

local news

This is a benchmark project. Local government in this country is going through a phase of change. There is a process happening, right now, which is all about what the expectations and delivery of local government means. It's to do with professionalism and it's to do with progress, and it's to do with pride, and it's to do with purpose.

case study



▶▶▶ East and West wings are effectively two buildings above ground level, joined by a Wintergarden. The underground car park extends under the complete footprint of the combined buildings. Particularly because of the expiry of various leases, time was of the essence. This was very much a fast track project, completed on time in 40 weeks...but we also phased in early occupancy on a floor-by-floor basis to smooth a complex transition for the borough's staff.

Our tour revealed an impressively designed working environment that meets the challenges head on with considerable style and restrained panache. With communication high on the agenda, it seems appropriate to start by describing the places where Newham's staff meet and talk. The numbers are impressive in themselves – with 52 meeting rooms of various types and sizes spread liberally throughout the facility. Notable among these are rooms endowed with leading edge AV systems, and the high specification Skyfold vertical folding wall systems to maximise capacity and multi-

purpose usage. As Neil points out to us, such meeting rooms feature 52db acoustic rated Nordwall glazed partitions, which were critical as much of Newham's team activities required high levels of confidentiality.

The welcoming Parklife areas are as impressive as collaboration spaces go, with staff getting together for business chats, or just taking five. Featuring on each of Newham's five floors, the Parklife concept creates a centralised zone that enhances interdepartmental communication as well as becoming something of a focal point. Clear and straightforward colour coded wayfinding is mirrored by the colourways found on each floor. This is backed up by individually themed manifestations and well-structured joinery to reflect the diversity of Newham's neighbourhood.

Linear workstations handle cables effectively, maximise space utilisation and can clearly easily adapt to the needs of roving or permanent staff. This flexibility is supported by a range of needs-appropriate filing or storage solutions, which range from

portable hot boxes through to lateral filing and archive systems. Notable for attention to detail, the fit-out exudes simple, robust quality. Elements such as the 'ribbon' motif in Taylor Made's joinery, the ergonomically excellent Spina chairs by Orangebox and the contemporary styling of Milliken, Interface and Westbond flooring are stylish but also built to last. Despite large footplates and relatively dense occupancy levels, the overall effect is of space, transparency, light...and an aura of calm professionalism. This feels like an organisation of substance, working together as one.

By any standards this is an impressive fit-out. The project is a successful collaboration of professionals, combined through the Design & Build process to offer a good quality environment that best suits Newham's needs. Overbury was appointed at the construction stage as the preferred contractor. Gardiner & Theobald, ID:SR and Chapman Bathurst continued to assist Newham and support Overbury through the construction phase which facilitated the smooth and timely handover. Fast track, stylish, functional yet elegant, as green as you like...with the added value of being a driver of massive cultural change. More than significant savings, and even more than communication and work style though, this is a story about how local government generally, and the London Borough of Newham in particular, sees itself today and going forward.

Purposeful, professional, positive, progressive, proud. Definitely a benchmark project ●

essential ingredients

Client:	• London Borough of Newham
Architect:	• ID:SR, Sheppard Robson 020 7504 1743
Fit-Out:	• Overbury 020 7307 9000
Project Manager:	• Gardiner & Theobald 020 7209 3301
Furniture Solutions:	• Unique Office Solutions 020 8500 2121
Carpets:	• Westbond, Milliken, InterfaceFLOR
Task Seating:	• Orangebox 020 7837 9922
Glazed Partitioning:	• Nordwall 020 7247 0759
Specialist Joinery:	• Taylor Made 01449 740518