



Our people and partners

One of the most exciting things about East Thames is the variety. As a social landlord, we may be best known for the homes we build and the neighbourhoods we create, but we do so much more, as you'll have seen in these pages.

Pamela Gardner,
director of communities
and neighbourhoods



Employment and training programmes, care and support, creative programmes to keep youngsters safe and engaged, children's centres, healthy eating programmes, the list goes on. The reason we're successful in such a range of services is because our staff live and breathe our corporate vision. We really are passionate and committed to making a positive and lasting contribution to the neighbourhoods where we work, and we believe in the products and programmes we provide.

In 2010-11 we launched our five year strategic plan, which brings together all the East Thames elements, distils them into five clear aims and then sets out how we'll achieve these aims. You can read more about the plan in this section, but what's key, is that every single member of staff will be focused on achieving these aims over the next five years, driven by a commitment to the contribution East Thames makes.

East Thames' people

Recruiting and retaining excellent people who share our vision and values is crucial. We've started work on an **East Thames People Strategy** so we can be sure we're getting the best from our employees and they're getting the best from us as an employer. We want to make sure that people working for East Thames are supported to do their job, have opportunities for advancement and feel that it's a good place to work. Getting this right improves the quality of services we provide and our effectiveness.

One way of gauging staff mood and understanding how we can be a better employer is our staff survey which takes place every two years. Over 70% of staff completed our last survey in 2009, and that really helped us understand what we're doing well and what we need to improve.



so what?
83%
 of staff said
 they were
 committed to the
 organisation's
 goals in the 2009
 staff survey.

Supporting employment, training and small business

We live and breathe our mission and we support our own programmes. For instance, we believe in the quality and effectiveness of our employment and training programmes so much that for many years we've offered work placements and permanent jobs to many of the residents who come through them.

We're grateful to have the support of our corporate partners who provide mentoring, jobs, apprenticeships and work placements. Some of the partners who have done this include Trowers and Hamlins, Barclays, Durkan and London City Airport.

Resident Board members

We want to make sure our residents are well represented on our **Board** so they are involved in decision making at the highest level. At the beginning of 2011 and following a rigorous recruitment process, we appointed three residents to the East Homes Board – Philip Fearn from Tower Hamlets and Angela Williams and Dominic Jebb from Newham.

Housing Scrutiny Panel

Another way of getting residents involved in strategic decision making is through our new **Housing Scrutiny Panel**. Seven residents have been elected to the Panel representing fellow residents in the boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest and we'll be holding elections soon for representatives in Barking and Dagenham, Tower Hamlets, Havering and Essex.

The Housing Scrutiny Panel meets every three months to examine our performance and services. Panel members can look at our budgets, identify good practice and areas for improvement, and hold East Thames accountable for the services we provide. They will decide which service areas they want to scrutinise and can commission resident inspectors and mystery shoppers to gather independent performance information.



Scrutiny panel member Melinda Ashby said: "The new resident involvement approach is a good way for us as residents to feel like we have a say in what goes on within our communities. It's all about team work and I am looking forward

to being a part of making the boroughs we live in a better place."

Strong industry partnerships

We have a wealth of knowledge and experience at East Thames on regeneration, community cohesion, the housing sector in London and employment and training. Working closely with our partners enables us to both share and build on our knowledge to the benefit of our residents and the wider community.

As a member of the Stratford Renaissance Partnership, we're working with other local businesses in Stratford to help the Partnership tell Stratford's story to the wider world and defining, developing and promoting Stratford's economic role.

We also work closely with the National Housing Federation, London Development Agency and Homes and Communities Agency in an advisory and steering capacity. This helps these organisations better support and develop the industry, which is especially important during the current reforms to housing policy and funding.

A number of our team work with our partners in the G15, a group of London's 15 largest social landlords. The G15 work together on a range of topics facing London's social landlords and tenants, most recently tackling homelessness and improving social mobility.

Working with the National Housing Federation, Aster Group, Midland Heart and New Charter, we have developed a new tool which assesses the impact and effectiveness of community programmes. The Community Impact Tracking Service gives organisations the ability to monitor and evaluate the impact of projects and benchmark against others.

We're also helping National House Building Council Foundation, which is chaired by Nick Raynsford MP, do their work to fund valuable research into housing development, focusing on sustainability, customer experience and risk.

Giving something back

We receive so much fantastic support from our funders and it's great when we can give something back.

Last year Comic Relief provided much needed funding to Great Marvellous Cool Living (GMCL), a mental health project for young people run from our First Step Foyer in partnership with the NHS. The charity gave us a **grant of over £75,000** as part of their drive to support local projects that help young people with mental health needs. With the fantastic support we received from Comic Relief, staff decided to give something back by arranging fundraising activities on Comic Relief's Red Nose Day in March 2011.



Staff decorating the house to raise money for Shelter

Our partners helped us raise

£6,000 at our annual charity golf day.

The money has been donated to:
East Living Football Club who compete in the Positive Mental Attitude league; Starting Point to support social entrepreneurs; and a mothers and toddlers club at Ocean Estate.

so what?