



**Minutes of Berneslai Homes Board held 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**4.00 p.m.**  
**Gateway Plaza**

**Present:**

Ken Taylor (KT)	-	Chair
Richard Fryer (RF)	-	Board Member (Remote)
Adam Hutchinson (AH)	-	Board Member
Mark Johnson (MJ)	-	Board Member
Gez Morrall (GM)	-	Board Member
Kevin Osborne (KO)	-	Board Member
Jo Sugden (JS)	-	Board Member

**In attendance**

Amanda Garrard (AGa)	-	CEO
Dave Fullen (DF)	-	Executive Director, Customer & Estate Services
Rachel Taylor (RT)	-	Executive Director, Resources and Company Secretary
Russell Thompson (RTh)	-	Interim Executive Director, Property Services (Remote)
Paul Clifford (PC)	-	Service Director BMBC

**Observing**

Alison Dalton	Head of Strategic Housing BMBC
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The Chair took the opportunity to congratulate Alison Dalton on her new role and welcomed her to the Board meeting.

	<b>ACTION</b>
<b><u>Item 1 – Apologies</u></b>	
Rebecca Mather, David Leech, Board Members	
<b><u>Item 2 – Declarations of Interest</u></b>	
None were declared.	

<p><b><u>Item 3 – Tenants Voice – Ambition Programme – Dylan’s Story</u></b></p> <p>DF introduced the presentation referring to the Pathways to Work Programme. The video shared one individual’s journey, demonstrating the impact of the programme had on his life.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the presentation Board expressed how fantastic it was to see the progress made. They acknowledged that it was the dedication and excellence of the staff that enabled Dylan to reach this point. Prior to this support he had not been engaging and would not have been able to achieve what he is doing now. Board recognises the time required to break down barriers. They also agreed on the importance of continuing to resource this work in partnership with BMBC. DF confirmed that funding has been secured for the next 2 years, however Board emphasised that a rolling programme is required as uncertainty near contract end dates causes staff concern and prompts them to consider other employment options. PC reiterated the challenges of securing long term funding and stressed that national lobbying will play a key role moving forward.</p> <p>The Chair requested a note of thanks be sent to the team involved and Dylan on behalf of the Board. Appreciation was also extended to the Comms Team for their work in producing the presentation</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>The presentation was received</b></p>	<p>DF</p>
<p><b><u>Item 4 – CEO Recruitment</u></b></p> <p>The Chair outlined the comprehensive and thorough recruitment process which also involved Board members JS and RF as well as Matt O’Neill from BMBC. Three high calibre candidates were interviewed, culminating in the appointment of Steve Feast. Steve brings over 20 years of experience. He will commence his role on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2026.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>Board ratified the decision of the Board sub group to appoint Mr Stephen Feast to the position of Berneslai Homes’ Chief Executive</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Item 5 – Berneslai Homes Strategic Plan and Annual Business Action Plan for 26/27 and update on actions from the 25/26 Plan Quarter 2</u></b></p> <p>AGa presented the report, highlighting the key points, beginning with an overview of the process that commenced at the Board Strategic Planning Day in March 2025. Since then extensive engagement has taken place with tenants, staff and BMBC. Based on the feedback received the plan has been simplified to make it more focussed and achievable. The ambitions have been refined into 4 priorities and the success measures have been reviewed and updated accordingly. A significant amount of content has been removed as it related to the business as usual activity.</p>	

The Draft Annual Business action plan sets out a 1 year programme, concentrating on key areas of focus including data, the HRA Savills' report, maximising income, engagement, achieving EPC C, Awaab's Law, the new Asset Management Strategy and Organisational review.

AH emphasised the importance of ensuring alignment with the VFM Strategy at the point of review. MJ noted the risk posed by current recruitment challenges, stressing the need for the plan to adapt accordingly. KO highlighted the importance of transparency, particularly in relation to voids and acquisitions and the need for robust plans to address void performance. He thanked BH for providing the 6 monthly ward level updates to councillors, supporting openness

**Resolved:**

- **Board approved the Strategic Plan.**
- **Board approved the draft Annual Business Action Plan for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 and delegated any minor amendments to the Strategic Plan and Annual Business Action Plan to the Chief Executive, as the plans go through the approval process with BMBC.**
- **Board noted the six monthly update on progress against the Annual Business Action Plan.**

**Item 6 – Quarterly Risk Update**

RT presented the report which outlines the current risk position and sector wide risk profile. A new risk management system is proposed for implementation on the 1<sup>st</sup> February. A report was presented and reviewed by EMT and will be discussed at SMT today. An update will be provided to Audit and Risk Committee in January. A session will then be arranged to reassess strategic risks in the light of the challenging and changing environment.

AH questioned the removal of the policies and procedures risk, noting the Board requires assurance around controls and visibility. RT confirmed work is underway on a policy framework/strategic tree, to be presented to Audit and Risk Committee before coming to Board. DF added that the risk information presented during the regulatory inspection was satisfactory. However he will be working with the Head of Strategic Housing conducting a self-assessment against the revised Consumer Standards to ensure policies are up to date.

JS raised concerns about the increasing risk relating to workforce capacity and recruitment to key leadership roles. AGa provided an update on the recruitment to some key roles.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim ED Property Services in post, extended to the end of June and working 4 days per week from January 2026. The recruitment process to this role has commenced.</li> <li>• An internal interim arrangement is also in place for the Head of Asset Management, providing a development opportunity. Recruitment to follow in 6 months.</li> <li>• The Head of Estate Management role recruitment will be considered after Christmas.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair asked how staff were being supported during the transition period before the new CEO joins. AGa confirmed that recent face to face Leadership Forums have been used to provide updates, with the Heads of Service cascading messages effectively. The Communications Team are ensuring consistent high quality messaging.</p> <p>PC said he welcomed the contingency measures from a Council perspective and requested future reports include mitigations details for each risk.</p> <p>MJ reflected on the organisation’s strong response during the pandemic and asked about future risks. DF expressed disappointment with the government’s Pegasus exercise, noting the limited learning. The Resilience Team will therefore lead a local learning exercise to capture insights and avoid losing corporate learning.</p> <p>AH referred to contingent liability related to the December court case and if there was an update. RT said she had not heard anything but will follow up.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>Board review and comment on the Risk Management Quarterly Update. Review and comment on the Strategic Risks.</b></p>	<p>RT</p> <p>RT</p>
<p><b><u>Item 7.1 Q2 Performance Summary</u></b></p> <p>DF presented the report, already reviewed by Customer Services Committee and highlighted the key points.</p> <p>KPIs – 17 targets were met or exceeded, 10 targets were narrowly missed and 6 targets were not achieved.</p> <p>Key strengths are Building Safety Compliance, Complaint handling response times, proportion of emergency and non-emergency repairs completed in target, rent collection, staff sickness and sustained Call Centre performance.</p> <p>One of the key focus areas is void rent loss and cross divisional working is ongoing to deliver against the Empty Homes Reduction Plan.</p> <p>Not included in the report is the results of the TSM Wave 2 survey. These will be brought to a future Board meeting. Direction of travel is positive with improvements on Wave 1. Of the 12 KPI targets, 6 exceeded target, 5 were</p>	

<p>very narrowly missed and only 1 (ASB handling) was missed, although this has still improved from last year.</p> <p>It was pleasing to report a 5% improvement in satisfaction with the time taken to complete repairs within the target timescale. This is something that BH have invested in, the swing is statistically significant.</p> <p>AH felt it would be helpful if Board were involved more in the target setting process and questioned if there was an opportunity. Board to be involved in company KPI's in future years noting that many are set by BMBC.</p> <p>RF was pleased to see the improvements in sickness absence, however, pointed out that Paragraph 3.5 suggests Housemark analysis indicates BH performance has declined, with our Peers improving. DF explained our peers are moving at a faster pace, with AGa commenting that perception surveys lag by 18 months and the backlog will have had an impact. If next year shows little progress further action will be required.</p> <p>MJ feels a corner has been turned and performance has improved, therefore we are moving in the right direction with plans in place.</p> <p>Board were pleased with the report but requested that future reports also include numerical values (cash, percentage or both) for void rent loss.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board considered quarter two performance.</b></li> <li>• <b>Where performance targets have not been achieved, Board confirmed they were satisfied with the explanations provided and there are adequate controls and actions in place</b></li> </ul>	<p>RT</p> <p>DF</p>
<p><b><u>Item 7.2 – PRIP Performance Q2</u></b></p> <p>RTh presented the update. Board noted that performance has declined since the last quarter. Changes are being made to the PRIP contract and challenges continue on Empty Homes Sub contractor use has slightly increased due to void demand. A system issue affecting job closure also needs investigation. With regard to customer satisfaction moving to TSMs this will provide a consistent and clearer understanding of performance.</p> <p>MJ referred to the 3 RIDDORS. RTh advised that these have been reviewed by the Health and Safety Manager and a report considered by EMT found no concerns. RF also queried the disparity in near-miss reporting between PS (none) and Wates (153) . RTh said he would investigate and circulate the findings to Board.</p> <p>KO observed the significant difference in the summary of results between Wates (Green) and Property Services (Red). RTh advised that this relates to</p>	<p>RTh</p>

<p>technical issues with job closures and attendance times incorrectly indicating incomplete work.</p> <p>PC questioned the comparability of Wates and Property Services reporting given existing variances. RTh acknowledged some differences and stressed the need for consistency which he is confident can be achieved by year-end. PC reiterated the importance of this.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Board considered the Q2 2025/25 PRIP Performance Report update summary report.</b></li> <li><b>2. Where PRIP performance targets have not been achieved, Board was satisfied with the explanations provided and there are adequate controls and actions in place.</b></li> <li><b>3. Board did not identify any areas where they feel more detailed consideration is required by Customer Services Committee on any customer focussed KPIs.</b></li> </ol>	
<p><b><u>Item 7.3 – Building Safety Compliance and Disrepair Q2</u></b></p> <p>RTh presented the update, highlighting the key points.</p> <p>Board were asked to note that 67 out of 73 sump pump checks are now complete. 100% should be achieved by the end of December.</p> <p>JS referenced Awaab’s Law and recommended that the scorecard be reviewed to clearly set out the areas on which the Board requires assurance. Early changes are visible, including an increase in inspections and a reduction in mould washes. The Chair requested an update be presented to February’s Board on Awaab’s Law/Damp Mould and Condensation.</p> <p>RTh highlighted the additional pressures arising from tight timelines, noting that this has created challenges and the need for further resources. Overall performance remains reasonable given current demands. Daily monitoring is in place to ensure resources are allocated effectively. Weather changes are expected to increase demand and work is underway to identify opportunities for strengthening activity at the front end of the process.</p> <p>The Board requested that the next report include a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) rating.</p> <p>Board were informed the asbestos issue detailed at 4.5 of the report has now been resolved and is at 100%.</p> <p>RF welcomed the government’s focus on addressing the unethical practice of claims farming and noted that if supported by strong evidence from the sector, this work could lead to meaningful and positive change.</p>	<p>RTh</p> <p>RTh</p> <p>RTh</p>

<p>KT expressed satisfaction with the strong performance to date and highlighted that progress continues to move in a positive direction.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>Board received and noted the 2025/26 Qtr. 2 report and the areas of focus.</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Item 8 – Regulator of Social Housing Update Report</u></b></p> <p>DF presented the update. The State of the Nation presentation in September reflected on the C1 regulatory judgement. The annual meeting with the Regulator took place on the 7/10/25. In attendance were DF/PC/SC/AG. The meeting was positive and focussed on actions taken since the inspection including tenant engagement. 2 new actions were agreed:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be updated on progress relating to the new involvement and engagement strategy</li> <li>• Arrange introductory meetings with the new CEO of Berneslai Homes and the Head of Strategic Housing BMBC. This has been arranged for the 16/1.</li> </ul> <p>They also talked through the work programme for the Consumer and Oversight Board and a full self-assessment will be undertaken. The Regulator acknowledged the good progress made half way through the 4 year cycle.</p> <p>Appendix B to be recirculated, due to some narrative not being visible.</p> <p>Board made reference to customer data and discussion took place. DF explained that this remains an area of limited strength for our long standing tenants and that a more robust system is required. More comprehensive data is, however, available for newer tenants. Work is already underway to ensure the necessary information is captured to meet the requirements of the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and customers are being encouraged to update their details through the Repairs online service. It is recognised that further development is needed and this will be progressed as part of the Know Your Customers workstream.</p> <p>The Chair requested this be picked up by Audit and Risk Committee as part of their assurance work on data.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Board note the progress made against key areas detailed in the update note provided to the RSH in October 2025.</b></li> <li>• <b>Board noted the actions requested by the RSH following the Engagement meeting.</b></li> </ul>	<p>JW</p> <p>RT</p>

<p><b><u>Item 9.1 Board Fact Sheet</u></b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>Board received for information.</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Item 10 – Minutes/Actions Debriefs:</u></b></p> <p><u>Minutes and actions from the last meeting held 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025</u></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p><b>The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and the actions were noted.</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Mark Johnson</u></b></p> <p>At the close of the meeting KT on behalf of the Board took the opportunity to thank MJ for his outstanding contribution over the years. He highlighted MJ’s many roles, his consistent support to colleagues and the Executive and the invaluable knowledge and experience he has brought to the organisation, noting the high standard he has set.</p> <p>MJ expressed his appreciation to EMT, fellow Board Members, the Governance Team and Council representatives. He reflected on the significant achievements made, acknowledging both the challenging periods and the rewarding work. He said it has been a privilege to serve the organisation and a tremendous opportunity.</p>	