have measurable impact • Facilitate ways in which VCSOs can have more engagement with the Council in future commissioning plans, open procurement, and bidding opportunities
Support to enable local voluntary and community sector organisations develop and strengthen their skills, capacity, and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of local capacity building support is insufficient to meet current and growing levels of demand • Increasing stress on human resources within VCSOs – among both paid and volunteer staff/trustees exacerbated by C19 and CoL crises • Limited involvement of community groups in local decision-making, /service co-design and commissioning processes • Under-representation of service users/those with lived experience in leadership positions in VCSOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flexible range of infrastructure and support services which address local sector needs and reduce the gaps and inconsistency in current provision • A local offer which builds on existing supply and the full range of community networks across all parts of the borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build area-based and thematic clusters of VCSOs to build sector capacity in fundraising, bid writing, financial management, evaluation and reporting • Offer local VCSOs access to relevant professional training provided to Council and other local statutory sector staff (ie a branded Wandsworth partnership professional development package) • Develop a core-funding approach which will enable VCSOs, particularly those which are smaller and minority-led, more time to invest in their organisational resilience and sustainability



Voluntary Sector Needs Analysis and Design of Infrastructure and Capacity Building Support

5. Funding and resources

Definition - Funding and resources understanding the financial health & funding profile of the sector in Wandsworth

Issue/Priority	Evidence of need	Outcomes	Solutions
LBW's grants strategy needs underpinning by a clear, shared understanding of community needs; how to target them and how grants complement commissioned services and deliver Wandsworth's priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local VCSOs report a lack of clarity as to the Council's vision and ambition for the Borough and a missed opportunity to support the co-design of a new direction for the borough supported by place-based funders, including the Council Growing need for unrestricted core funding; training in fundraising and grant applications/bid writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using grant funding to deliver a shared vision for Wandsworth and, where appropriate, support the VCS to bid to deliver services; leverage other external funds Taking into account the extent of LBW's hot and cold spots and how to bridge gaps and address underfunding of minoritised groups Raising the profile of the delivery capacity and reach of the VCS and how it can enable LBW and statutory sector partners to meet their priorities (eg through social prescribing; arts and culture) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider using some of your grant funding to support a core-group of local VCSE organisations (eg via Strategic Partnership Grants) with expectations to collaborate and build community capacity Collaborate with the ICB to develop joint/complementary place-based grants Explore the potential of participative grant making as a tool for engaging and working more co-productively with local communities
Establish and support a Wandsworth Funders Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a coordinated approach to resourcing the local VCS Increased competition within the sector for grants at a time of heightened demand and growing interest among funders in local collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the identity, focus and totality of grant funding of the VCS in the borough from the combination of local, regional and national funders and from across the statutory, independent and private sectors Using the Forum to establish a more strategic approach to VCS funding in Wandsworth; reduce duplication, increase efficiency, support collaboration, and enhance impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite London Funders to establish a local funders forum modelled on similar forums in other boroughs Use the forum to raise the profile of the sector, coordinate investment and attract additional funders locally Link grant funding to a borough-wide "funder plus" offer of related capacity building support
Reduce the administrative burden on grant applicants and recipients in Wandsworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of grants rewarding the same organisations historically Smaller constituted organisations find the Council's grants programme inaccessible and too bureaucratic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the totality and range of funding coming into the borough alongside the Council's grants programme to support a vibrant civil society across Wandsworth's communities - core, project and infrastructure funds Pool knowledge, experience and resources across the statutory and private sectors in support of a vibrant civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply IVAR's flexible funding principles to reduce the administrative burden and frictional costs to local VCSOs Develop shared resources (eg collaborating on due diligence) in order to maximise the proportion of funding which goes into the sector and to frontline services

Annexes



Weblinks

Definition “Civil Society”

“The organisations within a society that work to promote the common good, usually taken to include state-run institutions, families, charities, and community groups”

<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/civil-society>

Definition “Place-based partnerships”

“A place-based approach is about understanding the issues, interconnections and relationships in a place and coordinating action and investment to improve the quality of life for that community.”

<https://www.ourplace.scot/about-place/place-based-approaches>

Definition - “Anchor institutions”

“Anchor institutions are large organisations that are unlikely to relocate and have a significant stake in their local area. They have sizeable assets that can be used to support their local community’s health and wellbeing and tackle health inequalities, for example, through procurement, training, employment, professional development, and buildings and land use.”

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/anchor-institutions-and-peoples-health>

Definition - “Co-production”

“Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.”

<https://neweconomics.org/2010/07/right-right-now>

Page 3:

A recent [peer review](#) led by the Local Government Association (LGA) noted the progress being made in the council’s working with partners, including the VCS, but suggested there is more work to do to harness the potential of these relationships.

<https://democracy.wandsworth.gov.uk/documents/s104992/23-229%20FINANCE%20OSC%20JULY%202023%20LGA%20PEER%20REVIEW.pdf>

It is against this backdrop of change in the Wandsworth story and the new ambition of the local authority that this Needs Analysis identifies how the Council can engage and work together with the local VCS to [unleash the full potential of civil society](#).

<https://civilsocietycommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FINAL-Unleashing-the-power-of-civil-society-%E2%80%93-for-upload.pdf>

This is a journey which some have identified as part of a [fundamental shift in the role of the state](#) and its relationship with civil society which, as [Locality](#) recently identified in its work for the LGA, local councils choose to approach in different ways.



<https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/the-community-paradigm/>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/state-strategic-relationships-between-councils-and-their-local-voluntary-and-community>

The Needs Analysis focuses in turn on the core functions of local voluntary and community sector infrastructure, as defined by the [National Association for Voluntary and Community Action](#).

<https://navca.org.uk/what-our-members-do>

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Civil Society Roots 3: Identifying cold spots – Rapid Evidence Group

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_civil_society_roots_3_-_rapid_evidence_review_short_write-up_.pdf

Page 7 –

Co-develop the specification of a new VCS support service for Wandsworth which largely builds on the existing assets, infrastructure and support needs identified in this Analysis, but forensically uses evidence and data presented here, and in the accompanying [data dashboard](#), to target underserved communities across the borough.

<https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/684da0a4-22b0-4fe8-bde3-4df7c744f432/page/ofxMC>

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The most recent national [Civil Society strategy](#) envisages five foundations of social value, which can enrich lives and build a fairer society for all.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732765/Civil_Society_Strategy_-_building_a_future_that_works_for_everyone.pdf

Most pertinently the final of these reports was on [relationships, influencing and collaboration](#). This concluded that there was a great deal of engagement between TSOs and the public sector locally, but noted that there needs to be substance behind this engagement for this to be effective: *“Buttering up the sector with flattery in policy statements does not mean, therefore, that organisations will rush in to provide assistance unless objectives are aligned with their own interests, that they are incentivised or supported to do so.”*

<https://www.communityfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Third-Sector-Trends-in-England-and-Wales-2022-relationships-influencing-and-collaboration.pdf>

[Unleashing the power of civil society](#) – The final report of the Law Family Commission on Civil Society was published in January 2023.

<https://civilsocietycommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FINAL-Unleashing-the-power-of-civil-society-%E2%80%93-for-upload.pdf>

Around the same time (December 2022), the LGA published its [research into the relationships between councils and their local VCS](#).

https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/state-strategic-relationships-between-councils-and-their-local-voluntary-and-community#_edn1



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To support the VCS Needs Analysis project, an analysis has been done on this filtered Charity data to produce an open source [interactive dashboard](#) which gives a geographic breakdown of voluntary sector organisations by location, beneficiary type and income size.

<https://lookerstudio.google.com/reporting/684da0a4-22b0-4fe8-bde3-4df7c744f432/page/ofxMC>

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Source: Centre for Thriving Places [Thriving Places Index](#)

<https://www.thrivingplacesindex.org/>

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In October 2021, the Young Foundation produced [A Civic Strength Index for London](#) report, funded by the GLA, which maps civic strength at a ward level by three primary domains: (1) Relationships and Social Capital; (2) Democratic Engagement and (3) Public and Social Infrastructure

<https://www.youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Civic-Strength-Index-Final-Report-1.pdf>

Source: [London Civic Strength Index](#), The Young Foundation, October 2021

<https://www.youngfoundation.org/our-work/publications/london-civic-strength-index/>

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Definition taken from [NAVCA](#), which identifies the ‘Four Functions of Local Infrastructure.’ For the purposes of framing this Needs Analysis, we added a fifth “Funding and Resources.”

<https://navca.org.uk/what-our-members-do>

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Local Government Association. (2022). The State of Strategic Relationships Between Councils and Their Local Voluntary and Community Sector. [Link](#).

https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/state-strategic-relationships-between-councils-and-their-local-voluntary-and-community#_edn1

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Community Southwark. What is your preferred action? [Link](#).

<https://communitysouthwark.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/GetImage8d28.jpg>

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A review of different sources of available funding was identified as an enabler of partnership and collaborative working in terms of anticipating opportunities to build consortia and collaborative bids around key policy priorities and shared goals such as the [London Borough of Culture award](#) or the [Propel funding](#) which enables organisations to explore, develop and lead collaborative approaches to tackle some of London’s biggest challenges.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/arts-and-culture/current-culture-projects/london-borough-culture>

<https://londonpropel.org.uk/>



Free2B Alliance.

<https://free2b.lgbt/inclusion/>

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Citizens Advice Wandsworth. Help Through Hardship Crisis. [Link](#).

<https://cawandsworth.org/our-projects/help-through-hardship-crisis-and-advice-first-aid/>

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Introduce an appropriate governance and shared outcomes framework which works equally for all partners as a way of driving change, performance and enhancing [community wellbeing](#) and fully engages different networks and engagement mechanisms (for example see the [LB Southwark model](#))

<https://cles.org.uk/community-wealth-building/what-is-community-wealth-building/>

<https://communitysouthwark.org/vcs-support/networks/>

Explore the potential of a Wandsworth partnership approach to community wealth-building enabling local spending/community reinvestment (eg see [Preston Model](#))

<https://www.preston.gov.uk/article/1339/What-is-Preston-Model->

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Pro Bono Economic. (2023). Shifting Out Of Reverse. [Link](#).

<https://www.probonoeconomics.com/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=e02585be-c7d7-48c4-9d10-83f1902cf8cc>

NCVO. (2023). Time Well Spent. [Link](#).

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/time-well-spent-2023/#/>

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For example, the [Works 4U free guide](#) provides employers with a framework for embedding meaningful employee volunteering opportunities within their companies.

<https://www.works-4u.com/contact-4>

Similarly the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development provides [guidance](#) for implementing an employer-supported volunteering programme which includes short-term and long-term options for employers.

<https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/guides/volunteering-employer-supported-guide/>

Other local authorities, such as Lewisham and the City of London, have rolled out borough-wide reward schemes via the likes of discount cards and [Tempo Time Credits](#),

<https://www.temptimecredits.org/log-in>

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London Plus. (2023). London CVS Network Impact Report. [Link](#).

<https://londonplus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/London-CVS-Network-Impact-Report.pdf>



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Resource for London. (2023). Capacity to Change: The State of London's Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Organisations in the 2020's. [Link.](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55c48182e4b03ca91f267647/t/646e26ca78e7d02ca197d421/1684940494271/Capacity+to+Change.pdf)
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55c48182e4b03ca91f267647/t/646e26ca78e7d02ca197d421/1684940494271/Capacity+to+Change.pdf>

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See for example Community Southwark's [State of the Sector](https://communitysouthwark.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/State-of-the-Sector-Research-Research-Findings-and-Call-to-Action.pdf) (2022-23). The graph is from the [2023 Funder Plus survey](https://esmeefairbairn.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/2023_Funding_Plus_survey_summary.pdf) which is undertaken by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
<https://communitysouthwark.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/State-of-the-Sector-Research-Research-Findings-and-Call-to-Action.pdf>
https://esmeefairbairn.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/2023_Funding_Plus_survey_summary.pdf

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Frey, B. B., Lohmeier, J. H., Lee, S. W., & Tollefson, N. (2006). Measuring collaboration among grant partners. [Link.](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1098214006290356)
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1098214006290356>

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The local voluntary and community sector which is predominantly made up of small, grassroots organisations report that too many funding processes remain overly complicated and resource intensive; this despite many high-profile funders (e.g. City Bridge Trust, Esmée Fairbairn and Lloyds Bank Charitable Foundation) signing up to the [IVAR flexible funding commitments](https://www.ivar.org.uk/publication/new-principles-for-grant-reporting/) to make grants in a way that reflects the realities facing charities now and for the foreseeable future.
<https://www.ivar.org.uk/publication/new-principles-for-grant-reporting/>

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Details of contracts awarded by LB Wandsworth are available on the council's online [contract register](https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/procurement/selling-to-the-council/).
<https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/procurement/selling-to-the-council/>

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Invite [London Funders](https://londonfunders.org.uk/what-we-do/enabling-funder-collaboration/local-funder-forums) to establish a local funders forum modelled on similar forums in other boroughs and use the forum to raise the profile of the sector, coordinate investment and attract additional funders locally
<https://londonfunders.org.uk/what-we-do/enabling-funder-collaboration/local-funder-forums>

Apply [IVAR's flexible funding](https://www.ivar.org.uk/flexible-funders/) principles to reduce the administrative burden and frictional costs to local VCSOs
<https://www.ivar.org.uk/flexible-funders/>



Glossary

BAME – Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
BIDs – Business Improvement Districts
CEO – Chief Executive Officer
CIL – Community Infrastructure Levy
CVS – Council for Voluntary Service
FTE – Full time Equivalent
GLA – Greater London Authority
ICB – Integrated Care Board
ICS – Integrated Care System
KLS – Katherine Low Settlement
KPIs – Key Performance Indicators
LB – London Borough
LBW – London Borough Wandsworth
LGA – Local Government Association
LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/or Questioning
NCVO – National Council for Voluntary Organisations
SMEs – Small and Medium sized Enterprises
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TSOs – Third Sector Organisations
VCS – Voluntary Community Sector
VCSE – Voluntary Community Social Enterprise
VCSO – Voluntary Community Sector Organisations
WCA – Wandsworth Care Alliance
WCEN – Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network

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