

March 2025

Shine

Resident Engagement
special edition

Eastlight
Community Homes

HAVE YOUR SAY

on our proposed
Eastlight Resident
Members Charter

Consultation:
17 March–27 April



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HAVE YOUR SAY!

WELCOME TO A SPECIAL EDITION OF SHINE MAGAZINE



Eastlight Board Chair
Hattie Llewelyn-Davies

As an Eastlight resident, you know better than anyone what you need to be safe and happy in your home.

That's why, since Eastlight was formed in 2020, we have introduced a range of opportunities for residents like you to shape Eastlight for the better.

We have the Customer Influence Committee – a rare opportunity to sit on a powerful Board committee. We also have our Active Residents Network and our Eastlight Residents Groups.

But we want to go further. We are launching a consultation on proposals to include a commitment in our rules to involve residents in how Eastlight is run.

As well as our groups, residents can also get involved by applying to become Shareholders. We have around 4,500 Shareholders

“I think what this group of residents has created is excellent. Your views will shape what happens next.”

who are invited to vote at our Annual General Meetings. However, few choose to, and you have told us that Shareholding simply does not work for you.

In short, it does not give you the opportunities you want to get involved and make a difference to the things that matter to you as Eastlight residents.

So over the last nine months, a group of residents have been working with Eastlight to create something to replace it that includes those opportunities.

This edition includes a consultation on what they have created: a Resident Members

Charter bringing together a range of new and existing ways to ensure your voice is heard by Eastlight. I think what this group of residents has created is excellent. It strengthens Eastlight as a Community Gateway association and commits us to listen to and involve residents when making decisions about your homes, services and neighbourhoods.

Your views will shape what happens next. If the feedback is positive, then we will invite shareholders to vote on a proposal to introduce the Charter to Eastlight's rules.

So please take the time to complete the survey and do get in touch if you have any further questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

Hattie Llewelyn-Davies

Hattie Llewelyn-Davies
Eastlight Board Chair

WHAT IS SHAREHOLDING?

AT EASTLIGHT, WE HAVE AROUND 4,500 RESIDENT SHAREHOLDERS, WHO ARE INVITED TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGMS) AND OCCASIONAL SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS (SGMS).

At these meetings, Shareholders:

- Approve administrative resolutions, including for Board Members and who our auditors should be
- Receive an update on Eastlight's activities, including community work, over the previous year
- Ask any questions they have to the Leadership Team.

However, few Shareholders choose to get involved in this way – at our last AGM in September 2024, **just 67 Shareholders took part.**

Last year, we wrote to those who had recently taken part in an AGM to invite them to take review of our Shareholding offer. To attract a diverse range of residents, we also publicised the invitation in Shine magazine, on our Facebook channel and in our newsletter to the Active Residents Network.

Jeanette Sullivan, Chair of the North Eastlight Residents Group, said:

“Being a Community Gateway is an ethos. It's about residents working alongside staff at Eastlight to make it a good company, and we need more opportunities for residents to get involved.”

THIS IS WHAT RESIDENTS TOLD US:





INTRODUCING THE EASTLIGHT COMMUNITY GATEWAY CIRCLE

OVER THE PAST NINE MONTHS, ENGAGED RESIDENTS TOLD US WHAT THEIR CHALLENGES AND FRUSTRATIONS WERE.

For example, there are several ways for residents to get involved with Eastlight. You can join the Active Resident Network, get involved in your local Eastlight Residents Group or apply to join Eastlight's Board or Customer Influence Committee.

However, the review found that these opportunities are disconnected from each other, and not enough residents know about them. We also heard that communication needed improving and that residents did not have enough opportunities to have their say on the services that mattered most to them.

Instead of trying to change Shareholding, we decided it would be better to create something new.

Following a series of online and in-person workshops, plus phone calls, the following circle was created by residents. This brings together all existing activities, and some proposed new ones, into one place.



“ We created the circle to connect everything together, so that all the really good stuff that happens in different places in Eastlight joins up. We also wanted to improve communication, and this circle reflects something continuous, with no ‘us and them’”



Tammy, one of the engaged residents



Eastlight residents share their views at a shareholding workshop at Eastlight House

WHAT'S IN THE CIRCLE?

Eastlight Resident Members (new!):

under this proposed structure, all Eastlight residents would be invited to become a Resident Member. They would receive a Membership card and receive regular opportunities to take part in activities and complete surveys and consultations through the **Active Residents Network** newsletter.

Board and Committees: Residents would continue to be invited to apply to join our Board and our **resident-led Customer Influence Committee**. The committee is made up of residents who are passionate about championing your voice and ensuring your experiences continue to shape Eastlight's decision-making.

Charter Steering Group (new!): A group of engaged residents who designed the new offer and Eastlight team members would work together to make sure that we implement the new offer and Charter successfully.

Scrutiny and Service Improvement Activity (new!): Residents felt Eastlight needed to provide more opportunities to work together to improve services and influence how they are delivered. This is likely to include staff and residents working together to identify improvements to the areas that matter to you. Other opportunities could include joining procurement panels for services that directly affect residents or helping to recruit staff who provide your services.

Eastlight residents groups: Our groups are an opportunity for staff and residents to work together to make a difference in their local neighbourhoods through quarterly meetings, estate walkabouts and budgets for community improvements.

Resident communication: Residents told us they want better communication, and this has been brought into the circle to create more opportunities for you to shape our communication with you, from the letters you receive to Shine magazine.

Community voices (new!): We heard that many residents want to be a link between Eastlight and their local communities, but do not receive enough information and support to play that role. This is particularly true in areas where Eastlight does not own many homes.

Resident events and consultation: We would hold member-only events to get their views and keep everyone up-to-date. Members, and other Eastlight residents, would be consulted on any major proposed changes to Eastlight's operations, such as restructures, in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's standards and other laws and regulations.

None of these activities would be possible without the support of **Eastlight teams** providing information and support. Eastlight publishes quarterly Customer Voice reports with **performance information**, and would provide more **opportunities to learn** through the Resident Academy. For the first time, we would publish a **monthly calendar of events (new!)** to let members know about the range of activities taking place.

INTRODUCING THE EASTLIGHT RESIDENT MEMBERS CHARTER

WE ARE CONSULTING ON A PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE AN EASTLIGHT RESIDENT MEMBERS CHARTER, PUBLISHED ON THESE PAGES, TO REPLACE OUR CURRENT SHAREHOLDING OFFER.

It describes our long-term commitment to providing meaningful influence and engagement for residents. Unlike current engagement opportunities, this charter would be included in Eastlight's rules, meaning it is legally binding.

We are holding this consultation because we want to understand whether residents support it. If the feedback is positive, then we will present a proposal and invite Shareholders to vote on it.



Craig Clackett,
Customer Influence
Committee member

“ To me, this Charter is so important. Introducing it would give us residents more chances to work with staff to make sure that what Eastlight do is right for us.”



PHILOSOPHY

As a Community Gateway organisation, Eastlight is committed to embedding residents' views in our formal structures. We recognise that Eastlight residents know better than anyone what they need to be safe and happy in their homes and communities.

The Eastlight Resident Members Charter has been designed by Eastlight residents.

Eastlight residents can choose to become Eastlight Resident Members.

Through our Eastlight Community Gateway Circle, we provide opportunities for everyone to contribute, irrespective of time available, location or interest. We positively encourage residents to become Eastlight Resident Members to help us deliver our purpose and strategy.

We expect Eastlight Resident Members to hold us to account and scrutinise our performance.

Our Eastlight Community Gateway Circle aligns groups for resident-led scrutiny, communications and involvement and connects the Board, Committees, Staff and Residents to work together to deliver our purpose and strategy.

Our Eastlight Resident Members Charter outlines our long-term commitment to embedding meaningful influence and engagement and is enshrined in the Eastlight Rules.

We will explain, using plain English, what the Eastlight Resident Members Charter means for Eastlight residents and how they can get involved.



OUR CHARTER

Our Eastlight Resident Members Charter's purpose is to build trust, create value and influence through meaningful resident engagement and involvement. It ensures that residents can act as long-term custodians for Eastlight's role in the community, providing quality homes and services and enable the governance of Eastlight to take residents' views into account in their decision making.

Through the Eastlight Community Gateway Circle, we will organise activities and connect people to improve accountability, scrutiny, transparency, influence, communication, connectivity and inclusion.



Eastlight resident
Shereen Faure and
her two children

We will publish how a diverse range of residents can become Eastlight Resident Members and outline the criteria for admission. We will also publish the Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct for participating in engagement, community, communication and scrutiny activity within the Eastlight Community Gateway Circle.

Specifically, we will:

- Provide opportunities for residents to scrutinise performance and get involved in improving service quality. This is likely to include, but is not limited to, opportunities to sit on panels to influence the delivery of residents' services, attending meetings, carrying out reviews to scrutinise services and contributing to surveys.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful two-way dialogue and embedding residents' views, ensuring that ideas and content are sourced from local communities. This may include but is not limited to opportunities such as meetings, consultations, events, and providing feedback for our communication channels.
- Ensure that diverse needs and preferences are considered when engaging in activity within the Eastlight Community Gateway Circle, providing an inclusive offer

This Charter will be reviewed every two years in conjunction with Eastlight Resident Members to ensure it remains fit for purpose. Any updates to the Charter will only be considered after full and meaningful consultation with Eastlight Resident Members and only where any updates remain within the spirit of the Charter purpose as outlined in the Eastlight Rules.



SHARE YOUR VIEWS

WE ARE CONSULTING ON A
PROPOSAL TO REPLACE OUR
CURRENT SHAREHOLDING OFFER
WITH THE EASTLIGHT RESIDENT
MEMBERS CHARTER.

←
Eastlight residents,
Abaida Baldwin (left)
and Joy Lee (right).

We would like to know whether you believe the Charter, as set out here, would be an improvement and provide you with more opportunities to influence the services that matter to you.

To share your views, you can:

- Complete a short survey on our website. Visit: www.eastlighthomes.co.uk
- Complete a paper survey included with this magazine, and return it using the stamped addressed envelope included.
- Come along to a drop-in session.

**In person: Monday, 24 March.
12.30pm–2pm. Eastlight House,
Charter Way, Braintree, CM77 8FG**

**Online: Monday, 24 March. 6pm–7pm.
Online, via Microsoft Teams.**

To attend either or to share other feedback in other ways, please email community@eastlighthomes.co.uk or call us on **0330 128 0330**.

YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED



AM I TOO LATE TO GET INVOLVED?

Not at all! We are planning to hold workshops and drop-in sessions through the coming months to start to shape how the new offer would work in practice, and we would welcome anyone interested in getting involved. Please call us or email community@eastlighthomes.co.uk to find out more.



IF THIS CHARTER WAS INTRODUCED, WOULD EASTLIGHT REMAIN A COMMUNITY GATEWAY ASSOCIATION?

Eastlight would remain a Community Gateway association. Being a Community Gateway association is about committing to resident and community involvement, working in partnership with residents, empowering residents and communities, and focusing on local accountability by having a resident-led democratic structure in place.

As a result, we believe that giving residents more opportunities to shape the services that matter to you means we would be strengthening our Community Gateway ethos.



WILL THIS CHARTER COST US MORE?

No. If this goes ahead, the resources that we currently put towards running our Shareholding offer would support the creation and running of the Charter, which we believe would result in much greater resident engagement.



HAVE OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS DONE THIS?

Other housing associations, such as CHP in Essex and Saffron Housing Group in Norfolk, have also replaced shareholder models with charters such as the one proposed in order to improve opportunities for residents to shape the homes and services they receive.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Please take the time to share your feedback. The Customer Influence Committee and Board will assess your views before deciding on next steps. If there is strong support for the Resident Members Charter, then we will invite Shareholders to vote on a proposal to introduce it in line with our rules.

Subject to views raised in the consultation, the proposal would be to replace Shareholding with the Eastlight Resident Members Charter. If voted in, then Board members would be Eastlight's shareholders, and would vote on administrative matters currently, such as who our auditors are.

Resident Shareholders would be invited to become Resident Members instead, where they would be consulted on any major changes to Eastlight's operations, which would give more residents the chance to influence anything proposed.



WHAT HAPPENS IF RESIDENTS DON'T WANT THIS?

We are consulting on this proposal because we believe this Charter will provide you with more relevant opportunities to get involved than we currently offer. If this isn't introduced, then we will continue to offer shareholding as we do now. We will continue to run engagement activities in line with our rules and regulatory expectations.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE NEWLY REFORMED EASTLIGHT RESIDENTS GROUPS FOR BRAINTREE, WITHAM AND HALSTEAD HAVE BEEN BUSY OUT AND ABOUT IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOODS.

Joining our Resident Engagement Team and Estate Safety Officers on walkabouts around your estates, the groups have identified areas of improvement across all three towns.

From spotting issues with fly tipping to ways we can improve communal areas, all issues identified as our responsibility have been reported to our teams.

In December, the groups met to discuss the best ways to resolve the identified issues.



At their meetings, they agreed on:

- Sprucing up the communal space at Godric's Place in Braintree by installing seating and planters.
- Installing seating in the communal garden at Colne Valley Close in Halstead. Plus, the uneven drains in the garage area have now been fixed.
- Painting carpark lines on Honeysuckle Way in Witham, and planting some flowers to brighten up the area.

We'll be hosting more estate walkabouts this year, and we're looking at the best way to offer more to residents who live outside these areas. Watch this space for more information!

TO GET INVOLVED

Complete our simple form:
www.eastlighthomes.co.uk/my-community/resident-involvement



community@
eastlighthomes.co.uk



0330 128 0330



JOIN YOUR ACTIVE RESIDENT NETWORK



Eastlight Resident and Braintree group member, Rob Yates

Are you looking for an opportunity to make a difference in your community? Then join the Active Resident Network!

We recognise that you understand your homes and neighbourhoods better than anyone.

The network has been created because we want to work with anyone willing to share their expertise and passion to improve your homes, services and communities.

WHAT COULD I GET INVOLVED IN?

Network members receive regular newsletters with updates and opportunities to get involved.

In recent months, members have:

- told us how we can improve the support we offer to residents experiencing anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse



- helped us identify better ways to adjust our services based on your needs
- built on the compensation we offer by including vouchers, where appropriate.

Members can also:

- make a difference in your neighbourhood through our volunteer Eastlight Residents Groups
- learn about Eastlight and the housing sector through our Resident Academy
- apply for paid roles, like our resident-led Customer Influence Committee.

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Visit: www.eastlighthomes.co.uk/my-community/resident-involvement

Email: joanne.jackson@eastlighthomes.co.uk

Call us on **0330 1280330**



Call: 0330 128 0330 (local rate)

Text: 07860 024 511


Email: customer.services@eastlighthomes.co.uk


Write to: Eastlight House, Charter Way,
Braintree, Essex, CM77 8FG

Visit: www.eastlighthomes.co.uk

 facebook.com/eastlighthomes

 instagram.com/eastlighthomes

 x.com/eastlighthomes

 linkedin.com/company/eastlight-community-homes-

We really value your comments, compliments and complaints, as they help us to shape the services we provide to you. Please get in touch, any time.

If you need this magazine in a different format or language, please let us know.

