

Realising the benefits

The East Thames Customer Contact Centre is essential to the organisation's commitment to providing a great service to residents. When the Group moved to a new build headquarters in Stratford, east London, ensuring the seamless continuation of this service was crucial to avoid any disruption for residents.

Redstone Converged Solutions' OneNET™ Intelligent Building proposition provided a common IP infrastructure for the IT elements of the new building, from security to communications, allowing for a smooth transition with minimal disruption and reducing both building and operating costs.

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Jeff Solomon
Head of ICT, East Thames Group

EAST THAMES GROUP SUCCESSFULLY RE-HOUSES WITH REDSTONE

The client

East Thames Group is a housing association providing high quality homes and a range of social regeneration services to meet the needs of residents across east London and Essex.

The challenge

When East Thames decided to consolidate its 800 employees in a new building to gain space and merge two separate offices, they spotted an opportunity to resolve a number of issues they had experienced with the previous sites. Within the old buildings, much of the ICT infrastructure had grown organically over a number of years and, in some cases, was no longer keeping pace with the latest best practice design. For example, its Local Area Network (LAN) needed to be better designed from the outset to cater for current and future requirements.

Similarly the telephone system had become even more critical to the business and no longer had all the features required. East Thames saw a golden opportunity to cut costs and improve operations at the same time by introducing a unified communications system and updated workflow.

"One of our core themes is to provide value for money," explains Jeff Solomon, head of ICT at East Thames, "we needed to make sure that, despite us moving to a new build and taking advantage of a fresh start, we could make full use of existing resources, particularly IT hardware."

To meet these challenges, East Thames turned to Redstone to advise on all technical elements of the IT infrastructure and the implementation of the complete ICT build.



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The results

- East Thames now provides a more efficient service to its residents and the local community
- Costs reduced due to IP telephony between sites and a single infrastructure for IT, telecommunications and building management systems.
- Reduced building cabling costs by 50% by using one cable per desk through Cat-6
- Unified communications system means employees can schedule calls and manage calendars easily.

For further information please call us on
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The solution

Redstone's OneNET™ is at the heart of the new East Thames building. OneNET™ is an integrated network architecture which supports Intelligent Buildings by providing a common, secure IP infrastructure for all building management and communications systems.

Redstone completed two main work packages for the move. The first, completed directly for East Thames, included the supply and configuration of a new LAN and wireless LAN, the installation of new UPS units, plus the management of the migration of existing systems to the new building. Intelligent business communications software from IPFX provides unified communications functionality.

“As with all the technology, the roll out of the unified communications system went very smoothly,” said Solomon. “We deployed department by department, with people being trained as we went along. The reaction to new features such as the ability to remotely manage calendars and integrate with Outlook to schedule call backs has been extremely positive.”

The second element was as a subcontractor, supplying the building-wide structured cabling system (SCS), and security system comprising door access controls, CCTV, intruder alarm and turnstiles. These centrally managed elements provide a secure environment for the re-located staff. IP-enabled security systems offer added flexibility in terms of integration and remote access, while deploying these systems over the common SCS infrastructure also reduces total cost of ownership.

The outcome

The 40+ satellite offices across the group can now access the full features available at East Thames headquarters, cutting costs as calls are routed across an internal network. East Thames expects to see significant ROI benefits from having an integrated IP system and a structured cabling system, which will mean lower infrastructure costs and lower management overheads.

In addition to lifetime cost savings, there are also numerous immediate benefits;

“We have simplified the infrastructure, making provision and support easier by integrating management systems such as security access across the new building. Using the IPFX unified communications system installed by Redstone we also gain greater mobility and integration between office services and the front line,” explains Solomon. “So, for example, our agents have the facility to take office calls and even monitor the help desk from their mobile phones, transferring those calls where appropriate, which makes our operation far more flexible.”

The move also meant the merger of two separate offices, making the support of those teams simpler. In addition, the operations team now occupies the same floor as the frontline services team, allowing for easier communications across the organisation. Security has also improved, with the networked access control turnstiles, door access control and CCTV system, making it much simpler to restrict access to only staff and authorised visitors. One of the few building systems which is, by necessity, not integrated by OneNET™ is the NetBotz environmental monitoring system which provides SMS alerts for heat, moisture and movement in the communications equipment room.

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