

Voluntary **Action** Islington

Strategic Business Plan
2010-13

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Following the successful merger of IVAC and the Volunteer Centre, Voluntary Action Islington was formally established in November 2009, and moved into a new home at 200a Pentonville Road. The merger and the relocation offer a wide range of new opportunities for Voluntary Action Islington to work differently, to capitalise on the low rent of the building (as a result of section 106 support) and to ensure the organisation is sustainable and able to respond to the changing demands of funders and clients in the years ahead.

This Strategic Business Plan is the result of extensive stakeholder discussions (with funders, clients, users, staff and trustees), research into national and local trends, discussion workshops with staff and Trustees, development work with the CEO and senior team, culminating in an all Staff/Trustees planning workshop in February to agree priorities and projects for the next 3 years.

2.0 CONTEXT

National Context

The full impact of the recession has not hit many third sector organisations – with grant funding secure until 2011, many charities have yet to feel the worst effects of the downturn. Nationally the picture is a difficult one - predictions of government funding cuts to the third sector, of cuts backs at local authority level and a downturn in public contributions to charities mean that many charities large and small face challenging times ahead.

Contracting and commissioning is already in place for procuring public services, but many third sector bodies have not had experience of competitive tendering or contracting. After 2011 when the current round of public sector funding finishes the pressure on charities to competitively tender at all levels will be intense. Local charities may find themselves up against national third sector providers, or private enterprise.

Infrastructure organisations, like the CVS have a crucial role to play in responding to this agenda but they will find themselves under increasing pressure to prove how they add value – especially at national and regional level.

Local Context

Findings from the stakeholder research conducted with a range of organisations across Islington demonstrated that Voluntary Action Islington has a central role to play in supporting organisations of all sizes in the borough and beyond.

Stakeholders wanted Voluntary Action Islington to adopt more of a leadership role, guiding the sector in the borough through the difficult times ahead and being one step ahead on the commissioning and contracting agenda. They highlighted the need for Voluntary Action Islington to be “innovative in helping build consortia within the third sector”.

Volunteering continues to be of vital importance to all sectors, third, private and statutory and Voluntary Action Islington has an important role to play in securing shaping volunteering and brokerage services in the borough.

A positive future

Despite the difficult times ahead Voluntary Action Islington is well placed to respond to the challenges at both national and local level. The merger with the Volunteer Centre in 2009 and the move to the new building at 200a Pentonville Road under a section 106 agreement, have given the organisation enormous strengths and potential.

Voluntary Action Islington has a strong track record both within the borough and across the capital. This established reputation, coupled with the development of community hub space at 200a Pentonville Road, means we can approach the future with confidence able to lead and support the Third Sector within Islington to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

3.0 OUR VISION

A thriving third sector that leads and sustains individual and community activity.

4.0 OUR MISSION

- To lead and support local voluntary activity, by individuals and community or not for profit organisations
- To promote strong and mutually beneficial relationships between the Third Sector and the statutory and private sectors
- To develop sustainable voluntary activity in our community
- To engage and support the most excluded members of our community.

5.0 OUR VALUES

Underpinning our Vision and Mission statements are the values of Voluntary Action Islington and these are at the heart of what we believe as an organisation and how we work both with all our external stakeholders and within the organisation, with our staff and volunteers.

Our values are:

- equality and diversity, valuing difference, treating everyone with respect
- independence, in our thinking and actions
- integrity and professionalism, maintaining high personal and professional standards
- partnership, working with others to support and develop partnerships across the community
- listening and learning, from all our stakeholders - members, staff volunteers and partners.

7.0 OUR STRATEGIC AIMS AND OUTCOMES

The Strategic Aims set out the direction for Voluntary Action Islington for the next five years. They reflect both the current strengths of the organisation and its aspiration to be at the heart of supporting and developing a thriving Third Sector within Islington. Our Strategic Aims and Outcomes will drive our operational business plan and will help guide managers and staff when it comes to setting objectives for 2011-2013 and beyond.

1. Leadership and Advocacy

- To develop our leadership role so we can act as both an advocate for the third sector and lead the sector as it responds to change.

Outcomes

- 1.1 Voluntary Action Islington is recognised by stakeholders as successfully leading debates about policy and priorities.
- 1.2 Third Sector organisations influence policy and issues of importance to the sector.
- 1.3 Local voluntary and community organisations are better informed and prepared to lead and respond to changes in policy at national, regional and local.

1.4 The profile of third sector organisations and volunteering improves.

2. Community Engagement

- To engage communities, particularly those who are most excluded, to support their active participation in effective local action at all levels.

Outcomes

- 2.1 Socially excluded groups take an active and influential role in the community.
- 2.2 The statutory and private sectors are able to access and engage with the community supported by Voluntary Action Islington.
- 2.3 People from socially excluded communities are supported to take part in volunteering.

3. Brokerage and partnerships

- To develop brokerage between individuals and organisations through volunteering.
- To develop partnerships between community organisations and to support consortium relationships.
- To develop partnerships between the third sector and the statutory and private sectors.

Outcomes

- 3.1 There is an increase in the number of people volunteering.
- 3.2 Organisations are better able to create and manage opportunities for volunteers.
- 3.3 More community organisations form and take part in partnerships or consortia to address particular needs and respond to contracting and market opportunities.
- 3.4 More effective working arrangements between third sector organisations, statutory and private sector organisations are formed.

4. Research and Learning

- To promote research and learning which supports individuals, organisations and communities to create change.

Outcomes

- 4.1 Local community organisations have increased knowledge and skills and are better able to influence and respond to change.
- 4.2 Small and medium sized groups are more sustainable, have better quality systems and have greater knowledge and skills.
- 4.3 Access to research, particularly community research, equips community organisations to respond to change.
- 4.4 Community organisations are empowered to carry out their own research which enhances service provision and increases influence.

5. Sustainability

- To ensure organisational sustainability through the sound management of resources.

Outcomes

- 5.1 The organisation has the right skills and competencies to adapt and change to new ways of working and new services.
- 5.2 The organisation effectively collects and manages data.
- 5.3 The organisation has an entrepreneurial approach to service delivery and income generation and is financially sustainable.
- 5.4 The organisation has a higher and more positive profile with its stakeholders and the public.
- 5.5 Voluntary Action Islington has in place a sustainability plan for accommodation once Section 106 agreement for 200a Pentonville Road ends.

6. Community Resources

- To develop 200a Pentonville Road as a resource for voluntary action.

Outcomes

- 6.1 200a Pentonville Road is widely recognised by the public and local organisations as a hub to promote voluntary activity.
- 6.2 200a Pentonville Road is used by a range of organisations as tenants, and for training, conferences and events.
- 6.3 200a Pentonville Road is central to the development of a community hubs/premises network within the borough and is leading on initiatives to develop shared services across centres.

8.0 2010/11 PRIORITIES AND OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Voluntary Action Islington needs to be flexible and ready to develop new ways of working to respond to the economic pressures ahead and to the changing needs of our users, funders and stakeholders. We have identified the key priorities for the coming year to help shape and guide the organisation's work as it responds to new demands and challenges.

- Brokerage – volunteering, consortia and partnerships
- Community engagement – networks and forums, relationships with stakeholders

- Premises – creating a new hub at 200a Pentonville Road and supporting wider community hub/premises activity
- Development and learning – organisations and individuals
- Research and evaluation – both at community level and by Voluntary Action Islington
- Social entrepreneurial working – adopting a more entrepreneurial approach to the way we work and supporting entrepreneurship across the borough
- Change management – a programme of change within the organisation to help us adapt our way of working to provide the best value service for users and funders
- Training – to streamline our training services and increase the use of 200a Pentonville Road as a venue for external training providers.

Voluntary**Action**Islington

200a Pentonville Road

London N1 9JP

T 020 7832 5800 **F** 020 7832 5835

E information@vai.org.uk

W www.vai.org.uk



Voluntary Action Islington previously known as Islington Voluntary Action Council. Charity Number 291890.
Patrons: Jeremy Corbyn MP, Lord Smith of Finsbury, David Vandivier.
Chief Executive: Mike Sherriff.
Company Limited by Guarantee Number 1913555.