

Two Rivers Housing

Overview: Two Rivers Housing is a housing association in the Forest of Dean that provides quality affordable homes

Knowledge
Transfer
Partnerships



University of the
West of England



The business background

Two Rivers Housing provides quality affordable homes to meet community needs. It currently manages 3500 homes in the Forest of Dean District and plans to develop an additional 150 homes per year. Together with UWE, the company has set up a 2 year 'Action Through Innovation' project which will look at ways of incorporating environmental technologies into the development, refurbishment and maintenance of housing stock. The aims are to improve energy efficiency and implement waste control measures in order to cost save and reduce environmental impact. In January 2008 UWE graduate James Ford started working with Two Rivers Housing to meet these aims.

Achievements & outcomes

James has completed a feasibility study looking at the introduction of ground source heat pumps at existing properties. The study shows that by using £60,000 of recycled funding Two Rivers can replace as many as 40 of the current heating systems at zero cost to the company, with tenants set to save £300 per year on fuel bills (4-5 tonnes of CO₂ per property per year). In addition, James has developed a whole life costing model and is producing an IT-based Sustainable Resource Centre with a toolkit to assess the suitability of sustainable housing solutions. A tenant energy focus group has been set up to monitor energy use within the home and this will allow Two Rivers to build up a real-life picture of energy spending and what can be done jointly to save money and improve energy efficiency.

Tangible business benefits

Two Rivers is benefiting greatly from both James' ongoing work and UWE's advice and expertise. In the first ten months of the project a vast amount of research has taken place which, if implemented, will help improve sustainability of the housing stock and deliver financial and social benefits to tenants. Richard Parnaby, Professor of Architecture at UWE, will be heading up a new build 'think tank' to discuss Two Rivers' next stage in new build development, in which the company aims to go beyond current government targets and reach the next level in the code for sustainable homes.

Fast Facts

- As a provider of affordable homes Two Rivers Housing aims to improve the sustainability of its properties and reduce costs for its tenants.
- A two year project with UWE is being run to look at ways of incorporating environmental technologies into new and existing housing.
- As well as conducting a feasibility study into sustainable energy sources, an IT-based Sustainable Resource Centre is being produced and a new build 'think tank' has been set up.
- The code for sustainable homes is a mandatory Government target to, amongst other things, reduce carbon emissions. A code 3 home, for example, emits 25% less CO₂ than a new home built to current Building Regulations.

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)

KTP is a three-way project between a recent graduate, a business and a university or college for work on a specific project

Benefits to the Business

- Innovative solutions to help your business grow
- Increased competitive advantage and profitability
- Access to highly qualified people to spearhead new projects
- Access to experts who can help take your business forward
- Improved performance and business operations

Benefits to the Graduate

- Allows you to launch your career from the right platform
- Gives a chance to apply your degree to your job
- Training opportunities provided
- Mentoring support offered
- Ownership of your project

The viable solution for business & higher education

The business perspective

"Our Sustainable Development Associate, James Ford, has been instrumental in bringing the two elements of this project together and his role has proven to be a vital catalyst in our successful partnership working. The opportunity to work with a university such as UWE has helped support one of our key values, which is putting 'people first' and investing time, effort and resource in our staff and customers."

**Garry King, Chief Executive,
Two Rivers Housing**



The university perspective

"The partnership with Two Rivers Housing is an exciting opportunity for the Centre for the Study of Sustainable Buildings. The chance to help develop the full new build design specification will represent significant contribution from the university and good academic benefits are expected as the project moves forward."

**Richard Parnaby,
University of the West of England (UWE)**

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Grow

Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and Expert South West

KTP is a UK-wide programme enabling businesses to improve their competitiveness and productivity through accessing knowledge, technology or skills from the UK's universities, colleges and research and technology organisations.

The knowledge sought is embedded into the business through a project or projects undertaken by a recently qualified person recruited for the purpose to work in the business.

KTP is run and managed on behalf of 17 government-funding organisations by the Technology Strategy Board.

As well as KTP, the online Expert South West Service showcases a variety of other ways to work with the Universities of South West England including training and development, research, consultancy, networking, recruitment, support for start-up businesses and use of a range of resources and facilities.

The next step

For more information on KTP visit www.ktponline.org.uk. To find out about other services and facilities offered by the South West Universities visit www.expertsouthwest.com.