

Wandsworth Borough Council

Organisational Assessment

Dated 9 December 2009



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Wandsworth Borough Council

Overall, Wandsworth Borough Council performs excellently

Managing performance	4 out of 4
Use of resources	3 out of 4
Managing finances	3 out of 4
Governing the business	3 out of 4
Managing resources	3 out of 4

Description of scores:

1. An organisation that does not meet minimum requirements, Performs Poorly
2. An organisation that meets only minimum requirements, Performs Adequately
3. An organisation that exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Well
4. An organisation that significantly exceeds minimum requirements, Performs Excellently

Summary

Overall the London Borough of Wandsworth (the Council) performs excellently. It has continued to maintain an excellent rate of improvement. Continued improvement has been achieved in corporate and community priorities, including children's services, tackling crime, and delivering high-quality value for money services. Over three quarters of residents feel that they receive fair treatment by local services which are in the best performing levels of measurement and above London average. Council tax in Wandsworth is the lowest in England.

There is a difference between the scores that make up the two parts of this assessment: use of resources and managing performance. We believe that most of the Council's services perform excellently and continue to improve. For this reason, the Council is rated as performing excellently overall rather than performing well.

Contributions to wider community outcomes are strong with good partnership working with different organisations in the area such as health services, the police, private businesses, landlords and also people from community and voluntary groups and organisations. The Council has clear and challenging goals to build on its existing achievements to make the area an even better place to live while keeping spending under tight control. These ambitions include continuing improvements in education, health, social care, support for older people and housing alongside making the area safer. Good progress has been made in improving the environment and building a prosperous and vibrant community. Key successes over the last few years include reducing health and employment inequalities, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and reducing carbon use by the Council.

The Council's response to the impact of the economic recession has also been timely and effective. It has introduced good systems to implement tight financial controls as well as ensuring that risks are minimised. This has enabled the Council to achieve savings in both money and staff time which are above target. Almost all services are of outstanding quality and provide excellent value for money. Political and professional managerial leadership is effective. Performance management is excellent. Service performance is reviewed regularly within service areas and reported to senior officers and elected members through the Council's comprehensive annual quality and performance reviews.

The Council's ability to improve including the management of its services remains excellent and links appropriately with corporate priorities. This is obvious in the Council's consistently high performance across service areas particularly in areas identified as important. Leadership by managers is effective and professional. Alongside a stable administration, the Council has retained staff that have been in Wandsworth for many years and have recently recruited other key senior staff of high standard. The Council has a delivery-focused work culture, the 'Wandsworth Way', which is practical and based on a philosophy of "can-do" which is well understood by staff. As a result, all staff remain clear about their responsibility to deliver effective and continuously improving services.

People in Wandsworth have good physical health and healthier and safer lifestyles to help them lower their risk of illness, accidents, and long-term conditions. Fewer people need care or treatment in hospitals and care homes. People who have long-term needs and their carers are supported to live as independently as they choose, and have well timed, well-coordinated treatment and support.

Overall the Council scores three out of four for its Use of Resources assessment and is performing well. It continues to deliver excellent value for money in relation to the services it delivers in line with its long-standing corporate objectives.

Ofsted has rated children's services as performing excellently and the Care Quality Commission has rated the Council's adult social care as performing well.

About Wandsworth Borough Council

The London Borough of Wandsworth is the largest inner London borough with a population of just under 284,000. The borough has five main town centres; Clapham Junction, Balham, Wandsworth, Putney and Tooting. Wandsworth has the River Thames as a northern boundary and some important landmark sites such as Battersea Power Station. The borough also has large recreational spaces such as Battersea Park. A third of residents in Wandsworth are from an ethnic minority background which is lower than the London average but higher than the national average. However the area is becoming more diverse. Wandsworth has a high number of young adults with nearly half the population aged between 20 and 39. The area is distinctive as it has a high number of people moving in and out of, and within, the borough. The numbers of residents who are aged 0-14yrs and of people aged 65 are both

below the London average for these. The pattern of young single adults moving to the borough suggests that Wandsworth has a mobile population. House prices are among the highest in the capital.

A third of Wandsworth's population can be described as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) (including 'white other' and 'white Irish'), which is lower than the London average of 42 per cent. The largest ethnic group are White Other (11 per cent), Black Caribbean (four per cent), Indian (three per cent), Black African (three per cent). Population estimates forecast the population of Wandsworth will increase by four per cent by 2016 but this projected increase is not evenly spread across the Borough. The population of Queenstown ward is estimated to increase by over 25 per cent by 2016, whilst the populations of St Mary's Park and Thamesfield wards are estimated to grow by around 15 per cent. This reflects the longer term impact of riverside residential developments. However, there are decreases in population forecasts in Roehampton, Shaftesbury and Furzedown.

Wandsworth is a mainly residential area with much of the population travelling to work outside the borough. Unemployment is low in the borough, while average wages are high. Wandsworth has the highest proportion of residents with degree level qualifications in the country.

Overall, people in Wandsworth are better off than the average in London and England although there are inequalities across the borough with pockets of deprivation in areas of Roehampton, Battersea and Tooting. Crime levels in Wandsworth are lower than the London average and the borough is one of the safest in inner London. There are good transport connections with central London. There is planned investment in the further development of areas of the borough, particularly in Nine Elms ward, Battersea Power Station and Roehampton.

The health of people in Wandsworth is better than the England average. However there are large differences in life expectancy between different areas of the borough. The number of early deaths from heart disease and stroke has improved but is still just below the national average.

The Council has 60 elected members; 50 Conservatives; nine from the Labour party; and, one Independent. There is therefore a majority Conservative group which forms the administration and Cabinet. There are eight committees which scrutinise the decisions of the Executive and Cabinet. Local elections are due to be held in 2010.

The Council is committed to the ambitious long term vision for Wandsworth as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Council's own five strategic objectives (and sub-objectives) reflect the Council's priorities and its role as community leader in achieving this vision. They also reflect the Council's ongoing corporate ambition to deliver high quality, value for money services including keeping Council Tax amongst the lowest in the Country. The Council's priorities are set out in its Corporate Business Plan and are:

- Delivering high quality, value for money services
- Improving opportunities for children and young people with an emphasis on early intervention and preventive work

- Making Wandsworth an attractive, safe, sustainable and healthy place
- Providing personalised and preventative care and support for adults in need
 - including those in housing need
- Building a prosperous, vibrant and cohesive community

Organisational assessment

Delivering high quality, value for money services

Whilst satisfaction is variable for different types of services provided in Wandsworth, a large proportion (76 per cent) of residents feel that they receive fair treatment by local services which are in the best performing levels of measurement and above London average (68 per cent).

The Housing and Council Tax benefits service has cost less per customer to deliver but despite this the level of service provided has not deteriorated. There is good evidence of increased customer satisfaction with the service. This is indicative of the Council's performance culture where all Directors in the Council have clear targets set to deliver efficient and value for money services.

Residents have highlighted some issues for future action including the need to promote active citizenship and further build community spirit. This also includes residents themselves getting involved by taking responsibility for children's behaviour, participating in volunteering, and managing waste and recycling.

Steady improvement has been made in the way that Wandsworth is managing its waste. Seventy eight per cent of residents are very or fairly satisfied with waste collection which is better than the London and national averages (76 per cent). Levels of satisfaction with local tips and recycling facilities are also high at 68 per cent and above average (61 per cent). Increasing the amount of household waste sent for re-use, recycling or composting is one of the local priorities but so far rates are below average for England.

As costs for the disposal of municipal waste and managing recycled waste increase, there is a real incentive for the Council to encourage residents of Wandsworth to reduce the amount of waste it produces and, to recycle it where possible. There are specific plans in place to reduce waste being generated and increase recycling which could mean savings of over £632,000 a year. The Council also helps to make residents understand the benefits of reducing waste, such as creating a better environment, but with added assurance to residents that they will not see any reduction in their services such as the weekly collection of waste and recycling which are valued by them.

Local resident's satisfaction with levels of street cleaning is 64 per cent which is well above the national and London averages (59 per cent).

Residents who are satisfied with local bus services is relatively high (76 per

cent - average 72 per cent) and local transport information is rated high (61 per cent). These are in the highest performing measures in London and in England.

Improving opportunities for children and young people with an emphasis on early intervention and preventive work.

Children's services in the London Borough of Wandsworth perform excellently.

Overall a large majority of different types of services which are provided are judged to be good or better than in similar areas. However, the numbers of good or better secondary schools is lower than average and provisions for providing day-care for young children is satisfactory. Secondary schools are also satisfactory in the extent to which they help children enjoy and achieve and develop the skills and knowledge they require to be able to eventually find jobs. The most recent judgement for making children and young people safe was judged as outstanding. This was also the case for children who need to be specially looked after and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All special schools are judged to be good or better. The services for those children and young people who may be unable to take care of themselves or need support in children's homes, the local authority fostering agency, adoption agency and private fostering arrangements is consistently good. More pupil referral units, which are schools designed to help those children who might not fit in to the normal school systems for a variety of different reasons, are good or better than seen nationally or in similar areas.

Performance against a very large majority of national indicators is better than or in line with similar areas and the position nationally. Indicators show arrangements for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults to be carried out very effectively. Differences in achievement between children and young people from low income families and others are smaller than observed nationally and particularly so at age 19. Achievement gaps between children and young people with special educational needs who are following the national curriculum and their peers are also narrower.

Further work has gone into encouraging children from minority ethnic backgrounds to succeed in school. Boys in particular have been targeted for this through the 'Black Achievement Programme'. This initiative targets boys in three particular schools by means of mentoring, extra classes and support for parents.

The Council and its partners work well together to look after the overall health of children and young people. However, in terms of children and young people's health, there has not yet been the desired impact on reducing the numbers of obese children and teenage pregnancies. Childhood obesity continues to pose a challenge with levels rising amongst children in year six from 21 per cent to 24 per cent between 2006/07 and 2007/08. This is the eighth highest rate nationally. A range of initiatives to tackle childhood obesity have been put in place. These include the MEND Programme (Mind Exercise Nutrition Do it!) which involves training on many healthy lifestyle programmes for the family that last for eight weeks. The Council has introduced free swimming for under 16's at Council leisure facilities. There are other projects

such as weight management, food and fitness programmes, training and supporting outlets for affordable fruit and vegetables in deprived wards.

Reducing teenage pregnancies is an important target that the Council together with its partners have set in their Local Area Agreement. Results show that teenagers becoming pregnant are reducing although not showing a consistent downward trend. A teenage pregnancy strategy was developed in 2001 and updated in 2007. Four young people's sexual health clinics have been established. Between 1998 and 2005 the teenage pregnancy rate fell by 19 per cent, from 71 to 53 conceptions per 1,000 girls aged 15-17. But since then there has been an increase with the rate in 2006 rising to 58 per 1,000 females, compared to the national average of 41 and rising to 61 per 1,000 in 2007, partly reflecting the national trend. In view of this, the Council and its partners agreed to place an extra focus on improving local information for key areas. This will help to reduce rates of conception, repeat terminations and also to improve the school attendance and school and college results of vulnerable girls. Delivering sex and relationships education is also being tackled.

The economic position and school and college results of those who may be unable to take care of themselves or need support remains good overall. However, in some cases the recession may have had an impact. Level two (GCSE or equivalent) qualifications by the age of 19 have improved to 72 per cent and are about equal with the London average (73 per cent) and this is one of the adopted local priorities. The number of care leavers in education, employment or training has fallen to 84 per cent but remains higher than the national average of 68 per cent. Achievement and skills levels generally remain in the high compared with the rest of the country and are improving.

Making Wandsworth an attractive, safe, sustainable and health place.

Wandsworth is one of the safest boroughs in Inner London. The police and the Council are working well together to tackle crime in the areas that matter most. These include violent crime; theft and burglary; drug-related offences; crimes committed by young people in particular; and, the fear of crime itself. The rate that crime is committed continues to fall and between 2008 and 2009 recorded crimes have reduced overall by nine per cent. There have been some real successes including a notable decline in gun crime and burglaries from houses. Good progress has also been made in relation to robberies against the person and also in relation to vehicle crimes and serious acquisitive crime. The rates of re-offending continue to fall.

The satisfaction with the Council and the police dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues is about average at 29 per cent. There has been an increase recorded in anti-social behaviour but the number of residents who think that anti-social behaviour is a very or fairly big problem in Wandsworth is below the national and London averages. The Council is tackling these issues and has suitable plans in place.

Road safety in Wandsworth has improved. By 2008 the number of people killed or seriously injured has decreased by 54 per cent since 1998, meeting the Mayor of London's target of a 50 per cent fall by 2010. Between 2007 and 2008 the total number of casualties from road traffic accidents actually

fell slightly and the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents decreased by 30 per cent. This is not as good as other similar areas in London. Wandsworth has several local schemes in place to improve on road safety and needs to ensure that improvements are maintained.

The Council has made good progress in tackling environmental issues in both the way in which it operates and in service delivery. The Council's priority for building an environmentally friendly community is a wide-ranging theme. It includes both the environment and transport.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) affects global warming, so that controlling the amount of carbon produced helps ensure a healthy climate for future generations. The Council is committed to reducing its own CO₂ emissions. In 2008 the Council signed up to the Nottingham Declaration, which is a statement on supporting climate change made by local authorities. By signing the Declaration councils and their partners pledge to systematically address the causes of climate change and to prepare their community for its impacts. The Council recognises the significance of climate change and has made a commitment to produce action plans in the next two years.

The Council is working in partnership with schools to encourage pupils to walk, cycle or use public transport. There has been a reduction in the number of pupils travelling by car from 30 per cent in 2004 to 25 per cent by 2008.

Providing personalised and preventative care and support for adults in need - including those in housing need.

Wandsworth is performing significantly better than the England average in a number of key areas, including smoking in pregnancy, encouraging adults to eat healthily and be physically active and providing incapacity benefits for mental illness. Wandsworth also compares well for breast feeding initiation (96 per cent - London average 82 per cent), adult obesity and diabetes. Life expectancy is increasing in line with the national trend, albeit still with significant differences within the area. The rates of death from cancer have decreased over recent years but higher than the target. Other areas of concern include rates of tuberculosis, hip fractures in the over 65s, deaths from smoking and early deaths from heart disease and stroke.

The performance indicators for people's overall health and wellbeing is in the highest performing categories (86 per cent - London average 79 per cent). Adult participation in sport and active recreation is virtually the best in London and top performing.

Key health issues in Wandsworth include smoking related diseases. Overall, death rates from all causes have fallen from 395 per 100,000 population in 2000 to 352 in 2005. But smoking related deaths are slightly higher than the national average. Estimates suggest that almost one in three adults in Wandsworth smoke, which is a higher proportion than in England as a whole. Around 35 per cent of deaths in people aged over 35 in Wandsworth are thought to be attributable to smoking, which reflects the English average. However, death rates from lung cancer are above the national average. These are all issues affecting the more deprived wards of the borough,

showing the health inequality between different parts of Wandsworth. The Council and its partners have included a target on helping people to stop smoking particularly in the poorer wards in the borough which is well on target to be met.

The Council has a strong commitment to providing support for people needing social care. The Care Quality Commission has rated the Council's adult social care as performing well. There is a clear focus on increasing the choice and control that people have over the services they receive. People are supported to live at home through schemes such as the on line shopping service provided through Age Concern.

A high number of people now receive Telecare - this is equipment and services that support people to live safely and independently in their own home. More people, particularly those with learning disabilities now receive Direct Payments. These are payments for people who have been assessed as needing help from social services. They then arrange their own care and support instead of getting them directly from the Council. However waiting times for major adaptations such as ground floor facilities and ramps have increased. The Council's own survey indicates that 91 per cent of people who use this service are happy with it.

The Council recognises the need to increase the numbers of carers it supports and the range of services available for them. It is introducing a new assessment process to address this. A plan with specific actions included has been produced by the Council and involving carers to raise the profile of support for carers within the borough and to ensure the engagement of other authorities and voluntary organisations in delivering this.

The Council together with its partners has made significant progress in raising awareness of protecting adults from harm and abuse. However the Council recognises that more still needs to be done in this area.

In addition to this, the Council and its partners are continuing to invest in an approach which includes other providers of social and leisure services to help maintain older people's independence and reduce the risk of falls. The Wandsworth Primary Care Trust also expects to expand further the Expert Patient Programme (EPP) in Wandsworth to reach even greater numbers of older people. This should also have some good outcomes on long term dependency on statutory support.

The Council continues to own and manage its social housing stock after strong endorsement from tenants. The Council owns and manages around 17,000 homes in the borough and has responsibility for maintaining the common parts of 16,000 ex-council leasehold properties. All of the Council's properties already meet the Decent Homes standard and energy efficiency ratings are above average, reflecting sustained and effective investment in its homes. Spending money on improvements such as entry call, communal lighting, CCTV and other estate services also provides security and well-maintained living areas for residents. Performance in the area of housing management is strong. Seventy per cent of tenants were satisfied with the overall housing management service in 2008/09.

Housing conditions in the private sector are being steadily improved. The level of non-decent private sector housing in the borough is slightly above the

national average, with almost 38,000 private sector homes failing to meet the decent homes standard. This is largely explained by the age of the housing stock - more than half the private sector homes in Wandsworth were built before 1919 compared to around a quarter in England as a whole. A mixture of money from grants and making private landlords spend money on work has been used to raise standards. There has also been money spent to support more private tenants who may be unable to take care of themselves or need support. In the past year, 456 non-decent homes were improved and 50 long-term empty homes were returned to use. Work on empty homes and providing warmth to those who are poorer in the year ahead will also be strengthened by grant bids which have totalled around £1.5 million. However, high demand for grants for disabled adaptations and renovation work still means that not all demands can be met quickly.

Wandsworth does have a track record of delivering more social rented homes besides new larger developments by converting disused land or properties on their existing estates. By September 2009, the 'Hidden Homes' scheme had delivered 170 social rented and shared ownership homes in Wandsworth. The Council promotes the scheme and offers help to other boroughs seeking to try something similar.

The Council and its partners are doing well in tackling homelessness. Performance is good in terms of the number of people in temporary accommodation and acceptance rates and prevention. Wandsworth was the first inner London council to meet the government's target to halve the number of homeless households occupying temporary accommodation and in 2008/09 no family households with dependent children were in bed and breakfast for more than six weeks. However, in 2008/09 for length of time spent in hostels before being housed was 52 weeks and for bed and breakfast accommodation it was just under four weeks. The overall length of stay in temporary accommodation averaged 27 months, although, the vast amount of the properties used by the council are of a standard at least equivalent to that of the permanent housing stock. Long stays in non-self contained temporary accommodation can have a negative impact on some people's well-being and works are currently underway to improve the standard of such accommodation.

There has been an increase in dedicated housing for older people. Chestnut House, a 41 extra care scheme accommodation opened in January 2009, which will complement the accommodation already available in the borough in Mary Court. Further accommodation plans for older people including three further extra care schemes are to be developed over the next three years.

Building a prosperous, vibrant and cohesive community.

Wandsworth has low levels of poverty compared to other parts of the country. However, it is particularly exposed to the adverse impact of the recession. It is the London authority with the largest concentration of its resident workforce working in the property sector and has the fourth highest dependency on work in the financial services sector. There are inequalities across the borough with areas of poverty particularly in parts of Roehampton, Battersea and Tooting. Current indications are that there is uneven progress in narrowing these gaps in some circumstances. The Council recognises the

need to tackle these and has plans in place to deal with them but further progress needs to be made.

Eighty five per cent of people are satisfied with the area as a place to live which is considerably higher than the London average (75 per cent). The figure for those over 65 years of age is very similar at 86 per cent (average 77 per cent). Seventy nine per cent of people think that people from different backgrounds get on well with each other which is higher than the London average (76 per cent). Wandsworth ranks highest in the country for the number of residents (70 per cent) who think that the Council promotes the interests of local people. The Borough is also consistently in the top set of figures for people believing they can influence local decisions. However, perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration is below average at 35 per cent (37 per cent).

The unemployment rate in Wandsworth at the beginning of 2009 was three per cent. This is lower than the London average, but higher than the national one. Claimants for jobseekers allowance are low and there are low levels of people not in education, employment or training and a very highly qualified resident workforce. Helping people who are out of work is an area of focus for the Council and it is being tackled through joint projects with partners in education and jobseeker agencies. Targets have been set to reduce the number of claimants by over ten per cent by 2010, with an emphasis on incapacity benefit claimants. Certain specific groups are also being targeted. One such group is young black men, where the Council is joining with a specialist outreach and job brokerage recruitment service to help young black men of Caribbean heritage to get jobs, and prepare bids for funds. This initiative has only been in place since April 2009 but should have good prospects of improvement for this group.

Wandsworth is at the forefront of widening the focus of Central government 'Prevent' funding and has reached agreement to make flexible use of these additional resources to engage with all sections of the community to improve cohesion rather than take a narrow approach which might harm community relationships.

CAA looks at how well local public services, working together, are meeting the needs of the people they serve. It's a joint assessment made by a group of independent watchdogs about the performance of local public services, and how likely they are to meet local priorities. From 9 December you will find the results of Comprehensive Area Assessment on the Oneplace website - <http://oneplace.direct.gov.uk/>

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Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ
Telephone: 0844 798 1212
Fax: 0844 798 2945
Textphone (minicom): 0844 798 2946
www.audit-commission.gov.uk



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