



Transforming Local Infrastructure

Wandsworth Consultation Findings

October 2011

Background

Infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector in the future is changing. The Office for Civil Society (OCS) has made up to £30 million available in short-term funding, to provide better support for frontline civil society organisations by transforming local infrastructure services.

OCS views this as a final national level investment in this area, aimed at transformational activities such as:

- collaboration and consolidation - creating more efficient, effective and agile organisations through rethinking business models, asset consolidation, merger of back-office functions and shared services
- the redesign and integration of services towards more imaginative and enterprising approaches that are valued and supported locally
- better links with local businesses; more peer-to-peer support within the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and stronger partnerships with local statutory bodies, particularly the relevant local authority
- sustainability in the long-term without ongoing support from central Government.

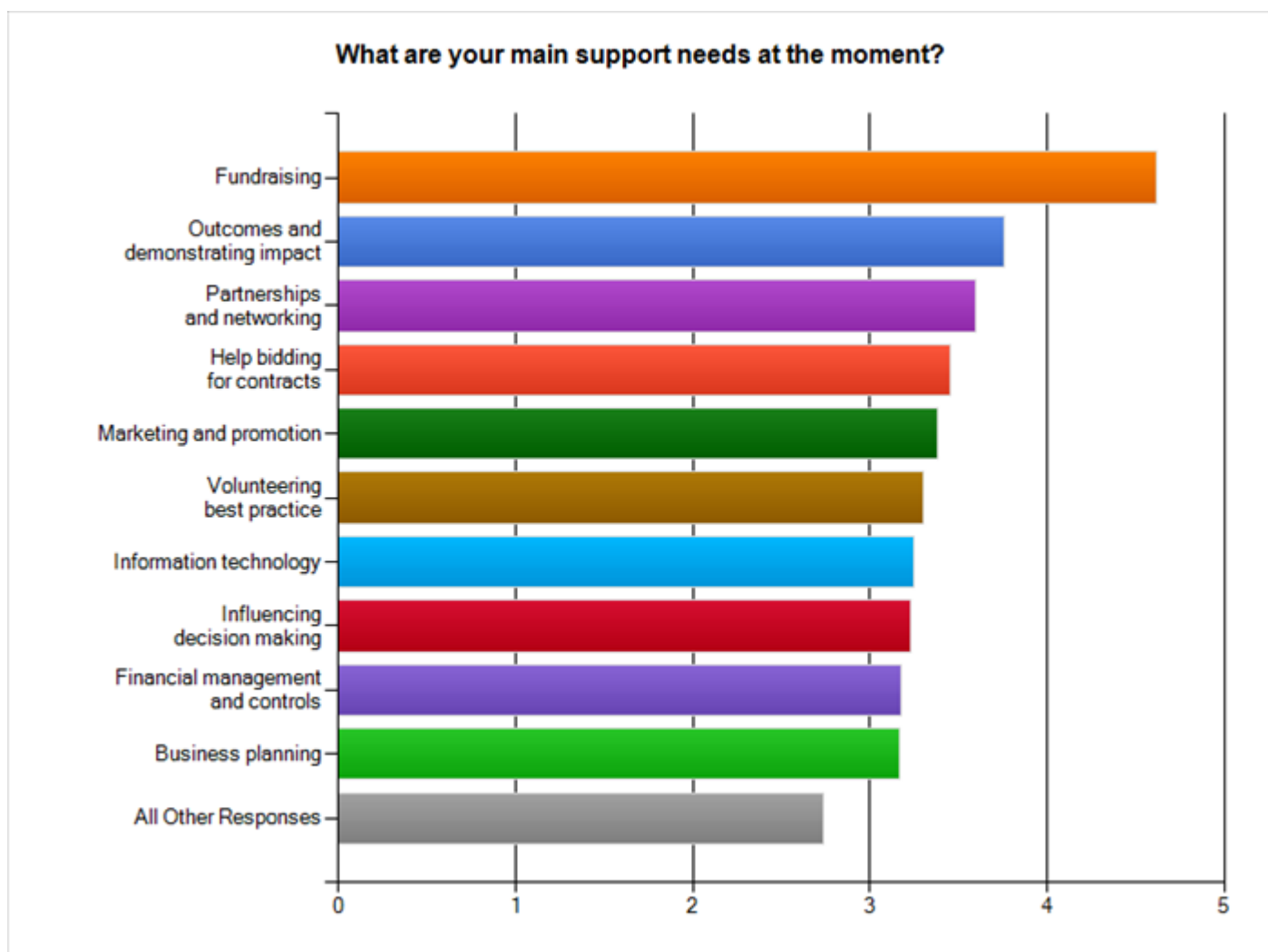
The result of this will be that:

- Frontline civil society organisations can access a wider range of high quality support, networking and volunteering brokerage opportunities and value them more highly.
- There is stronger local leadership for civil society organisations which contributes to better partnerships with local businesses and the local statutory sector.
- Infrastructure organisations, including volunteering infrastructure, are transformed so that they are more efficient, effective and are able to learn and grow with less dependence on state funding.

As part of this consultation exercise we asked you what support your organisation would need in the future. 56 organisations responded and your answers have enabled a partnership of local infrastructure organisations to develop a plan to provide services in the future.



What you want



(Average scores when organisations were asked to rate a list of subjects between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest))

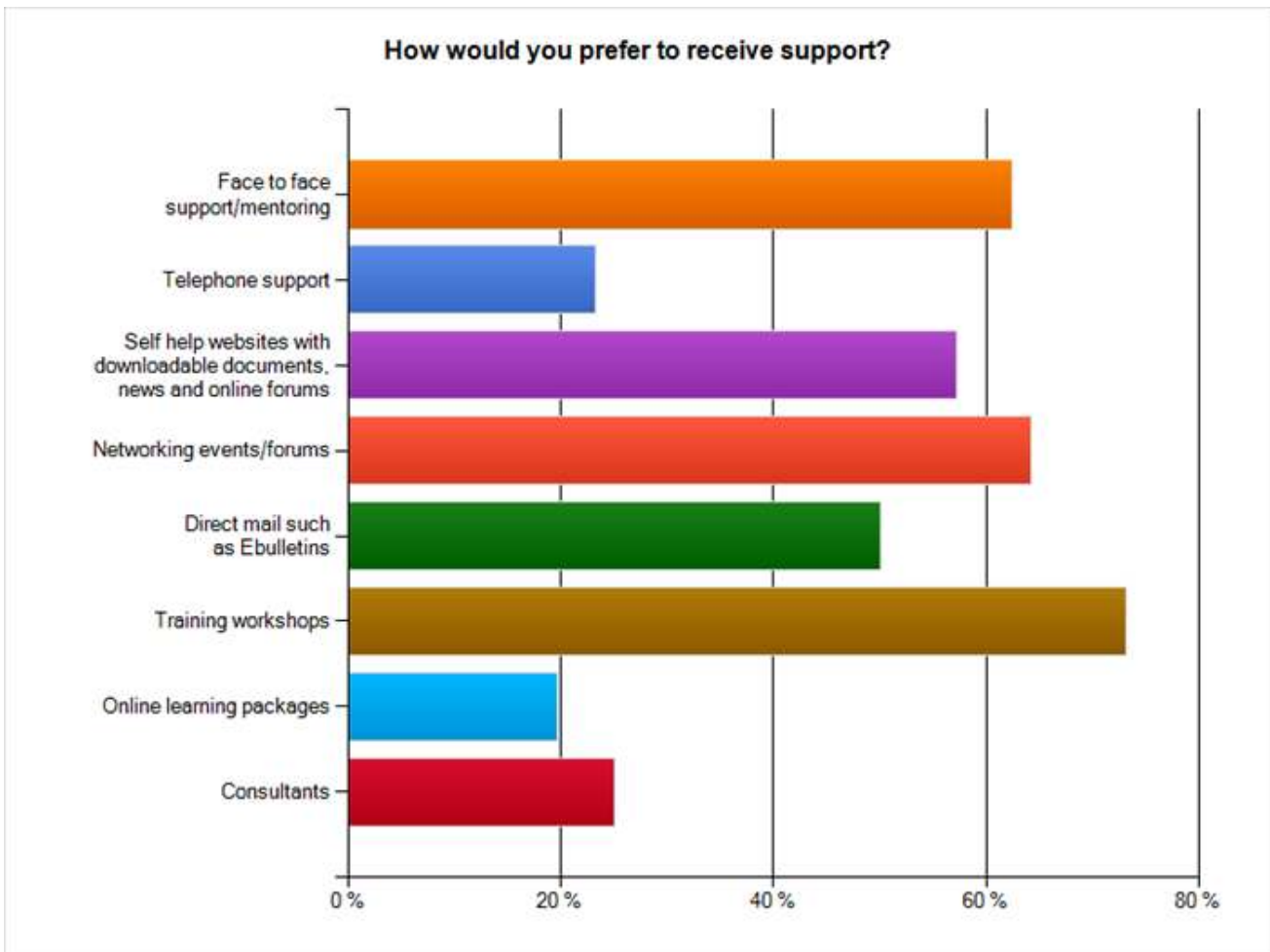
Fundraising support has been the top priority for the sector for many years and will continue to be so in the future. Local organisations need both accessible support to enable them to develop fundraising skills but also sustainable funding sources that fund established projects within the Borough.

Organisations want to develop a stronger understanding of marketing and promotion and access services that provide them with ways of promoting their services to the right target audience. Many organisations understand that; the people they used to call service users now call themselves customers; and the perception of their brand can have a dramatic effect on funding, donations, volunteering and referrals.



Organisations have recognised the need to demonstrate the outcomes and impact of their services as part of a process of continuous quality improvement for their services but also to promote a stronger fundraising proposition. In order to do this they need to learn the techniques of measuring outcomes, how to use the information gained in a meaningful way and develop systems that allow the collection of data on wider levels.

Local organisations recognise the value of developing networks between other organisations to discuss common issues and explore ways of working together. Organisations want to explore how these networks can be developed into partnerships, funding consortia and ways of providing voice.

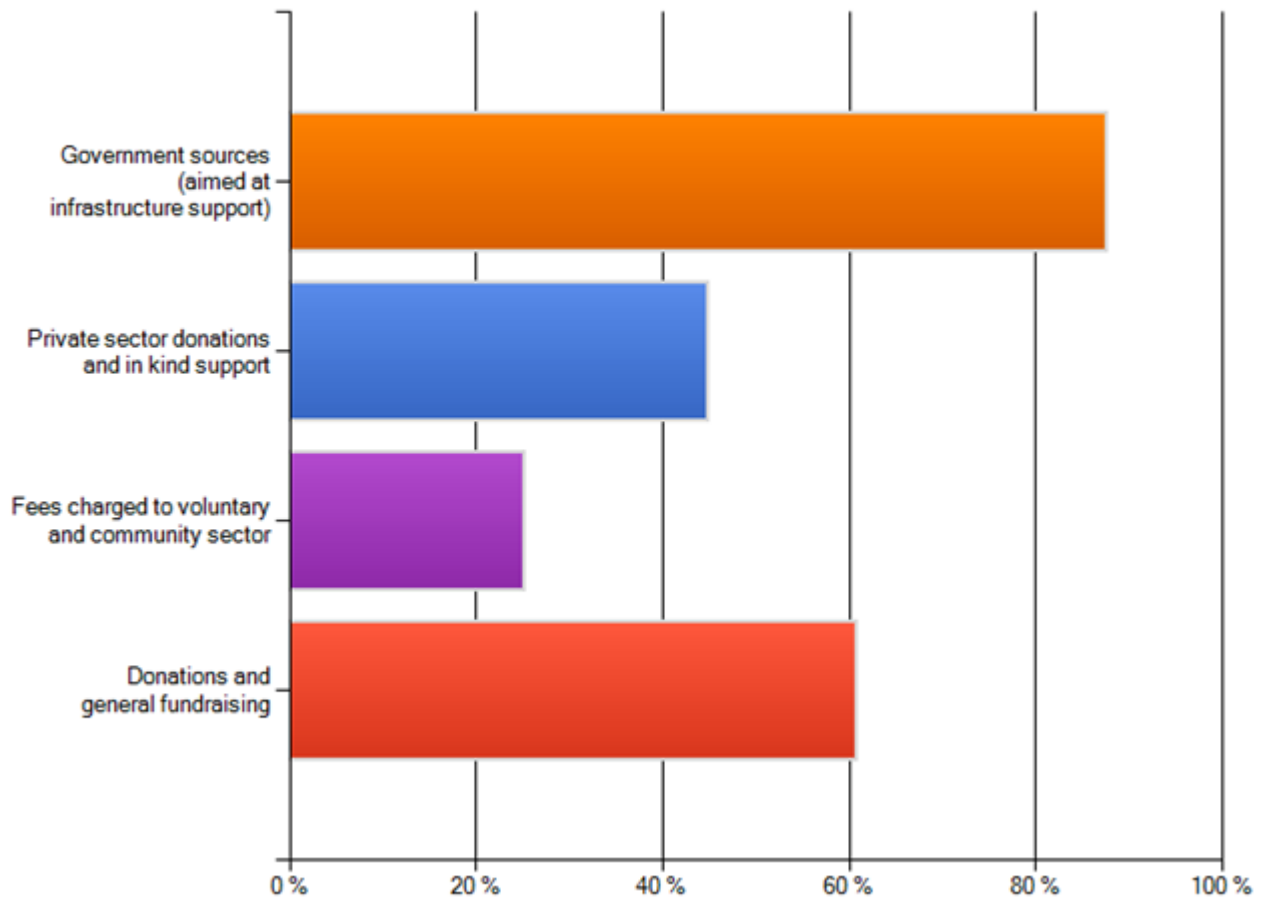


Many organisations would like to have a blend between face to face support and online support that they can access when they want to. The type of support needed will differ according to the subject area but already established methods of support continue to be popular.

The majority of organisations wanted continued access through one to one support (63%), events (64%) and training (73%). However a significant number wanted an online resource that would support a more self directed learning approach (57%).



How do you think sector support should be funded?



Our consultation showed us that although local organisations still think that infrastructure support should be mainly funded by statutory sources (86%), they are recognising the importance of donors (61%), links with the private sector (45%) and they themselves paying fees for services (25%). Less than a year ago only 10% of organisations said they would be willing to pay fees for support services.



Ideas for the future

The diverse sector in Wandsworth requires different points of access for a range of different support needs. Organisations not only need a choice of different support services to enable them to enhance their capacity or develop their skills, but they also need a support structure that will organise and manage their access to that support. In order to provide this to civil society organisations in Wandsworth, the partnership will move towards a more flexible, innovative and sustainable model of service delivery. The new approach to service delivery is a radical transformation of local support in terms of what is offered and how it is accessed.

As demonstrated by the research, organisations place great emphasis on being able to access local one-to-one support, networking events and training workshops. Providing this support requires local knowledge, resources, expertise and excellent relationships. It will also require us to be open and flexible to new ideas to ensure that we can deliver the right support in the future to enable the voluntary and community sector to get stronger, better and more resilient. This funding stream represents an opportunity to move away from top-down generic models of support towards new ways of working with organisations that can make a real difference to the lives of local people.

The partnership will:

- Develop an online support resource that will incorporate a range of services available to local organisations.
- This resource will host a marketplace of support services featuring information on training courses, online learning, videos, downloadable documents, events, consultants, funded support projects and other resources.
- This resource will include a database of civil society organisations which will be updated by the organisations themselves and will include functionality to collect information on organisational development needs, local community needs and outcome and impact measurement.
- This will enable the partnership to build an up to date picture of local needs and the impact the sector has in meeting those needs, in turn providing the sector with a stronger voice when dealing with commissioning bodies and strategic partners.
- The online resource will provide a number of networking and discussion opportunities for local organisations and other stakeholders to explore the issues that affect local service delivery; identify gaps and duplication of services and feed directly into health and social care strategy.
- Each database entry will provide local civil society organisations with their own micro site from which they



can promote their organisation and services. This will allow organisations to market their services to a wide range of customers and promote the idea of a larger Wandsworth wide civil society brand.

- The site will provide functionality to process financial donations and facilitate the sharing of private sector expertise with local civil society organisations.
- As well as this approach to local giving the project will develop additional approaches to generating funds both for infrastructure support and local good causes.
- Corporate and payroll giving will be developed to create a local grant fund that will contribute towards the support of civil society in Wandsworth and local good causes.
- Developing Pan London partnerships to explore new methods of sharing resources and improving efficiency.

This new approach to providing services encourages local organisations to share their learning and provide their own solutions for local issues. There will be a greater emphasis on user led support and updating of information. Technology will play a key role and the hub will utilise social media and other new technology that will make information easier to manage, maintain and circulate.

This new service will bring together diverse support options into one point of access so local organisations are clear about what support they can receive.



This is the final stage of consultation before we apply for funding so please let us know any comments or suggestions.

All comments should be sent to
Andrew Smith
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by
Thursday 20th October 2011.

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