

This report consists of four documents:

Premises Research Report

Appendix 1: Borough Profiles

Appendix 2: Bibliography

Appendix 3: Contacts

[www.dta.org.uk/aboutus/dtaintheregions/
london/londonresearch.htm](http://www.dta.org.uk/aboutus/dtaintheregions/london/londonresearch.htm)

London Voluntary and Community Sector premises research report 2009

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Commissioned by
Development Trusts Association



Acknowledgements

This report was produced in June 2009 after a research process that took place between mid February and the start of April 2009. There will already be places where information has been superceded as boroughs have made more progress developing policy and projects. Nevertheless, our thanks are due to the staff of councils for voluntary service and officers of London councils who provided information, copies of documents and time to answer our questions.

As authors we are responsible for any errors in this report, though the complexity of the subject matter and rapidly changing circumstances in each local area, make it difficult to present a comprehensive snapshot at any one time. We have, however, done our best to summarise the current situation in each borough.

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Executive Summary

Background

In 2007 the planning process for identifying the development needs of London's voluntary and community sector had been completed. Each Borough had an Infrastructure Development Plan and the need for premises for the sector had been identified as an important issue across the capital.

To investigate the issues associated with premises for the sector, what progress had been made in each borough, and the policy that was influencing practitioners on the ground, the London Premises Sub Group commissioned research. This resulted in a report outlining the situation in each borough and recommending future action by London Borough Councils, London Borough Councils of Voluntary Service and individual VCS groups.

The 2009 report is an update of the work done in 2007 and is contained in four related documents which are presented as a resource for use by local authorities, umbrella organisations in the voluntary and community sector and individual groups. It is hoped that they can be used to increase the already productive work going on in each borough and provide food for thought on the way that individual boroughs are approaching premises issues. The hope is that this will avoid re-inventions of the wheel and encourage learning across London.

The 2009 Report

This brings together the data from all the boroughs and draws out conclusions and some recommendations.

Borough Profiles

This sets out, on a borough by borough basis what the current policy position is in each borough and the main headlines of work and activity being undertaken by both Councils and Councils for Voluntary Service.

Bibliography

This is a resource which references relevant documents for each borough that have been uncovered during the research process which took place from mid February to the start of April 2009. It includes Cabinet decisions and reports, information on specific projects and corporate plans and policies that relate to the provision of premises to the voluntary and community sector in each borough.

Borough Contacts

During the research process we spoke to officers in Borough Councils and CVS's about the issues. Where we could not speak to people we found out who has a remit to deal with the issues that the report covers. The contacts in this list are not always going to be able to answer questions about all the issues, but they are a starting point in each borough for a dialogue about the content of the report.

Findings

The report sets out a number of changes since 2007 in the policy and practice environment to address the premises needs of the voluntary and community sector in London:

The support available to address premises issues in the sector

Capital investment for improvement of VCS accommodation and community buildings has increased and there are now more services provided through outreach and on line to deal with premises issues for front line groups.

The policy environment

More London Boroughs are now reviewing or developing policy on premises issues for the sector covering the provision of premises and the terms on which they can be provided. This has been a significant area of activity since 2007 with specific policies being developed towards transfer of ownership interests as well as clarification of policies towards VCS tenants of local authority property in relation to rents, rates relief and allocation of property. There has also been an increase in the regularisation of procedures for selecting buildings to transfer out of Borough Council ownership and organisations that they could be transferred to.

Practice

There are still some London Boroughs where premises are not considered an issue at all and some Boroughs where the voluntary and community sector does not have the capacity or resources to pursue them.

Practice is also highly contextual, with specific ways of addressing provision of accommodation driven by opportunities for co-location or existing partnerships between VCS organisations and local authorities on service provision. London Borough Councils also varied greatly in their approach to accommodating VCS premises needs through Resource Centres or other multi-purpose community buildings and the extent to which opportunities existed or were pursued to redevelop sites or individual buildings to include voluntary and community sector provision.

Recommendations

Many of the recommendations in the 2007 report are now being addressed, although the 2009 work found that the following were still needed:

A single point of contact for VCS groups to pursue within local authorities on premises issues.

More shared information on the availability of premises on a borough by borough basis for the voluntary and community sector.

More strategic involvement of the sector on the planning of new community buildings as part of local authorities' asset management planning processes.

1 Background

In September 2007 the Capacity Builders London Premises Sub-Group received the first *London Voluntary and Community Sector Premises Research Study*¹.

The report was commissioned to provide an evidence base for presenting recommendations to funders and government agencies on how best to meet the premises needs of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in London. In addition, the report was intended to provide an information resource covering the current “state of play” with VCS premises issues in each borough.

This report is an update of the work undertaken in 2007 and, like the first, addressed the following study brief:

- Collect, collate and analyse existing research relating to VCS access to suitable premises;
- Collect, collate and analyse information relating to the wider national policy environment that impacts or potentially impacts upon this issue e.g. asset transfer, community anchors, neighbourhood management etc;
- Collect, collate and analyse information relating to London local authority strategies for addressing VCS premises needs;
- Collect, collate and analyse information relating to London local authority asset management strategies and their implications for the VCS;
- Identify, review and analyse approaches/models to addressing VCS premises needs within London including examples of different practice;
- Collect, collate and analyse information relating to existing premises support capacity for the VCS in London;
- Identify opportunities for promoting best practice and addressing barriers to VCS premises needs given the wider policy environment;
- Identify and signpost sources of guidance and support for VCS organisations seeking premises and/or aiming to develop premises as an asset base and income generator;
- Offer key recommendations as to how to address VCS premises needs.

The information collated for the first report is not repeated in full here. A summary of the previous information is provided where necessary, along with a commentary on additional information now available or significant changes since the first study was completed.

¹ London VCS Premises Research Study. Environment Trust Associates, 2007
www.dta.org.uk/aboutus/dtaintheregions/london/londonresearch.htm

2 Methodology

The brief for the report was addressed using the following methods:

- Telephone contact with all London borough councils to determine their current policy and strategy towards premises for the VCS.

Contact was initially made via a search of each borough council web site to identify work that was being done on the subject. This had the added advantage of providing an insight into how easily available contacts and documents were to the public/external organisations. At least three attempts were made in each borough to speak with individuals. All the contacts provided as a result of the study in each borough – whether from the local authority or the local council for voluntary service (CVS) have agreed to be points of contact for this study – but this does NOT mean they are the first point of contact for enquiries about accommodation for the VCS.

- Telephone contact with the CVS in every London borough to identify what work was being undertaken in relation to VCS premises. Again this started with a review of on-line information from each CVS and was followed up with telephone contact.
- Both CVS and local authority contacts were asked for information on their policies towards land and property for use by the VCS and what work or initiatives were being pursued currently.
- A review of relevant published literature.

3 Findings: national picture

3.1 Context

The 2007 study reported at a time when the national context was very different. The premises issues facing the VCS in London were affected by a property market characterised by high values and a large volume of development activity.

In 2009 this picture has significantly changed. The uncertainty created by the current economic climate will be a significant factor influencing premises provision for the VCS for the foreseeable future and may impact VCS organisations and their premises needs in a variety of ways, both positively and negatively. For example:

- VCS groups' ability to raise funds and prospects for charitable giving are likely to be uncertain, so commitment of resources to long-term planning for capital projects is likely to be reduced in priority.
- Capital funding that was previously available via planning gain agreements² from new development may decrease.
- Uncertainty on land supply in the capital may ease pressure. Previously pressure in some London boroughs to maximise capital receipts through asset disposal meant that VCS organisations were finding it difficult to have their accommodation needs met through local authorities. In addition, planning policy was not necessarily addressing their needs for accommodation when they were competing with other land uses, such as the provision of affordable housing, an agreed national priority for action by government at all levels. The currently depressed market may now ease some of this pressure and groups may find themselves able to occupy and acquire property on more favourable terms both from the private and public sector.

These trends provide an important context for policy and practice on the ground, the effects of which may not yet be felt fully by either local authorities or other local organisations.

3.2 Policy

The previous study identified a wide range of national policies that were relevant to the availability and provision of premises for the VCS. These policies encompassed:

- Support for locally-devolved decision-making and ownership where appropriate and wanted (Local Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities 2006)
- Support for the development of social and community enterprises that can deliver public services (UK Social Enterprise Strategy, creation of the Office of the Third Sector in 2006)

² Planning gain agreements are made between developers and local councils in their role as the local planning authority. Agreements usually provide for payments or works that are considered necessary to mitigate or compensate for the effects of a development.

- Support for the transfer of local authority owned assets to support community empowerment and help create income streams for local organisations (Quirk Review 2007)
- Support for a vibrant and diverse VCS (Firm Foundations 2004)
- Support for the involvement of stakeholders in the statutory land use planning process (Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Since the previous study was published a number of these policies have been developed in more detail and the investment that was announced in 2006/7 has moved into full implementation. These include:

- The Community Empowerment Action Plan published in October 2007, which sets out the intention to support community management and ownership of assets as part of government's community empowerment agenda.
- The roll out of the Advancing Assets Programme, which is now in its third year, and the establishment in April 2009 of the Asset Transfer Unit. These initiatives aim to support partnerships and pilot projects for transfer of ownership of public assets to the VCS. These initiatives are delivered by the Development Trusts Association in association with Community Matters and the Local Government Association.
- The introduction by central government, in October 2007, of a single set of National Indicators to be used to measure the performance of Local Authorities and Local Strategic Partnerships. These include indicators of particular relevance to the strength and support given to the VCS in delivering more sustainable communities.
- The introduction of Comprehensive Area Assessments. Starting in April 2009 local government and other statutory agencies' performance will be assessed by central government both as individual organisations and across geographical areas. This assessment will be made against the National Indicators which are chosen at local level by Local Strategic Partnerships as priorities to work towards via their Local Area Agreements. These priorities will influence local commitment and levels of investment in all areas of public service. As such they will affect future provision of accommodation for VCS organisations not just by local authorities but also Central Government, Primary Care Trusts, Police and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

3.3 Practice

The previous study identified the specific initiatives that were devised from 2002 to 2007 to enable VCS organisations to diversify funding streams through, for example, service contracts or acquisition of property assets. Since 2007 programmes like Futurebuilders, the Adventure Capital Fund and the Community Assets Fund (administered by the Big Lottery) have resulted in specific projects on the ground. The government's focus on finding ways to support community empowerment has also seen the development of more detailed policy at borough level. These policies cover both the transfer of the ownership of buildings and other property to VCS organisations and the basis for VCS occupation of publicly-owned buildings in each borough. These are detailed in the next section and can be found on a borough-by-borough basis in the attached appendices.

The previous study identified the range of support available nationally to VCS organisations to meet their premises needs. These organisations were both direct providers of accommodation for VCS organisations in London or alliances of organisations that do this at local level as well as deliver other kinds of services:

- BASSAC
- CAN Mezzanine
- DTA
- Ethnic Minority Foundation
- London Youth Support Trust (LYST)
- Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art (ACAVA)
- Creative Space Agency
- Ethical Property Company

Where they are direct providers of accommodation, these organisations continue to provide space using the business cluster model, with varying degrees of shared facilities and services, from post and reception, to business advice and mentoring also on offer.

In addition the original study identified a range of generalist support services available to VCS organisations in London to assist them with their property needs:

BASSAC and their individual members
Community Matters and their individual members
DTA and their individual members
Ethical Property Foundation.

It also identified a number of organisations that provide relevant services for premises projects by VCS groups that are related to specific types of buildings, building user or property design and management issues:

Centre for Accessible Environments – information and training on design for access.

www.cae.org.uk

Glasshouse – national organisations provided design technical aid principally for tenants and residents associations

www.theglasshouse.org.uk

LawWorks – pro bono legal advice

www.lawworks.org.uk

Peppercorn rent – advice to VCS organisations on rent reviews, leases

www.peppercornrent.co.uk

Planning Aid for London – provides advice on town planning legislation and its procedures

www.planningaidforlondon.org.uk

ProHelp – access to pro bono professional services, including legal and planning/design.

www.bitc.org.uk/community/employee_volunteering/prohelp/index.html

Women's Design Service— advice on design and gender issues as well a practical help on the physical development process.

www.wds.org.uk

Since 2007 this picture nationally for VCS premises provision and the availability of support services has changed in two main ways:

- Capital investment for improvement of VCS accommodation and community buildings has come on stream from the Lottery, the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Office of the Third Sector and the Department of Culture Media and Sport (Community Assets Fund, Advancing Assets, Lottery Community Buildings programme, Capacity Builders Capital fund, and Myplace). The boroughs that have benefitted from this funding are shown in Table 1. Some of these funding streams will have been secured directly by VCS organisations (like Myplace and the Capacity Builders Capital funds). Others, like the Community Assets Fund, were available to local councils if they had a VCS partner. In addition some funding streams are specifically looking to increase sharing of space and service delivery by different agencies. The latest of these was the £200 million Co-Location Fund from the Department of Schools and Families which was announced as part of the Children's Plan.³
- Investment in support services to meet VCS property needs have also come on stream or been secured from London Councils, Capacity Builders and the Lottery BASIS programme. This has enabled the expansion of services to include more training, more outreach of existing services across London and the provision of reference publications and on-line resources for frontline organisations.

³ Stop Press – 15 London Boroughs were awarded co-location grants in June 2009 totalling more than £30 million. For details see www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/pnattach/20090106/1.html

Table 1
London Boroughs and national policy and funding programmes

Borough	My Place	Community Assets Programme	Advancing Assets Programme (Years 1-3)	Capacity Builders (Resource Centres)	Community Buildings (Lottery)
Barking & Dagenham		●	●		
Barnet					
Bexley	●		●		
Brent	●				
Bromley					●
Camden	●		●	●	●
Croydon					
Ealing					
Enfield					
Greenwich			●		
Hackney	●			●	●
Hammersmith & Fulham					
Haringey			●		
Harrow					
Havering	●	●			
Hillingdon		●			
Hounslow					
Islington	●		●	●	●
Kensington & Chelsea					
Kingston Upon Thames					
Lambeth		●	●	●	
Lewisham		●	●		
Merton					
Newham	●				
Redbridge					
Richmond Upon Thames					
Southwark	●	●	●	●	●
Sutton	●				
Tower Hamlets		●	●		
Waltham Forest					
Wandsworth		●			
Westminster				●	

4 Findings: view from the boroughs

4.1 Local council perspective

Local authorities are significant providers of premises to the VCS. This is because most VCS organisations are involved in providing a whole range of services to borough residents. As locally managed organisations they are also contributors to opportunities for volunteering, increasing the skills of borough residents and underpinning the local economy through their need for goods and services.

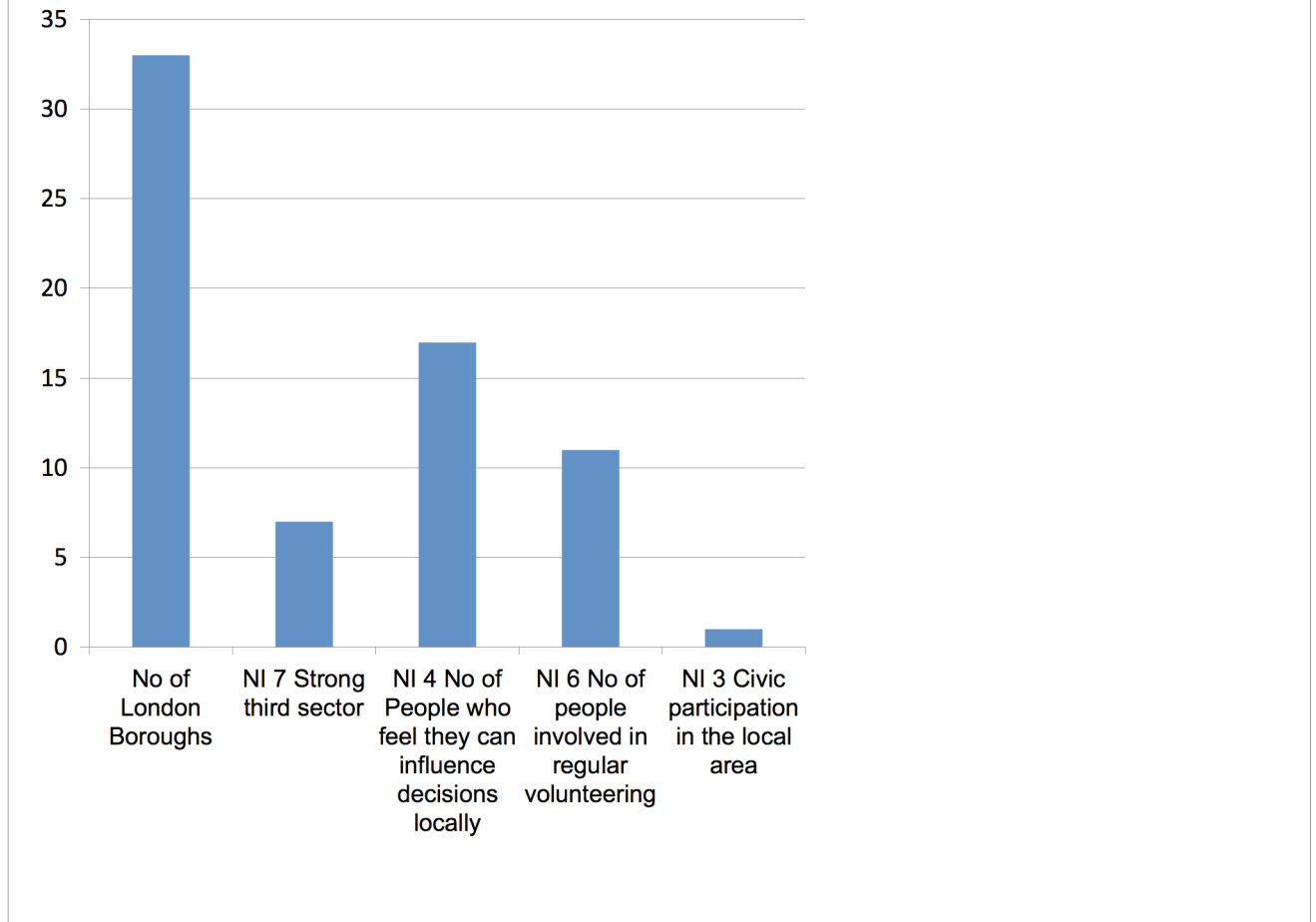
Local authorities' policy towards providing premises for VCS organisations is, however, not a distinct activity separate from the planning of services or the use of council property, particularly when there are pressures on local councils to make maximum use of properties or dispose of them for a capital receipt (cash). Policy towards accommodating VCS organisations in council owned property may therefore be found in several places – the council asset management plan, the council's policies towards the VCS in their area (their "compact" or Sustainable Community Strategy) or in regeneration policies and strategies, including their Local Development Framework (a series of documents that set out council policies towards the development of land in their area). It may therefore be difficult to find policy that applies or it may be found in several places rather than in one document.

The 2007 report documented that more than half of all London boroughs were in the process of reviewing their policies towards the provision of premises for the VCS and four mentioned that they would be specifically looking at their policies in relation to asset transfer to VCS organisations in the light of the Quirk Review.

In re-visiting contact with the boroughs for this study, specific enquiries were made of boroughs regarding policy towards VCS premises, towards policies on asset transfer to VCS organisations and overall asset management planning. In addition, information was also collected on whether National Indicators that are relevant to third sector activity in each borough had been adopted as local priorities to guide work with partners in other sectors and investment decisions. National indicators identified in this study as particularly relevant to the VCS are NI3, NI4, NI6 and NI7. These relate to civic participation, development of the voluntary and community sector, volunteering and influence over local decision making.

The following tables summarise this information for all London boroughs. More details can also be found in the borough profiles appended to the report.

Table 2 National Indicators adopted by London Boroughs



The National Indicators which are now a critical part of planning for statutory agencies show in London that those that may be specifically associated with the sector are not as strong a priority as those which are aimed at increasing the amount of influence that people feel that they have on local decisions. The extent to which the VCS in any borough is seen to provide a route for this influence may be critical to the attitude of local statutory agencies towards dealing with the premises needs of the sector, particularly transfer of asset ownership.

Table 3 National Indicators relevant to the VCS

Borough	NI 7	NI6	NI4	NI3
	Create conditions for a thriving third sector	Participation in regular volunteering	No of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality	Civic Participation in the local area
Barking & Dagenham			•	
Barnet			•	
Bexley		•	•	
Brent			•	
Bromley		•	•	
Camden		•		
Croydon	•			
Ealing				
Enfield		•		
Greenwich				
Hackney				
Hammersmith & Fulham				
Haringey		•	•	
Harrow	•	•		
Havering	•		•	
Hillingdon		•	•	
Hounslow	•		•	
Islington		•	•	
Kensington & Chelsea		•	•	
Kingston Upon Thames	•			
Lambeth			•	
Lewisham	•		•	
Merton				
Newham		•		
Redbridge		•		•
Richmond Upon Thames			•	
Southwark			•	
Sutton			•	
Tower Hamlets	•			
Waltham Forest				
Wandsworth				
Westminster			•	

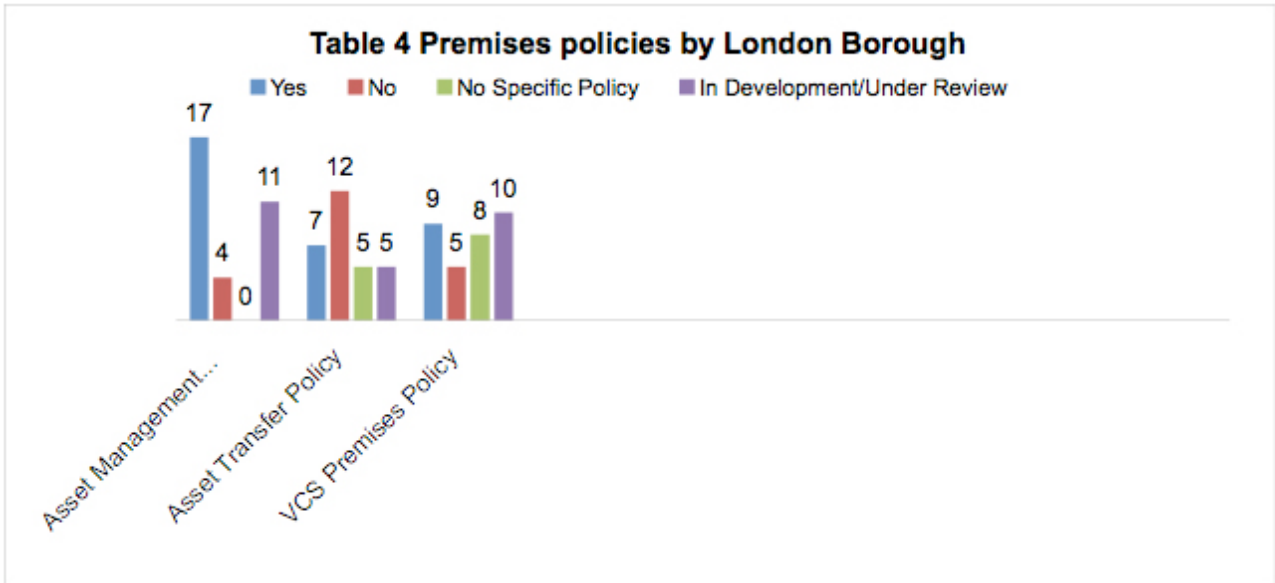


Table 4 shows that there is still considerable policy development going on in Borough Councils and that for some the development of a specific policy is not an overall priority.

This may change as the effects of the Comprehensive Area Assessment Framework in relation to the effective and strategic use of resources and assets requires statutory agencies to look at their use of resources more strategically and consider where partnership working can increase the amount of available resources.

Table 5 Policy development by London Borough

Borough	Asset Management Plan	Asset Transfer Policy	VCS Premises Policy
Barking & Dagenham	●	●	✓
Barnet	✘	✘	✘
Bexley	✓	●	◆
Brent	✘	✘	●
Bromley	●	◆	✘
Camden	✓	✓	✓
Croydon	●	✓	✓
Ealing	●	●	◆
Enfield	✓	✘	●
Greenwich	●	●	●
Hackney	●	✘	●
Hammersmith & Fulham	●	✘	●
Haringey	✓	✘	✘
Harrow	✓	●	●
Havering	✓	✓	✓
Hillingdon	✓	✘	✓
Hounslow	✓	✘	◆
Islington	✘	●	●
Kensington & Chelsea	✓	✘	◆
Kingston Upon Thames	✘	✘	✘
Lambeth	✓	◆	✓
Lewisham	✓	✓	✓
Merton	✓	●	◆
Newham	✓	◆	◆
Redbridge	●	✘	◆
Richmond Upon Thames	●	✘	●
Southwark	✓	◆	●
Sutton	●	◆	✓
Tower Hamlets	✓	✓	●
Waltham Forest	✓	✓	✓
Wandsworth	✓	✓	◆
Westminster	✓	●	●

✓ = Yes

✘ = not agreed/available

● = In development/under review

◆ = No single policy document

The tables do appear to show some clear change since 2007:

1. *Many London Borough Councils are reviewing or developing policy – though more authorities have policies than previously.*

All the policies we have collated for this report are dated since the first report in 2007, indicating a lot of policy development activity over the period (see bibliography).

2. *Many London Borough Councils have no single policy document regarding VCS premises issues or transfer of assets to the third sector.*

This is logical given what we found when we made contact with councils which was that all of them had made premises available or transferred ownership interests to VCS organisations for a wide variety of buildings with conditions and terms that were specific to each project. For many authorities this will continue to be their policy.

3. *More authorities had policy on the terms on which they would provide premises than policies specifically related to transfer of property asset ownership.*

It is hard to conclude why this may be the case except that it is consistent with the view of many authorities that they will consider what they are prepared to do in each case and do not need an overarching policy towards transfer. However, some authorities saw a transfer policy as a way of supporting VCS organisations both to know what would be required of them if they wanted to discuss the potential acquisition of an interest in premises from the council, and also to have a transparent process for dealing with situations where a building was of interest to more than one organisation.

4. *All authorities had completed, or were in the process of dealing with, the regularisation of tenure for VCS organisations occupying their property.*

An analysis of council policies and reports on this (see bibliography) suggests that there are a number of issues that councils have had to address:

- Some groups occupy buildings with no agreements in place for a variety of historic reasons. This creates potential legal disputes and prolonged argument regarding new terms and conditions for occupation
- Some groups may have acquired significant leasehold interests at little or no cost. As a result, organisations may feel that there is no consistency and potentially a lack of fairness in the way that accommodation issues are addressed
- Some groups may occupy buildings that are not fit for purpose or in need of considerable investment in comparison to others – again creating tensions in the landlord/tenant relationship

- The sometimes ad-hoc nature of both investment in property occupied by VCS organisations and the terms on which they are occupied can create geographical gaps in space provision in terms of both quantity and quality.

The result of this is that policies being developed, which obviously also influence future VCS tenancies with local councils, are focused upon:

Transparency to manage expectations and ensure that subsidy – where it is provided – is measurable and explicit

Consistency to ensure that all groups are treated in the same way

Efficiency to maximise and encourage shared use of facilities.

5. *The existence of policies towards premises in London councils did not correlate with the adoption of National Indicators that are particularly relevant to the VCS nor the amount of investment that had been secured from national programmes for community buildings or asset transfer.*
6. *An analysis of asset management plans for boroughs (see borough profiles) showed a wide variety of approaches towards consideration of the accommodation needs of the VCS or towards the sector as a group of tenants within each borough's portfolio.*

Some authorities focussed on the work they were doing to provide VCS resource centres, for example in Sutton or Brent, whilst others mentioned specific projects that they were proposing to transfer e.g. in Tower Hamlets. Others mentioned the VCS only in relation to asset disposals where it was proposed to give consideration in Options Appraisals for disposal to management or ownership of assets by a third sector group. Unsurprisingly, the overwhelming focus in asset management plans in relation to the VCS related to co-location of services, some of which were related to a "First Stop Shop" style of local provision of all services (e.g. Newham) or were focused on work in particular areas of service like social care (e.g. Harrow), youth services (e.g. Haringey) or family and children's services (Enfield).

4.2 Voluntary and community sector perspective

The Change Up programme now taken forward by capacity builders resulted in infrastructure development plans being agreed by the VCS in each borough. An analysis of these plans for the 2007 report summarised what the VCS in each borough felt was needed in relation to premises.

For this report we contacted all CVS's to find out what they were currently pursuing in relation to premises issues. The results of these inquiries contrasted with findings on similar issues in 2007 are shown in the tables below. More details can be found in the borough profiles produced to accompany this report.

Area of Work	2007		2009	
Creation of Asset/Premises Audits or baseline information	Barking & Dagenham Ealing Haringey Lambeth Lewisham Southwark Tower Hamlets Waltham Forest	Were carrying out audits/collating information on premises provision or undertaking detailed needs analysis in their Borough	Barking & Dagenham Bexley Brent Camden Croydon * Ealing Enfield Hackney Hammersmith & Fulham* Harrow* Havering Hillingdon* Islington Kensington & Chelsea Lambeth Lewisham Merton Southwark Waltham Forest Westminster	Have completed audits or provided information and training on premises issues or it was in development (authorities marked with * are in development)
Provision of advice and information on premises issues	Croydon Enfield Haringey Harrow Lewisham Wandsworth	Looking at providing advice and information provision on premises issues	No follow through identified	No follow through identified
Policy Development	Camden Hackney Islington Lambeth	Were committed to developing policy	Camden Enfield Hackney Hammersmith & Fulham Islington Harrow Hounslow Waltham Forest	Committed to developing policy with local authority and other statutory authorities
Resource Centre Provision	Barnet Bexley Brent Bromley Camden Enfield Hammersmith & Fulham Haringey Hounslow Kingston Lambeth Sutton Redbridge Waltham Forest Westminster	Had proposed that new provision in the form of "hubs" or resource centres should be pursued in their borough	Barking & Dagenham Brent Haringey Kensington & Chelsea Kingston Lambeth Southwark Sutton Westminster	Have a commitment to progressing plans for a VCS hub

Area of Work	2007		2009	
New Provision of Premises	Hackney Haringey Havering Kensington & Chelsea	Generally identified the need for new provision	No follow through identified	No follow through identified
Co-location/Sharin g Focus	Barnet Greenwich Harrow Hillingdon Kingston Lambeth Lewisham Richmond Newham Tower Hamlets Waltham Forest	Identified co location or sharing of premises as an area where they wanted to develop policy with their local authority	Haringey Havering Kingston Redbridge	Identified co location or sharing of premises as an area where they wanted to develop policy with their local authority
Resource Constraints			Bromley Haringey Richmond Westminster Greenwich* Newham* Tower Hamlets* Wandsworth*	Lacked resources to work on premises issues or not a priority for work by the CVS (marked with a *)

It is clear from this that there has been considerable progress since the last report on developing an information base in each borough about premises both in relation to provision and advice and information locally on premises issues.

The CVS in some authorities has also taken a more strategic approach to provision overall. CVS's in Camden and Islington, for example, are looking at the potential for a range of properties to be managed by one organisation in order to maximize potential for sharing facilities and space.

Without more detailed research than has been possible for this report it is difficult to draw conclusions about the reasons for the shifts in emphasis from the original Change Up infrastructure plans to the activities that are being pursued by CVS's in each borough now. There are some boroughs where progress has been slower than others for a variety of reasons. For example, some CVS's do not now regard premises as a priority or do not have resources to take it forward as an issue. Progress on projects like the development of resource centres is also funding- driven and has required full feasibility and business planning exercises before they can be progressed (e.g. in Haringey and Brent). In some boroughs the compilation of information on the amounts of space available, what authorities or organisations are providing them, and on what terms, has taken time to collate. As the table shows, in some boroughs it is still being collated in order to inform policy. With some boroughs the introduction of comprehensive area assessments has meant that this exercise has been made more complex and is now including the property of other organisations such as primary care trusts and the police.

5 Examples of Practice

The following examples illustrate a range of approaches that have been taken to address VCS premises needs by both local authorities and their partners including third sector organisations.

They are not offered as “best practice” since this would suggest that there is a particular process, method or incentive that is more effective at delivering VCS premises and related support services than any other.

The evidence would seem to suggest instead that the local context for the VCS in each borough, the amount of publicly-owned land and buildings available and the overall state of the market is so diverse that it is unlikely that any one method of providing premises or related support services would address all of the possible circumstances that occur across London.

Barking and Dagenham

A partnership between the London Development Agency and East Thames Housing group, a registered social landlord, has created “Starting Point” a building providing space to “nurture voluntary and community sector groups in Barking and Dagenham”. The building provides space and hot desking as well as business support to organisations just starting up.

www.starting-point.org.uk

Enfield

“Vincent House” in Enfield accommodates Age Concern and Citizen’s Advice Bureau activities and includes a meeting facility, cafe and accommodation for young people with learning difficulties.

“Community House” which accommodates the borough CVS also has hot desks for small groups and lone workers in the sector.

Enfield, like other London boroughs, has also worked on accommodating groups that work with specific client groups, such as children and young people. At Ark at Marsh House several groups working with children and families have been accommodated together.

www.enfield.gov.uk

Newham

Community Links, a well-established social change charity, has recently bid for and secured from the London Borough of Newham a 20 year lease for a City Farm and Nature Reserve, with an associated 10 year funding agreement. Newham saw this as an opportunity for Community Links, which has a range of services for young people and children, to provide a different environment for provision of services and an opportunity for them to develop new ones associated with training for employment. They also identified potential savings that would result from devolving the service to local management and taking advantage of external funding opportunities and volunteer input.

www.newham.gov.uk

www.communitylinks.org.uk

6 Recommendations

The 2007 London VCS Premises Study made 7 recommendations:

“A nominated officer in each London authority to deal with the premises issues for the VCS as a publicised point of contact would enable groups to quickly get advice and guidance on premises availability and policy towards its provision.

A template for a premises database should be developed for sharing between London Councils and CVS's at borough level. This should include information on council premises used for community purposes and the ways in which they can be accessed by local groups in the delivery of their activities and information on all third sector providers of property

Increased provision, signposting and promotion of free advice and support on all premises issues is needed to improve its accessibility at local level. These should be provided on a regional level, but with more resources than currently available for borough outreach services.

Local ChangeUp consortia should seek clear policies and procedures agreed with their borough on the criteria to be used to value, set rents and lease/licence terms to VCS organisations.

To respond to emerging plans on the ground in many London boroughs, there is a case for developing guidance and training for the VCS and London local authorities on the creation of voluntary sector resource centres.

To respond to the many London Councils who are proposing changes in relevant policy or agreeing their asset management plan, there is a case for developing guidance for local authorities in asset management planning processes to ensure that they include VCS premises requirements. This guidance should include the need for discussion with local CVS organisations and ChangeUp consortia on:

- The form and location of new provision to meet local needs for service delivery based on up to date information about current provision and use of premises available from the borough council and other providers.
- Option appraisal processes for disposal of Council property to include the social and environmental returns that will result from the VCS's development and occupation of premises in addition to the financial benefits to the authority”

Most of these recommendations are now being implemented by local authorities and their VCS partners in each borough.

Significant progress has also been made on the availability of information about premises provision in each borough and more support is available to the VCS on premises issues via outreach and regional delivery from national organisations.

However there are two areas of activity which remain recommendations from this report:

1. VCS involvement in strategic discussions on the use of assets such as land and buildings with statutory authorities is also an areas where there appears to be little activity. Although not yet published, this situation may be improved by central government which is supporting updated guidance produced by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors on

local authority asset management. This includes specific reference to asset transfer and strategic consideration of VCS accommodation and co-location as part of Option Appraisal.⁴

2. The other main exception to progress relates to a nominated officer as a publicised point of contact. Although we have identified points of contact in each borough for this study, there was considerable variability between boroughs in how easy or difficult it was to identify an initial contact for VCS enquiries in connection with premises and in many cases we were unable to identify *one* key point of contact.

⁴ Stop press – this guidance is now available at www.publicsectorassetmanagement.com

7 Relevant Organisations

The following organisations are relevant to the report in that they are either VCS providers of accommodation for other VCS organisations and social enterprises or offer funding and other support services to VCS groups to meet their premises needs.

ACAVA (Association for Cultural Advancement through Visual Art)

Blechynnden Street, London W10 6RJ

Tel: 020 8960 5015

www.acava.org

Adventure Capital Fund

5th Floor

6 St Andrews Street

London EC4A 3AE

Tel: 020 7842 7760

www.adventurecapitalfund.org.uk

British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres (BASSAC)

33 Corsham Street, London N1 6DR

Tel:

www.bassac.org.uk

CAN Mezzanine

32-36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EE

Tel: 0845 456 2537

www.can-online.org.uk

Capacity Builders

77 Paradise Circus, Birmingham B1 2DT (Head Office)

Tel: 0121 237 5100 (main switchboard)

www.capacitybuilders.org.uk

Community Matters

12-20 Baron Street, London N1 9LL

Tel: 020 7837 7887

www.communitymatters.org.uk

Centre for Accessible Environments and the Access Lab

70 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL

Tel/textphone: 020 7840 0125

www.cae.org.uk

Creative Space Agency is a project delivered jointly by [CIDA](#) (the Cultural Industries Development Agency) and [Urban Space Management](#)
www.creativespaceagency.co.uk

Development Trusts Association
33 Corsham Street N1 6DR
Tel: 0845 458 8336
www.dta.org.uk

The Ethical Property Company
2nd Floor, 9 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HH
Tel: 01865 207810
www.ethicalproperty.co.uk

Ethical Property Foundation
Development House, 56-64 Leonard St, London EC2A 4JX
Tel:
www.ethicalproperty.org.uk

Ethnic Minority Foundation (EMF)
Forbes House, 9 Artillery Lane, London E1 7LP
Tel: 020 7426 8950
<http://ethnicminorityfund.org.uk/>

Futurebuilders England
5th Floor
6 St Andrew Street
London Ec4A 3AE
Tel: 020 7842 7700
www.futurebuilders.org.uk

The Glasshouse Community Led Design
51 Tabernacle Street
London EC2A 4AA
Tel: 020 7490 n4583
www.theglasshouse.org.uk

LawWorks
10-13 Lovat Lane, London, EC3R 8DN
DX c/o Clyde & Co 1071 London City
Tel 0207 929 5601
www.lawworks.org.uk

London Youth Support Trust (LYST)

See website for contact details for each Centre

www.lyst.biz/about

Peppercorn Rent

C/O West Hampstead CA

60-62 Mill Lane, London NW6 1NJ

www.peppercornrent.co.uk

Planning Aid for London (PAL)

The Planning Aid Resource Centre,

Unit 3.01,

Whitechapel Technology Centre

65-75 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DU

www.planningaidforlondon.org.uk

ProHelp

Business in the Community Registered Office

137 Shepherdess Walk, London N1 7RQ

T. (0)870 600 2482

www.bitc.org.uk/take_action/in_the_community/community_investment/engaging_employees/prohelf/index.html

Upkeep

The Building Centre

26 Store Street, London WC1E 7BT

Tel: 020-7631-1677

www.upkeep.org.uk/

Women's Design Service

3rd Floor

Tindlemanor

52-54 Featherstone St

London

EC1Y 8RT

Tel: 020 7490 5210

www.wds.org.uk