

Berneslai Homes Customer Services Committee 14th November 2024 – Meeting Summary:

Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 2 2024/25

The Quarter 2 (July – September 2024) performance information was presented, which informed Committee of Berneslai Homes' performance, including areas of strength, areas for improvement and actions being taken in specific areas to improve performance. Key areas of focus for improvement included void rent loss, employee sickness and the proportion of calls answered in target timescales by the Contact Centre.

The Committee reviewed the Quarter 2 performance report recognising the areas of strength and the actions being taken in key areas to improve performance.

Property Repairs and Improvement Partnership (PRIP) Performance Report Quarter 2 2024/25

The Quarter 2 PRIP performance information for the contractor delivery of the repairs service was presented and discussed. The report shows the performance of the contract partners on 14 key performance indicators (KPIs) for the second quarter. It was highlighted that performance was strong despite the combined achievement for both partners resulting in 4 KPIs being met and 10 not. It was noted that the targets for the contract set by the council were very ambitious. KPI targets were achieved in relation to voids turnaround time, sub-contracting percentage value, major adaptations and the Barnsley Pound. Actions being taken to address and improve the KPI targets that have not been met was presented from both contractor partners.

The Committee noted the report and the actions being taken to improve performance on KPIs where targets have not been met.

Stock Condition Outcome

The Committee received a report on the outcome of the Stock Condition survey conducted by Pennington Choices. The survey aimed to assess 17,967 properties and 713 blocks, focusing on system storage, configuration, Housing Health and Safety (HSRS), the escalation of severe hazards, and the lodgement of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs). To date 13,000 properties have been surveyed, representing 86% of the stock. Of these, 90% were deemed decent, while 10% were considered non-decent. This assessment does not account for recent work on investment programs, addressing hazards and reviewing lifespan elements. Progress on non-decent properties as of Quarter 2 was highlighted. Over 10,000 properties have received an EPC, with 40% achieving a rating of C or above. Further work is needed on properties scoring EPC D. Committee had raised and were informed that further validation of some data is being undertaken as some discrepancies have led to some properties being incorrectly deemed non-decent, however officers are confident that site-based checks and escalation routes are in place to achieve 0% non-decency by March 2025.

The Committee noted the current position on stock condition surveys.

Quarterly Complaint Report (Quarter 2) 2024/25

The Committee received a report which summarised the complaint handling and learning for Quarter 2 (July – September) and Quarter 1 and 2 combined. The significant increase in contact with the Customer Services' Team was highlighted, with a 73% rise in Stage 1 complaints in Quarter 2 compared to the same quarter last year. Despite this, the performance in responding to complaints remains strong at 96% within the timescale. The Housing Ombudsman Service Landlord Report 2023/24 and satisfaction results are positive. The high proportion of Stage 2 complaints upheld was discussed with Committee noting that measures are in place to monitor this, together with communication to tenants particularly regarding dates for works and managing expectations when timescales cannot be met. The rise in Stage 1 complaints is partly attributed to delays in carrying out works and increased publicity on the customer's right to complain. However, Berneslai Homes has significant customer insight into areas needing improvement to enhance the customer experience, and efforts will continue in this regard.

The Committee were assured by Housing Ombudsman Landlord Report and Berneslai Homes' performance in comparison to national performance and performance compared to similar landlords by size and type and noted the report and the continue positive progress in improving the complaint handling service.

Hearing Tenants – Involvement and Influence Update

The Committee received a report which gave a mid-year update on how tenants and residents have made their voices heard and influenced policy and service delivery at Berneslai Homes and how Berneslai Homes has worked with tenants and residents to support sustainable communities. The report highlighted the positive increase in tenant feedback despite resource challenges within the Customer Services Team over the summer, which reduced the capacity to turn insight into action. The report did not include feedback from complaints and compliments as this is reported separately.

The Committee noted the positive actions to strengthen and respond to the tenant voice, and the development of the Insight and Engagement Strategy and that the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey and Action Plan will be presented to Berneslai Homes Board in February 2025.

Update from the Building Safety Resident Engagement Panel

Committee received an update from the Building Safety Resident Engagement Panel. Since April the Panel has held 5 meetings, 3 of which were special sessions focussing on the Resident Engagement Strategy, the new Lettings Policy, and the “Something Doesn’t Look Right” procedure. The Panel has also contributed to creating a Tower Talks Newsletter for high-rise buildings, installing electronic noticeboards in high rise buildings (which will be installed in Independent Living Schemes by end of February 2025), changing of intercom systems, CCTV and emergency lighting, wall ties to Buckley and Britannia House, Communal corridor door replacements and installing sprinklers to remaining flats that were not previously fitted. The Panel is working with the Building Safety Regulator to address issues with inner doors on flats that open onto balconies. During a recent Regulator of Social Housing inspection, building safety was highlighted as a key area of strength with positive feedback on tenant engagement and the work carried out by officers engaging with tenants and leaseholders. The Panel has organised coffee mornings in the high-rise buildings which will assist in to combatting loneliness as well as focussing on building safety issues. These events will be expanded to the local community.

The Committee noted the Building Safety Resident Engagement Panel update.

Damp & Mould Action Plan Quarterly Update

The Committee received the quarterly update which highlighted trends and key actions completed and in progress. Progress has been positive with an increase in performance for the completion of 7-day jobs within the target timescales for Quarter 2 (July – September) by both contractor partners. Damp and mould will be added as an additional compliance area moving forward. The technologies to improve damp and mould were discussed, including the trialling of TIC and providing early advice to tenants.

The Committee noted the Quarter 2 damp and mould performance, and the key actions completed and in progress.

Impact of the new Lettings Policy – 6-month review

The Committee received a presentation regarding the impact of the new Lettings Policy. The key principles of the policy and key changes were presented highlighting that the majority of these are being met but are being impacted by the long term empty homes available for letting. Number of applications on the register has significantly reduced from 9,324 in August 2022 to 5,059 at November 2024. The impact in respect of increase and decrease for specific bandings were presented which showed a reduction in the high priority Bands 1- 3. There are still a high number of applicants in Band 4 on the list and these applicants will have very little chance of being rehoused. The waiting times for priority applicants has reduced from 2023/24 but is still high due to increased time to prepare homes for reletting (this is impacted by our available budgets). Key developments that are being progressed are in respect of age/disability restrictions on homes, measuring sustainability of lets, IT developments, improving processing of nominations and mutual exchanges and a service restructure to align resources to the right areas. A Customer Panel has been held on the new Lettings Policy with positive feedback received. A meeting will be held with BMBC to present the findings and Member Seminars will be arranged which may result in adjustments to the Policy. A number of complaints have been received from tenants in respect of re-banding, Member enquiries have increased but these are now stabilising. There has not been a large number of requests received for reviews on decisions made.

The Committee noted the update and the impact of the new Lettings Policy.