Richmond-upon-Thames State of the Sector Survey

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2013

third strand consulting

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Executive Summary

The Richmond-upon-Thames State of the Sector Survey was commissioned by Richmond-upon-Thames Council for Voluntary Service and Richmond Parish Lands Charity. The aims of the research were to: calculate the value of the sector, assess how the sector in Richmond-upon-Thames is working, look ahead at the opportunities and challenges for voluntary and community sector (VCS) and assess what support is needed by VCS organisations. The project covers the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames and defines the sector to include voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises.

The main data gathering tool was an online questionnaire for VCS organisations which received 106 unique responses. This was supported by a stakeholder organisation survey which gained 11 responses, 20 interviews with individuals within VCS and stakeholder organisations, attendance at two VCS meetings and a focus group. The research was carried out between July and October 2013.

Main findings and conclusions

Survey respondents from 57 organisations reported income of almost £24m in FY 2012-2013. Given that secondary sources estimate 578 VCS organisations in the borough; this work estimates the total income of the sector to be £113m.

Actual values reported in the survey show overall sector growth in FY 12-13 of 12.2% after a 0.8% decline in the previous financial year. This overall growth hides a median level decline of -13% since 2010, particularly affecting medium sized organisations.

Survey respondents reported employing 2,013 people in 686 full time equivalent posts (FTE). Year on year most reported that levels of staffing had 'stayed the same' or 'increased'. Volunteers through the survey were said to number 4,078 with 776 trustees, contributing £15.3m to the VCS in a year.

In extrapolating the staff and volunteer figures to estimate the value across the whole borough this work estimates there to be 1,640 FTE posts and volunteering to contribute £52.9m.

Partnership working within the VCS is widespread, with relationships considered to be between 'fair' and 'very good'. However the current commissioning environment has created a counter-force of competition which has reduced contact between some VCS colleagues.

Partnership with business is less dense though many organisations have at least one contact with business. It is largely not meeting identified needs. Equally it is not being carried out strategically by many organisations responding to this survey. Survey respondents estimated the value of working with business to be £214,051.

Relationships with statutory organisations are noted by both VCS and statutory partners to be less good than desired. There is recognition that this is at least in part due to the commissioning process and that there is desire on both sides to build trust and good relationships. In considering voice and influence, the VCS is thought to not be as proactively engaged at a strategic level as is possible or desirable. Although there is widespread engagement in consultation activities, very few stakeholders said they had been proactively approached by VCS organisations to clearly discuss their work strategically.

Although there have clearly been birthing pains in the implementation of commissioning, attempts have been made to respond to feedback to make the process and implementation easier for VCS organisations and improve outcomes.

Commissioning is not desirable to all VCS organisations nor do commissioners expect it to be. For those that are wishing to engage with the processes there is growing preparedness: 61% said they were 'somewhat' to 'fully' prepared. Both 'sides' have stated a shared understanding that they are all learning.

Funding, income generation, communications, recruiting and retaining skilled trustees and volunteers are enduring needs of the sector and increasingly knowledge of contracting and associated monitoring requirements are additional needs to be effectively resourced.

Unmet needs around the impacts of welfare reform, access to services, housing and living costs are an issue for the borough and the equalities impact of these requires they are given careful consideration by all.

Opportunities for the sector include: personalisation, demonstrating social value, increasing use of social media, commissioning, Achieving for Children, the joint children's services delivery model operating across Richmond and Kingston boroughs, and establishing partnerships with businesses, Housing Associations and education providers all of whom have indicated they are open to partnership working with VCS organisations.

The VCS use, value and need support and overall consider current provision to be useful. Support is usually taken from a range of providers, some of which are 'under the radar' as support providers such as thematic providers in faith or social care.

There is a role for infrastructure to provide voice, representation and influence strategically, to facilitate a range of collaborative working partnerships and to raise the profile of VCS and its outcomes. The view from VCS organisations and stakeholders is that these need to happen in a more pro-active, robust and tangible way than has happened to date.

The VCS sector has been spoken of by many - stakeholders and VCS organisations alike - to be active, thriving and vibrant in the borough, and we concur with these statements. The VCS in Richmond-upon-Thames is broad, diverse and meeting a range of needs that might otherwise be left unmet. We endorse you for all that you are doing.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this project.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the research

The Richmond-upon-Thames State of the Sector Survey was commissioned by Richmond-upon-Thames Council for Voluntary Service (RCVS) and Richmond Parish Lands Charity as the final phase of the Transforming Local Infrastructure (TLI) project in the borough. It seeks to create a lasting legacy of the project by reflecting the current value, context, challenges and opportunities for the sector.

The State of the Sector project was managed by RCVS and supported by a cross sector steering group. Al Bell of Third Strand Consulting and Richard Usher of Just Ideas Sustainable Solutions, both independent third sector focused consultancies, delivered the project between July and November 2013.

1.2. Scope and definition

This report covers the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames (LBRuT).

The term VCS is used as an abbreviation for the voluntary and community sector. This definition includes the full range of voluntary sector organisations from local community led groups through to national charities and social enterprises within the borough.

1.3. Aims of the research

The research has four overarching aims which are used to structure this report. These are to:

1. Calculate the value of the sector in terms of its economic as well as social value
2. Assess how the sector in Richmond-upon-Thames is working: the extent of partnerships, collaborations within and outside the sector and the influence the sector has with statutory and other partners
3. Look ahead at the opportunities and challenges for VCS organisations in relation to their sustainability and understanding of community needs within the borough
4. Assess what support is needed by VCS organisations and relating this to current infrastructure support provision within the borough.

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2. Methodology

Secondary sources, quantitative, qualitative and participatory research methods were used in order to include a broad range of stakeholders as detailed in the six main groupings identified below;

1. Voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations in the sector undertaking significant service delivery within the Borough
2. Smaller voluntary and community groups, possibly un-constituted, formed around particular local needs with few or no staff, or run and managed by volunteers/trustees such as residents associations. Since the 2010 Charities Act, the £5k turnover limit on registration will exclude many groups from registration
3. Statutory partners such as: London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames, Richmond-upon-Thames Clinical Commissioning Group and the Social Enterprise Partnership
4. Peer organisations: other infrastructure organisations in the borough; voluntary sector strategic lead organisations, formal peer partnerships such as South London CVS Partnership
5. Local grant-making charities and trusts – including Richmond Parish Lands Charity
6. Organisations based in the Borough with a significant user constituency, including housing associations, education providers, business support agencies

2.1. Data collection

Primary sources:

- Two online surveys were used to collect the views of VCS organisations and non VCS stakeholders;
    - A VCS organisations survey of 31 questions was disseminated directly by the research team, by email through the RCVS e-bulletin. Organisations in the Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership (VSSP) and other networks within the sector were also asked to circulate the survey. Completion was encouraged by telephone and where required telephone completion of the survey was carried out. The survey was also available for paper completion through RCVS.
    - A stakeholder survey of 19 questions for non VCS organisations and circulated by RCVS to 30 contacts within LBRuT council, education, funders, health and housing associations. This email was supported with telephone calls to stimulate response and requests were made to interviewees to circulate the survey.
- 20 semi-structured interviews were undertaken across the six stakeholder groupings indicated above including representatives from large and small VCS organisations, officers within the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames, local trusts, the Chamber of Commerce, Clinical Commissioning Group, a local Housing Association and Richmond Adult Community College. A full list of interviewees can be found in the appendices.
- Attendance by the team at two VCS network meetings during the period of the project were used to publicise the survey and gain qualitative input, specifically at the following events:
    - Access network meeting, for organisations working to support children with disabilities and their families, 26th September 2013

- Voluntary Sector Forum, 10th October 2013

- A focus group with representatives from seven VCS organisations who had completed the survey, held on 17th October 2013, was used to test and explore emerging themes from the research.
- Secondary sources reviewed include; LBRuT borough profiles 2013, Charity Commission open source data, minutes from recent VCS meetings including Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership (VSSP) and Executive group, previous surveys carried out by RCVS, Office for National Statistics data, State of the Sector Surveys from other areas; Bolton, Durham, Greater Manchester, Hackney, Salford and South Gloucestershire and NCVO UK Civil Society Almanac 2013.

2.2. Analysis

Quantitative (numeric) data from the surveys has been analysed and used in a variety of ways;

- Analysed against research objectives
- Used to confirm or dispel emerging themes from other data sources
- Correlations identified between data to improve understanding on presenting facts or to discover indicating factors
- Segment data by size of organisational income
- Analysis against national data for comparison
- In conjunction with national data, used to identify a proxy for methodical extrapolation of data, particularly regarding value.

Qualitative (comment) data from interviews and the survey were collated around emerging themes. Verbatim comments have been included in the report to illustrate a point that has been made by a number of respondents.

Triangulation was carried out between the data source, in later interviews and focus groups to triangulate (confirm, dispel or add insight to) these emerging themes.

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3. London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames – profile of the borough

The borough covers an area of 5,095 hectares (14,591 acres) in southwest London and spans both sides of the Thames. More than a third of its land is open space (including Richmond Park, Bushy Park and Kew Gardens).[1] Although standard of living indicators such as average income and health outcomes show Richmond-upon-Thames well above national and London-wide levels, there are pockets of deprivation in the borough – notably in Mortlake and Ham.

The 2011 census figures estimate the population of Richmond-upon-Thames to be 187,000.[2] Comparison of Office for National Statistics (ONS) of population data for the borough from 2005 to 2010 shows a rise of 7,300 (4%) in the overall borough population during this period. The borough is less ethnically diverse than other London boroughs with 86% of residents in Richmond-upon-Thames being of White ethnicity (including White British, White Irish, White Gypsy or Irish Traveller and White Other ethnic groups) 7% Asian and 1% Black (incorporating the breakdown of ethnic categories within these groups). The figures also show levels of employment to be high, particularly in comparison to other London boroughs, and levels of unemployment to be low at 3%: the percentage of people in employment in Richmond-upon-Thames was 69.8% in 2011, of the population aged 16-74, compared to 62.6% in Outer London and 62.1% in England as a whole.

The last available statistics on levels of volunteering in the borough (2008 data from www.datarich.info) showed a higher than national average involvement in volunteering by local people 24.3%, compared with the London average of 20.8% and national average of 22.7% where volunteering is defined as people who had given unpaid help at least once per month over the last 12 months.

Below is a brief summary of some main points of interest within the VCS context from the Census (2011) release[3]:

Currently, 13.5% of the population of Richmond-upon-Thames are aged 65+. While there has been a decrease in the number of people aged 75-84 (down 11.2% since 2001), there have been huge proportionate increases in the number of people aged 60-64 (up 49.4%) and 65-69 (up 26.6%). There are around 1,500 people aged 90+ (up 27.2%) which equates to 5% more than the national average. Over the next 5 to 10 years, there will be significant numbers of people moving into the 75+ age bracket which is likely to lead to an increase in demand on services.

Richmond-upon-Thames has a large owner occupied sector with nearly 64% of households owning their home either outright, 29.8%, or with a mortgage, 33.8%. A significantly higher proportion of people in Richmond-upon-Thames own their own home than in Outer London, 48%. All these figures have seen declines since 2001 as house prices have increased. The availability of affordable property

[1] www.Richmond-upon-Thames.gov.uk/home/community_and_living/neighbourhood_information/borough_profile.htm
[2] www.Richmond-upon-Thames.gov.uk/census_borough_profile_2013.pdf
[3] www.Richmond-upon-Thames.gov.uk/census_borough_profile_2013.pdf

to both rent and buy has had an impact particularly on first time buyers and is likely to contribute to the reason for a decrease in the number of people aged 20-34 in the borough since 2001. This also has an influence on the ability of VCS organisations to afford to rent accommodation, an issue picked up by the Transforming Local Infrastructure project in the borough.

Richmond-upon-Thames has a higher rate of people reporting to be in very good health at 57%, than either London, 49%, or England, 47%. Residents of the borough are less likely to be providing unpaid care than those in either London or England. Overall, 91.5% of people are providing no informal care whatsoever compared to 89.8% in England.

4. Overview of responses

4.1. Response rate in the VCS organisation survey

The VCS organisation survey received 106 unique responses. When compared to the RCVS database of 942 social enterprise and community and voluntary organisations, this indicates a response rate of 11.2%. Against the NCVO estimate of 578 organisations the response rate becomes 18.3%.

Despite proactive calling to ensure a representative sample, compared to the RVCS database, the survey data underrepresents;

- Social enterprises– 23%
- Faith groups – 13%
- Sports and leisure - 9%
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) -9%
- Physical/sensory impairment (people with) -8%

And over represents;

- Community groups +11%
- Children's and young people's activities +10%

A full breakdown of the variance against RCVS database can be found in the appendices.

4.2. VCS organisation respondent profile

47% (50) of responding organisations are registered at Companies House or with the CIC regulator
82% (87) are registered charities

Respondents completing the VCS organisational survey were mainly a Chief Executive, Director or Manager of an organisation:

Role in organisation	Response %
Chief executive/Director/Manager	40.4
Other employee	22.2
Chair	16.2
Secretary	9.1
Other committee member or trustee	6.1
Other volunteer	6.1
Treasurer	2.0

In terms of area of delivery, the majority of respondents were only delivering services in Richmond-upon-Thames:

Area of service delivery	%
Delivering only in Richmond-upon-Thames	45.8
Delivering in Richmond-upon-Thames and other London boroughs	37.5
Delivering in Richmond-upon-Thames and other parts of the UK	12.5
Delivering in other parts of the UK but not Richmond-upon-Thames	2.1
Delivering overseas and in the UK	2.1
Delivering overseas only	0.0

Considering organisation type, respondents were most likely to be local voluntary organisations:

Type of organisation	%
Local voluntary organisation	57.7
Community group	13.4
Branch of national voluntary organisation	12.4
Social enterprise	7.2
Faith group	6.2
Other (please specify)	5.2
Community Forum/Development Trust	3.1

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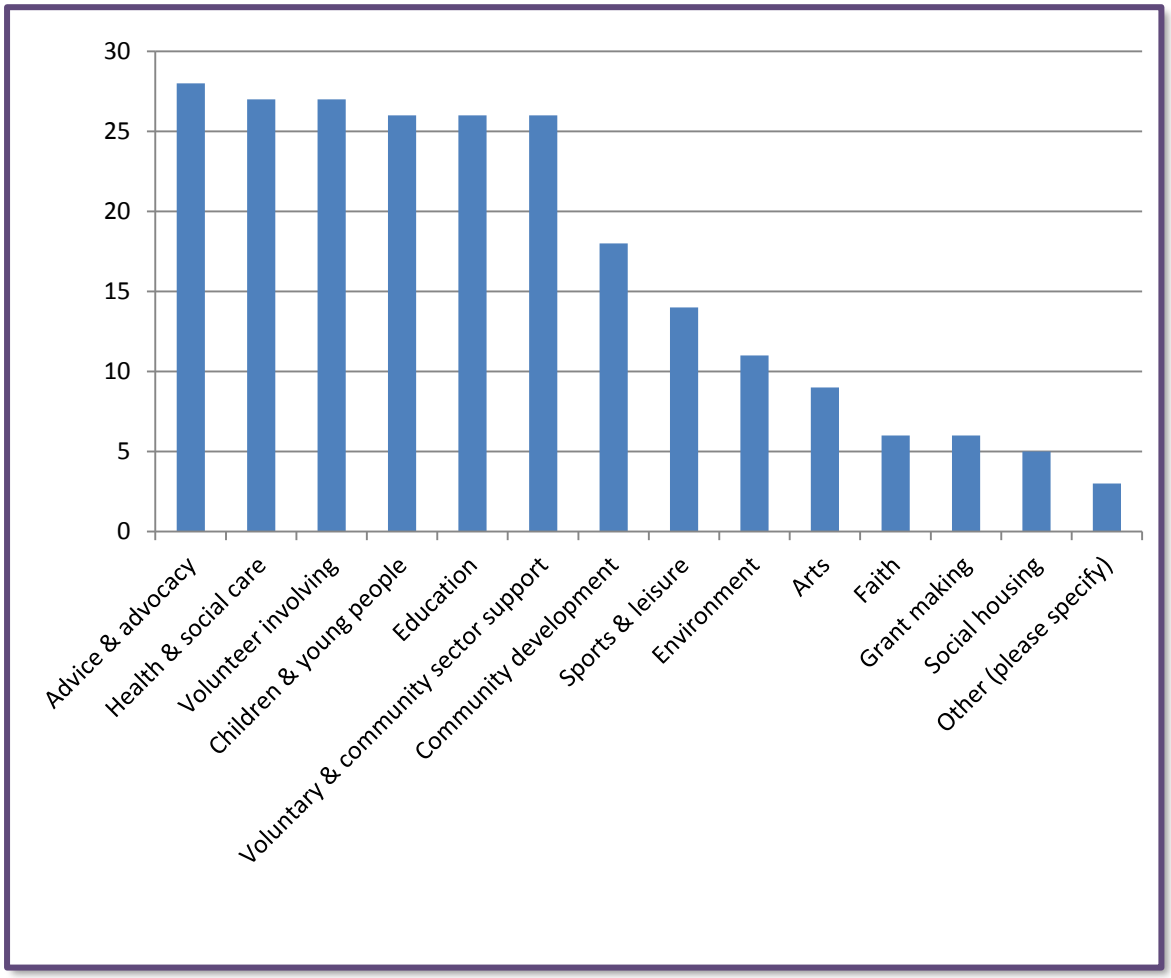
Figure 1: Main activities or services respondent organisations deliver - 98 organisations



Other activities undertaken by organisations were; transport resources, community cohesion and support to MPs.

4.3. Stakeholder survey response

The stakeholder survey received 11 responses, as below

Organisation	Response
Council	7
Funder	1
Health/Clinical commissioning group	1
Housing association	1

Responses from the council show high engagement from a range of council departments, despite the initial circulation list only containing three council contacts.

- Three responses are from councillors
- Council departments responding include the community investment, arts and culture, adult and community services and procurement departments.

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5. Analysis and findings

5.1. Comparison to National data

Two main sources of comparative data are used within the analysis; the NCVO Almanac 2013[4] and Charity Commission Open Source data[5].

NCVO proxy

In comparing the VCS organisation survey data to NCVO Almanac data it became clear that the response rate was particularly biased to larger organisations. To reduce this bias and more accurately reflect the VCS in Richmond-upon-Thames, the research team developed a proxy combining census data, NCVO estimates and data on organisational income shared within the VCS organisation survey, as below.

The NCVO Almanac 2013 estimates Richmond-upon-Thames to have 3.09 voluntary organisations per 1,000 population. This is higher than the national average of 2.6 per 1,000 population; this estimate does not include 'below the radar' non-registered informal groups.

Given that the population of Richmond-upon-Thames is stated to be 187,000[6], we can reasonably estimate there to be 578 'above the radar' organisations in the borough.

It is estimated that the VCS in Richmond-upon-Thames follows the same proportions of those nationally segmented by income

- Micro; under £10,000 – 51.7%
- Small; annual income between £10,000 and £100,000 – 32.3%
- Medium; annual income between £100,000 and £1 million – 13%
- Large; annual income greater than £1 million – 2.6%

This proxy has been applied to some of the data as follows and where appropriate to counteract the bias in response rates.

[4] NCVO Almanac 2013 http://data.ncvo-vol.org.uk/
[5] Charity Commission Open source data http://data.ncvo-vol.org.uk/areas/Richmond-upon-Thames/income
[6] www.Richmond-upon-Thames.gov.uk/census_borough_profile_2013.pdf

5.2. What is the value of the sector?

Drawing from mainly quantitative data in the survey and in comparison with published national data sources, we considered the value of the VCS and the financial contribution to the borough.

5.2.1. Overall value of the sector

57 (53%) organisations responded to questions on finances. Of these 70% are registered at Companies House or with the Community Interest Company (CIC) regulator which is significantly higher than the overall survey percentage of 48% incorporation. Therefore these responses do not accurately reflect all organisations responding to the survey or of the sector in Richmond-upon-Thames as a whole but is the best indicator of values that can be established at present.

Stated income per year by survey respondents (not all organisations existed in all years)

	2012 - 2013	% change	2011 - 2012	% change	2010 - 2011
Total	£23,733,037.0	12.2%	£21,160,461.0	-0.8%	£21,332,048.0
Average	£423,804.2	4.1%	£406,931.9	-2.7%	£418,275.5
Median	£110,863.0	-3.6%	£115,003.5	-9.7%	£127,336.0

Overall total and average incomes have grown over the last three years with a slight decline in incomes in the financial year (FY) 2011-2012. However a declining value of the median (mid-point) in incomes is a more accurate reflection of changes in the sector. The decline was reduced by 5% to -13% due to the activities of social enterprise organisations.

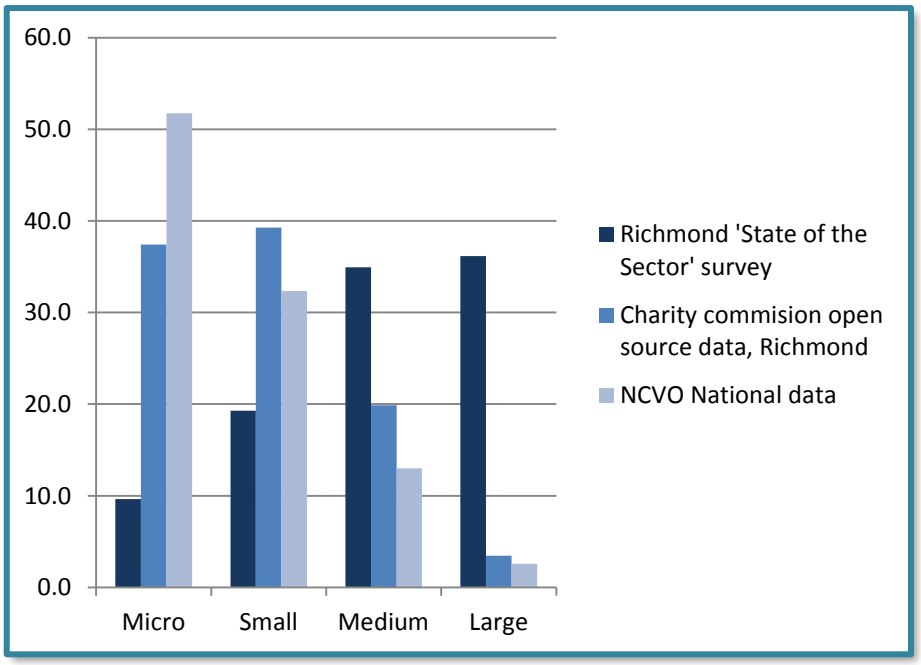
Micro, small and large organisations in the survey have seen income stability or growth with medium sized organisations bearing the brunt of the decline.

Organisation size	2012 - 2013	% change	2011 - 2012	% change	2010 - 2011
Micro under £10k 8 orgns in 12-13					
Total	18,129.0	40%	10,898.0	-34%	14,551.0
Average	2,589.9	30%	1,816.3	-34%	2,425.2
Median	3,000.0	40%	1,791.5	5%	1,700.0
Small annual income between £10,000 and £100,000 16 orgns in 12-13					
Total	656,400.0	28%	470,633.0	-9%	511,877.0
Average	41,025.0	18%	33,616.6	-9%	36,562.6
Median	41,000.0	43%	23,499.5	-16%	27,318.5
Medium annual income between £100,000 and £1 million 29 orgns in 12-13					
Total	12,993,508.0	16%	10,977,532.0	0%	11,014,223.0
Average	448,052.0	12%	392,054.7	-4%	407,934.2
Median	240,000.0	-7%	257,357.0	-3%	264,617.0
Large annual income greater than £1 million 3 orgns					
Total	14,200,000.0	17%	11,775,908.0	-2%	12,025,000.0
Average	4,733,333.3	17%	3,925,302.7	-2%	4,008,333.3
Median	3,500,000.0	46%	1,900,000.0	-11%	2,100,000.0

Open source data for Richmond-upon-Thames shows income to be £84.9m in 2010-11 and also shows a decline of -3.9% between FY 2010-2011 and FY 2011-2012. This data only covers organisations with an income of over £500,000.

A comparison with the most recent NCVO Almanac data and Charity Commission Open source data for Richmond-upon-Thames indicates that the finance data gathered through the 'State of the Sector' survey for Richmond-upon-Thames reflects a proportionally higher number of larger organisations.

Figure 2: Percentage of organisations found in each survey by income level



Categorised by income level

- Micro; under £10,000
- Small; annual income between £10,000 and £100,000
- Medium; annual income between £100,000 and £1 million
- Large; annual income greater than £1 million

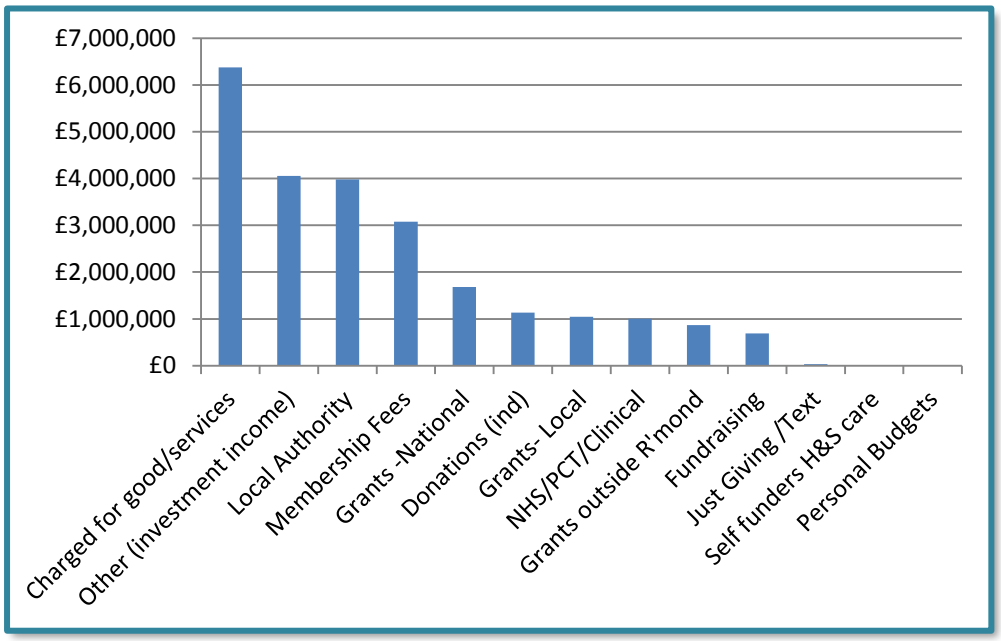
When using the NCVO estimate of 578 registered organisations in Richmond-upon-Thames and appropriating the average value proportionately, it is reasonable to estimate the total income in 2013 to be £113m.

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average income as captured in SoS survey	£2,590	£41,025	£448,052	£4,733,333	
Total income estimate	£774,589	£7,669,477	£33,663,418	£71,156,117	**£113,263,602**

5.3. Sources of income

39 organisations replied to the survey question on sources of income. The most common source of income named was charging for goods and services reported by 38 of the 39 organisations. Richmond-upon-Thames council is the largest single external funder.

Figure 3: Actual income by source



Just Giving /Text	£33,000
Self-funders H&S care	£10,000
Personal Budgets	£600

These 39 organisations are generating earned income of £9.4m, made up of charging for goods and services and membership fees. This is 2.4 times that of the local authority contribution of £3.98m. This figure is boosted by micro organisations which earn 60% of their income via this method, giving an average value of c £1,368 for micro organisations.

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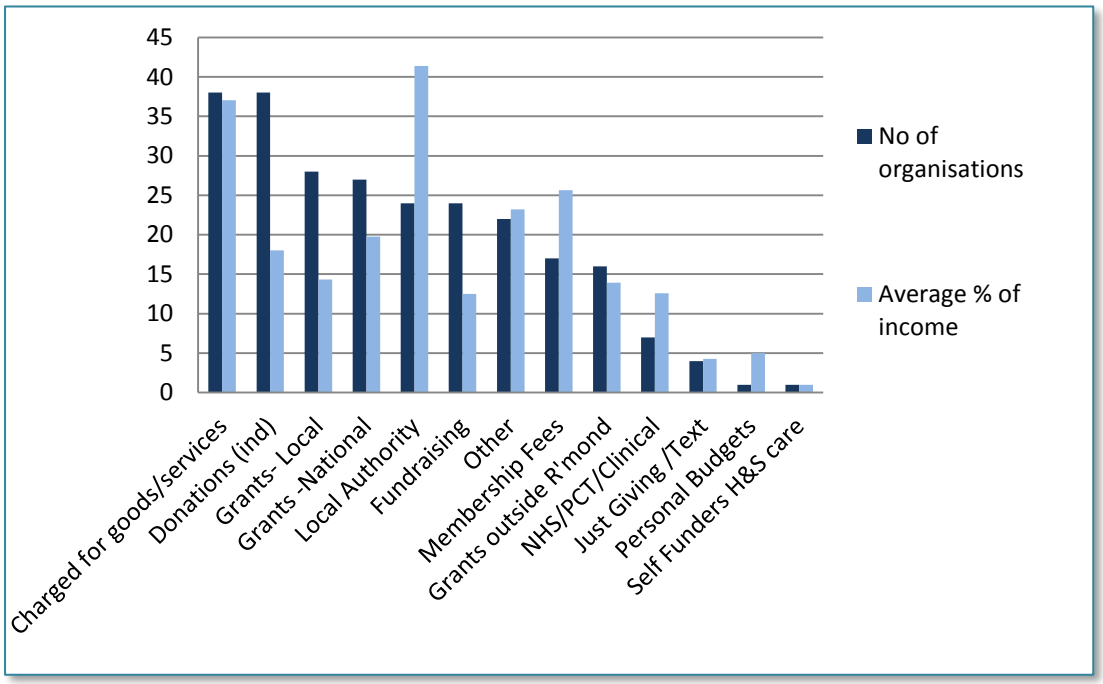
In considering what % on average of income is made up by each source, we see that organisations indicating the local authority as an income source make up an average of 41.4% of total income. Five organisations funded by the local authority said this source made up 70% or more of their total income indicating a small number of organisations who are heavily reliant on this source of income.

Figure 4: Number of organisations indicating an income received by source and average income



In the following chart this data has been split by organisation size and indicates that proportionately;

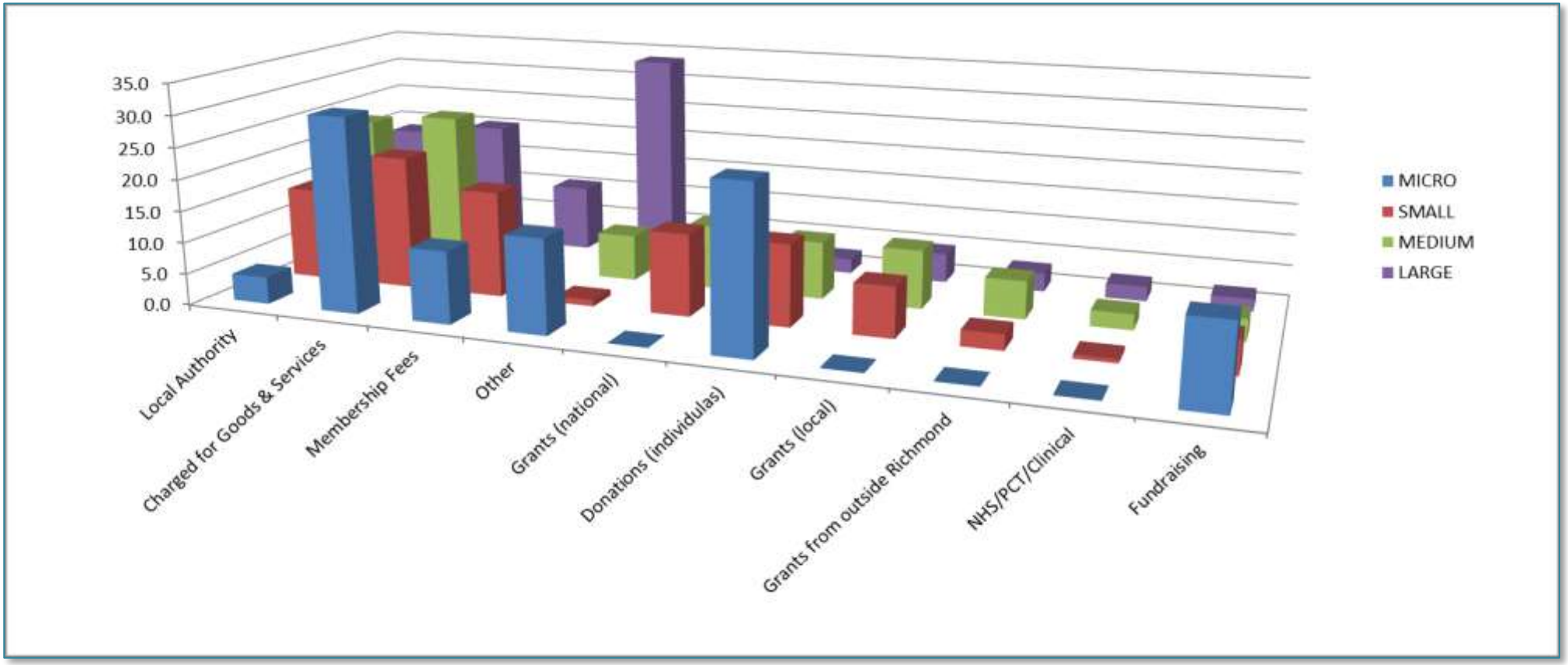
- Micro organisations have the highest level of earned income and the lowest level of grant income
- Medium organisations have the highest level of local authority income
- Fundraising contributes a small amount to all incomes

Average % of income by source and organisation size

Other income for large organisations is predominately made up of investment incomes that are recirculated within Richmond-upon-Thames VCS.

Just Giving and text giving, personal budgets and self funders health and social care have been excluded from the graph as they were only indicated by four, one, and no organisations respectively.

Figure 5: Average % of income by source and organisation size



5.3.1. Rent subsidy

LBRuT council provides a rent subsidy to 33 VCS organisations within the borough. To 23 organisations this is valued as £510,000 and to the ten uniformed youth groups £1,457, bringing the total to £511,557. For accounting purposes organisations should be including this in their income figures so this figure will not be added to the incomes provided but is more recognition of the value of rent subsidy provided. Since September 2011 rent subsidies have been and continue to be phased out alongside the Council's move to a commissioning model, with organisations being asked to include the full cost of overheads when tendering for contracts.

5.3.2. Funding from local trusts

Funding from the three main charitable trusts in the borough is a particular strength both in terms of the sustainability of organisations and the expertise that is held within these trusts on the subject of grant giving. The trusts are also well placed to understand issues within the sector and areas of community need, arising through their grant application processes. Overall amounts of funding from each trust are indicated in the table below:

Name of Trust	**Funding to voluntary sector organisations in 2012-2013**	**Comment and Changes in funding – either historical or expected in future**
Richmond Parish Lands Charity	£825,953	75 organisations funded in 2012-2013 – average grant £11,012. Rising profile of funding – expecting grant round of £1.4 million in 2013-14 (including grants to individuals and schools)
Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity	£854,650	Overall expect available funding to rise.
Barnes Workhouse Fund	£205,000	30 organisations funded. Funding has remained largely stable – expected to increase slightly over the next few years
TOTAL	£1,885,603	

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5.3.3. National funding

Proportions of national funds being drawn into the borough appear low; many of the most common funders identify deprivation as a key criterion and whilst having pockets of deprivation, the area is largely affluent and does not feature in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

For the period April 2009 to July 2013 funding, Big Lottery Funding into the borough through the main programmes was as follows:

Programme	No of applications	% of applications receiving grant	Value
Awards for All	32	50%	£247,182
Reaching Communities	4	11%	£937,085
		Total	£1,184,267

This has been boosted in recent years by arts and sports funding as below:

Programme	No of grants	Year	Value
Heritage	7	2011	16,130,800
Sport	10	2013	17,747,308
		Total	**£33,878,108**

These thematic based grants highlight the opportunity for the borough to make approaches for grants that are not usually related to deprivation such as; arts, disabilities, heritage and sport.

5.3.4. Fundraising

Fundraising activities appear strong and the survey data indicates that fundraising income is at 12%, while the NCVO Almanac states the national average to be 5%. This perhaps goes towards filling a gap that might otherwise be filled with grant income.

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5.4. Impacts of the sector

56 organisations responded to the survey question 'what has your organisation done in the last 12 months that has achieved the most impact?' some of these comments are below and highlight the range and breadth of impacts made by the sector some of which, at least, would not otherwise have happened without VCS intervention.

- Set up a new project to support more parents with mental health issues
- Reopened an Information Centre in Bushy (Park)
- We ran the third Virginia Prize for Fiction competition, giving an opportunity to emerging women writers to be published.
- Provided high quality childcare for the children of young parents attending training with Richmond Youth Partnership
- Created a music school for children and young people with special needs
- Piloted a Saturday lunch club for single parents
- Supported individuals following abortion and following miscarriage
- Given dozens of volunteers new skills through training and involvement in the various aspects of our project and an opportunity for the older generation to share their memories with others via oral history gathering and the website
- Provided Tui na massage for children with ASD or cerebral palsy
- We worked with young people on a healthy eating project, and our book The Green Teen Cookbook won the international Gourmand World cookbook prize for Best Sustainable Food Book UK
- Provided a range of social and leisure opportunities for people with learning disabilities
- Funding improvements to ponds in Richmond Park
- Secured funding for training potential advocates
- Given sporting opportunities to around 750 local children under the age of 18 (girls, boys, disabled) in football, cricket, tennis and hockey.
- Opened up Richmond Food bank
- Organised a 'flash-mob' to promote national Falls Awareness Week - this went viral on social media and was picked up by national Breakfast Time TV for 2 weeks running"
- Provided workshops to help parents understand and deal with challenging behaviour and the challenges faced by their children due to sensory difficulties

5.5. Sector resilience

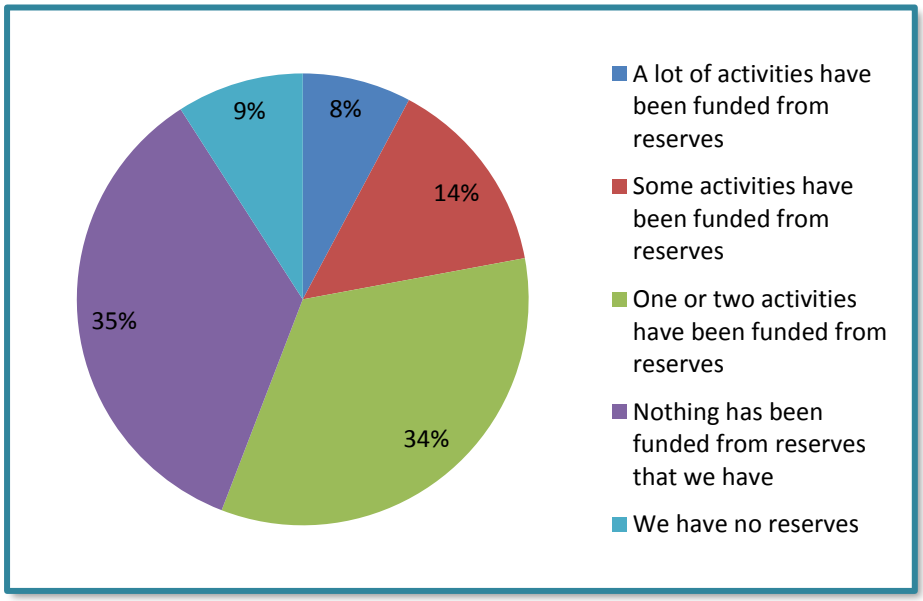
75 organisations responded to the question of whether their ability to fund core costs[7] in the last year increased, decreased or stayed the same. For the majority of organisations, the ability to cover core costs remained unchanged; however there is a shift towards this becoming more difficult.

Ability to cover core costs	Response No
Stayed about the same	37
Decreased	25
Increased	13

In the stakeholder survey, three respondents said they did include a consideration for core costs in their contributions to VCS organisations. Other respondents did not reply to this question.

Following this, respondents were asked if they had funded activities from reserves. 77 organisations responded; 56% (43) said they had funded at least one activity from reserves and worryingly 9% (7) said they had no reserves.

Figure 6: Level of funding from reserves



There are no distinguishing characteristics from the data that indicate why some organisations have been funding activities from reserves.

[7] 66 organisations responded to the question concerning what % of income is used to cover core costs. However as the responses ranged from 0% to 100% it would be misleading to analyse this information without knowledge of the context within which an organisation is operating.

Those organisations without reserves are predominately working with children and young people, families or people with learning disabilities and have low levels of local grant funding.

5.6. Levels of staffing

73 organisations surveyed indicated they employed a total of 2013 staff for an average of 353 hours a week. Assuming a 37.5 hour week, this equates to 686.6 full time equivalent (FTE) posts.

Number of employees and hours contributed collected through the survey:

	Total No employees incl. sessional staff	Total No employee hours/week
Total	2,013.5	22,814.0
Average	28.0	351.0
Median	7.0	91.0
Count	72	65

Survey respondents reported the following change in number of employees over the last 12 months:

Increase	Stayed the same	Decrease
32	29	18

It would be wrong to infer from this there is a net increase in number of employees as the survey does not take into consideration the numbers of increase or decrease but this does indicate that overall more organisations are increasing employment than reducing.

When applying the NVCO Almanac multiplier it would be reasonable to estimate the VCS in Richmond-upon-Thames provides employment for 4,947 posts at an average of 61,498 hours a week equating to 1640 FTE posts.

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5.7. Economic value of volunteers

Number of volunteer and trustee or management committee hours collected through the survey:

	Total No of volunteers	Total No of volunteers hours/week	Total No of trustees/board	Total No of trustee hours/month
Total	4,078.0	8,105.0	776.0	4,822.5
Average	49.7	111.0	9.0	65.2
Median	24.5	42.0	9.0	29.0
Count	82	73	86	74

Volunteers

82 organisations completing the survey stated they had a total of 4078 volunteers contributing an average of 111 hours per organisation per week. When combined with the Volunteering England[8] recommended ASHE survey[9] average hourly rate of £28.19, that equates to a total economic value of £256,649 per week and £13,345,733 per year.

When using the NVCO multiplier, this estimates the total number of volunteers for Richmond-upon-Thames to be 18,495 delivering 28,031 hours of volunteering a week. This brings the estimated value to £41m (£41,090,169) per year.

Trustees

86 organisations reported a total of 776 trustee posts, averaging 9 trustees or committee members per organisation and an average hourly contribution of trustees per month of 65.2 hours in 74 organisations. When combined with the Volunteering England[10] recommended ASHE survey[11] average hourly rate of £28.19, this equates to a total economic value of £1,895,899 per year.

Again using the NCVO multiplier as previously described, one could reasonably estimate that the number of volunteers in Richmond-upon-Thames is 4,019 providing 34,890 hours and a financial equivalent value of almost £12m (£11,802,663).

Summary data for all staff, volunteers and trustees and calculations for estimates can be found in the appendices.

[8] http://www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/is-there-any-way-of-measuring-the-economic-value-of-the-work-our-volunteers-are-doing

[9] Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2011, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-235202

[10] http://www.volunteering.org.uk/component/gpb/is-there-any-way-of-measuring-the-economic-value-of-the-work-our-volunteers-are-doing

[11] Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2011, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-235202

5.8. How is the sector working?

5.8.1. Relationships within the VCS and with key stakeholders

90 organisations replied to the question asking VCS organisations to define the quality of their relationship with various organisations and groups.

On the whole relationships were fair to very good. Relationships with RCVS were thought to be most positive however there is likely to be some predisposal to positive responses towards RCVS as the organisation which maintains the e-mail list which was central to the survey distribution.

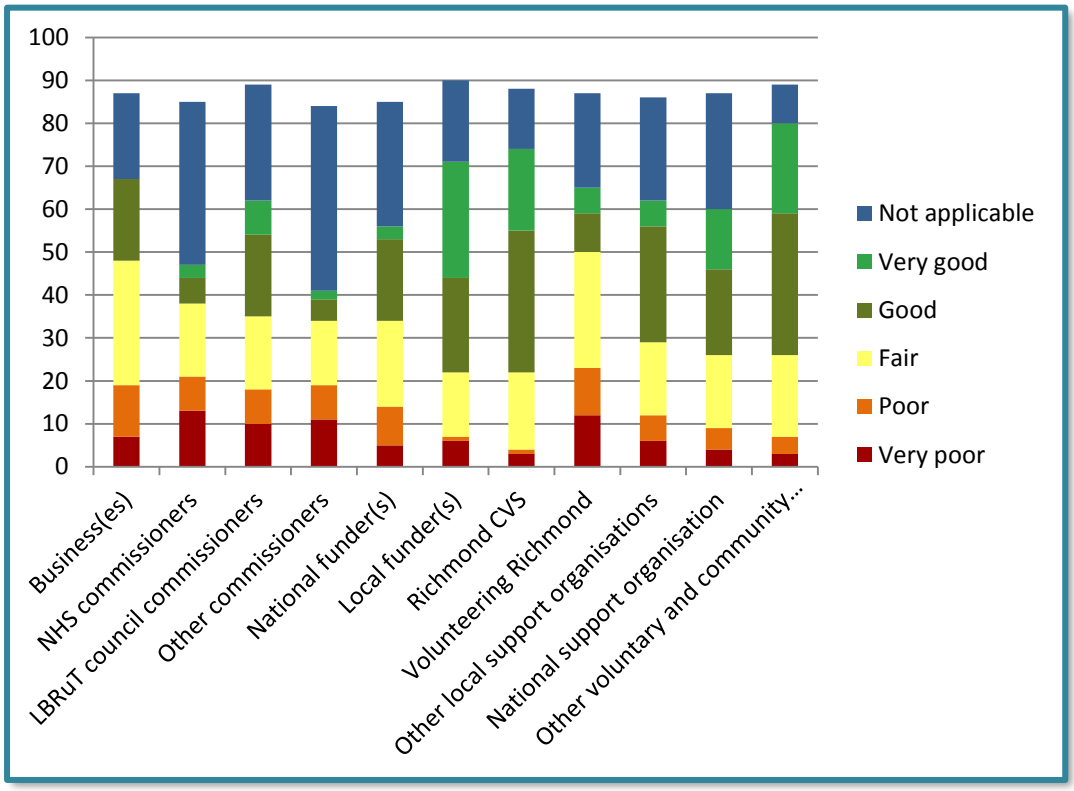
Other VCS organisations' relationships are also at the positive end of the spectrum which is encouraging as are relationships with local funders.

In the majority of cases even when some organisations are stating 'poor' or 'very poor' relationships, other organisations are achieving very good relationships which mean that good relationships are possible, if yet to be achieved by all.

However relationships with business were towards the negative end of the spectrum with no organisations stating a very good relationship.

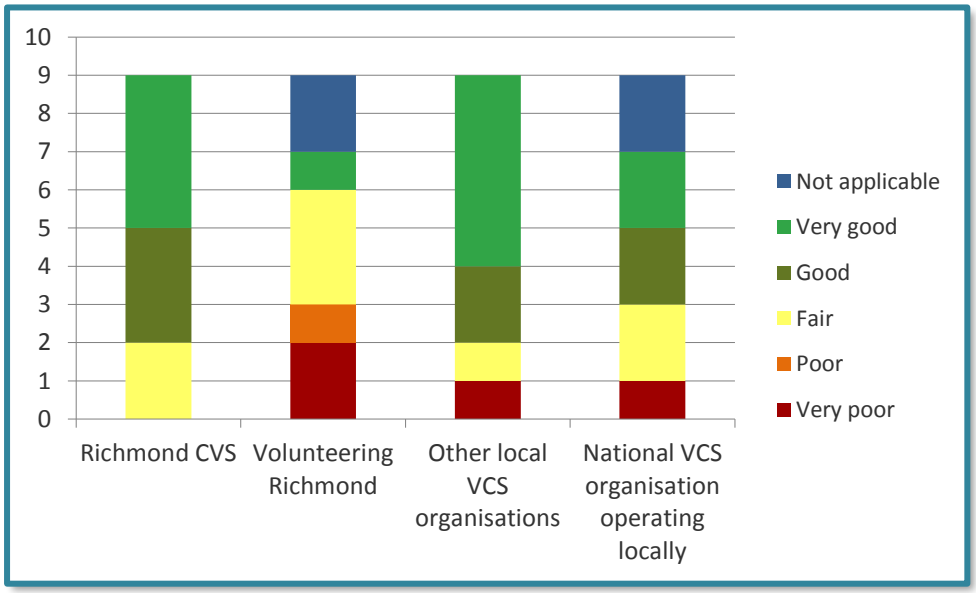
Relationships perceived to be worst were with the NHS and other commissioners and Volunteering Richmond which is disappointing given its role of supporting the VCS.

Figure 7: Quality of relationships – 90 organisations



In comparing these responses to those made in the stakeholder survey respondents, we can see the same trends being present, albeit with a very small sample.

Figure 8: Stakeholder organisations' view of relationship with VCS



5.8.2. Barriers and builders of relationships

Interviewees were asked what are the problems of building relationships and how can they be improved. These verbatim comments highlight the views expressed by a number of respondents:

> *"It's a paternalistic relationship that is perpetuated by the VCS who look to the commissioners for answers/parameters rather than working with us to define them"*- - Commissioner

> *"People who you can trust and have open, easy and off the record conversations with, genuine communication, not just challenge"* - Commissioner

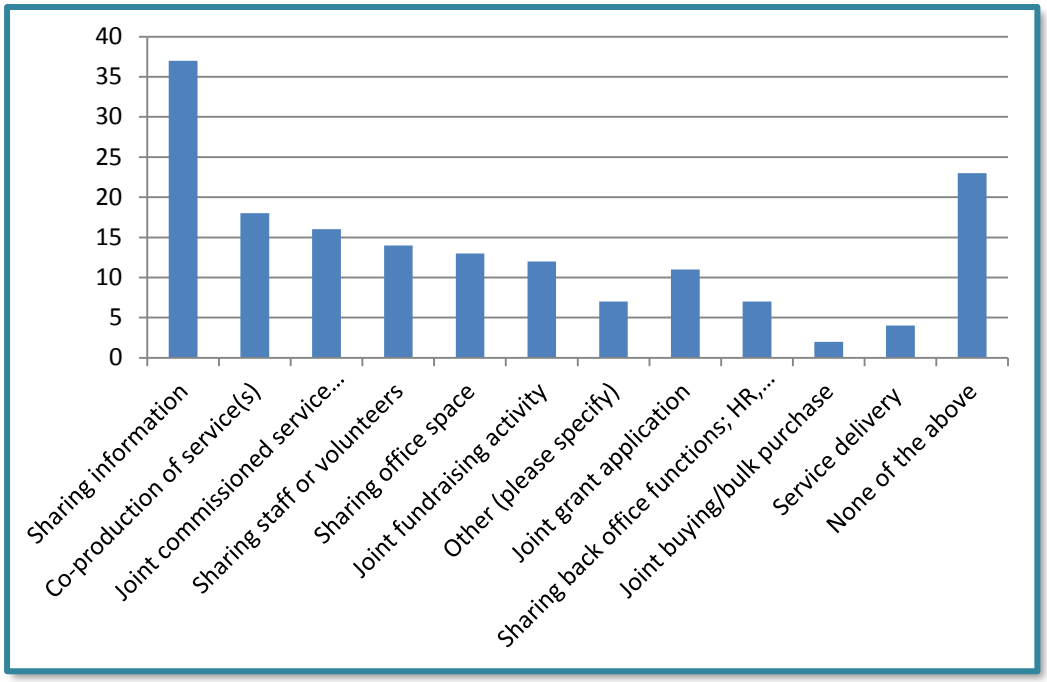
Stakeholder and VCS organisation interviewees, when asked the question on barriers and builders of relationship, said that the presence of Councillors and MPs in local VCS organisations had created challenges in how organisations communicate and work with each other and with other stakeholders. However involvement can be both a builder as well as a barrier to relationships: an example cited was the potentially higher profile given to organisations that had more Councillor involvement, compared to those that did not. One VCS organisation stated that four Councillors had supported an event they ran to engage businesses.

5.8.3. Review of partnership working

The survey and interviews asked to what extent organisations are working with partners inside and outside the sector to achieve their aims.

79 organisations indicated that they were partnering with other VCS organisations. The partnerships are both broad and deep with 22 organisations indicating co-production or joint service delivery.

Figure 9: Type of partnership with other voluntary sector organisations



Total 141 activities by 78 organisations other includes donations to other organisations, outreach works and attending conferences.

Overall levels of partnership work with business appear to be lower with 40% (31) of responses indicating that they have not partnered with business at all in the last 12 months.

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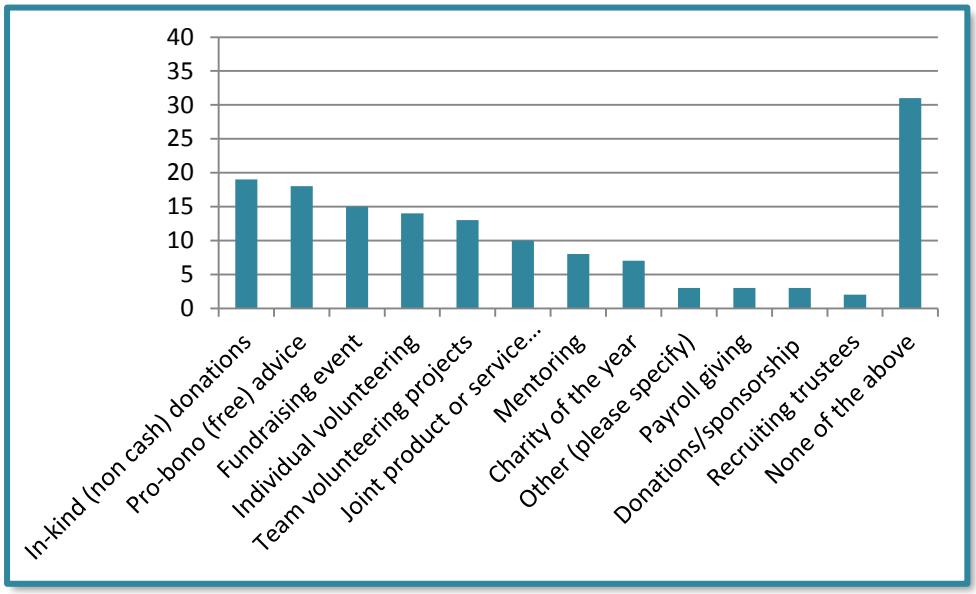
Figure 10: Partnership with business by type of activity



(Total 115 activities by 78 organisations)

Interviews with VCS organisations suggested that as with other more developmental work the process of nurturing relationships with a business can be time consuming with large benefits.

> *"We need to develop relationships and have a good relationship with eBay (whose head office is in Richmond-upon-Thames) – we are one of their named charity partners, they provide volunteers who work with us around Christmas time. It can take a lot of time to develop these relationships but it is worth it. I have had mentoring from their Head of European Development. So it is possible to start little then seek more specific support. Our Volunteer Co-ordinator is good for making these links. We are also working with Waitrose who are offering us community space."*
>
> - Richmond-upon-Thames Age UK, quote used with permission

This was equally recognised by a stakeholder

> *"VCS need to reorganise to get work with business. They need to listen and understand businesses, their wants and the needs of CSR policies. Consider messaging to their target audience – business style communications, not generic communications, and they need to demonstrate their 'fit' to businesses by doing their research and deliver a contract professionally without changing deadlines or delivery method."*

Examples were given of the occasional mismatch between what business employees want to do within the sector, often activities of a practical nature such as team volunteering projects, and the needs of the sector - specific support, trustee recruitment or pro-bono help e.g. legal advice:

> *"We do look to broker employers where we can – it's not the main part of what we do but we respond to need. There's often a disparity between what the organisation wants and what the business wants to do e.g. team challenges"* - VCS interview feedback

The survey included a question on the financial benefit gained from partnership working, see below. This indicates that small organisations are working proportionally well with business whilst medium organisations gain most benefit from working with other VCS organisations. This may be due in part to commissioning processes.

		Partnering with business	Partnering with other VCS organisations
MICRO			
	Total	£1,050.00	£501.00
	Average	£131.25	£62.63
	Count	8	8
SMALL			
	Total	£75,001.00	£47,850.00
	Average	£4,687.56	£2,990.63
	Count	16	16
MEDIUM			
	Total	£68,700.00	£1,361,850.00
	Average	£2,368.97	£46,960.34
	Count	29	29
LARGE			
	Total	£5,000.00	£50,000.00
	Average	£1,666.67	£16,666.67
	Count	3	3

5.9. Influence of the sector

The Stakeholder survey responses show that six stakeholder organisations had contacted a range of VCS organisations, including all members of the VSSP, in the last year to ask views or opinions to inform policy, strategy or delivery. Most often they contacted RCVS, Ethnic Minorities Advocacy Group, Age UK Richmond-upon-Thames, Arts Richmond, Integrated Neurological Services or Mortlake Community Association.

All six said that the quality of information provided was 'very good' with three stating that they had changed policies or processes as a result.

> *"The Charity Law Working Group was a joint initiative with local voluntary sector reps and Trustees, and the Council. The outcome was a comprehensive review of the contract terms and conditions, which were significantly reduced in size and designed to be proportionate and relevant to a particular service and provider."* - Council Officer

However in the interviews the theme was that although there was broad based low level engagement in consultation events, there was no or very low strategic level engagement or influence from the VCS.

> *"We don't feel engaged with voluntary sector at strategic level, we are open to approaches from VCS but that doesn't happen"* – Stakeholder

> *"Low VCS strategic level engagement, only a small proportion of sector engaging with us"* - Commissioner

5.9.1. Role of VSSP

RCVS is contracted by LBRuT to provide strategic leadership, voice and representation for the sector. It works towards this through a number of partnership forums and in direct contact with stakeholders in the sector. In delivering this aspect of their work, RCVS host the Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership (VSSP), comprising of up to 20 nominated or elected representatives from each constituency of interest, whose responsibility it is to liaise with their sector.

Feedback from VSSP member interviews suggested that it is valuable as a forum for information exchange, with Council officers being invited to attend relevant agenda items. Some successes recently include negotiating for charges for waste collection from charities to be reduced:

> *"There have been times when we've been able to influence policy – inviting Council officers when appropriate. Always a bit of anxiety but we have managed to influence Council decisions. And tried to do it in other ways – people don't always articulate their views/influence."* - VCS interview feedback

However stakeholder organisations stated that they were less clear about the role of the VSSP and that the approach and aims of the partnership could be clearer and more proactive:

> *"I've only just started going to [been invited to] VSSP meetings, but I would have expected them to be more proactive in asking for attendance and brokering relationships"* - Commissioner

VSSP members concurred with this sentiment, stating they need to define and measure its impact on strategic issues and that it can and should have greater strategic influence and focus:

> *"VSSP doesn't have that level [platform] - it is recognised but not taken seriously enough. The Compact is there but no one heeds it. Also as a result of the commissioning process there is more competition so less sharing of info."* - VCS interview feedback

> *"VSSP is not influencing or shaping commissioning, just looking at back office functions."*
> - VCS interview feedback

5.10. Representation

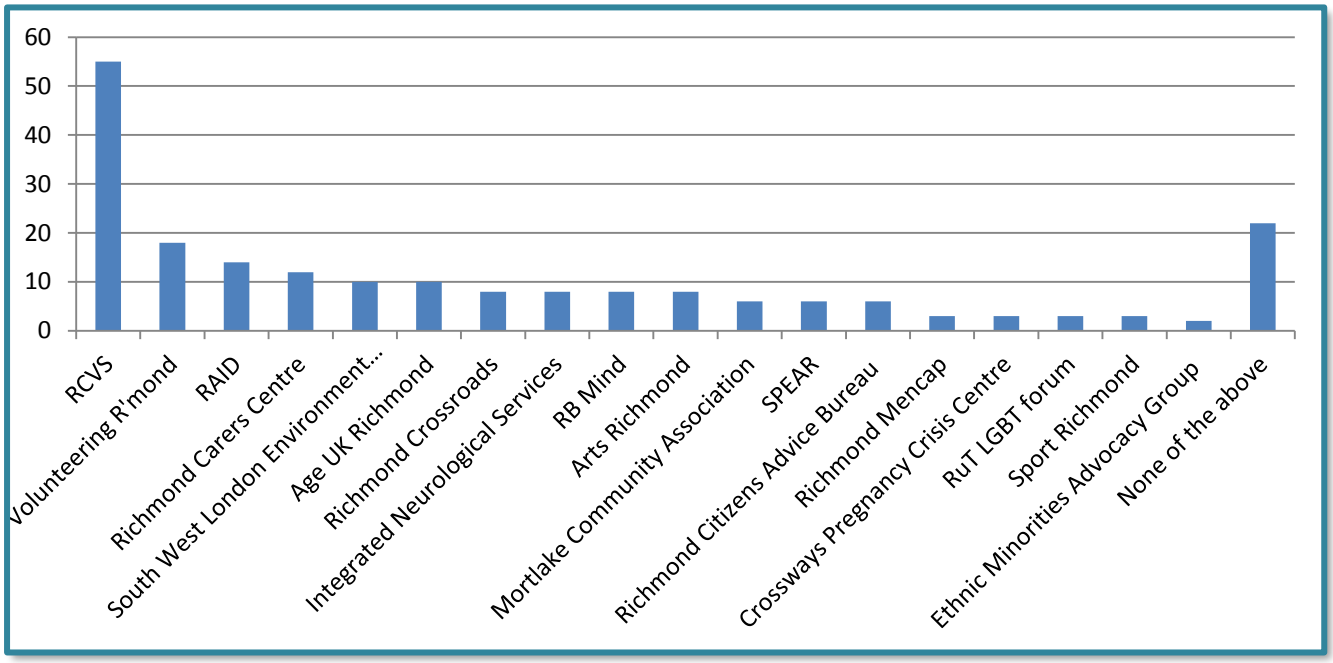
Crucial to the VSSP is the representation role of organisations on the partnership – some of which are effective at feeding back to their constituency such as Richmond Carers Centre and Richmond AID, while other organisations expressed they do not prioritise the representative role, both in terms of the time and outcomes expected. Some did not realise they have a representation role or do not have the capacity to do so:

> *"I am not there to represent others"* - VCS interview feedback

> *"It is a challenge to represent the 700 people in the Borough with learning disabilities – effective representation is time consuming and demanding."* - Focus group

This sentiment rings true as when VCS organisations were asked via the survey if they had been contacted by VSSP members for views and opinions so they can feed this back to council or others 26% (22) said they had not been contacted by any of the above.

Figure 11: No. of organisation stating they had been contacted for views to influence by VSSP member organisations



VSSP members also state they have their own direct relationships with the Council and other stakeholders so 'do business' outside of the VSSP forum. Feedback from interviews suggests these relationships are largely based on trust and shared understanding:

> *"We are all learning as we go, this reflects the kind of relationship we have. We talk about the issues and come up with solutions. It's been a massive change management process"*
> - VCS interview

"Relationships are very good. The Local Authority is very good at consultation – they invite us to so many things we have consultation fatigue! Officers are brilliant – trying to make something work. Always ask us our thoughts." - VCS interview

A number of stakeholders stated in interview or through the survey that they are keen to develop further links with the sector, accessing the member/community views that organisations have. Also where organisations are working with clients whose opportunities may be increased by contact:

"We need to know who's out there, what their needs are, what their aims are – this can be a good linkage with RACC, both to support in terms of students with skills and needs for experience and input, and there could be a linkage with client groups that would really appreciate the opportunities that we offer." – Richmond Adult Community College

"One of the things we have to do is understand where those organisations think they're going e.g. funding, business model. Really interesting to see how organisations are thinking and gauge those that are more positive." - Commissioner

5.11. Richmond-upon-Thames Compact

'This Compact is a written understanding between the two sectors as to how they should behave towards each other to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship exists. The Richmond Compact aims to build upon our existing commitment to partnership working by setting out our shared principles and the way we have undertaken to consult, involve and manage our resources together.' [12]

Interview feedback from the sector suggested that although there is currently a Compact in place dating back to 1998, it is not heeded in the interaction between the local authority and the sector such as in the timeframe and consultation for the introduction of commissioning of services.

The Compact can become a cornerstone for consolidating a more systematic, constructive relationship between the council and the sector. Revision of the Compact is underway with consultation between the Council and the sector. RCVS are leading on this for the voluntary sector.

A robust Compact with principles that are adhered to by both sides can be used as the basis for effective consultation, commissioning and co-operation between the Council and the sector. This should be the basis for future positive relationships, trust and the development of a shared understanding of the roles of each.

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[12] http://www.Richmond-upon-Thames.gov.uk/home/community_and_living/voluntary_organisations/relations_with_voluntary_sector.htm

5.12. Commissioning

5.12.1. Introduction of commissioning

The procurement and commissioning approach to service delivery is being increasingly adopted by a range of public bodies including health and councils; most notably to the VCS in LBRuT is the commissioning of council services.

Since April 2011, the Council has introduced a voluntary sector commissioning model, pooling grants budgets with the service-led commissioning budget to contract voluntary sector service providers.

The voluntary sector commissioning model was introduced over a phased period. The Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee report of December 2012 states the following sequence:

Children, families and young people	April 2011
Infrastructure and capacity building	June 2012
Culture, leisure and environment	October 2012
Community involvement	December 2012
Equalities	April 2013
Adult services	July 2012-13
Community Advice services	July 2013

Overall the Council states an investment of £10 million in the not-for-profit sector through contracts and an additional £3 million through grants and rent subsidies.

Birth pains

In the initial phase of the commissioning process, VCS organisations felt overwhelmed by the degree of technicality and length of specifications:

> *"The commissioning process was heavy duty – it has now been 'thinned down', and relevant to the sector (e.g. 30 pp. rather than 100pp of specifications). The relationship is now more open, a lot better."* - Commissioner

> *"The contract itself wasn't fit for purpose – there has been a lot of discussion in the sector about this. We negotiated everything successfully but were isolated in doing this – the first service contract – it was all new territory; a massive learning curve."* - VCS interviewee

But it is clear that over the last two years there have been lessons learnt and changes made to the process on both sides:

> *"We have responded to concerns by changing specifications for delivery and asking for proportionate documentation, applying a consistent approach and providing clarity of delivery."* - Commissioner

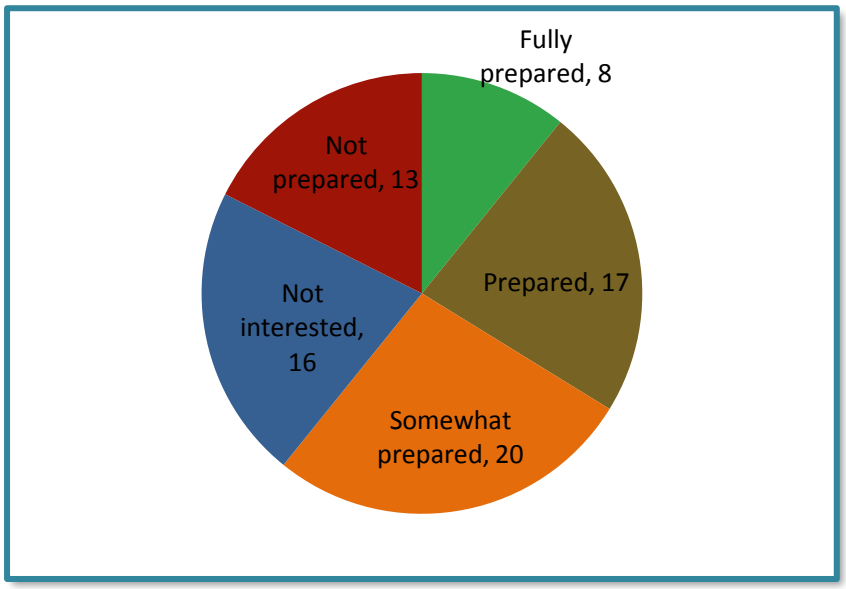
These changes have included criteria on the local knowledge and expertise of organisation – which was missing from earlier commissioning processes. There was still a feeling from the sector that 'risk assessment' by the Council could be strengthened i.e. looking at the impact of losing services such as infrastructure support in relation to the bigger picture:

> *"In other boroughs [within London) the CVS was identified as a key partner – but LBRuT didn't. It fragmented support for the sector, with services that have been given to other providers."* - VCS interview feedback

5.12.2. Engagement with commissioning

In the VCS organisation survey, 74 organisations responded to the questions on commissioning. Of those, 39% (29) said they were not interested in commissioning or were not prepared for commissioning, with the remaining 61% (45) stating they were at least somewhat prepared.

Figure 12: Preparedness for commissioning – 74 organisations



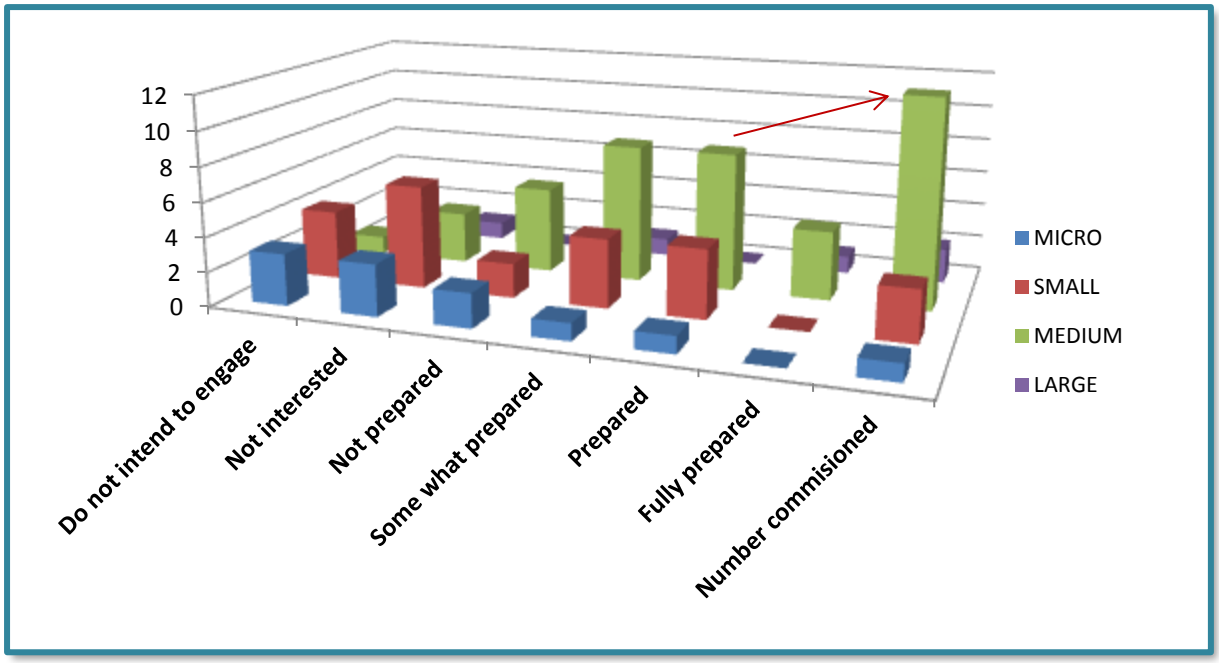
Organisations that have engaged with the commissioning agenda have spent resources including staff time developing partnerships and bids navigating legal aspects of contracting. VCS organisations have stated that these costs are not being offset:

> *"The process is very time consuming for the amounts involved"* - VCS survey respondent

> *"We have been commissioned to provide a service. During this time there has been a lack of communication, and a complete lack of understanding about what our service actually provides. The process has been uncomfortable and badly managed. There has been a lack of transparency. It has been a very demoralising experience"* - VCS survey respondent

The Council informed us that they offered transition grant funding to support organisations who were unsuccessful in securing provision of commissioned, however uptake for these grants was low, it wasn't known to the officer why this was the case.

Figure 13: Preparedness for and number of commissions by organisation by size



As indicated by the chart, medium sized organisations are the most 'prepared' for commissioning and have won the most commissions, this correlates with the income data for medium sized organisations. This shows that this size of organisation had been hardest hit by the decline and also this group makes up the largest segment of 29 organisations.

What is interesting about this graph is that those being commissioned do not perceive themselves to be fully prepared for commissioning, as some of those who only perceive themselves as 'prepared' rather than 'fully prepared' are being commissioned to deliver services, as highlighted on the graph by the arrow.

The view from the stakeholders through survey and interviews was that VCS organisations were 'somewhat prepared' or 'prepared'.

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5.12.3. Impacts of commissioning

Respondents stated impacts of commissioning have been negative and positive and occasionally both.

Negative impacts

- Loss of income and therefore services by some organisations
- Mission stretch or drift to secure a service
- Changes to service delivery that do not meet beneficiaries' needs
- Decline in relationships with VCS colleagues
- Loss of trust with commissioning organisations
- Higher levels of monitoring and evaluation, which have resource and skill implications
- Stress

"Relationships are strained because of competition and new collaborations. People are protective due to commercial competition detail causing issues. People aren't used to not talking so they shut down from talking about anything" – VSSP member

"We had to change to a less flexible, time limited service to meet the targets of our contract" – VCS survey

"Services that have been tendered out to large organisations are not always engaging well." - VCS survey

"It has caused a lot of heart ache and worry, but on the plus side we have worked closely with several other charitable organisations" - VCS survey

Positive impacts

- Increase in level or reach of some services
- New and longer term VCS partnership development
- Reviewing and renewing services to meet community need

"Overall we have increased the number of services we are delivering. Our concern is that the local authority does not appear to have fully researched demand and need. Needs analysis of large tenders should be done by external organisations" – VCS survey respondent

"Building partnerships/consortia – it's longer term, 3 year contracts." – VCS survey respondent

"It's an opportunity for real joined up thinking and real working together for the good of those in need in Richmond-upon-Thames borough… but build on existing services." – VSF feedback

"It has strengthened our service provision through prompting service remodelling and informing service development." – VCS survey respondent

"Services have become more target-driven, which has helped us review quality management. We have been able to reach 150% more people through a new contract" – VCS survey respondent

5.13. What does the future look like?

5.13.1. What are the challenges for the sector?

63 organisations responded to the question 'what are the main challenges you face?' A diverse range of comments were received, these have been collated by priority as below:

1. Funding and income generation, developing an effective fundraising strategy, diversifying income streams and increasing levels of earned income, and commissioning 52% (33)
2. Effective communication about their work and with target audiences 13% (8)
3. Business development, to generate income 11% (7)
4. Reaching and recruiting new members 8% (5)
5. Recruiting or developing trustees particularly with commissioning skills 8% (5)
6. Increasing costs and demand for services set against static or declining income 8% (5)
7. Accommodation that is suitable and affordable 6% (4)
8. Recruiting volunteers 6% (4)

Other concerns for organisations, with less than 5% (3) of organisations indicating them as challenges were:

- The threat or actual closure of the organisation due to lack of funding
- Establishing need or identifying gaps in current provision
- Partnership development and developing delivery relationships with organisations outside the borough to meet the demands of shifting or joint commissioning areas
- Local and global environmental issues i.e. climate change
- Recruiting and retaining staff with specialist skills to deliver services
- Maintaining the ethos of the organisation within a "competitive and commercial" environment

Comments from the survey included:

"Recruitment of a wider membership base and better advertising of our organisation so we can have a wider diversity of opinions and suggestions."

"We are only able to offer non-competitive salaries and no added 'extras'

"Identifying where the gaps are. What can be grant funded and what service users are prepared to contribute."

"We need Board members with experience and expertise with time to support commissioning, and resources to support evidence-based practice re monitoring our outcomes."

"The main challenges will be our continued capacity to compete, raise our profile as a partner and to apply for tenders. The continued competition from national and regional charities is growing; it will get tougher to compete against the large teams that are 'professional'."

Additional comments collated at the Voluntary Sector Forum meeting on 10th October prioritised

- Challenge of isolation or divisiveness caused by engaging with commissioning
- Need to adapt to the new structures
- Fragmentation of infrastructure support due to commissioning

5.13.2. What are the opportunities for the sector?

Existing opportunities

- **Personalisation**[13]

From the survey only one organisation stated an income from 'self-funders of health and social care'. Perhaps there is a lack of clarity around the term for organisations even though personalisation was raised in a few interview and survey responses. Personalisation will continue to be the focus of health and social care strategy into the future, presenting an income generation opportunity without the threat of mission drift.

VCS organisations need to be aware of the funding relevant to their clients and adapt how they develop and charge for their services to make the most of the opportunity.

> *"We need to start charging people where there are individual budgets, need clear information on costs, direct payments – then at the end of the day services survive. This is the way things are changing."* - Stakeholder interview

- **Social value**

The need to be able to communicate effectively about their work and monitor outcomes and impacts has been stated previously as an issue for VCS organisations and networks alike. Although commissioning has enforced more rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes, only one interviewee that engaged with this research talked about social value or making use of the 2012 Act[14] to influence funders or other stakeholders.

There is no universal definition of social value but in its Cabinet report of 17th January 2013 LBRuT takes the definition from Social Enterprise UK:

> "Looking beyond the price of each individual contract and looking at what the collective benefit to a community is when a public body chooses to procure."

VCS organisations in the borough are well placed to deliver against the social, environmental and economic priorities. The Council has elaborated particularly on the social priorities of:

- Promoting the health, wellbeing and independence of people and communities, providing opportunities for the most vulnerable to make a valuable contribution.

[13] Personalisation is the process of enabling people to be more in control of the support and services they receive. Every person who receives funding from health and social care public bodies will have choice and control over the shape of that support

[14] Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 implemented January 2013 requires Councils and other public bodies to consider economic, social and environmental wellbeing in procurement processes.

- Promoting the active involvement of retired people in the borough
- Enabling local people to develop, agree and deliver their own solutions to local issues

The Act applies to some funders and all other public bodies, so the application is more widespread than the example of the Council used here. Outside of the Act, being able to demonstrate social impacts and value is cited as being an effective way to communicate to business and other stakeholders in a language of shared understanding.

- **Commissioning**

Whilst it has been a challenge, the desire to embed commissioning also brings a number of opportunities for the future;

> *"We have few formal processes so there is a genuine shared space for innovation, provision and strategy development. There is an opportunity as there is more flexibility in budgets than in other areas but in 2 years' time this will change" – Commissioner*

> *"Co-production is an aspiration but only about 6 out of 10 are on the way to achieving full co-production"- Commissioner*

This sense of opportunity is shared by VCS organisations;

> *"An opportunity for real joined up thinking and working."- VCS organisation*
> *"Needs to be a partnership [between commissioners and the sector] not a 'them and us' arrangement."- VCS organisation*

- **Social media**

The use and prevalence of social media was only mentioned by one respondent in this research and could be underused in the sector. Social media has the potential to increase the profile, reach and targeting for organisations and should be explored further. Training and support would undoubtedly benefit future usage and uptake.

- **Business and external relationships**

As previously stated, relationships with business, education providers and housing associations appear under developed. There is openness, from those interviewed at least, to explore mutually beneficial partnerships where there are shared aims or target audiences. Organisations wishing to explore these opportunities need to be pro-active, clear about the potential fit with the other stakeholder and what the mutual benefits of working together are.

New opportunities

- **Achieving for Children**

The development of a new Community Interest Company (CIC) to manage the delivery of children's services which is being set up between Richmond-upon-Thames and Royal Borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames Borough Councils presents an opportunity for the sector.

Achieving for Children will serve both borough areas and the Company will be fully operational from 2014. There is the possibility that contracts for services will be delivered across both boroughs.

Interviews and qualitative feedback in the survey and from the Voluntary Sector Forum meeting indicated some concern over how the new Achieving for Children organisation will interact with and commission services from the sector. This comment from an organisation which otherwise is successfully engaged with the commissioning processes highlights the issue:

> *"We have no clarity re commissioning intentions from children's services. It has been very difficult to get any commitments about the future position, particularly following the merger with Kingston. It is not clear and there is no commitment to advise potential providers about how to influence priorities."*

There is an opportunity now for the VCS to influence this agenda, start creating partnerships in the neighbouring borough and to consider the appropriateness of their governance structures in advance of implementation.

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5.14. What are the unmet needs in the borough?

Responses (54) from both surveys and interviews to this question logically reflected the aims and beneficiary groups that organisations are working with. Thematic analysis of the survey data revealed some areas of common community concern or need, as cross-cutting issues regardless of the focus of the organisation:

- **Welfare reform**

16% (9) of organisations identified welfare reform as the greatest support need for their client group. Welfare reform covers changes to welfare benefits including the introduction of Universal Credit and more specific changes for people with disabilities such as the Disability Living Allowance being replaced by Personal Independence Payments.

These changes have increased demand for advice and guidance services for a range of organisations who also identified the multiple disadvantage that these groups within the community face:

> *"Welfare reform and the economic climate are causing huge financial issues for our clients - benefits issues, rising utilities bills, food being too expensive, housing issues. Our clients' cases are becoming more complex, time consuming and clients are becoming more distressed."* - VCS Survey feedback

> *"Our families have very complex needs and are facing multiple disadvantages (mental health issues, domestic abuse, substance misuse, physical handicap, bereavement, poverty etc.). They are socially isolated, poorly served by existing services and unfairly stigmatised as 'different' and 'worse' than 'normal' people. In reality they are like everyone else except that the breadth and depth of their challenges are much greater than normal."*
>
> - VCS survey feedback

- **Access issues**

15% (8) of organisations indicated that access to their service, either as a result of cost, travel, disability or a combination of these factors, were a major concern, particularly where organisations were uncertain about their own income and not in a position to assist with costs.

- **Housing and living costs**

15% (8) of respondents described housing and living costs as their greatest concern in relation to their client group. This relates both to the high cost of rented accommodation in the borough and uncertainty over welfare reform, mentioned above:

> *"Current economic climate - we are seeing more people on low incomes and in most cases this is due to the cost of living. Risk of losing jobs - this is causing stress/depression anxiety and pressure on individuals." –VCS interviewee*

- **Funding cuts**

7% (4) of organisations identified that funding cuts to their organisation prevented them from meeting community needs and reaching or serving their client group effectively:

"Most voluntary organisations stop all PR & marketing work when cuts threaten core services; they will lose reputation and profile - it will take them years to recover, if at all."

- VCS Survey feedback

Other areas identified by more than 5% of respondents were: difficulty in accessing volunteer support for their projects; lack of education and training opportunities for young people and the impact of multiple disadvantage.

5.15. What support is needed by VCS organisations?

18 of the 98 VCS organisations responding to the VCS survey indicated that they 'work with' voluntary sector organisations and 26 said they provide 'voluntary and community sector support'. Alongside the more known providers of infrastructure, seven are what would traditionally be seen as thematic service providers and five are faith based groups, indicating that support provision is quite broad based.

5.15.1. What is the value of current infrastructure support?

Survey respondents were asked to rate the support they received from support organisations in the borough. The results highlight the range of organisations providing support to the sector:

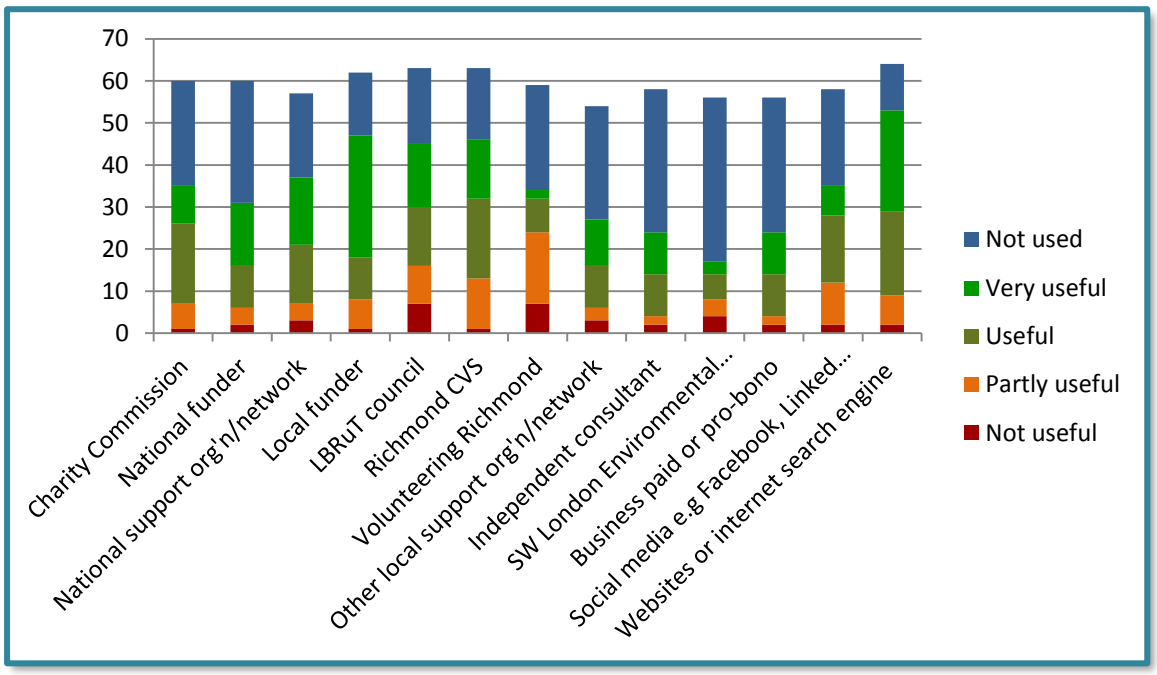

Figure 14: Usefulness of support provided – 68 organisations

Although not all respondents had used the support services of RCVS, the survey was publicised through the RCVS network. This means there is likely to be a greater reporting of contact and

usefulness for RCVS. LBRuT council and funders have a dual role for the sector which may also influence results.

Overall, respondents are positive about the usefulness of support organisations with the exception of Volunteering Richmond where responses for 'not useful' and 'partly useful' (24) are more than double that for 'useful' and 'very useful' (10).

There was also feedback in the survey and interviews that Volunteering Richmond were not able to reach new volunteers due to not having a consistent physical base in the borough to offer face-to-face support as had been the case previously with the Volunteer Centre and that the arrangement 'needed time to bed in'.

Interview feedback from VCS organisations and the Council suggest that infrastructure support is most important to smaller organisations without the capacity, network and membership of larger organisations or those with national affiliation:

> *"RCVS are able to support smaller groups, we're now bigger. There is certainly a role for RCVS to maintain the vibrant VCS in the borough."* – VCS interview feedback

Support and infrastructure services are being delivered by non-infrastructure larger organisations such as Richmond Carers Centre who have provided support to carers' organisations to engage with the commissioning process:

> *"We supported organisations to assess the risks involved in participating [in commissioning] – supporting them with information including on contracts and a legal advice service. We did have to pull in other resources (pro bono legal advice)."*

5.16. What support is needed by organisations?

Challenges identified in section 6.12.1 provide priorities that VCS organisations are seeking support on. Interview responses and feedback from the Voluntary Sector Forum of 10th October are included in addition in the themes below:

- **Commissioning support**

Support to engage with the commissioning processes was identified as a need. Organisations that have most successfully engaged with the process described the importance of pro bono legal support to fully understand contracts, and issues such as sub-contracting other organisations i.e. in a hub model, for example in the approach taken for the Richmond Carers hub.

Skills required to manage the commissioning process or contracts are more specialised than previous grant applications and monitoring. Those organisations that have been successful in the commissioning process have had this capacity at Board and staff level. There is a need to:

- **Support and develop boards** in thinking through the risk assessment, potential for collaboration and wider knowledge of the sector that is required for commissioning

- **Support and develop staff** with specific legal expertise around contracts – which some organisations have accessed through pro-bono support.

- **Future funding**

33% (25) of survey respondents stated that their ability to fund core costs had decreased, with only 17% indicating that their ability to fund the core costs of their organisation had increased. This trend was reiterated at the Voluntary Sector Forum where finding funding was the most common challenge for organisations.

- **Diversifying incomes**

Respondents identified that support was required to think creatively based on the needs of clients or beneficiaries to seek income diversification, through a combination of membership fees and services that are charged for

> *"We are moving away from grant funding. Income from other streams currently only covers 40% of core costs. We want the split to be the other way round."* - VCS Survey feedback

- **Partnership development**

Tailored support, facilitation and brokering of partnerships was needed by organisations who did not have the capacity to do this themselves. Linked to this was a need to increase awareness and understanding of expertise of local VCS organisations.

5.17. What is the future role of infrastructure?

Of 68 respondents to the survey question pertaining to infrastructure support, only two had not used any of the support providers listed. The remaining 104 organisations used three or more of the providers indicating that infrastructure support is being used and is useful to VCS organisations.

Support is also being sought by VCS organisations thematically, such as faith based or carers as indicated above. Coordination of support has not been raised as an issue, but perhaps there is a role for equipping and supporting organisations that are providing support currently 'under the radar' to groups, seeking out collaboration and partnership opportunities.

- **Voice and representation**

The role of voice and representation is required by stakeholders and that has traditionally been provided by infrastructure bodies:

> *"It's good to have an organisation that is a broker and a networker. RCVS has always provided that role for us – they know all of the VCS groups. They are also very familiar with local issues."* - Stakeholder interview feedback

Given the low level of proactive engagement with constituents on soliciting feedback by some VSSP member organisations, and that larger organisations we spoke to indicated that they already have direct contacts, actions need to be taken to ensure broad base representation and voice, particularly for small and micro organisations across the borough.

- **Targeted strategic influence**

Stakeholders and VCS organisations have both stated that there needs to be more engagement in and effective influence of strategic issues in the borough that is built on mutual trust and understanding. Infrastructure organisations have a role in equipping and facilitating VCS organisations to do this whilst increasing their own engagement at strategic levels.

- **Facilitating collaborative working within the VCS**

Pro-active brokerage of partnerships that is informed by organisational knowledge can reduce duplication, increase impact and reduce costs for organisations. Organisations having a need or desire to work together but have not identified a partner need a source of introduction and access to supportive expertise to lay the foundations for partnership working.

- **Facilitating collaborative working with business**

There is openness and recognition of the need to partner with business. Many of the organisations we spoke to did not have the resources to do this for themselves. Effective brokerage of these relationships could bring many benefits to VCS organisations. A sector overview and knowledge of the areas of work across the diverse range of organisations in the borough will be essential to delivering this role.

- **Raising the profile of the sector**

Help to enable VCS organisations to effectively communicate with stakeholders, raising their role and profile as well as that for the sector as a whole is deemed necessary by stakeholders;

> *"In meetings I had with the VCS I wasn't clear what they wanted, they didn't seem sure about themselves as providers, there weren't any clear objectives for the meetings and no clear indication of what they needed or wanted"* – Commissioner survey feedback

> *"We don't feel engaged with voluntary sector at strategic or delivery levels, we are open to approaches from VCS but that doesn't happen"* – Stakeholder survey feedback

- **Effectively communicating the role of infrastructure**

Infrastructure organisations need to be proactive and clear about their aims and remit and how different VCS organisations work together and providing a point of contact for external organisations to navigate the sector.

> *"it is not clear what RCVS remit was."* – Commissioner survey feedback

- **Compact development**

A revision of the Compact is underway with consultation between the Council and the sector. There is a role for infrastructure to ensure a robust Compact is delivered that ensures 'principles that are adhered to by both sides' and is used for consultation, commissioning and co-operation between the Council and the sector.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This section of the report draws together conclusions from the data collected and analysed. Conclusions are grouped following the structure of the findings within the report.

6.1. Conclusions

Value of the sector in Richmond-upon-Thames

a. Overall voluntary sector organisations make a huge contribution to the borough in both economic and social terms. The VCS is reported to be a vibrant, active and valued contributor.

b. Survey respondents (57 organisations) reported income of almost £24m in FY 2012- 2013. Given that secondary sources estimate 578 VCS organisations this work estimates the total income of the sector to be **£113m**. 37.5% of reported income is earned by the sector through charging for goods and services or membership fees.

c. Actual values reported in the survey show overall sector growth in FY 12-13 of 12.2% after a 0.8% decline in the previous financial year. This overall growth hides a **median level decline** of -13% since 2010, particularly affecting medium sized organisations. This means that a few organisations have seen their incomes increase whilst the majority have seen incomes decline. This could be in part, at least, related to the impact of commissioning.

d. Income growth had been particularly strong for micro and small organisations which have a high proportion of earned income; average growth was 40% on 2011-12.

e. Organisations with an income from LBRuT Council tend to have a high proportion of income from this source (average 40%). Five organisations indicate the level was 70% or more. This means a few organisations are heavily reliant on a rapidly changing and sometimes unpredictable income stream.

f. A relatively high level of funding from reserves, 56%, as indicated in the report, may be reflecting a short term decline in incomes as most had not changed their staffing arrangements. However this situation needs to be monitored and responded to appropriately.

g. Survey respondents reported employing 2,013 people in 686 full time equivalent posts (FTE). Year on year most reported that levels of staffing had 'stayed the same' or 'increased'.

h. Volunteers through the survey were said to number 4078 with 776 trustees, contributing £15.3m to the VCS in a year.

i. In extrapolating the staff and volunteer figures to estimate the value across the whole borough this work estimates there to be 1,640 FTE posts and volunteering to contribute £52.9m.

Partnership working and stakeholder analysis

j. Partnership working within the VCS is widespread, with relationships considered to be between 'fair' and 'very good'. However the current commissioning environment has created a counter-force of competition which has reduced contact between some VCS colleagues.

k. Partnership with business is less dense though many organisations have at least one contact with business. It is largely not meeting identified needs. Equally it is not being carried out strategically by many organisations responding to this survey. Survey respondents estimated the value of working with business to be £214,051.

l. Relationships with statutory organisations are noted by both VCS and statutory partners to be less good than desired. There is recognition that this is at least in part due to the commissioning process and that there is desire on both sides to build trust and good relationships.

m. In considering voice and influence, the VCS is thought to not be as proactively engaged at a strategic level as is possible or desirable. Although there is widespread engagement in consultation activities, very few stakeholders said they had been proactively approached by VCS organisations to clearly discuss their work strategically.

n. The VSSP grouping isn't deemed to be working for VCS organisations or external stakeholders as no clear benefit or raison d'etre for the grouping could be stated.

o. Relationships between the VCS and statutory sector are said to work best when inequalities are reduced, political involvement is low and when based on trust.

Commissioning

p. Although there have clearly been birthing pains in the implementation of commissioning, attempts have been made to respond to feedback to make the process and implementation easier for VCS organisations and improve outcomes.

q. Commissioning is not desirable to all VCS organisations nor do commissioners expect it to be. For those that are wishing to engage with the processes there is growing preparedness. 61% said they were 'somewhat' to 'fully' prepared. Both 'sides' have stated a shared understanding that they are all learning.

r. Impacts of commissioning have been both positive and negative, and whilst there is anxiety amongst VCS organisations there is a growing optimism about the future which is shared by commissioners.

The future

s. Funding, income generation, communications, and recruiting and retaining skilled trustees and volunteers are enduring needs of the sector. Increasingly, knowledge of contracting and associated monitoring requirements are additional needs to be effectively resourced.

t. Unmet needs around the impacts of welfare reform, access to services, housing and living costs are an issue for the borough and the equalities impact of these requires they are given careful consideration by all.

u. Opportunities for the sector include: personalisation, demonstrating social value, increasing use of social media, commissioning, Achieving for Children, the joint children's services delivery model operating across Richmond and Kingston boroughs, and establishing partnerships with businesses, Housing Associations and education providers all, of whom have indicated they are open to partnership working with VCS organisations.

v. The VCS use, value and need support and overall consider current provision to be useful. Support is usually taken from a range of providers, some of which are 'under the radar' as support providers, such as thematic providers in faith or social care.

w. There is a role for infrastructure to provide voice, representation and influence strategically, to facilitate a range of collaborative working partnerships and to raise the profile of VCS and its outcomes. The view from VCS organisations and stakeholders is that these need to happen in a more pro-active, robust and tangible way than has happened to date.

Support needed by the sector

x. Funding, income generation, effective communications, business development, recruiting and retaining staff, volunteers and trustees with appropriate skills continue to be a priority for VCS organisations.

y. Organisations that are locality based or targeting a specific group emphasised the need for marketing and publicity support, both to reach new members or clients and to demonstrate the outcomes of their work. This connects strongly with the increasing emphasis within both grant and contract funding of effective monitoring and evaluation systems, in proportion to the level of funding and service being delivered.

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6.2. Recommendations

Value of the sector

a. The income streams and values in this report should be used by organisations to compare against their own organisation's incomes to
   - Carry out an 'income risk assessment'. If any of their own incomes are above average or make up an above average proportion of their income, these incomes could be at risk and need to be monitored and potential decline mitigated against.
   - Identify additional income opportunities or potential to grow existing incomes

b. The funding of activities from reserves is a concern. This needs to be monitored and, if needs be, addressed by VCS and support organisations. This would establish what the contributing factors are that are requiring this to happen and identify any support or resource needs.

c. The volunteer value multiplier explained in the report can be used by organisations to gain a better understanding of volunteer value to their own organisations financially. Some funders allow the contribution of volunteers to be used as match funding and this should be explored.

Partnership working and stakeholders

d. VCS to VCS relationships should continue to be nurtured and engaged to a deeper level to secure maximum value.

e. Relationships between statutory organisations and VCS require pro-active repair and re-alignment to become a more equal partnership.

f. Partnerships with businesses should be developed in a professional way that is mutually beneficial. A suggestion from business was that organisations cluster to fund a business relationship management role across a number of organisations seeking to work with businesses so that the cost of this expertise is spread and business has a single point of contact.

g. The VSSP grouping needs to be reassessed to better reflect the needs of both VCS organisations and stakeholders with consideration given to the needs of smaller organisations which might not otherwise have a platform for strategic engagement.

Commissioning

h. VCS organisations will continue to need support to prepare and engage with the commissioning processes. Expertise and experience from peers or businesses should be sought and facilitated by commissioners and infrastructure organisations alongside grants.

It should also be established why there was low level uptake for the transitional grant funding offered by the council.

The future

i. Unmet community needs and the support needs of VCS organisations identified through this research need to be considered by stakeholders, particularly funders, and appropriately addressed.

j. VCS organisations should consider and where appropriate embrace and engage with the presenting opportunities of personalisation, social value, commissioning and not for profit sector partnerships. Engagement should be pro-active, based on relationship building and, if applicable, strategically co-ordinated.

k. A range of support options as used by VCS organisations should continue to be provided and supported.

l. The role of coordination, voice, representation and strategic influence should be effectively resourced and delivered, with monitoring that ensures representation is representative.

And finally

The VCS sector has been spoken of by many, stakeholders and VCS organisations alike, to be active, thriving and vibrant in the borough, and we concur with these statements. The VCS in LBRuT is broad, diverse and meeting a range of needs that might otherwise be left unmet. We endorse you for all that you are doing.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this project.

7. Appendices

7.1. Interviewees

Colin Cooper, CEO, South West London Environmental Network
David Done, CEO, Richmond Housing Partnership
Val Farmer, CEO, Richmond Borough Mind
Grahame Freeland-Bright, Head of Service Development & Commissioning, Joint Commissioning Collaborative
Gabe (Gabrielle) Flint, Principal, Richmond Adult Community College
Alison Hardacre, former Interim Head of Joint Commissioning Collaborative, Richmond Clinical Commissioning Group
Miranda Ibbetson, Clerk to the Trustees, Barnes Workhouse Fund
David Jackson - Partnership Manager, South London CVS Partnership
Cathy Kerr – Director of Adult & Community Services, LBRuT council
Rachel McLean, For Sanity's Sake (Social Enterprise)
Jonathan Monkton, Director, Richmond-upon-Thames Parish Lands Charity
Sandra Morrison, CEO, Age UK Richmond
Anne Newton, CEO, Richmond Borough Chamber of Commerce
Ben Richardson, Volunteering Development Co-ordinator, Volunteering Richmond
David Sidonio, CEO, Richmond-upon-Thames Council for Voluntary Service
Mandy Skinner, Assistant Director Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy, LBRuT Council
David Taylor, Funding Officer, Big Lottery
Darren Thornton, (former) Manager, Mortlake Community Association
Melissa Watson - Voluntary Sector Partnerships Manager, LBRuT Council
David White, Chief Executive, Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity
Melissa Wilks, CEO, Richmond Carers Centre

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7.2. Survey response variance

Organisation type	RCVS database	RCVS %	Survey	Survey %	Variance
Branch of national organisation	32.00	7.19	10.00	9.71	2.52
Community group	8.00	1.80	13.00	12.62	10.82
Faith group	15.00	3.37	6.00	5.83	2.45
Social enterprise	132.00	29.66	7.00	6.80	-22.87
Unknown	35.00	7.87	1.00	0.97	-6.89
Community Forum/Development Trust	6.00	1.35	2.00	1.94	0.59
Local voluntary organisation	216.00	48.54	41.00	39.81	-8.73
Self-help group	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Start up	1.00	0.22	0.00	0.00	-0.22
Other (please specify)			23.00	22.33	
	445.00	100.00	103.00	100.00	0.00

Who does your organisation work with? You can select up to 3	RCVS database	RCVS %	Survey	Survey %	Variance
Black minority & ethic communities	19.00	4.69	6.00	3.13	-1.57
Carers	18.00	4.44	14.00	7.29	2.85
Children & young people	22.00	5.43	37.00	19.27	13.84
Faith communities	61.00	15.06	4.00	2.08	-12.98
Families	10.00	2.47	23.00	11.98	9.51
Gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people	37.00	9.14	0.00	0.00	-9.14
Homeless people	1.00	0.25	7.00	3.65	3.40
Learning disabilities (people with)	30.00	7.41	12.00	6.25	-1.16
Long term/chronic illness (people with)	41.00	10.12	12.00	6.25	-3.87
Mental health needs (people with)	36.00	8.89	18.00	9.38	0.49
Older people	65.00	16.05	26.00	13.54	-2.51
Overseas beneficiaries	2.00	0.49	0.00	0.00	-0.49
Physical/sensory impairment (people with)	59.00	14.57	12.00	6.25	-8.32
Refugees and asylum seekers		0.00	3.00	1.56	1.56
Voluntary sector organisations	4.00	0.99	18.00	9.38	8.39
	405.00	100.00	192.00	100.00	

What are the main activities or services your organisation?	RCVS database	RCVS %	Survey	Survey %	Variance
Advice & advocacy	68.00	7.12	23.00	11.00	3.88
Arts	70.00	7.33	9.00	4.31	-3.02
Children & young people	22.00	2.30	26.00	12.44	10.14
Community development	73.00	7.64	17.00	8.13	0.49
Education	77.00	8.06	22.00	10.53	2.46
Environment	74.00	7.75	11.00	5.26	-2.49
Faith	12.00	1.26	6.00	2.87	1.61
Grant making	34.00	3.56	6.00	2.87	-0.69
Health & social care	187.00	19.58	26.00	12.44	-7.14
International aid/development	2.00	0.21	0.00	0.00	-0.21
Social housing	15.00	1.57	4.00	1.91	0.34
Sports & leisure	127.00	13.30	8.00	3.83	-9.47
VCS support	34.00	3.56	26.00	12.44	8.88
Volunteer involving	160.00	16.75	25.00	11.96	-4.79
	955.00	100.00	209.00	100.00	0.00

7.3. Volunteer and trustee values by organisation size

	Total No employees incl. sessional staff	Total No employee hours/week	Total No volunteers	Total volunteers hours/week	Total No of trustees/board	Total trustees/board hours per month
MICRO						
Total	2	60	45	46	38	204
Average	2	60	6	12	5	41
Median	2	60	6	13	6	45
Count	1	1	7	4	7	5
SMALL						
Total	30	510	997	952	144	1258
Average	3	32	62	60	9	79
Median	2	18	25	41	7	8
Count	9	16	16	16	16	16
MEDIUM						
Total	467	9806	1122	3022	244	2617
Average	16	350	43	116	9	97
Median	10	136	32	113	9	32
Count	29	28	26	26	27	27
LARGE						
Total	516	750	250	600	21	75
Average	172	750	125	300	11	38
Median	32	750	125	300	11	38
Count	3	1	2	2	2	2

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7.4. NCVO proxy estimate calculations

Total income estimate

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average as captured in SoS survey	£2,590	£41,025	£448,052	£4,733,333	
Total income estimate	£774,589	£7,669,477	£33,663,418	£71,156,117	**£113,263,602**

No of employees

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average as captured in SoS survey	2	3	16	172	**193**
Total employees	598	561	1202	2586	**4,947**

No of employee hours

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average as captured in SoS survey	60	32	350	750	**1192**
Total estimate	17945	5982	26296	11275	**61,498**

No of volunteers

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average as captured in SoS survey	6	62	43	125	**236**
Total estimate	1794	11591	3231	1879	**18,495.00**

No of volunteer hours

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average as captured in SoS survey	12	60	116	300	
Total estimate	3589	11217	8715	4510	**28,031.06**

No of TRUSTEES

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average as captured in SoS survey	5	9	9	11	
Total estimate	1495	1683	676	165	**4,019.48**

No of TRUSTEE hours/MONTH

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large	Total
NVCO National data % of whole	51.7	32.3	13.0	2.6	99.7
Pro rata estimate of Richmond-upon-Thames organisations	299.1	186.9	75.1	15.0	576.2
Average as captured in SoS survey	41	79	97	38	
Total estimate	12262	14769	7288	571	**34,890.22**

7.5. Learning for future State of the Sector Research

A number of areas were identified for consideration should a State of the Sector survey be commissioned in future:

Limitations of the research 'reach': Although feedback from a range of stakeholders was analysed and incorporated into the report there are limitations to its representativeness in such a large and diverse sector. Targeting gate-keepers (stakeholders with access to information or a representative role for the sector) can help to ameliorate this but there will always be a constraint on the number of interviewees and responses from organisations via the survey either as result of the budget for the work or peoples' ability to respond during the research period.

Uptake of the survey by the sector: Dissemination of the survey was supported primarily by RCVS through its e-mail bulletin list and contact database. Greater ownership of the dissemination of the survey by other network organisations in the sector may enhance the uptake and response rate for the survey. However the researchers perceive 'weariness' caused by the large number of online survey requests to the sector and there will always be a limitation to individuals and organisations capacity to engage. This effect could be mitigated against by face to face completion at booked meetings or events.

Linkage with other surveys and research: During the period of this State of the Sector research other work was taking place in the sector seeking the input of sector colleagues - specifically the South West London Environmental Network survey. Future research may benefit from a more co-ordinated approach avoiding duplication and reduced response rates as a result of similar pieces of work being undertaken at the same time, through earlier co-ordination and planning.

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