



CUSTOMER PANEL

THEME: STRATEGIC PLAN

It's been five years since we published our Strategic Plan 2021 - 2031, a plan which sets out not just how we aim to get the basics right for tenants but also our ambitions and priorities.

We invited tenants to come into Gateway Plaza to share with them what we've achieved under the plan, but most importantly find out from tenants and residents whether they think the plan, our ambitions and our priorities are still right for them and Barnsley.

If you want to read our Strategic Plan click [here](#).

On Thursday 5 June 15 tenants came into Gateway Plaza for the Customer Panel on the Strategic Plan.

Chief Executive Amanda Garrard gave tenants a short presentation on the Strategic Plan, giving more information on national and local issues and financial context that impact on the sector in general.

The group then split into three smaller workshops which were each given a question to answer so we could hear their views in more detail.

WORKSHOP ONE

This workshop looked at whether we are getting the basics right for tenants. They were asked for the views on three questions around this. Here is their feedback:



Are the plan's themes still relevant?

We acknowledge the need to get the foundations of the business right; to be a high performing and learning organisation that continues to transform, learn, and use innovation to improve our services to tenants whilst being as efficient as possible. The plan focuses on getting the basics right. Here are the themes;

- **Excellent Customer Service**

We listen to our customers and their views are at the heart of our decision making. We continue to learn, grow and change so we adapt to any given situation.

- **Successful well managed company**

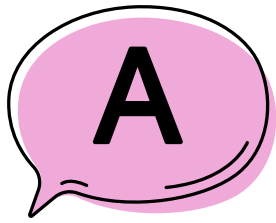
We invest and spend wisely in our homes and communities whilst also supporting the local economy and investing in our town, ensuring we provide value for money services.

- **Partnership working**

We are proud to work closely with the Barnsley 2030 Board, our local communities and different businesses and organisations across all sectors to achieve their vision of Barnsley being a place of possibilities.

- **Sustainable communities**

We embrace diversity and inclusion, provide work opportunities, support carers, and contribute to the zero-carbon agenda.



Yes, they are all still relevant.



Excellent Customer Service is important and tenants like face to face conversations.



We'd like to know who our Neighbourhood Officers are and how to contact them.



Improve the website as it's not user friendly.



Communication is a top priority!



Treat everyone as individuals, for example, knocking and waiting when turning up for an appointment as some tenants may have vulnerabilities.



Getting things right first time in relation to repairs.



Some tenants prefer telephone contact as that's good customer service.



Concentrate on value for money and allocating resources properly.



The ASB Partnership model is a good example of partnership working.



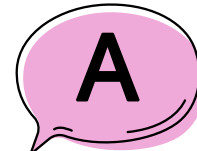
What is stopping us from delivering these?



- Poor communication with tenants.
- Lack of visibility of Neighbourhood Officers on estates.
- Lack of knowledge as to who the tenants Neighbourhood Officers.
- Long waiting times on 787878.
- Lack of email acknowledgement on group emails.
- No acknowledgement on the website when enquiries are put in.
- External communications need improvement.
- Tenants need to be clear on who does what.
- Get things right first time.
- Sustained communities.



What do we need to do differently with the resources we have?



- Review new initiatives like Solar Panels to see what works and how it can be improved.
- Ensure emails have an auto response.
- Make the website easier for transactions.
- Improve communication with tenants.
- Have consistency with community meetings in relation to attendance and agendas.
- Let tenants know who their Neighbourhood Officers are.
- Sort out the backlog of repairs.
- Manage expectations.

WORKSHOP TWO

Workshop Two looked at what we should be focusing on over the next few years. They were also given three questions and asked for their views. Here is their feedback:



Are the current priorities still the right ones?

Here are the current priorities:

- **Hearing tenants**

listening to organisations, valuing and encouraging feedback from customers, working together to continuously improve services.

- **Keeping tenants safe**

Currently a top priority with the introduction of Awaabs Law and other legislation such as Decent Homes 2.

- **Employment and Training**

The Berneslai Homes Achieve Team are working hard on this and now there is the new BMBC initiative of Pathways to work and 10% suitable posts to those who are economically inactive.

- **Technology and Innovation**

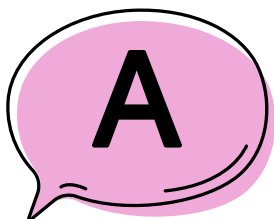
We are developing the best use of technology for the business, tenants, communities and staff, but could we do more?

- **Growth of homes and services**

New builds and acquisitions now sit with BMBC but we are working closely with them to establish a future of council housing strategy. This has recently been discussed at BMBC Cabinet 2025.

- **Zero Carbon**

We are meeting targets both locally and nationally by changing the way we work and investing in homes.



Yes, they are still the right priorities but they could be expanded on.



Include more community based priorities. More locality not just focusing on the town centre.



Look at more youth provisions.



Raise the profiles of already established groups such as U3A (a charity who offers over 100 active groups for retired/semi retired people).



Better transportation links as these are essential for communities.

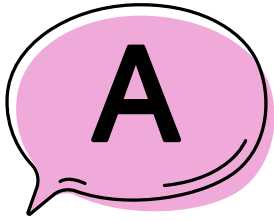


Better advertising of services available from partners, such as transport to hospitals etc.



What are the most important priorities for tenants?

Looking at the priorities above, tenants were asked to list them highest to lowest. Here is what they thought:



1 Keeping Tenants safe.

Looking at damp and mould, fuel poverty and energy efficiency for homes. Walkabouts should be advertised more so that tenants know when Neighbourhood Officers will be on their estates if they want to meet with them to discuss issues.

2 Hearing Tenants.

Listen to what tenants are telling you.

3 Improvement opportunities for employment and training

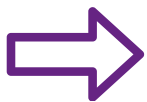
This should also include current staff on apprenticeships and offering more apprenticeships.

4 Growth of homes and services

Making sure both new and old builds are energy efficient.

5 Technology and Innovation

The feedback from tenants was that this priority can feed into all of the above. Also looking at training elderly tenants on how to use and be confident in using online services and to go paperless.



Zero Carbon

Tenants thought that this shouldn't be it's own priority and instead feed into all the priorities for example, Keeping Tenants safe; Zero Carbon is a part of this by making sure all homes are energy efficient and free from damp and mould. This also links in with BMBC and their priorities like Sustainable Barnsley and the BMBC Housing Strategy.



How do our priorities 2026/31 reflect BMBC priorities?

Tenants took a look at the table below which outlines BMBC Priorities and discussed how Berneslai Homes priorities fit in. Here is their feedback:

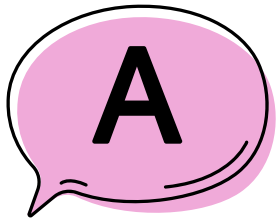
Barnsley 2030

Barnsley - the place of possibilities			
Healthy Barnsley	Learning Barnsley	Growing Barnsley	Sustainable Barnsley
People are safe and feel safe.	People have the opportunities for lifelong learning and developing new skills including access to apprenticeships.	Business start ups and existing local businesses are supported to grow and attract new investment, providing opportunities for all.	People live in great places, are recycling more and wasting less, feel connected and valued in their community.
People live independently with good physical and mental health for as long as possible.	Children and young people achieve the best outcomes through improved educational achievement and attainment.	People have a welcoming, safe and enjoyable town centre and principal towns as destinations for work, shopping, leisure and culture.	Our heritage and green spaces are promoted for all people to enjoy.
We have reduced inequalities in health and income across the borough.	People have access to early help and support.	People are supported to have safe, warm, sustainable homes.	Fossil fuels are being replaced by affordable and sustainable energy and people are able to enjoy more cycling and walking.

Barnsley

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Welcome to the place of



- **Healthy Barnsley**

Making homes affordable and safe improves health.

- **Learning Barnsley**

Partnership working with BMBC on Pathways to work. More could be done to advertise how Berneslai Homes can support with getting back into work

- **Growing Barnsley**

As mentioned in the feedback to Question 1, advertise more on already established groups and services available, focusing more on local communities.

- **Sustainable Barnsley**

Looking at the answer from the priorities question, linking the Zero Carbon priority in with Sustainable Barnsley.

From this feedback it was clear there was a theme of Partnership working and information sharing when it comes to priorities. Hearing Tenants also feeds into all of BMBC priorities.

WORKSHOP THREE

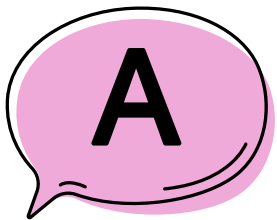
In this workshop tenants were asked to look at how we can create savings and capacity, they were given questions and asked to give their views. Here is their feedback:



How can we create savings and capacity?

Thinking about the services we provide, priorities and the themes in the strategic plan, how can we make savings and work smarter to ensure we deliver for tenants within the constraints we have.


Tenants in the workshop were given both the themes of the strategic plan and the priorities which were outlined in the other two previous workshops.





Improve internal communications.





Streamline processes to simplify tenant transactions, for example, tenants just dealing with one team or staff member.

 Address issues such no access, repeat visits and turning up to the wrong addresses.

 Listen to staff and act on what they are saying.

 Focus on the repairs and empty property backlog.

 Listen to tenants, use their experience and knowledge to get the job right first time.

 Make small quick win changes.

 Do it right first time.



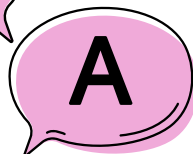
How can we be more efficient and effective?



- Send the appropriate operative for the job.
- Can operatives identify jobs in properties? for example, if they have the skillset to carry out 'minimal repairs' when they already at a property.
- Use materials that are built to last for repairs.
- Trust between management and staff.
- Good leadership.
- Reduce wages.
- Ask staff what they are doing can be changed to save money.



How can we do things differently?



- Allocate the right trade operative to the job raised.
- Take time out to re-evaluate/reassess.
- Cut down on transactions.
- Neighbourhood Officers need to be more visible.
- Involve tenants more in things like restructuring of services.
- Ask staff how they think they can help the culture of organisational change.



How can we use our resources, people and funding more effectively?



Address the issues that keep being raised by tenants. They are continually raised for a reason.



Communication and conversation. Both internally and externally, between staff and customers.



Trust the staff involved to make changes to the website when ideas or issues are raised.

NEXT STEPS

All feedback from each workshop will be collated and discussed before feeding this back to BMBC. We will be sending out surveys to all involved tenants at the beginning of September to discuss some of the findings from the different consultation events and ask their views. There will be a draft updated Strategic Plan presented to Board in September/December this year before going to Cabinet in December ahead of Cabinet approval in February 2026.

Thank you to everyone who came along to the Customer Panel on the Strategic Plan.

Your views are really important to us and we appreciate both tenants and residents volunteering their time to help us improve our services

Thank you

GET INVOLVED



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