



Annual Report

east
endHOMES

2009/2010

www.eastendhomes.net

Aims and objectives

EastendHomes Mission

“To provide a local housing service which is efficient, gives value for money and meet the needs, priorities and aspirations of all residents”

EastendHomes Vision

“To achieve the comprehensive regeneration of our estates and to bring about a sustained improvement in the homes and quality of life for residents”

EastendHomes Values

- We value and support resident involvement
- We recognise and value the commitment and hard work by our staff
- We will always strive to provide the best possible service
- We welcome and support diversity and we are committed to equality
- We want to improve and succeed in all aspects of our work





Annual Report

2009/2010

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Introduction

2009-10 has been another eventful, challenging and successful year for EastendHomes.



Following the very good result from the Audit Commission Housing Inspection in October 2008, we have continued to make steady progress towards achieving our key objectives whilst meeting our business plan requirements in an increasingly difficult financial climate. The newly established [Tenant Services Authority](#) (TSA) earlier in the year recognised this by confirming a further good Regulatory Judgement on EastendHomes.

Our estate regeneration and [Decent Homes](#) programmes have continued to move forward and we have been successful during this year in being granted further planning approvals from Tower Hamlets Council. Our regeneration programme will now provide over 250 new affordable homes to rent in the borough during the course of the next five years or so.

In April 2010 the [Tenant Services Authority](#) (TSA) took over the role of overseeing the performance of housing providers like EastendHomes. The [TSA](#) has introduced a new framework for assessing performance. This requires housing providers to consult with their tenants to find out what their priorities are, what tenants think good performance will look like, and how tenants want to be told about it.

This Annual Report looks at how we currently provide services, and reviews our performance in 2009-10. It also considers what you have told us about what you want from us. Finally it sets out our timetable to deliver a set of [‘local offers’](#) by April 2011. This will form the basis of what you can expect from us as your landlord in the future and how our performance will be assessed.

In developing this Annual Report and our first draft of your requirements for a [‘local offer’](#), we have already spoken to a wide range of our tenants, including receiving feedback on a number of different potential layouts. This Annual Report gives you the opportunity to look at our initial assessment of your priorities and comment on the proposals if you think that there is something extra which EastendHomes should be looking to provide or achieve.

EastendHomes has worked with residents to develop a comprehensive range of [service standards](#), covering all of our key service areas such as repairs and anti-social behaviour, including targets for performance. We had worked previously with residents to establish the “top ten” performance standards and these are published regularly in our newsletters. The [‘local offer’](#) process means that we are reviewing residents’ priorities within our service areas to produce a performance offer against the most important areas for our residents. Performance against these offers will be published annually on the EastendHomes website and updated in our Annual Report, distributed to all residents.

This Annual Report looks at how we currently provide services, and reviews our performance in 2009-10. It also considers what you have told us about what you want from us.

We have worked to keep the language in this Annual Report clear and understandable, however there may be occasions where you would like to check the meaning of a few of the terms used in this Report. When a word is **highlighted in blue**, you can check its meaning in the Glossary on page 25.

Your Annual Report is divided into sections based upon the services provided by EastendHomes, but also with reference to the six national 'standards' prescribed by the **TSA**. By April 2011 EastendHomes will have agreed a '**local offer**' for each of these standards. Each section shows four things relating to the service: a summary of what EastendHomes provides ('What we are doing'), some figures to show performance in 2009/10 ('How we are doing'), a summary of what you have told us in **consultation** events so far ('What you have told us') and some initial ideas for the basis of our '**local offer**' to you ('What we plan to do').

Following the publication of this Annual Report we will be working to finalise our '**local offers**' to you, which must be published by 1st April 2011. These will be based upon the plans laid out in this Annual Report and your feedback. If you would like to provide feedback on these plans then please send us your comments and we will include them in our considerations in finalising our '**local offers**' to you.

Martin Young
Chair



Timeline to deliver our local offer

Date	Action
14th June 2010	Annual EastendHomes Residents' Conference attended by 50 residents who share their opinions and priorities with relation to the new TSA standards
July 2010 to January 2011	Residents able to provide further feedback via printed forms available from housing offices or via an electronic form on the EastendHomes website
3rd, 4th and 7th August 2010	Series of drop-in sessions held across EastendHomes estates, including an evening and a weekend session, allowing residents unable to attend Residents' Conference to provide their feedback
14th September 2010	Draft version of this Annual Report reviewed by Service Review Board to gain initial resident feedback on content and proposals for 'local offers'
29th September 2010	Annual Report submitted to EastendHomes Board for information and comment
30th September 2010	Annual Report published and delivered to all EastendHomes properties, inviting feedback from residents on proposals for 'local offers'
January 2011	Feedback from all consultation received presented to EastendHomes Board prior to finalising 'local offer' to residents
By 1st April 2011	EastendHomes publishes its 'local offers' to residents and begins to monitor performance against them
September 2011	EastendHomes' Annual Report published, including first assessment of performance against 'local offers'

How to access our services

EastendHomes provides locally-based services to our estates across Tower Hamlets. Through four local housing centres, we provide small teams of officers dedicated to your estate area. They have good knowledge about your area, your problems and your priorities. For each estate area, there is a dedicated housing officer who is your first point of contact for any enquiry relating to EastendHomes' landlord services, and there is also a caretaking manager responsible for each estate.

Offices are located at:

Mile End Housing Centre, 38 Wager St E3 4JE Tel: 020 8880 7055

Island Gardens Neighbourhood Centre, 137 Manchester Road, E14 3DN Tel: 020 7538 2340

St George's & Glamis Housing Centre, 61a Swedenborg Gardens, E1 8HP Tel: 0800 028 1587 or 020 7680 8640

Holland Estate Housing Centre, 35 Commercial Street, E1 6BD Tel: 020 7456 6700

The offices are open 9am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday (telephones to 5pm) and from 1st of September 2010, for a three month trial period, our Mile End Office is running a late evening service on Wednesday evenings to 7pm which can be accessed by residents from any estate.

Services provided at the housing centres includes repairs, parking, tenancy enquiries, new tenancies, anti-social behaviour case investigation, and leasehold management.

Anti-social behaviour cases are investigated by the local housing officer. However EastendHomes also works with a number of partners in our efforts to reduce ASB on our estates, and you can report ASB 24 hours a day to the Tower Hamlets Council's ASB Hotline on 0800 917 5918.

Surgery Times

	Mile End	Island Gardens	St George's & Glamis	Holland
Leaseholder Surgeries	1st Tuesday of every month 2pm - 4.30pm	2nd Monday of every month 2pm - 4.30pm	3rd Friday of every month 2pm - 4.30pm	4th Tuesday of every month 2pm - 4.30pm
Rents Surgeries	Fortnightly Wednesdays 10am - 12noon & 2pm - 4pm	Fortnightly Wednesdays 10am - 12noon & 2pm - 4pm	Fortnightly Tuesdays 10am - 12noon (Glamis) & 2pm - 4pm (St Geo)	Fortnightly Thursdays 10am - 12noon & 2pm - 4.30pm
Lettings Surgeries	3rd Friday of every month 10am - 4pm	1st Monday of every month 10am - 4pm	2nd Tuesday of every month 10am - 4pm	4th Thursday of every month 10am - 4pm

Telephone enquiries regarding leaseholder service charges are dealt with from our Head Office at Tayside House, and service charge officers will arrange to see leaseholders by appointment via surgeries at our local housing centres.

Rents arrears and account enquiries are dealt by a specialist team based at Mile End Housing Centre. Tenants are seen by appointment during the daytime and a quarterly evening surgery is scheduled and advertised on rent statements. Although the team is based at Mile End, regular surgeries are held in other housing centres.

Our lettings advice and property allocation service is based at Mile End and tenants are seen by appointment. Local surgeries are held monthly at each housing centre.

EastendHomes tenants can join the housing list by completing the application form and registering on the common housing register through our lettings section at Wager Street.

Any other resident living on our estates should join the list by applying directly to:

Tower Hamlets Lettings Customer Service Team
Albert Jacob House, 62 Roman Road, London E2 0PG

A number of other housing options schemes are available. Contact our Lettings team for more details.



Written and electronic enquiries

You can also write to us at any of our offices or contact us by email or through our website. For straightforward enquiries we will respond to you within 5 working days, while we will get back to you within 15 working days for more complex enquiries.

Text Messaging

You can also contact us by text on 07961 941 584

Emergencies

Outside normal working hours you can report emergency repairs on 020 7364 7070 or 0800 376 1637 (free from landlines but not from mobiles).

What you can expect from us and what is expected from you is set out in the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Handbooks, and regular information about additional services and facilities are communicated regularly through our quarterly newsletter, the website and estate notice boards. If you would like another copy of our Tenants' or Leaseholders' Handbook, please contact your local housing centre.

Tenant involvement

What we are doing:

- Strong resident presence as the largest single group on the main Board and resident representation across the range of support committees
- Residents on the Service Review Board, which monitors performance
- Elected local Estate Boards
- An annual residents' conference held to plan priorities for the future
- A Readers Panel who review and comment on material produced by EastendHomes to give resident feedback prior to publication
- Focus groups convened with specialist expertise or interest, for example looking at issues concerning disabilities, groups supporting reviews of specific services, and groups of residents providing feedback on regeneration schemes.
- Mystery shopping arrangements supporting resident feedback on service access and delivery
- Specific Focus Groups targeting hard-to-reach sections of the community, for example a group for young residents. Customer profiles are being developed for housing estate areas to ensure that participation at all levels of governance and involvement activity represents the communities we serve
- Service Feedback including questionnaire and surveys, both on specific services as you use them, and regular satisfaction surveys covering all of our services



EastendHomes provides opportunities for residents to develop their capacity to review our performance. These include:

- Opportunities for board members to receive training to enhance their skills
- Training of mystery shoppers
- Training of Resident Inspectors so that they know cleaning and void standards
- Training for residents in [Equality Impact Assessments](#) so that they can contribute more effectively to the review of services

How we are doing:

60 (approx.) residents regularly attending local board meetings (across all areas) in 2009/10

208 estate inspections completed in 2009/10

27% of estate inspections had a resident in attendance

34 residents trained in cleaning assessments as at April 2010

What you have told us:

Through a number of [consultation](#) events, we have found that the local board arrangement is not always considered the best or most transparent way to communicate the wishes and priorities of all tenants. It was felt that in order to reach all residents it is necessary to supplement the local board structure with a range of forms of tenant engagement such as community events, telephone interviews and surveys, and consultation events.

What we plan to do:

We will develop with you and publish a set of standards relating to the operation of our local boards. These may include, for example, senior managers attending an agreed number of meetings a year, and papers being sent out within an agreed period in advance of the meeting. Other possible examples include the availability of information with relation to meetings, membership criteria and processes, and public information arising from local boards including minutes.

We will introduce a resident scrutiny panel with a brief to look at the performance and costs of our services, and our compliance with the '[local offers](#)' we have made.

We will develop mechanisms for engaging our wider tenant voice to help inform decision-making processes.

For 2011/12 we will deliver a resident empowerment programme which will focus on the understanding, interrogation and challenge of performance information and [Key Performance Indicators](#). This will be a mandatory training module for all scrutiny board members.

Case Study

A fun day was held on the Brune estate in August 2009. Local organisations and EastendHomes provided activities for residents to participate in on communal areas. Activities included flower arranging, making jewellery, and a henna tattooist, and EastendHomes staff members were present to answer any questions that residents had. This day helped to engage some residents with their landlord and assisted with understanding of projects such as the resident profiling exercise, as well as introducing resident to services such as the Tower Hamlets playworkers.



Customer service

What we are doing:

EastendHomes provides a locally-based service. Through local housing centres we provide small teams of officers dedicated to your estate area, with good knowledge of your area, your problems and your priorities.



Whenever we deal with you, we will try to get things right first time. Where we haven't been able to resolve your enquiry on your first contact with us, we will try to resolve your enquiry by the end of the next working day.

If you write to us or e-mail us, we will try to reply within 5 working days or let you know who will be dealing with your enquiry. We will then provide a full response within another 10 working days.

If you phone our offices, we will try to answer your call within 5 rings.

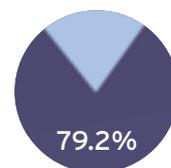
How we are doing:

79.2% of queries resolved at first contact

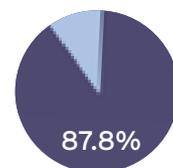
87.8% of correspondence responded to on target

93.8% of calls answered in target in 2009/10

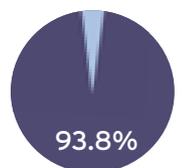
130,293 telephone calls answered in 2009/10



queries resolved on target



correspondence responded on target



calls answered on target

What you have told us:

In a range of areas, you demonstrated that you wanted staff to take more ownership of the delivery of the final outcome to your enquiry. We have reviewed our customer service performance and identified that we need to improve our induction process for all short term and frontline staff members.

What we plan to do:

We will introduce a new staff induction process with an emphasis on the most important service to you: repairs and maintenance. We anticipate that this will particularly affect the frequency with which we are able to resolve your queries at the first time of asking, and help to improve contact with you regarding repairs which have been requested. We will set improvement targets in **consultation** with you.

Complaints & compliments

What we are doing:

Complaints or compliments can be made in person, in writing, by phone or through our website. Complaints are a formal expression of dissatisfaction with our services through which we can use customer feedback to shape improvements to our services.

When you make a complaint, we will respond within fifteen working days or let you know if there is a delay which will require a further target date for a response to be set. When you have received the response to your complaint, if you are still unhappy, you can ask that the findings are reviewed further through the next stage of our internal complaints system. When your complaint has been through our internal system, if you still wish to, you can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

How we are doing:

86 complaints received in 2009/10

95.35% of complaints responded to in target

We received **16 compliments** during 2009/10.

What you have told us:

Our complaints system has too many stages and the process is not sufficiently clear to you.

What we plan to do:

By April 2011, in [consultation](#) with you, we will have streamlined our complaints process. Together, we will set targets for complaints performance and customer service performance.

Complaints by area

Themes	Total
ASB	6
Capital Works/ Regeneration	14
Estate Services	2
Lettings	1
Parking	11
Rents	2
Repairs	32
Resident involvement	2
Staff conduct	12
Other	4



Meeting your needs



What we are doing:

EastendHomes has carried out a profiling exercise which tries to find out if individual residents need services provided in a specific way. For example, if you tell us that you have a sight impairment, we will try to contact you with large text or to explain written communication to you over the phone. Any information we have obtained about your needs has been recorded so any staff member who contacts you will take your needs into account. When you speak to our staff members, please check that we hold correct and up to date information about how you want services provided, and let us know if a staff member gets it wrong.

EastendHomes also uses profiling information to ensure that policies, procedures and services do not have an adverse impact on any members of our communities, and [Equality Impact Assessments](#) are carried out in each policy area as it is reviewed. Some residents have been trained and assist us in this review process. In 2009/10, this information was used to carry out a full [equality impact assessment](#) of the repairs service.

We also work with a range of partners who provide support services, if you need help sustaining your tenancy or in carrying on your day-to-day life. The first point of contact to access support services is your local housing centre. Our partners include Positive Pathways for general support, Housing Link for mental health issues or Fair Finance for finance issues. All of these support services are free and can be accessed by tenants or leaseholders. Contact your housing officer if you need help with a referral.

How we are doing:

81.1% of tenants - Profiles received as at April 2010

953 properties with residents with service delivery tailored to their needs

39 households on the Safe & Well scheme as at April 2010

What you have told us:

You have used Resident Profile Questionnaires to tell us when you have specific needs, which for example means that we should write to some residents in large text as a matter of course. You have told us that you would like more information on how to be referred to specialist support services. We offer a 'Safe & Well' scheme where an EastendHomes officer calls residents who want to maintain regular contact with us, and can refer residents onto specialist services if they request it.

What we plan to do:

We will encourage our residents who have not yet completed a Resident Profile Questionnaire to let us know their information so that we can supply services in the way best suited to them. We recognise that some people are reluctant to answer some questions so we will encourage them to provide information to help us to deliver services to them more effectively, and tell us if they do not want to answer some questions.

We will have a Bengali speaker in every local housing centre, and if they are not available or if you speak another language we will offer an interpretation service over the telephone.

We will provide copies of written communication in other languages or formats on request.

We will provide you with information on support services as appropriate.

Responsive repairs

What we are doing:

EastendHomes provides a **responsive repairs** service via a mixture of external contractors and an internal handyman service. This includes work such as plumbing, carpentry, electrical works, finishing (plastering etc.), metalwork, paving and so on. When a repair is issued it is given one of three priorities in the table, right.

For more information on repairs priorities, see our 'Repairs' leaflet, available from your local housing centre.

Repair Priorities	
Priority	Target Time
Emergency	24 hours
Urgent	7 calendar days
Routine	28 calendar days

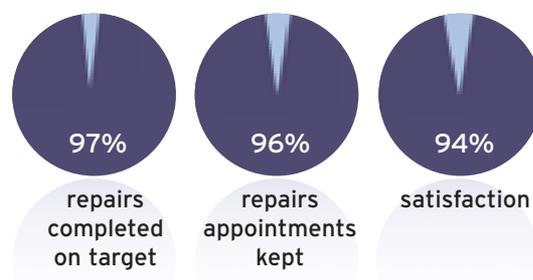
How we are doing:

9686 repairs completed in 2009/10

97% of repairs completed in target 2009/10

96% of repairs appointments kept 2009/10

94% satisfaction with the handyman service 2009/10 (84% all contractors)



What you have told us:

In 2009/10, EastendHomes carried out a review of its repairs service which included comprehensive resident **consultation**. Significantly, some of the feedback from these groups challenged traditional stereotypes of cultural needs in service provision and have helped to shape a different set of performance priorities for the repairs service. Residents felt that timed appointments were an important part of delivering a good repairs service and were more important than payment of compensation for missed appointments.

Residents also felt that EastendHomes should work towards completing all repairs on the first and only visit. However, where this was not possible it was deemed important that EastendHomes takes ownership of the repair, which means the responsibility lies with EastendHomes to manage future appointments and to keep residents updated.

What we plan to do:

We plan to refocus our repair reporting process so that when you report a repair you are always provided with a receipt or reference number, so that if anything goes wrong or you want to make an enquiry about progress with your repair, it is easier for you to get information quickly from us.

We will seek to ensure that all non-emergency repairs receive a timed appointment in a 2-hourly slot, allowing you to plan your time better when you are due to have a repair completed.

EastendHomes will seek to ensure that 65% of repairs are completed on the first and only visit. This target has been set to take into account those jobs such as kitchen and bathroom fitting and renewals where more than one visit will normally be necessary.



Regenerating your estates

What we are doing:

EastendHomes stock condition has improved from 25% meeting the [Decent Homes Standard](#) at the time of the first transfer in 2005 to 80% by the end of September 2009 and will reach 100% by 31st December 2010. In the autumn/ winter of 2010, we are on-site completing improvement works to over 400 properties.

EastendHomes took over management of estates which required substantial repair and improvement. This has meant that the focus of our maintenance has been responsive running alongside a significant investment programme to renew internal and communal fixtures and fittings. As the condition of the stock improves, EastendHomes will shift the focus of the maintenance of our properties from major refurbishment to cyclical and planned maintenance.

[SAP \(Standard Assessment Procedure\)](#) ratings are the method by which the energy efficiency of a property is rated nationally, with scores running from 0 to 100. Factors include elements such as the heating system used and how much heat is lost from the building. The improvement of [SAP](#) ratings continues to feature prominently in our [Decent Homes](#) packages and the impact of the improvement works will be felt as works are completed.

EastendHomes has comprehensive arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of residents and staff, including regular estate inspections, fire safety assessments and asbestos management arrangements. Our work in all of these areas is supplemented by advice leaflets available from our website and housing centres.



How we are doing:

During 2009/10, EastendHomes completed 921 internal refurbishments and spent almost **£21.1m** on the major works improvement programme. Decent Homes Standard compliance rose from 72% to 80%.

In 2009/10, the average **SAP** rating for EastendHomes properties remained constant at **61**.

Our target for 2010/11 is to increase this to 70.

What you have told us:

Residents have told us that their first priority is for residents to be involved in the **consultation** process prior to works commencing, including the selection process for both suppliers and contractors.

You want to be kept informed both during scheme development and while contractors are on site.

You have suggested that avenues for communication could include evening and weekend meetings, newsletters, and better use of the local estate notice boards.

Residents have asked for clear guidelines for reporting any defects and that there should be agreed timescales for resolving these problems. Contractor performance would be monitored at local board meetings which Major Works contractors would be required to attend.

What we plan to do:

EastendHomes will hold consultative days and pre-scheme works meetings to discuss the proposed works to each estate before works are due to commence.

Tenants will be advised by letter prior to the start of works and will be provided with information on their Resident Liaison Officer.

The Resident Liaison Officer will visit the tenant prior to start date to make sure everything is in place to allow the works to commence on the agreed start date.

EastendHomes will invite you to tell us how we can improve the way we delivered the works to your home.

We will offer you a choice of colours or finishes wherever possible when we carry out Major Works in your home.



Gas servicing; aids & adaptations

What we are doing:

EastendHomes works with the local authority to provide an effective [aids and adaptations](#) service to our residents. EastendHomes has a specific budget and also uses the [Decent Homes Programme](#) to provide tailored adaptations for existing tenants.

EastendHomes also carries out gas servicing works, including meeting our legal obligation to carry out an annual boiler service and obtain a safety certificate for gas boilers, known as a CP12 certificate, in all tenanted properties.

For more information on these services, see the leaflets 'Aids & Adaptations' and 'Gas Safety', available in your local housing centre and on www.eastendhomes.net.

How we are doing:

Properties with valid CP12 - 99.75% as at 31st March 2010

1600 CP12 inspections completed 2009/10

99% of respondents satisfied with gas safety inspection

09/10 Performance- Aids and adaptations – **147 completed and 97% in target.**

100% satisfied (5 responses)

What you have told us:

The areas of gas servicing and [aids and adaptations](#) have not featured in the feedback we have received from residents on their priorities. However if you would like to share your opinions on either of these important services, send us your comments and we will take them into consideration prior to finalising our '[local offer](#)'.

What we plan to do:

We will arrange the annual inspection before the current gas safety certificate expires.

We will continue to set targets and monitor performance on [aids & adaptations](#) completions.



Your tenancy

What we are doing:

EastendHomes offers all successful housing applicants an assured tenancy.

EastendHomes has reviewed and will continue to review the potential use of starter tenancies as a tool in resolving and preventing anti-social behaviour. At the start of a tenancy EastendHomes will provide all new tenants with the necessary information to enable them to effectively maintain their tenancy with us. EastendHomes operates a tenancy audit programme where random identity and occupation checks are undertaken on a proportion of our stock each year.

EastendHomes works with a range of specialist support and advice agencies to ensure that you are offered the assistance you require and that eviction is always used as a last resort.



How we are doing:

3 evictions in 2009/10

As of end of March 2010 there were **23 residents** receiving support from the Positive Pathways tenancy support service

9 people referred for specialist debt advice in 2009/10

What you have told us:

EastendHomes residents confirmed that tenancy sustainment was an important tool in developing successful and sustainable communities. Residents wanted EastendHomes to act against illegal sub-letting and to be more proactive in dealing with sub-tenants.

What we plan to do:

EastendHomes will review our comprehensive sign-up procedure to ensure that residents are being offered appropriate support to sustain their tenancy. All new EastendHomes tenants will be offered a settling-in visit four weeks after they begin their tenancy. We will work with support services and monitor take-up and satisfaction of our residents with partner agencies.

Letting you a home

What we are doing:

EastendHomes is a full partner of Tower Hamlets Common Housing Register and Lettings policy which is [choice-based](#). We and our landlord partners work together and advertise all available properties in the residents' weekly newspaper East End Life. Once your transfer application is assessed and verified, you can register your interest by 'bidding' for any suitable property advertised regardless of landlord. When the advert date expires a shortlist is created and the property allocated to the most suitable household with the highest housing priority. You can bid for as many advertised suitable properties as you choose. If you refuse an offer of alternative accommodation your application will remain live.



We recognise the difficulties that families experience when their home is too small, therefore EastendHomes operates an Overcrowding Reduction Initiative and will endeavour to make one direct offer of accommodation to all EastendHomes tenants needing larger accommodation. Offers are made to those families who have been registered to move for the longest time and to maximise transfer potential it is necessary to limit allocations to one offer per household. If an offer is refused unreasonably a second offer will not be made but this will not affect the status of your existing application and applicants can continue to be eligible for offers via the Common Housing Register. EastendHomes regularly submits information about its lets to [CORE \(Continuous Recording of lettings and sales\)](#) to ensure that our lettings practices and policies are fair and transparent.

For more information on the bidding process or Lettings policy, speak to a member of our Lettings team or see our 'Housing Options' leaflet, available from your local housing centre.

How we are doing:

In 09/10, there were **466** live applications amongst EastendHomes tenants and 50 offers were made to EastendHomes tenants through the Common Housing Register

63% of EastendHomes tenants on Common Housing Register satisfied with lettings advice received in 2009/10 (this compares to 56% of tenants from all RSLs).

137 properties let in 2009/10

17.9 days average turnaround time between tenancies.

What you have told us:

Our residents confirmed that overcrowding is a particular concern for a large number of households. Also residents were concerned that they needed more personally relevant feedback about the prospects of an offer of alternative accommodation.

Residents wanted more feedback on where bids were coming and their chances of obtaining properties they were bidding for.

What we plan to do:

EastendHomes will continue with its overcrowding reduction strategy. After you have made a bid and the advert cycle has expired, on request EastendHomes officers will be able to provide information on where you placed in the queue for that property to give a guide to your chances of future success for similar properties.

If you are [under-occupying](#), EastendHomes is involved in a range of initiatives which will help you to move out and free up larger accommodation for families on the waiting list. The new Lettings policy, which is due to be implemented at the end of September 2010, makes provision for a quota group of non-dependent sons & daughters of under-occupiers to receive an offer of accommodation thereby enabling their parents to move to smaller accommodation. A small percentage of empty properties will be set aside annually for this purpose.

EastendHomes will seek to introduce an internal exchange scheme allowing residents on our estates to 'swap' properties without reference to the Common Housing Register process. An internal database of residents willing to swap will be kept.

Rents

What we are doing:

EastendHomes rent increases are applied annually on the first Monday in April. Rent increases are calculated to the 'target rent' formula (Retail Price Index (RPI) at the previous September, +0.5% £2) as set by the Government. This limits how much rents can be changed in any year. Generally our rents are lower than the target rents set by the Government.

EastendHomes also works to collect all the rent due and to keep the level of arrears low. Intervening early in cases of arrears can help residents by providing specialist support and guidance before arrears build up.

How we are doing:

EastendHomes has some of the lowest rents in the Borough. At the end of March 2010 53% of our rented properties still had rent levels below the government target.

97.43% of rent collected as at last housing benefit week in 2009/10

Average Rents 2009/10

Property Type	Average weekly rent (£)
Bedsit	70.63
1 bed	79.91
2 bed	91.09
3 bed	102.95
4 bed	114.49
5 bed	120.34
6 bed	133.69

What you have told us:

Residents felt it was important to keep rent increases low and explain to people how rent increases are calculated. Residents asked that rent increase letters be reviewed to improve clarity.

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What we plan to do:

All new tenants will be offered a financial 'health check' at sign-up to assist them in keeping up with rent payments and avoiding falling into arrears. We will set targets and monitor rent collection performance. We will check before sending any letters regarding rents arrears that Housing Benefit payments are not due which would clear those arrears.

Tenancy
Standard

Dealing with anti-social behaviour

What we are doing:

EastendHomes offer an assured tenancy whenever we let a property. This includes a commitment to a number of actions and goals, including:

- Providing access to report anti-social behaviour, by phone, email or website.
- Providing you with regular updates at every stage of your case on actions taken or developments by arranging a meeting, or contacting you by telephone or letter.
- Offering you clear advice about the support options available to you.

You can find more information about the Tower Hamlets Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Pledge via www.towerhamlets.gov.uk, and EastendHomes also produces our own leaflet on the service, 'Anti-Social Behaviour', available from your local housing centre.



How we are doing:

278 instances of ASB reported to EastendHomes in 2009/10

68% of respondents were satisfied with the outcome of their ASB case

68% of respondents were satisfied with the handling of their ASB case

What you have told us:

A priority for residents was tackling anti-social behaviour including rubbish dumping, and the need to instil a greater sense of community on all estates.

Residents were also concerned about anti-social behaviour caused by sub-tenants of leasehold properties and felt there was a need to make these absentee landlords more accountable for their tenants' behaviour. It was felt that the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams should have a higher profile on the estates to promote a greater sense of safety amongst residents. Residents wanted a better understanding of the likely outcomes of cases when they first report them.

What we plan to do:

When a case of ASB is being investigated, EastendHomes officers will contact the person who reported the case at least once a week to keep them updated of progress and to check if they have any further support needs.

The investigating officer will agree an action plan with the resident, including the likely outcome and timeframe, for each case of anti-social behaviour reported. EastendHomes will actively participate with partners to resolve ASB affecting its residents and estates. As part of our regeneration of estates EastendHomes will consider whether the provision of additional community facilities will support local area co-operation to deliver services by partner agencies. EastendHomes' Corporate Plan and Service Objectives are based substantially on the Tower Hamlets Community Plan and therefore EastendHomes seeks to support local strategic partnership objectives in all of our activities.

Keeping estates clean

What we are doing:

EastendHomes carries out a 7 day per week caretaking service, with a full estate-based service Monday to Friday, a further service on Saturday, and mobile teams on Sunday who work to a schedule and also respond to messages left on a reporting service. All teams work to a schedule for completing tasks so that all blocks receive a standard service on a regular basis. EastendHomes records and keep records of all completed cleaning and gardening works and grade all works completed with the assistance of trained residents.

How we are doing:

36854 areas inspected in 208 inspections

99.8% of external areas graded A-B

99.1% of internal areas graded A-B

27% of inspections with a resident in attendance

What we plan to do:

EastendHomes will provide training for any residents who wish to develop the expertise to join in with [estate inspections](#), and will continue to incentivise resident participation, so that more feedback from residents is obtained. This will include targeting hard-to-reach groups such as young people.

EastendHomes will continue to provide a 7 day a week caretaking service and will continue to review arrangements to ensure that our caretaking resources are being efficiently utilised.

Block and estate notice boards will provide a full [estate inspection](#) programme to promote more resident participation in this activity.



Value for money

What we are doing:

Achieving value for money in service provision is about achieving the right balance between cost, performance, and resident satisfaction. EastendHomes operates a Service Review programme in which services are analysed on a rolling basis to identify good practice and ways we can improve. The review includes comparison (**benchmarking**) with other organisations on cost and performance to identify efficiency and potential savings/improvements which can be made.

EastendHomes targets community facility funding to complement service provision already in place and redress gaps in local options for community activities. For example, EastendHomes has partnered with Sure Start to provide a community centre on the Bede estate which will be completed in 2012.

EastendHomes has adopted a Value For Money Strategy which looks at a range of service areas with a view to reducing cost while improving or maintaining service level.

How we are doing:

Where every pound comes from:



What you have told us:

During our **consultation** process, a priority for some residents was effective control of costs and expenditure. Equally residents also wanted high quality services to be provided, at a reasonable cost.

Residents also wanted transparency over how expensive EastendHomes was in comparison with other similar or local organisations. It was felt performance information could be included in the annual report, in newsletters and on the website.

Another area in which residents sought greater transparency was in how service charges were calculated and apportioned. It was felt that at present this process is not understood by some leaseholders.

Every pound we receive is spent like this:



Management	Includes all salary costs and overheads across EastendHomes
Services	Direct Costs (other than salaries) of providing services such as caretaking, communal repairs, landlord lighting and heating etc.
Routine maintenance	Direct Costs of responsive repairs and gas maintenance services to our tenanted and void properties only
Major Works	Direct costs of delivering our refurbishment programme
Bad debts	Provision for bad debts eg former tenant arrears
Depreciation of housing properties	Write down value for physical wear and tear of all fixed assets e.g. heating and door entry systems
Empty Properties (Rent Loss)	Rent lost during periods when potential tenanted properties and parking facilities were empty
Interest Paid	Interest costs on loan borrowings to finance our refurbishment programme

What we plan to do:

Services will be reviewed by the scrutiny panel to ensure that Value For Money is being achieved and that resources are being targetted towards tenant priorities. This will include benchmarking of costs against other Registered Social Landlords.



EastendHomes will consult with residents periodically to establish your priorities for spending, and ensure that resource allocation reflects this.

The Value for Money Action Plan will be presented to a scrutiny panel annually so that residents can participate in assessing EastendHomes performance in achieving Value for Money. At least three trained residents will be involved in the selection of repairs contractors.

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Value for Money Standard

EastendHomes will review the way in which service charges are apportioned to leaseholders to try to make the process more transparent and fair.

Governance & financial viability

What we are doing:

As a social housing provider EastendHomes has adopted the [National Housing Federation \(NHF\)](#) Code of Governance. We have set clear roles and responsibilities for the Main Board and their subsidiary committees.

We have assessed our compliance with the [NHF](#) Code of Governance and we largely comply: due to our local estate-based structure we have slightly more board members than the recommended maximum, and as a consequence the [quorum](#) is different. We feel that this minor difference is justified to support our emphasis on resident involvement in governance.

We complete an annual assessment of the key competencies of our board members and a skills audit and base our recruitment drive for new members on any skills gaps identified, and supply training for existing members. We undertake internal and external audits of our services. EastendHomes submits regulatory returns competently and on time.

The EastendHomes Board has adopted a probity policy which ensures that all of our activities relating to governance, employment and allocations demonstrate integrity, accountability and transparency in decision-making. Given the current economic climate, EastendHomes has completed regular reviews to check the ongoing sustainability of our investments and prudent scheduling of planned works has allowed us to minimise unplanned early use of arranged credit facilities.

The Finance and Audit Committee meets quarterly to review EastendHomes' financial performance, and an Annual Report with risk mapping is presented to the EastendHomes Board.

How we are doing:

Constructed as it is from a range of professional independents and residents, our Board collectively have a range of skills to provide an effective steer and challenge to the EastendHomes executive team.

EastendHomes' Board undertakes a regular assessment of risk which may impede business activity and ensure that appropriate corrective action is taken where necessary.

Internal auditors TIAA carried out a review of EastendHomes' governance arrangements in July 2010 and found that there was 'substantial assurance' of compliance with the relevant codes and legislative requirements.

EastendHomes' Financial Statements for 2009-10 are included in this Annual Report.

What you have told us:

Residents felt that local board activities should be more transparent and should engage feedback from the wider resident group when making recommendations.

What we plan to do:

An annual skills audit of board members will be carried out and training will be offered to address any skills gaps identified.

EastendHomes will continue to ensure that residents form a strong voice on the Board. EastendHomes will publish Financial Statements in the Annual Report every year.

Summary accounts

Income and Expenditure Account

	2010 £'000	2009 £'000
Turnover	15,002	13,191
Operating Costs	<u>(12,040)</u>	<u>(11,787)</u>
Operating Surplus	2,962	1,404
Surplus on sale of housing properties	-	577
Interest receivable and similar income	21	406
Interest payable and similar charges	<u>(1,292)</u>	<u>(757)</u>
Surplus for the year	1,691	1,630
Taxation	(9)	0
Revenue reserves at beginning of year	<u>9,610</u>	<u>7980</u>
Revenue reserves at end of year	<u><u>11,292</u></u>	<u><u>9,610</u></u>

Summary accounts

Balance Sheet

	2010	2009
	£'000	£'000
Tangible fixed assets		
Housing Properties	102,853	91,739
Less:		
Capital grants	(28,178)	(11,373)
Other grants	(32,580)	(42,961)
Depreciation	(2,161)	(1,251)
	<u>39,934</u>	<u>36,154</u>
Other tangible fixed assets	<u>1,106</u>	<u>1,092</u>
	41,040	37,246
Current assets		
Debtors	3,255	3,724
Cash at bank and in hand	7,707	7,149
	<u>10,962</u>	<u>10,873</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(8,333)	(12,547)
Net current assets/(liabilities)	<u>2,629</u>	<u>(1,674)</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	<u>43,669</u>	<u>35,572</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	31,766	25,325
Provision for liabilities and charges	4,669	1,003
Capital and reserves		
Non equity share capital	-	-
Income & expenditure account	7,234	9,244
	<u>43,669</u>	<u>35,572</u>

Comment

During 2009-10 EastendHomes invested £21.8 million (2008-09: £23.4 million) in our resident homes as part of our promised Major Works programme. To date EastendHomes has invested £68.1 million out of a £133 million programme.

To ensure that sufficient funds are always available to finance the future elements of the promised Major Works programme EastendHomes will continue to apply its policy to collect rents and service charges as they fall due and to minimise arrears.

Glossary

- **Aids and Adaptations:** these are small changes we can make to your property to allow you to continue living there, for example a rail to make it easier for you to get in or out of the bath
- **Benchmarking:** this is where we compare ourselves to other providers of social housing, in areas such as cost and performance
- **Choice-based letting:** this is the system for letting homes operated by the Tower Hamlets Common Housing Register. Rather than homes being allocated to you, it allows you to 'bid' for advertised properties which are then distributed on the basis of assessed need
- **Consultation:** this is where we ask you for your opinions and feedback on our services and how we do things
- **CORE** (COntinuous REcording of lettings and sales): This is a nationwide system to which EastendHomes and all providers of social housing supply information, recording the characteristics of the residents to whom properties have been let
- **Decent Homes Standard:** this is the standard set by the Government as a target for all providers of social housing to meet by the end of 2010. It consists of various requirements for tenanted properties so that they are "wind and weather tight, warm and [have] modern facilities"
- **Equality Impact Assessments:** EastendHomes carries out these assessments to ensure that new policies and procedures have the same effect on all members of our communities, and that no group suffers an unfair negative impact
- **Estate Inspections:** estate inspections are carried out by EastendHomes staff, accompanied by resident(s) where possible, and inspect the condition of local blocks and estates. The inspection findings are graded using a system based upon the National Indicator 195 system used nationally to assess cleanliness
- **Key Performance Indicators:** these are the main results which EastendHomes publish and report to demonstrate how we are doing. A 'Top 10' of these KPIs has been agreed with residents and is published in resident newsletters
- **'Local Offers':** these are the proposals to be made to residents by EastendHomes under the new regulatory framework introduced in April 2010 by the Tenant Services Authority. The 'offers' must be published by EastendHomes by 1st April 2011
- **National Housing Federation (NHF):** the National Housing Federation is a nationwide organisation which represents independent housing associations. It has contributed to the development of codes setting out good practice for how providers of social housing should be run
- **Quorum:** this is the minimum number of people who must attend a meeting (of a board) for the decisions taken at that meeting to be valid under the terms of that board's constitution
- **Responsive Repairs:** these are the works carried out by our employees and our contractors to remedy day-to-day problems arising in EastendHomes properties and estates. These do not include planned maintenance (for example, the jetting of drains once every year), or major structural changes made to buildings as part of the regeneration process
- **Service Standards:** these are the standards which EastendHomes aspires to achieve in our dealings with residents. You can read a full list of these standards in the 'Service Standards' leaflet, available from your local housing centre
- **Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings:** these relate to a system used to assess the energy efficiency of properties, which include several factors such as the heating system used, and how much energy is lost through walls and windows from the property. The ratings work on a scale of 1 to 100
- **Tenant Services Authority (TSA):** the TSA is the national regulator for social housing, having succeeded the Housing Corporation in April 2010. The TSA have devised a new regulatory framework consisting of six 'standards', as described above, and the need for providers of social housing to make 'local offers' to residents
- **Under-occupying:** this is where a resident has more bedrooms in their property than they need, for example a couple whose adult children have moved out who continue to live in a 3 bedroom property. Financial incentives are offered to encourage residents in these properties to move to a smaller property

Other languages and formats that this report is available in:

We can provide copies of this report in a range of languages and formats, including:

- in languages such as Bengali and Somali;
- in Braille;
- in large print;
- on audio tape.

To ask for a different format, please contact your local housing centre.



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EastendHomes is a registered social landlord
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