



Minutes of Berneslai Homes Board held 11th July 2024 at 1.30 p.m.
Gateway Plaza

Present:

Ken Taylor (KT)	-	Chair
Richard Fryer (RF)	-	Board Member
Mahara Haque (MH)	-	Independent Chair of Customer Services Committee (Co-optee to the Board)
Adam Hutchinson (AH)	-	Board Member
Mark Johnson (MJ)	-	Board Member (joined remotely)
Rebecca Mather (RM)	-	Board Member
Gez Morrall (GM)	-	Board Member
Kevin Osborne (KO)	-	Board Member
Jo Sugden (JS)	-	Board Member
Sarah Tattersall (ST)	-	Board Member

In attendance

Amanda Garrard (AGa)	-	CEO
Dave Fullen (DF)	-	Executive Director, Customer & Estate Services
Arturo Gulla (AGu)	-	Executive Director, Property Services
Lee Winterbottom (LW)	-	Managing Director Construction Services
Kulvinder Sihota (KS)	-	Executive Director, Corporate Services
Sam Roebuck (SR)	-	Head of Governance and Strategy and Company Secretary
Kathy McArdle (KMCA)	-	Service Director BMBC
Gary Brampton (GB)	-	Pennington Choices (For Item 2 – Stock Condition
Ben Davidson (BD)	-	Pennington Choices (Survey on the Confidential Agenda)

Observing

Housing Inspection Team:-

Raina Mason	Senior Lead
Scott Conroy	Team member
Emily Wall	Team member
Declan Smyth	Team member

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions took place.

	ACTION
<p><u>Item 1 – Apologies</u></p> <p>Eric Smith - Board Member (Co-optee to the Board)</p>	
<p><u>Item 2 – Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were none declared.</p>	
<p><u>Item 3 – Customer First Video – Making a Difference</u></p> <p>DF introduced the item, referring to previous videos, outlining various stories. This video focuses on the positive difference made in neighbourhoods, working with the community and partner organisations and reflects what Berneslai Homes do.</p>	
<p><u>Item 4 – Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy</u></p> <p>DF presented the Strategy which seeks Board approval and their endorsement of the action plan (Appendix B) to enable the strategy to be brought to life. Board noted that the Strategy is fully aligned to regulatory duties.</p> <p>Reference was made to the previous work undertaken by TPAS and HQN in 2022.</p> <p>Officers and Board members are committed to hearing the tenants' voices and looking at opportunities where these can be captured. Once the Strategy and Action Plan has been approved and endorsed, work will commence on the checks and challenges, putting information onto the website in a user friendly way and making it accessible to everyone in the community.</p> <p>Board felt it was a good, clear and strong document, but were keen to understand how customers had been involved in the development of the Strategy. DF explained how BH had worked with the Tenants Voice Panel and other engaged tenants, commencing with an away day, looking at what was/was not working. TARA reps and mystery shoppers were also involved. Their feedback was considered when developing the document. Meetings then followed to shape the Strategy and action plan.</p> <p>He advised that tenants were very clear to stress the importance of the commitments being fulfilled, showing they have been listened to and that it is making a difference. Therefore, oversight will be monitored by the Customer Services Committee and an annual report will be presented to Board and BMBC. KMCA felt it would be useful to bring updates to future Strategic Assurance meetings and she would arrange for this to be added to the agenda as a standard item. Board also requested that updates from Customer Services Committee are provided to Board.</p>	<p>KMCA DF</p>

Board referred to the diversity element following their HDN session and questioned how confident BH were in ensuring the different customer bases had been captured. DF assured the Board that it was important that we do not duplicate the fora already in place in Barnsley. There are some well-established equality fora in Barnsley and links were made into these, this avoided the potential of consultation overload. He also referred to the action plan and some of the areas where more targeting was required i.e. the gypsy site, care leavers and he elaborated on the work that has been taking place in these areas. BH is also involved in community activities where engagement is in a more informal setting, this week for example at the Barnsley Pride event. Contact has also been made with DIAL regarding any issues they were aware of so these could also be reflected.

Discussion followed on the work of the Tenants Voice Panel and a question was raised regarding the potential of increasing the demographics. DF advised that this is a small group who are heavily engaged. The Panel have requested their meetings be reduced to four per year to enable them to focus their activities; one of their priorities is to engage in different elements of the community and groups of people to get a broader voice, utilising insight surveys and analysing equality factors to make sure they get true representation. This should increase demographics.

Board was also provided with examples of the various channels used to share information with the tenants and residents of Barnsley, including in paper format.

Board extended thanks to all involved.

Resolved.

- **Board recommended the Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy 2024-2027 for approval by BMBC Cabinet.**
- **Board endorsed the action plan to support the Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy 2024-2027.**
- **Board supported the proposal to include a summary of insight and engagement outcomes at each committee with an annual progress report on actions and impact being presented to Board and BMBC Cabinet.**

Item 5 – Employee Health and Safety Year End Report 2023/2024

SR presented the report highlighting the key points.

The report presents a complete overview of the year, comparing annual data to identify and question trends.

Quarterly health and safety audits are presented to EMT where employee health and safety actions are closely monitored.

<p>The BMBC Health, Safety and Emergency Resilience Service provides the statutory 'Competent Person' service to Berneslai Homes and as part of this service, BMBC undertake two yearly audits of the management of health and safety. The results are included in the report.</p> <p>Berneslai Homes' Corporate Employee Health and Safety Policy 2024-26 has been reviewed in line with this report with no notable changes made.</p> <p>Board was referred to the key points from the 2023-24 performance indicators (appendix B) outlined in tables 9.2.1 and 9.2.2.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to the spike in accidents and related absence in Q4. All the accidents were investigated; no patterns were identified, and all cases had risk assessments before, and all were reviewed post-accident. Board asked that any spikes need to be closely monitored.</p> <p>Board questioned 'near misses' and how they were being recorded. LW confirmed these are recorded and information will be included in future reports.</p> <p>LW referred to the increase in activity and turnover at Construction Services, therefore would expect to see some 'spikes.'</p> <p>MJ referred to the gas explosion simulation exercise planned for later in the year and due to his experience volunteered to be involved if required.</p> <p>Board was pleased to note a decrease in violence and aggression related incidents (from 28 to 18). Assurance was provided to Board that whenever an incident of this kind is reported, the case is looked at and to see if any lessons can be learned/action taken. All these incidents are reported to EMT on a quarterly basis. AGa advised of some training that has taken place, as a result of incidents, as the way people behave can escalate or de-escalate a situation.</p> <p>There has been an increase in absence due to mental health and Managers continue to support staff. The wide range of support and initiatives are included in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Board noted that Audit and Risk Committee will be carrying out a deep dive into mental health at their next meeting. A Board member commented on the good provision for mental health issues and questioned how this was working and if staff were accessing these resources. SR advised that the counselling services continues with a good take up by staff. Board noted that not all mental health issues are work related, some are personal issues. Occupational Health referrals continue, and wellbeing champions are accessible. There is also a significant amount of monitoring taking place on sickness absence. Board said they look forward to receiving assurance from the Audit and Risk Committee. The Chair asked if comparisons could be investigated at other organisations/ALMO's. AGa advised Board that Berneslai Homes promotes mental health and encourage conversations, therefore it is no surprise that this has increased. It reflects the openness of the organisation.</p>	<p>SR/LW</p> <p>SR</p> <p>SR</p>
---	----------------------------------

<p>The annual programme of review actions outlined at Section 10.2 of the report were drawn to Board's attention for approval.</p> <p>Resolved:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Board considered the performance of the health and safety systems and procedures and agreed actions to be in line with expectations and were assured that robust mechanisms are in place to manage those systems. II. Board approved and signed the refreshed 2024-2026 Health and Safety Policy. III Board approved the areas of further development and monitoring identified at Section 10. 	
<p><u>Item 6 – Building Safety Compliance Year End Report 2023/2024</u></p> <p>AGu presented the report highlighting the key points. He was pleased to report an average of 99.22% compliance across statutory legislation.</p> <p>A positive highlight was brought to Board's attention about TSM measures, all are 100% compliant i.e. gas, fire, asbestos, water safety, lift safety.</p> <p>Board were asked to note the areas of focus, mainly as a result of no access:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire safety equipment servicing. • Electrical compliance from a 10 year perspective – there were 92 outstanding condition reports at year end, now reduced to 40, through stronger letters/leaflets being served. Work continues with BMBC for a legal remedy. <p>Board was assured that before this strong approach to access for electrical testing is initiated, many visits have also taken place. BH are also aware of vulnerable customers. This stage is the last resort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic lifting equipment. • CO/Smoke installations – At year end there were 460 outstanding, this now stands at 250. BH are looking to utilise the gas legal remedy. Opportunities to carry out installations will be taken when undertaking gas servicing. KMCA stressed the importance of addressing the whole issue and requested this be tracked. <p>Board was assured that Property Services continue to work with partners, the Council etc on gaining access to properties.</p> <p>There has been an increase in damp/mould/condensation related works and particular reference was made to Awwab's Law. Board asked if there</p>	<p>AGu</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1300 adaptations carried out <p>The report also contains areas for improvement at Section 7.</p> <p>The report will be presented to BMBC’s Senior Management Team, followed by Cabinet, for further scrutiny. It will also be produced on an annual basis.</p> <p>The information will also be disseminated to staff as part of the monthly Team Brief.</p> <p>Board was extremely pleased with the report which highlights the hard work that takes place. They requested that their appreciation be extended to staff.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>Board approved the annual review, noting the achievements and areas for improvements.</p>	<p>AGa</p>
<p><u>Item 8 – Barnsley Homes Standard Programme – Year End 2023/2024</u></p> <p>AGu presented the report, highlighting key points.</p> <p>As part of the BHS programme, in 2023/24 works were undertaken to 1275 properties. A total of 3046 elements components were also completed. Customer satisfaction was 98.31% which was above target.</p> <p>There was a total saving of £9K against the budget.</p> <p>All schemes were completed by Construction Services and Wates, with just external roofing still in progress.</p> <p>Ventilation has been a continued focus. The fan component lifecycle was discussed in relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). AGu confirmed that if fans become faulty, they are either repaired or replaced. Replacement fans have been included in the business plan and would be a capital element. This will impact on future costs.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>Board approved the Barnsley Homes Standard outturn reported and referred to BMBC.</p>	
<p><u>Item 9 – Value for Money Annual Report</u></p> <p>KS presented the report and highlighted the key points.</p>	

<p>Progress continues to maximise value for money. The position at year end is positive in the challenging environment. Examples of key savings include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £1m annual recurrent savings, demonstrating that Berneslai Homes continue to be a good performing, low cost organisation as shown in the Housemark benchmarking data - £700K external funding realised - £900K additional income secured for customers <p>Audit and Risk Committee considered the report at their last meeting in June. AH, Chair of the Committee, confirmed that detailed discussion took place as outlined in the minutes of Audit and Risk Committee. The Committee was pleased with the performance achieved as part of the Housemark assessment and they look forward to receiving the next Strategy which will provide more detail on the approach which is moving from efficiencies to cash actionable savings.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>Board approved the progress and achievements made in maximising the value for money as summarised in the report and detailed in the attached appendix.</p>	
<p><u>Item 10 – Resources Reports:-</u></p> <p><u>10.1 Board Fact Sheet</u></p> <p>Board received the factsheet and commented this continues to be particularly useful.</p>	
<p><u>Item 11 – Minutes/Actions from previous meeting</u></p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record and the actions were noted</p>	
<p><u>Date of Next Meeting</u> – 26th September 2024 and AGM</p>	