

- Re-launching the WLA extranet this month;
- Providing expertise for the e-government component of the WLA Community Cohesion Pathfinder;
- Liaising with the London Connects programme; and
- Joining-up the "jobs" web pages across all six boroughs.

Single Programme funds for Heathrow City Growth Strategy

The LDA are supporting an area programme which promotes economic development in ten wards straddling three local authorities – Ealing, Hillingdon and Hounslow. A total of £12m (including leverage) over four years will be invested in:

- business competitiveness;
- entrepreneurship;
- skills and employment; and
- physical infrastructure

Park Royal/Wembley

The LDA are also supporting a major regeneration initiative which seeks to realise the potential of the Park Royal/Wembley area as a preferred business location within West London. The total LDA budget for the 3-year period to 2007 is £35,0110,000. However, projects can also benefit from European Objective 2 funds.

The Park Royal/Wembley programme will include regenerating brown field land, promoting economic diversity and linking local communities to employment opportunities.

Recruitment & Retention in Social Services

The WLA Social Services Group has been re-launched, with the explicit objective of addressing retention of employees and consolidating links with local training providers. Currently, the group is exploring ways of co-operating on overseas recruitment in order to achieve a cost effective and mutually beneficial joint programme.

Other work streams which are being

developed include preferred supplier agreements with recruitment agencies, customised training packages and marketing West London as a good place to live and work.

WLA Co-ordinator

A two-year secondment to the post of West London Alliance Co-ordinator has been finalised. Doreen Charlton has joined us from Camden and took up her post in mid-August.

Stop Press

The WLA HR Group are hosting a Basic Skills Seminar for senior managers across the six boroughs. Aimed at those who are interested in accessing LSC funding for training, recruitment and retention it will

WEST LONDON ALLIANCE STRUCTURE:

The West London Alliance comprises of the London Boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow. Other West London Boroughs, such as London Borough of Richmond upon Thames and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea also work closely with the WLA on areas of mutual interest.

Currently, the active working groups are:

- **Strengthening the Sub-Region Steering Group**
- **Environment Group**
- **Human Resources Group**
- **Social Services Group**
- **LGOL Group**
- **Transport Strategy Group**
- **Heathrow Information Group**
- **Planning Group**
- **Housing Group**
- **Community Cohesion Pathfinder**
- **Economic Development Officers Group**
- **WL Construction Training Planning Forum**

West London Partnership is a sub-regional forum, which brings together West London Alliance, West London Business and West London Community Network.

The West London Alliance Secretariat

The West London Alliance (WLA) has seen many changes since its inception in 1998. In the last five years we have had some important successes, some of which are highlighted within the newsletter. Both in meeting the challenges of changes in local and central government and also in setting

also endorse a sub-regional Workforce Development Network.

A pan-West London group has met to explore the benefits of working together on **Information Sharing for Children at Risk of Social Exclusion (IRT)**. There is general agreement that working together across the sectors would be advantageous in terms of responding to the government's guidelines.

up and delivering strategies that make a difference to our communities via our strong working partnerships and networks.

Working extensively with not just our local authority partners, but local businesses and their organisations engaging extensively with our local communities and voluntary organisations under the community cohesion banner to ensure we make a difference to West London.

To meet the growing challenges and to ensure that the work of the WLA continues to be both effective and innovative we have strengthened the WLA Secretariat by being able to secure additional external resources to provide a central resource and co-ordination for the partnership.

The team is made up of: Doreen Charlton, WLA Co-ordinator on a two year secondment from the London Borough of Camden. Harriet Cain Temp WLA Officer, Economic Development Strategy. Claire Codling, WL Community Cohesion Partnership Co-ordinator, funded by the Community Cohesion project, on an 18-month secondment from the London Borough of Harrow. and Andres Crespo Partnership Manager based at London Connects.

Together they form a team which will increase the WLA's profile and capacity, to build on our successes. The London Borough of Ealing is playing host to the team.

This could not be done without the continued support and commitment of the six partner local authorities.

To continue, the WLA will embark on a programme of raising the organisations profile, not just in the West London region, but across London and nationally.

For further information, please contact Doreen Charlton, WLA. Email: charltond@ealing.gov.uk

Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2003



WEST LONDON ALLIANCE

Promoting Community Cohesion in West London

As one of the most ethnically diverse regions in the country West London has much to be proud of. In general terms a cohesive and inclusive community has largely been sustained. However, past experience tells us there could be challenges ahead.

The WLA are therefore pleased to have been successful in securing £600,000 of Home Office funds to promote "Community Cohesion".

As one of fourteen Pathfinders across the country, West London's programme is the only sub-regional initiative, and also the only programme which involves all sectors – public, private and voluntary.

The Pathfinder will offer a unique opportunity over the next fifteen months to pilot activities and structures which reinforce best practice, encourage professionals to learn from each other, and promote a dialogue across all stakeholders.

The objectives are:

- to promote a community cohesion ethos across all sectors;
- to establish a better understanding of communities and strengthen the connections between groupings where they are weak;
- to positively influence the media's portrayal of the region and its residents;
- to develop the capacity and confidence of local communities so they can interact effectively with the public sector; and

- to help shape the approach of Local Authorities, Police and the Fire Service in relation to local communities.

The partners include: West London Alliance, West London Business, the Voluntary Sector, the Police, Fire Service, Health Sector and local newspapers (Trinity Mirror Group).

Three theme groups have been formed:

- Communication and Dissemination of Information
- The Public Sector meeting the Challenge of Community Cohesion
- Developing Communities through Strengthening Community and Voluntary Activities

Each theme group has representation from both voluntary and community sectors, as a demonstration of the strong commitment which already exists.

Individual projects within the theme groups have been designed to add value to other cross cutting initiatives, including Neighbourhood Renewal, London Development Agency (LDA), area interventions, Healthy Living schemes, recruitment and retention initiatives plus the actions stemming from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

The first key stakeholder meeting was held in July, with a half-day workshop which attracted representatives from forty stakeholder organisations.

For further information, please contact Claire Codling, West London Community Cohesion Co-ordinator. Email: codlingc@ealing.gov.uk

West London Housing Strategy

West London is the first of the London sub-regions to develop an Area Housing Strategy. The Strategy was launched at the House of Commons in July. The six WLA boroughs plus the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, see it as a framework for future collaboration. It is also intended to assist the London Housing Board in assessing options for housing investment across London.

The economy of West London is set to deliver well over 100,000 new jobs by 2016. The anticipated growth in population is expected to increase faster than current plans for housing provision. There is likely to be a shortfall of 35,000 homes just to accommodate these new households.

The continued rise in house prices beyond the reach of people on low and middle incomes threatens the ability of West London to attract and retain skilled workers. Even with a deposit and the maximum mortgage, the average equity gap for the cheapest housing in West London is over £80,000 for those on average incomes.

The quality of housing is also a problem, across all tenures. Over 50,000 homes in West London are classed as unfit, with the

(continued overleaf)

majority of these being in the private sector.

With high and rising private sector rents, the lack of local affordable housing has clearly become a very real threat to economic growth.

West London boroughs will work together to increase the supply of housing using a combination of planning tools, development and private sector renewal. In the forthcoming Local Development Frameworks, individual authorities will seek to respond to local needs as well as reflect the agreed vision. In addition, the possibility of a cross-borough Developer Forum will be explored.

West London Business

Kate Ashton has been appointed interim Chief Executive of West London Business, (WLB). WLB was formed principally by bringing together the West London Chamber of Commerce and West London Inward, in co-operation with other borough chambers. Its aim is to provide a unified voice for business in West London.

WLB has over 250 members, ranging from multi-national blue chip companies, small and medium sized businesses and sole traders. These include the BBC, GlaxoSmithKline, BSKyB, Brunel University, British Airways and BAA.

The WLA works closely with WLB on strategic issues of shared interest and together have formed the West London Partnership (WLP).

Kate herself is a West London enthusiast. She lives in the area and has worked very hard for West London and its interests over the last few years. She has held positions at both London West Learning and Skills Council and London Central Learning and Skills Council, where she managed the directorate with special responsibility for working with businesses. She also has had significant experience of working with a wide range of stakeholders, from businesses and local authorities to regional development agencies.

Kate takes over from Peter Hawkes, who has left a healthy legacy. She aims to achieve a seamless transition by continuing to articulate the needs and priorities for West London business in the pan-London arena.

WLA Transport Strategy

The anticipated growth in West London's economy, and the quality of life enjoyed by its residents and visitors will largely depend on facilitating movements of goods and people in a more environmentally sustainable way. The West London Transport Strategy, developed across WLA partners, is pursuing a vision for getting the balance right across all modes of transport including, freight, public transport and cycling. Only an innovative approach to the movement of goods and people can allow for higher density development at major hubs and key economic, social and cultural centres across the region.

The Freight Quality Partnership is one example of a recent initiative within the WL Transport Strategy.

Part of a nation-wide initiative launched by the Dept for Transport, the Freight Quality Partnership is an initiative which will bring local authorities and those enterprises that are freight operators together to formulate a sustainable approach to distribution networks, routes, deliveries and goods-in facilities.

However, balancing the needs of business distribution against environmental effects will involve developing a more sophisticated rail, road and space allocation for freight movements, both in town centres and residential areas in the longer term. For further information, please contact stevensa@ealing.gov.uk

FEATURE

Understanding West London's Sub-Regional Economy

The WLA and WLB are collaborating on a major initiative, supported by the LDA, to drive forward a Sub-Regional Economic Development Strategy for West London. An early vision of what might constitute a competitive and successful economy will be explored at a consultative conference, scheduled for October 2003, to which all stakeholders will be invited.

Once general agreement emerges on what the core issues might be, a shared agenda for the sub-region can be progressed incrementally, building on baseline research already undertaken by the consultants PACEC.

Commissioned by the LDA, PACEC define

a successful economy as an ability to secure economic benefits, social well being, and an acceptable environment. Their findings are summarised below.

PACEC's West London Findings:

The West is one of the fastest growing sub-regions in London. Between 1990 and 2000 the population increased by 13%. Employment growth is strong, increasing by almost 4% over 1995-2000 and unemployment remains low at 4.1% (2002).

The West falls within the top two of London's sub-regions and performs well relative to the rest of urban England. It is strong on social well-being indicators and has relatively low levels of multiple deprivation.

Over the last 20 years in London there has been a particular growth in financial services, retail and distribution, but particularly so in the west of London. Additionally, there has been a higher growth of SMEs than in other parts of London over the last decade.

While business services, computing, education and property are the main job creating sectors across London, in the west there has been a marked growth in activity related to air transport, with a specific cluster focused on Heathrow. There are also significant clusters in cinema, TV and business support.

Output and productivity in the West is the highest in London, even though the sub-region does not have a particularly diverse industrial base. In distribution, retail and leisure, for example, productivity is almost twice that of south and north London.

The utilities sector, which includes communications, is continuing to grow and the level of hi-tech employment (which PACEC uses as a measure of innovation) is positive. However, part-time employment (indicating labour market flexibility) is unfavourable in all of London, and particularly so in the west.

Drivers for Change

PACEC conclude that:

West London is likely to continue as a significant centre for corporate management and investment due to HQ activities. In addition, it is a centre for media and creative industries, ICT, and food processing activities, all of which depend on

an international market.

In this context air transport and the planned expansion of Heathrow (Terminal 5) has the potential to enhance the role of West London as a major international and national gateway for London.

Some of PACEC's negative findings:

The labour market in West London is relatively tight and shortages of skills present a problem for many companies and public sector agencies.

Continuing skill shortages will make recruitment difficult and high general costs, competition for sites and congestion, could hamper employment activities.

Although the industry mix has been favourable in the past, there are potential structural problems (linked to airport-related activities and other strong sectors) due to relatively low industrial diversity and low opportunities for small business and employment.

Housing deprivation, as a result of overcrowding and poor conditions, is severe in parts of the sub-region, raising issues about housing supply.

Finally, reported crime rates continue to be relatively high for the region as a whole.

PACEC's Priorities for Action:

Strengthen the main locations and development nodes for international headquarters, gateway functions, manufacturing, high-tech services, and tradeable services (creative industries, ICT, tourism and leisure).

Strengthen site availability and premises for inward investors, indigenous firms, and business starts in services and manufacturing through redevelopment of site nodes and town centre improvement.

Improve radial and orbital rail and road transport links.

Increase and improve the housing stock and supply, for intermediate and lower skill groups.

Develop customised training and educational provision for firms and residents.

Address areas of disadvantage through Neighbourhood Renewal.

Build the West London organisational base to include strong private sector leadership in order to co-ordinate strategy development, implementation and evaluation across the sectors.

West London's Response to the Draft London Plan

The Mayor's Draft Spatial Development Strategy for London, to which the boroughs plans must generally conform, maps out a social, economic and environmental framework for the next 15 to 20 years. The overall vision is one of promoting London as a sustainable world city.

This will necessarily involve accommodating growth, both in the economy and the population. However, in terms of the detail, assumptions contained within the London Plan will need to be made more explicit and a dialogue established to accommodate local considerations.

Prior to its adoption as the strategic plan for London, an "Examination in Public" (EIP) was held at the Greater London Assembly (GLA) earlier this year. The Chief Planning Officer of the London Borough of Harrow, Graham Jones, in conjunction with the other WLA boroughs presented West London's response.

Comments were tabled on a number of sub-regional strategy issues including parking. However, the main point raised in the presentation was the need for orbital transport in West London.

The key concerns related to how growth could be accommodated successfully within the sub-region. Such matters as the importance of town centres, orbital transport links and housing growth were covered in depth.

The EIP report is now available and the Mayor will be considering how to respond to its recommendations. One matter that he has already said that he will be reinforcing is the importance of town centres, both economically and socially.

Following the anticipated publication of the London Plan in December 2003, developing a sub-regional planning framework will be key to the process of aligning regional, sub-

regional and local ambitions.

It is as yet unclear whether the Sub-Regional Development Frameworks will eventually take on the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance.

WLA LGOL Programme

The WLA Local Government on Line (LGOL) Group has won £340,000 from ODPM in the latest round of LGOL partnership funding. Initially two projects will be prioritised:

- Developing the on-line housing nominations application LOCATA, and
- implementing an e-consultation tool.

LOCATA

LOCATA, was launched in April 2003 by the Housing Minister, is a system within the social housing sector that allows prospective tenants to choose their new home simply and easily, across the boroughs of Brent, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Ealing. It marks the end of traditional housing waiting lists and integrates Council provision with that of local Housing Associations.

All empty council and Housing Association homes are now advertised in a fortnightly free information sheet.

Picked by the government as a good pilot for making the system of finding a home more efficient, it has been a resounding success.

E-Consultation

The e-consultation project will develop an on-line tool, which all six boroughs will be able to use, either individually or collectively, for major consultation exercises.

A crucial success factor in the growing strength of the WLA LGOL Group, led by the Assistant Chief Executive of Brent, has been its ability to follow through on smaller scale partnership projects. Not only are these useful in their own right but they maintain the momentum whilst larger scale projects are being delivered. A further boost has been the appointment of a Partnership Manager – a role that has been funded by the partners themselves.

Examples of other e-government activities are:

