

Working in partnership

BeFirst

**Barking &
Dagenham**

Reasons to be cheerful

Delivering community
benefits to the people
of Barking and Dagenham



Winning hearts and minds,

by Tom Mather, Construction Director at Be First

At Be First we're not just about bricks and mortar, we're about hearts and minds too.

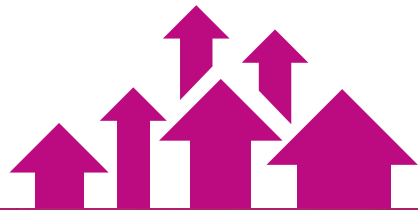
This means that while we're building quality new homes for local people we're equally ambitious about making sure the regeneration of our borough benefits the community in other ways.

We want to build thriving communities in attractive, safe, sustainable neighbourhoods that are healthy, vibrant and fun.

A big part of this is creating jobs and opportunities for residents and developing the supply chain to make sure the economic benefits are felt locally.

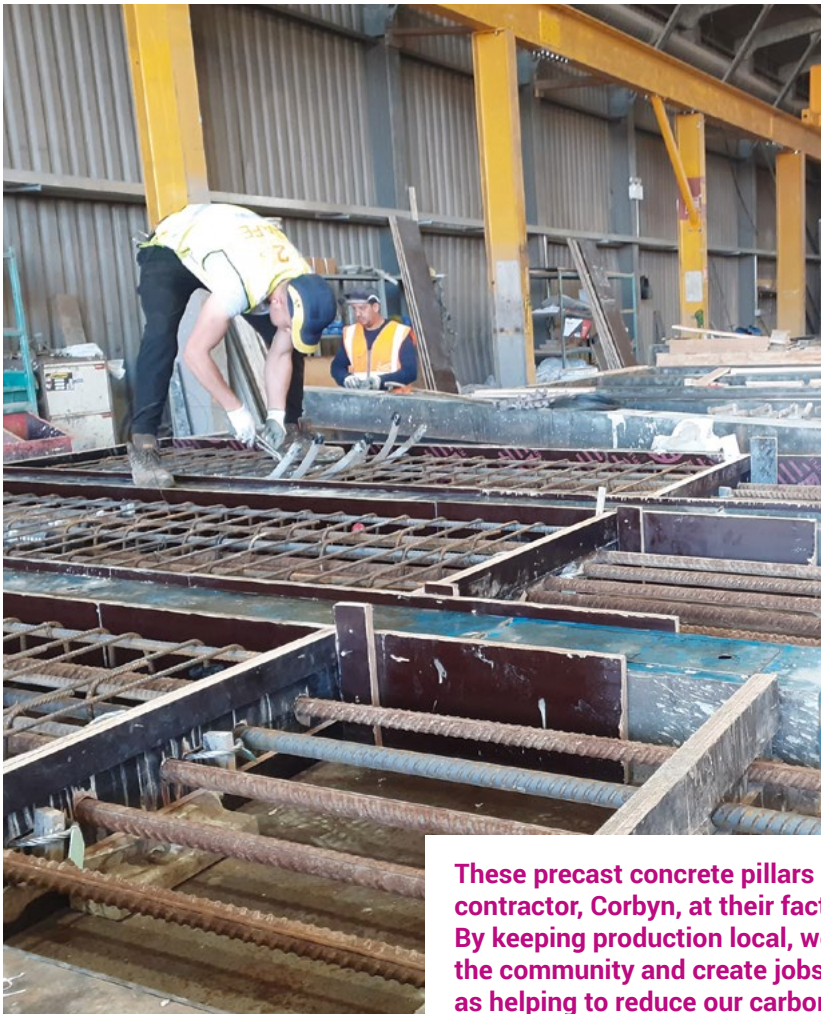
The way we do things with the community is as important as what we do. It's why we choose our partners carefully so we know they take their responsibilities to the community seriously.

This report gives a snapshot of the work we do with the council to create what we call 'social value'. We hope it illustrates the many ways that we are contributing to the local community and delivering regeneration so that no one is left behind.



Tom Mather with Be First apprentices Anna, Shabina and Tara.

Cover page: **India** is a construction apprentice with Willmott Dixon working on our pioneering redevelopment of Gascoigne neighbourhood.

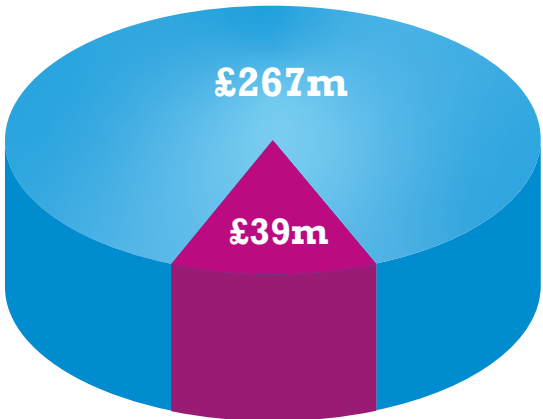


These precast concrete pillars were manufactured by our contractor, Corbyn, at their factory at River Road, Barking. By keeping production local, we recycle our investment into the community and create jobs and opportunities as well as helping to reduce our carbon footprint.



Accelerating housebuilding

Our target is to work with partners to deliver **50,000** new homes over the next **20** years.



We invested **£39 million** through local businesses out of **£306 million** of Be First contracts.

Healthy active communities

As we build affordable homes, we never lose sight of the fact that we also have to create great places too. We aim to build prosperous, healthy communities in exciting, sustainable neighbourhoods.

We're working hard to help make our communities healthier. It's why we've rolled out several cycling projects across the borough and introduced five School Streets to make the local roads safer, to improve air quality and to encourage healthier, active travel.

We have also continued to support the Barking and Dagenham Cycling Club - our highly successful local cycling team and introduced a cycle-to-work scheme for our staff.

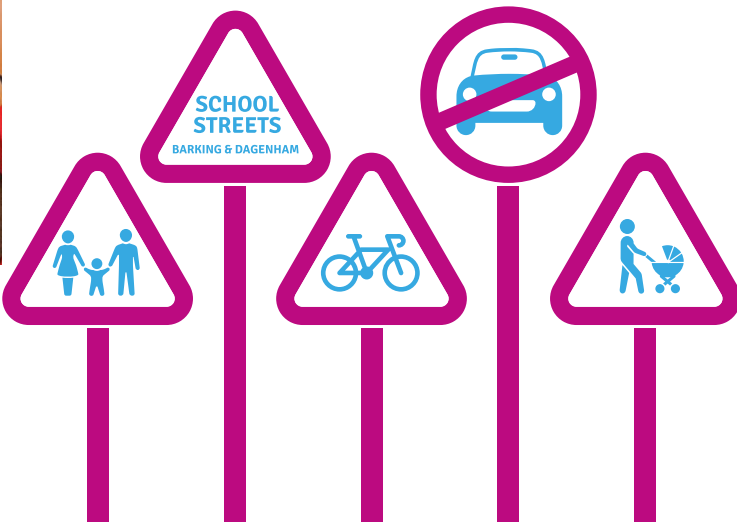


Bikeability training



School Streets

Five school streets this year, with another **seven** by April 2022.



Play is vitally important in children's growth and development, helping them to learn, exercise healthily and have fun on the way. All our developments incorporate new play facilities, such as this one at Tantony Green in Marks Gate.

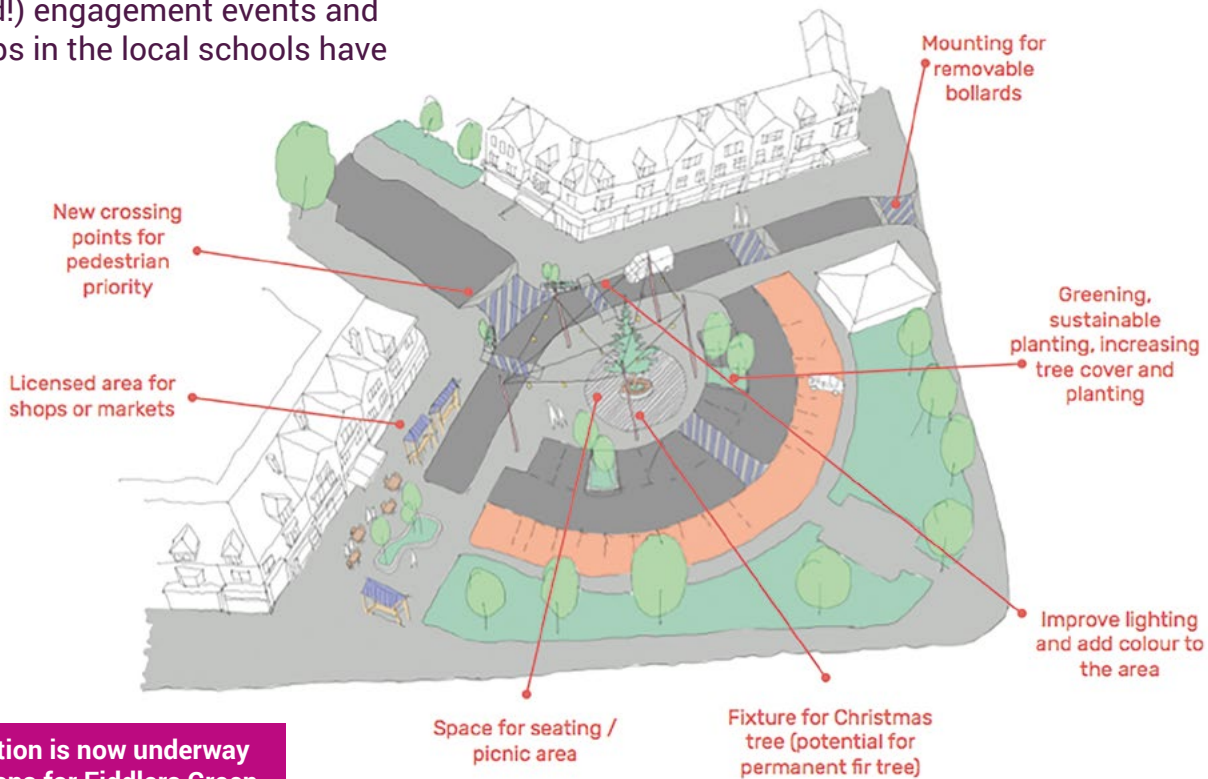
Greening Fiddlers Green

Greening the Fiddlers is a community led project in Becontree Heath which aims to create a more welcoming, healthy place for everyone to enjoy and encouraging more active, sustainable travel in and around the area of the busy junction opposite the leisure centre.

resulted in five projects to improve the local streets, which will be built in 2021. And these are accompanied by a programme of cycling and walking activities for local people.

The project is TfL funded with support from the Mayor's Air Quality Fund in partnership with the council.

A series of online and in-person (when permitted!) engagement events and workshops in the local schools have

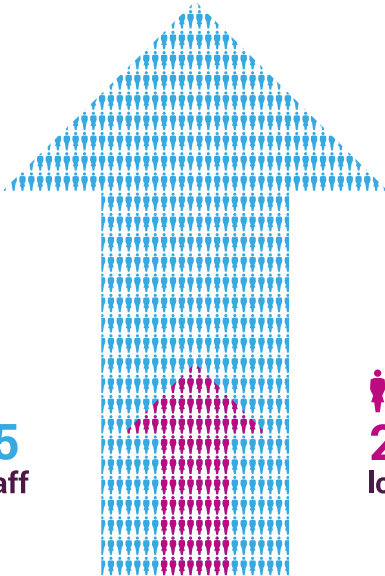


Consultation is now underway on the plans for Fiddlers Green

Jobs and opportunities

Creating jobs and training opportunities for local people is central to our mission. We do this by recruiting and training local people directly and through our contractors, wherever we can, and also by supporting development that will bring in jobs to the area, such as the Dagenham film studios.

All our contractors advertise their vacancies through the council's job shop. More than one in five of our construction contractors teams lives in the borough.



1,155
total staff

231
local staff

Be First staff

One in five of the people we and our contractors employ are local – that's 231 local people.



Employing local people

Ash, who works on the redevelopment on the Gascoigne and Rav, an apprentice electrician working at the redeveloped Sebastian Court.



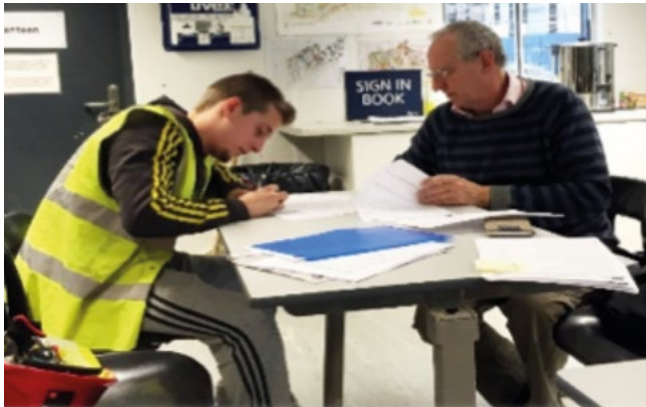
We're building new school buildings too, to ensure that our growing community has top quality educational infrastructure.

Apprenticeships for the future

The construction industry offers a huge range of job opportunities – blue and white collar – and is one of the best paid sectors in the UK. So, we believe that it is vitally important to open up opportunities to local people to get on board while our building programme reaches its peak.

long-term employment. You can see some our existing apprentices in this report and we have set ourselves an ambitious target to secure 185 places each year between now and April 2022.

We've recently entered into a partnership with industry experts, JBT, to streamline the recruitment of local young people into apprenticeships with our contractors. This will ensure the focus is on the quality of the placements - particularly how many apprentices achieve qualifications and, most importantly, how many go into



Lights, camera, action!

Our new film studios in Dagenham will create thousands of jobs and opportunities in the creative industries for local people.

Building a better Gascoigne

Redeveloping the Gascoigne neighbourhood as a beacon of 21st century urban living is our flagship project.

At Gascoigne, we've been commissioned by the council to create a modern, sustainable new neighbourhood in Barking, providing much more and much better quality housing, in a range of sizes, in an attractive, safe and healthy environment.

We're making great progress too. Here's a few projects we've been working on with the community on the Gascoigne.



Ibrahim Zengi owner of the Galleon Cafe, won the catering contract for the Wates construction team.

Your Place competition

We held a lockdown creative competition called Gascoigne Your Place in May.

Children were asked to create a piece of art in response to the changes taking place on the Gascoigne estate. The entries were all published on our engagement website and on Instagram. We had 57 creative, thoughtful, honest and insightful entries.

It has helped to cement our relationship with Gascoigne Primary School as a key stakeholder and a positive way to involve families.



Pranav V Menon, aged 6, was the winner of our children's art competition.



Places for Girls

It's a sad fact that in the UK that women and girls are far less likely to use public spaces than boys and men. So, we worked with young women at Greatfields School to look at improving the design of communal areas and public realm from their perspective.

We spent two afternoons with 12-15 Year 8 students identifying what they felt would make them feel safer and encourage them to use it. We were able to identify specific locations in the neighbourhood that the students liked or avoided and together, and discussed their ideas for change. Their feedback was fed into the design for the schemes.

Residents' Forum

In November 2020, we recruited a diverse group of 18 residents to join the Gascoigne Residents' Forum. The group will help us ensure that the concerns, aspirations and priorities of local residents are addressed and understood as the neighbourhood develops.

We held four online capacity building sessions enabling our members to learn all about estate renewal, placemaking, the design process and how the neighbourhood will be transformed. The members gave us an insight into their ideas for Gascoigne and told us about their priorities.



It's now 2021 and we've equipped the Forum with the knowledge and expertise to co-design a new 'pop-up' pocket park on Abbey Road and to participate in workshops linked to the current consultation for the eastern part of the estate.



Artists' impression of the pocket park.

A pocket park

Phoenix Park opened on 10 June 2021 for residents of the Gascoigne area of Barking.

The pop up park has been built on vacant land due for development in five years time, and was co-designed with the Gascoigne Residents Forum as a vibrant temporary facility, designed by the community for the community.

The park has four themes identified by local residents - exercise, play, growing and

contemplation. At the heart of the park is a stage which can be used for gatherings, events, communal dining, games and more.

It includes a natural play area, a gym corner, seating and stage area for space to relax in, a garden area, a large feasting table and a growing plot.

The park has been constructed using materials that have been reclaimed from the demolition of the Gascoigne estate or waste construction materials where possible. Any new materials such as planting or trees, will have a final, permanent location in the Gascoigne neighbourhood once it has been built.

Ayesha Riaz of the Gascoigne Residents' Forum said: "It was fabulous to work on the pocket park and especially now we're coming out of lockdown as I met so many people from the forum I hadn't met before. This is what this park is all about – bringing people together."

Caring for the environment



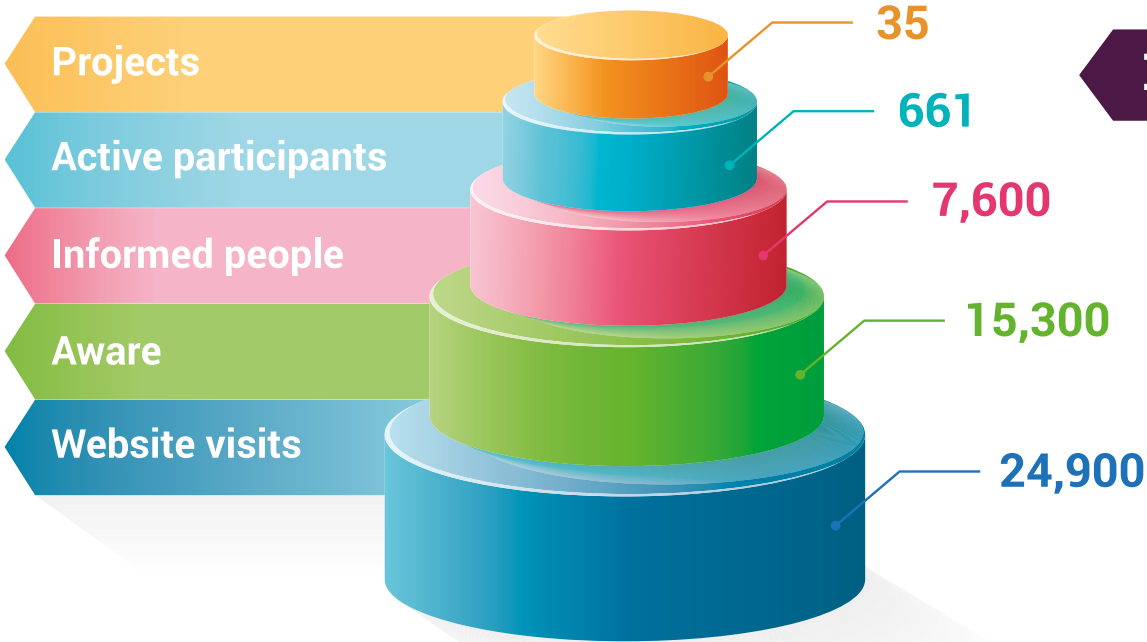
We're supporting local growers, makers and cooks who launched the Good Food Collective at Barking Market in September.

At Be First, we recognise that our work has a very significant impact on the environment. So, we are determined to maximise the opportunities to embed sustainability into our projects and minimise environmental damage.

The planning and design of our developments is informed by a range of environmental principles and approaches, and our projects use a variety of methods such as:

- ✓ top quality standards of insulation
- ✓ heating systems connected to low energy district heating systems, photovoltaic systems, and often ground source and air source heat pumps
- ✓ design which encourages active living – such as walking and cycling – to reduce private car use and improve air quality
- ✓ landscaping to encourage bio-diversity and capture carbon
- ✓ off-site manufacture and modern methods of construction which minimise unnecessary transportation

In 2020 we introduced a system to rigorously monitor our environmental footprint, looking at a range of indicators, such as carbon output, waste created and recycled, and water consumption. Our aim is to work with our contractors to look at ways improve practice in construction industry and set very ambitious goals.



Participation and engagement

Greatfields sustainability award

We've designed and built Greatfields School to be energy efficient and sustainable, and the new buildings have achieved a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of "Very Good" and an energy performance rating of A. The new school buildings are highly insulated and airtight to avoid heat loss through walls, floors, windows, doors and roofs. Air source heat pumps and solar panels will provide renewable energy.

Energy efficient fittings automatically adjust light levels to suit the amount of natural light entering the building and switch off when no one is in the room. Overall the new school buildings achieve a 35% reduction of CO2 emissions against 2016 building regulations.



Greatfields School

Consulting and engaging in lockdown

Lockdown presented a huge challenge to our engagement plans. But we moved quickly and successfully from mainly face-to-face events to online activity and, as the infographic shows, managed to generate very high levels of awareness and involvement with our projects.

We've revamped our online and social media presence to include high quality information, including clearer explanations, better pictures and a range of explanatory videos. And, we supplemented these by providing video interviews with residents, teachers and even an archaeologist involved in delivering our projects.



Online focus groups were used to get resident feedback about the new plans for Gascoigne

Quite apart from encouraging people to visit our website, we conducted surveys, carried out opinion polls, collected ideas, answered questions and ran competitions and prize draws to engage and consult local people and stakeholders.

We trialled online focus groups with Gascoigne residents which led to the establishment of a very active residents' forum (see page 9) have now used this technique to get detailed feedback on a number of our projects, ensuring that we don't lose the human touch.

Our house for artists will support local artists to work with the community on creative projects.



The arts are close to our heart

We believe encouraging the creative industries to flourish in our borough is not only great for regeneration it's good for the soul.

Local artist Susanna Wallis captured the discussions that took place with a live graphic picture at our Padnall Views workshop in January 2020. The workshop was an opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to share their ideas and thoughts on the new homes, green spaces, community facilities and the improvements to Padnall Lake.



We used Greatfields School pupil's artwork in our hoardings design. Picture credit: Elaine Tribble and Studio 3 Arts.



Jake Attewell won our competition to paint a heritage mural in Barking Town Centre with this stunning design. When complete later in 2021, the mural will be supported by an arts and heritage trail by international mosaic artist Tamara Froud.



These artworks are part of the Barking Heritage Project, which engages local volunteers, schools, colleges and business owners, to celebrate our history. We have updated the area's conservation management plan and we will improve local historic sites, such as the Curfew Tower, with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

About Be First

We are wholly owned by Barking and Dagenham Council. Our mission is to accelerate the development of new homes and jobs for local people. See www.befirst.london

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