

# Here East, a decade of collaboration and a powerful Olympic legacy

Just over ten years ago, London took to the global stage as the host of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. For several weeks, the nation's capital became the epicentre of the sporting world, with over 180,000 spectators everyday entering the Olympic Park in Stratford to enjoy the games - not to mention the millions watching from across the globe.

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Once the Olympic congregation left Stratford, the nervousness around what the future held for this pocket of East London set in. Amongst all the excitement there was the impending, and important, question - what next?

There was a fervent ambition to ensure that the Park did not become another white elephant to the nation, as we have seen in other host cities. For while the Olympics represents a celebration of heroic sporting achievement and national pride, it is the lasting footprint that is arguably more significant.

That summer in 2012, we won the bid to transform the International Press and Broadcast Centre on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park - a significant piece of infrastructure used in the Games - into a home for global technology companies, startups, academic institutions and creative businesses, now known as Here East. Ten years on, and Here East is home to over 5,400 people

- 3,800 who work for businesses on site and 1,600 who study - all of whom are regularly based on campus.

Our ambition was to create an environment for businesses of all shapes and sizes to flourish and grow through cultivating a space for collaboration right across our campus. We felt strongly that by curating this space, bringing in enterprising businesses and encouraging them to work together by sharing ideas and expertise, we would create an ecosystem that in turn delivered for not only local boroughs, but the whole of the UK.

*In theory, encouraging collaboration of this nature is a simple idea, our evidence has shown that it really does work. If you put a world-class scientist, a creative, and a business leader in a room together, the chances are they will find ways of working together and creating new business concepts and ventures.*

And that's exactly what we have seen happen at Here East. I have heard countless stories from businesses on campus who have worked together to create opportunities that generate new jobs, revenue growth and more ventures. We've seen unexpected partnerships emerge across Here East as corporates, universities, entrepreneurs and startups work together.

In a recent Oxford Economics study, we found that Here East has created over 10,300 employment opportunities in the past ten years, sustaining £317M in wages and contributing £700M in GVA towards GDP in 2021 - well exceeding the forecasts made by Oxford Economics in a 2012 report.

This is compelling data, and shows the tangible impact of cultivating a space for innovation, bringing together the best and brightest technology businesses, and how this translates into economic growth, job opportunities and transformation.

Collaboration of this nature has also seen East London has become a global

hub for three of the fastest growing tech clusters in the capital: esports, cybersecurity and the creative sectors. The campus has become a living testbed for creation and technological expertise – a place where people congregate to create, develop and deliver business ideas, solutions and social change that truly make a difference to our local area, and wider London economy.

We've learnt many lessons along the way. Bringing together the local authorities and the private sector has been an essential part of our growth journey. We wanted to first and foremost serve the community we sit within by keeping talent and employment opportunities local, whilst also bringing together a diversity of thought and values. Collaboration between the private sector, public sector and the local community is key for post games success and innovation in the tech and creative sectors.

*These are valuable lessons for the next host cities – Paris and LA – and I hope they deploy a similar strategy as they consider what comes after their Olympics Games.*

Ten years ago, we saw thousands of spectators come to the Olympic Park. Ten years on we welcome thousands of people onto our Here East campus every day, to work, study, and of course, collaborate. That's a powerful legacy, and one we will harness and build on as we look to the next ten years.

Gavin Poole is CEO of [Here East](#).