# CVA Hosts Beacon Advisory Panel

Cornerstone House and Waterside Centre, two voluntary action centres run by CVA, hosted a meeting with the Beacon Panel, who visited Croydon to assess the borough's application for the Beacon Award in 'Increasing Voluntary and Community Sector Service Delivery'.

A number of representatives from Croydon Council and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) were on hand to meet the assessors, who visited Croydon on 14 November to gather more information before deciding whether or not Croydon will be granted another Beacon award.

During the Cornerstone House session Councillor Enley Taylor, Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Customer and Organisational Services, formally welcomed the panel members, while Brian Stapleton, Divisional Director for Policy and Corporate Services at Croydon Council, elaborated on the structures and partnership schemes in place for enhancing voluntary sector service delivery.

Jane Doyle and Steve Liddicott, divisional directors at Croydon Council's social services department gave presentations on the commissioning process while Steve Phaure, CVA Chief Executive, and Nero Ughwujabo, BME Forum Director talked about capacity building services provided by their respective organisations to the VCS.

*(L-R) Nick Montgomery-Pott, Home Office; Brian Horner, Specialist Panel Member; Ernest Opuni, IDeA; and Steve O'Connell and Enley Taylor, deputy leader and cabinet member for community cohesion, respectively.*

During the second part of the assessment visit, the Beacon Advisory Panel heard presentations from several voluntary organisations, underscoring the role Croydon Council has played in improving their service delivery capacity.

Judging from their remarks at the end of the visit, the Panel seemed pleased by the range of partnership working and capacity building schemes currently going in the borough. By February 2007 Croydon will know whether it has won yet another Beacon Award.

Brian Stapleton, one of the architects of the bid, said: "Without doubt, it was a good day for the voluntary sector in Croydon. The Beacon assessors were clearly bowled over by the tremendous enthusiasm everyone showed during their visit. The presentations were all very impressive and matched the quality and vibrancy of the visual displays at the Waterside Centre. The Beacon visit was all about bringing our bid to life. We certainly achieved that."

If successful, this will be the 5th time Croydon has won a Beacon Award. Over the last two years Croydon has won the beacon awards for 'Getting Closer to Communities' and 'Improving Housing Services by Tenant Involvement'.

Beacon status is granted to local authorities in recognition of excellence in specific service areas as well as good overall performance.

*To keep informed about how Croydon is doing in its present Beacon application, contact Brian Stapleton on 020 8604 7064 or email him at brian.stapleton@croydon.gov.uk.*

*(Standing) Sasha Rhoden of the Croydon Supplementary Education Project (CSEP) outlining support received from Croydon Council*