

**APPENDIX A**

**Value for Money Strategy  
2018 - 2021**

## **Why have a Value for Money Strategy?**

Value for Money has always been a key consideration for Berneslai Homes. Obtaining the best outcomes for our customers, within available resources, is the key to achieving value for money 87% of our tenants currently tell us they are satisfied with the value for money they receive for their rent, an increase from 61% in 2005. Berneslai Homes embraces the VFM agenda and will strive for continuous improvement in this area.

Challenge Berneslai our tenant led scrutiny process offers external assurance that as a company we meet the HCA Consumer Standards and our local offers. Challenge Berneslai have influenced both strategy and policy via the outcomes from their performance monitoring and in depth reports.

This strategy brings together all of the VFM strands which run through everything we do and communicates clearly to all board members, customers, staff and other stakeholders of BH how we will achieve, manage and improve VFM.

## **What is Value for Money?**

Value for money is about getting the maximum benefit from the available resources.

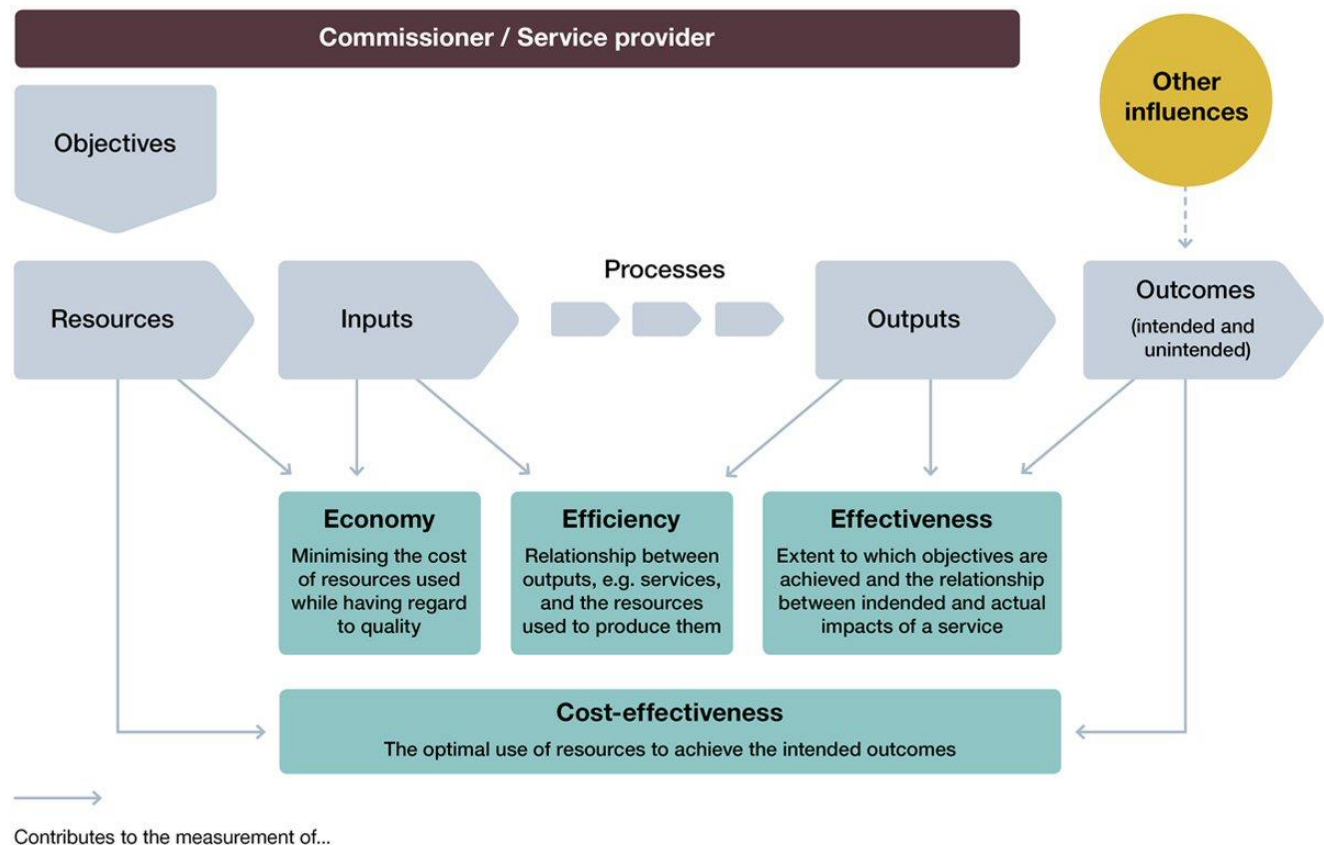
VFM is often described in terms of “the three E’s”- economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

- **Economy – minimising the cost of resources for an activity (“doing things at the right price”)**
- **Efficiency- how much you get out in relation to what you put in (“doing things in the right way”)**
- **Effectiveness- the extent to which objectives are met (“doing the right things”)**

Having the “right people” is also an important aspect of ensuring VFM and Berneslai homes aims to be an employer of choice with committed, skilled and empowered employees whose working environment is underpinned by modern employment practices.

Value for Money has been achieved when there is an optimum balance between economy, efficiency and effectiveness. That is, costs are low, productivity is high and outcomes are successful.

The relationship between the “three Es” is illustrated in the diagram below



Source National Audit Office Website April 2015

### **Local Context**

Our shareholder has set its vision as:-

“Working together for a brighter future a better Barnsley”

The Council’s Priorities are:

- thriving and vibrant economy
- people achieving their potential
- strong and resilient communities

Barneslai Homes vision is “ A fresh approach, to people, homes and communities “ and we do this through our values of “ Great People, Great Place, Great Company “ . Our Strategic Plan 2016-21 sets out what we aim to achieve over the next five years for our customers and our community and how we contribute to the delivery of Future Council.

In order to translate our vision into reality we have set four strategic objectives for the company. These are:

- Excellent Customer services
- Sustainable communities
- Partnership working

- Successful well managed company

The attainment of Value for Money is fundamental to the achievement of these objectives.

### **National Context**

- **Government Policy**

Radical changes to the Welfare Benefits system and the 1% rent reduction are placing a substantial strain on the finances of social housing providers. In this environment Value for Money is both more important and more difficult to achieve.

- **National Standards**

Regulatory standards contain the outcomes that the Social Housing Regulator expects providers to achieve. The standards are classified as either 'economic' or 'consumer'. The regulator only intervenes in relation to the consumer standards where failure to meet the standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants. The emphasis is on co-regulation with tenants holding their landlords to account. The economic standards, of which VFM is one, do not apply to local authorities or ALMOs.

Under the standard RSLs (Registered Social Landlords) now have to report against a set of metrics. While the value for money metrics which are applicable to all, are financially focused, providers will be also be able to set performance targets themselves to reflect social outcomes, appropriate to their objectives.

The standard requires providers to publish performance evidence in their annual accounts against their own metrics and those defined by the regulator, and report how that performance compares to peers.

- **Housing Growth**

Achieving Value for Money in all areas of the Landlord Service releases resources to re-invest in housing growth, a national and local priority

## **Value for money aims & objectives**

Berneslai Homes is committed to achieving the following Value for Money aims:-

- To provide cost effective services that give high levels of customer satisfaction
- To maximise resources available

Underpinning our VFM aims Berneslai Homes has the following objectives:-

- To improve VFM
- To have an effectively managed approach to VFM
- To promote ownership and awareness throughout the organisation, with customers and other partners/stakeholders
- To demonstrate VFM

Value for Money is embedded in everything we do and can be classified in terms of the 5Ps

- Planning
- Performance management
- Processes & Procedures
- Partnerships
- Procurement

## **Planning for the long term & Strategy**

To ensure we are effective and 'doing the right things' it is essential to have robust strategies and long term plans

### **Customer Involvement Agreement**

We believe that the best way of improving services is to work closely with our customers. To listen and act on what they have to say about the services we offer. We believe that our customers and their communities should be at the heart of everything we do. Our Customer Involvement Agreement sets out the ways in which tenants are an integral part of our processes and governance arrangements

We encourage our customers to play an active role in the management of their homes and estates. Their involvement is critical in the planning, delivery and monitoring of the services that affect them to ensure value for money is secured.

We ensure the Value for Money of our engagement strategy through the annual Customer Involvement Impact Assessment and the annual Review of TARA and Tenants Federation Funding; both of which are submitted to the Customer Services Committee for consideration.

### **HRA Business Plan**

From April 2012 the subsidy system ceased and the Council now keeps the entire income stream from their own rents which, after funding the debt charges on borrowing, is available to provide services and maintain the stock.

The 1% rent reduction over 4 years means the 30 Year HRA Business Plan is no longer viable and savings are required which may adversely impact on our ability to maintain the Barnsley Homes Standard and current levels of service.

### **Sustainable Asset Management**

We have a well developed approach to area profiling and option appraisal to ensure investment is only made in sustainable estates.

### **Strategic Plan**

The Berneslai Homes Strategic Plan 2016-21 sets a clear direction and set of objectives for the Company, which is essential to the achievement of VFM. The plan documents our achievements to date. This understanding of where we are now is then used to set challenging but achievable aims for the next 5 years and targets for the following year.

### **People Strategy**

The People Strategy is Berneslai Home's statement of how we will achieve our business objectives through our people. The strategy reflects the importance of effective Human Resource Management in achieving organisational goals. Ensuring a steady stream of committed, skilled and

empowered employees whose working environment is underpinned by modern employment practices is essential in supporting our ability to provide cost effective and efficient customer focused services. The achievement of the Investors in People Gold award in 2014 and reaccreditation as Gold under the new more challenging framework in 2017 are a testament to this.

### ICT strategy

The ICT strategy sets out the company's vision for IT capabilities. IT hardware and software have short product lifecycles. Customers have ever increasing advanced methods of communication. For Berneslai Homes to remain at the forefront of the social housing sector it is important to take full advantage of new technologies finding new and more efficient ways of delivering services to customers and streamlining back office functions. The ICT strategy prioritises areas for investment which, in 2018/19, includes increased mobile working capability for frontline staff. All proposed investment in ICT is supported by a business case demonstrating the link back to the company's strategic objectives.

### Service reviews and Improvements

To complement the Strategic plan we have an annual service improvement plan which sets out areas of service we will review and improve during the coming year. Customer involvement in the implementation of this plan is agreed with the Tenants Federation.

## Support Service reviews

The Company spends around £6M with the Council on Support Services. Some of these services including Barnsley Connects and Neighbourhood Services have a significant and direct impact on our customers. Hence it is essential that they are high quality and cost effective.

Support services have all been reviewed on several occasions following Best Value principles and shown to provide Value for Money. We continue to work closely with the Council to promote ongoing improvements to the services in line with our customer priorities

## **Performance Management**

Effective performance management is central to ensuring the delivery of key business and service priorities. A comprehensive and robust performance management framework is in operation. Performance targets are challenging, reasonable, meaningful and linked to the aims and objectives of the organisation. Managers review them monthly and variances are reported to a Performance Management Team meeting where reasons are discussed and remedial plans agreed. Performance is reported quarterly to the Board and the Council. The Performance Management Framework is under review in 2018/19 to be more streamlined and have a clearer focus on performance reporting aligned to our sole shareholder, the Council.

The loss of rent income on empty properties has been significantly reduced by effective joined up working throughout Berneslai Homes and construction partners together with very strong performance management arrangements. Voids turnaround time (BH9) has been reduced from 57 days in 2004/5 to 24.89 days in 2017/18. We continue to focus on bringing difficult to let and long term voids back into use. At the end of the year there were only 95 empty properties compared to 934 when the company was established.

Rent Collection performance (BH10) remains an area of significant strength for Berneslai Homes with this measure out-turning at 97.95%. The rents service has undergone further restructuring and modernisation with the reduction in manual records enabled by the development of our in-house Rents Intelligence System and more integrated workflows prioritising tasks and highlighting trends.

## **Financial Performance**

The base budget is reviewed each year as part of budget setting and staffing budgets are built up from zero base using approved structures. Managers play a central role in the process and must demonstrate the need for each budget line as well as demonstrate that they can make financial savings wherever possible in order to deliver new service developments or improvements.

SMT receives weekly updates on key budget issues, with monthly monitoring by budget holders the outcome of which is reported quarterly to the Board.



BH has already delivered significant efficiency savings. The efficiency register currently includes savings of £57M delivered since 2005. The register is updated regularly and is published annually on the Internet.

Benchmarking of activities and costs leading to management action to improve

BH has been a member of the House mark benchmarking club since 2002. The results are used to identify areas for management action. We have low cost core housing management services ( the fourth lowest of all ALMOs in the House mark benchmarking club) combined with good performance on PIs.

The table below shows the Berneslai Homes Housemark benchmarking results for 2016/17 compared to other ALMOs and Local Authorities (with greater than 10,000 stock)

Efficiency Summary for Berneslai Homes						
Business activity	Cost KPI	Cost KPI Quartile		Quality KPI	Quality KPI Quartile	
		Berneslai Homes (2016/2017)	Berneslai Homes (2015/2016)		Berneslai Homes (2016/2017)	Berneslai Homes (2015/2016)
Overheads	Overhead costs as % adjusted turnover			Overhead costs as % direct revenue costs		
Major works & cyclical maintenance	Total CPP of Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance			Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall quality of their home (GN & HfOP)		
				Percentage of dwellings that are non-decent		
Responsive repairs & void works	Total CPP of Responsive Repairs & Void Works			Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance (GN & HfOP)		
				Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs		
				Average re-let time in days (standard re-lets)		
Housing management	Total CPP of Housing Management			Percentage of tenants satisfied with the service provided (GN & HfOP)		
				Percentage of anti-social behaviour cases resolved successfully		
				Current tenant rent arrears as % of rent due		
Estate services	Total CPP of Estate Services			Percentage of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (GN & HfOP)		

Quartile key							
	Upper Quartile	Middle Upper	Median	Middle Lower	Lower Quartile	N/A	No Data
Valid dataset							

## **Processes & Procedures**

We are streamlining business processes to gain efficiencies while maintaining a strong customer focus and customer involvement in setting priorities. We use IT to improve processes. Actions taken include:-

### **Electronic Payment of Utility Bills**

We continue to use an electronic system for paying Utility Bills which has realised the following benefits:-

- better information on utility payments to promote improved management and control of these costs
- minimised the risk of supplies being terminated for non- payment.
- reduced administrative time and costs in processing invoices
- supplies have been moved to the cheapest contracts through YPO.
- no more charges for copy bills & late payment

### **Insurance claims**

We have reviewed the processes for dealing with Insurance claims. This has resulted in claims against Berneslai Homes being defended more successfully. The savings of these are added to our efficiency register.

### **Employee Administration**

We continue to work closely with BMBC, Financial Services to introduce more automated processes in employee administration. The absence return, termination and car mileage and expenses forms are now on line and all staff receive their payslips electronically. Further plans to bring the new starter and variation to contract forms on line are under development. Electronic annual leave cards were implemented throughout Berneslai Homes from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 with the exception of craft operatives. Further development of the leave card system is awaited to enable craft operatives to also book leave on line.

### **Letter Production**

The increased use of external services, in particular for bulk mailings, has streamlined processes and reduced costs. We save an average of 16p per letter by outsourcing bulk mailing.

### **Access to Service and Channel Shift**

We continue to redesign our front end service offer to support channel shift. Choice Based Lettings is the most advanced service on this journey with March 2017 seeing the ending of the Barnsley Chronicle property advert and the switching off of the automated telephony service. With the exception of a 'Search & Apply' mediated service in place providing support for the 1.5% of all applicants designated as vulnerable and unable to access services on-line, this service is now a digital only service.

Since 2014/15 there has been a 240% increase in the take up of on-line services by customers.

### Document management and electronic post

Our document management system has been fully operational for a number of years. All our paper records have been scanned into the system and are accessed electronically. Security restrictions are applied as necessary ensuring only relevant officers and staff can access sensitive or personal documentation. Considerable time is saved in locating a file or a particular document; everything is available via the system.

The electronic post room ensures that post is delivered electronically and post handling is monitored and performance reports produced. This ensures we can measure against one of our key performance indicators of responding to letters in 5 days.

### Managing attendance

The Company whilst a caring and sympathetic employer clearly recognises that absence from work is costly in terms of sick pay, temporary cover, workload, quality and level of service. Managing attendance is therefore always seen as a priority in ensuring value for money. Regular audits on sickness absence are undertaken by the HR service together with monthly review meetings with Directorates to consider sickness levels, review current cases and ensure effective action is undertaken. The HR Service is accessible for all employees on the provision of professional advice and guidance on terms and conditions and policies and procedures. A benchmarking exercise on managing attendance was previously undertaken against other high performing ALMO's. It was reassuring that the way in which we manage sickness absence is in line with the top performing ALMO's and that our pro-active health and wellbeing initiatives are also comparable with other ALMO's.

### **Partnerships promoting sustainable communities**

We will continue to work in partnership to generate maximum benefit for our customers.

### Regeneration Initiatives

We continue to work with the Council, RSLs and developers to lever in additional resources to regenerate areas. Public Resources for such work have reduced considerably and our primary focus is on a number of smaller scale interventions.

### New Build & Acquisition

New Build and Acquisitions are set within the affordability context of the HRA 30 year self- financing business plan and the HRA Residential Investment Fund. The business plan is based on maintaining the current housing stock at the home standard agreed with tenants. Neither new build nor stock acquisition is built into the business plan. They have therefore to be achieved through:

- Efficiencies generated within the plan (for example –savings on schemes)
- Additional income (for example - HCA grant or income from RTB sales)

- Headroom developed within the plan between the debt cap and the level of debt. This is achieved by repayment of debt and depends on a variety of other risk factors like rent income levels and welfare reform.

All of the budgets for new build and stock acquisition have therefore been generated from efficiencies or additional income. The new build and acquisition budgets are based mostly on efficiencies.

£14.3M has been identified within the Council Housing capital programme (£9.3M) and from a review of the HRA working balances (£5M). It has been agreed with the Council that expenditure of this sum will be part of the Council's Housing Growth 5 year investment programme for the period 17/18 to 20/21. It has been agreed with the Council that this added value sum will be spent on a number of new build, new build acquisitions and other acquisitions to increase housing supply. In addition to this £2.4m was identified as surplus to business plan requirements for the year 17/18 and it has been agreed with the Council that this will fund new build schemes to respond to the housing needs identified within the Older Persons and Vulnerable Adults needs assessment. Again this was approved as part of the Capital Programme. It is expected that this will deliver around 48 new build dwellings over the 5 year period.

#### Prevention is better than Cure

Berneslai Homes continues to promote early help, prevention and intervention as the most effective approach through our Vulnerability Strategy: 'Something Doesn't Look Right'. We provide practical support and interventions to address identified issues which, without our contribution could escalate to other services for example social care or the police. Our strategy aims to ensure the early intervention of risks during routine visits to thousands of homes within the Borough, at the start of tenancies and at various times throughout them. For example, we are able to provide practical support, make referrals to other appropriate support providers and carry out housing application assessments as part of our response to the early identification and intervention with our tenants in need.

Berneslai Homes continues to undertake proactive visits to Council properties specifically to identify any support or vulnerability issues early. Having concluded a pilot mental health support worker service in partnership with a third sector organisation, Community Links, we now operate a permanent in-house support service. The aim is to support tenants with low level mental health issues to better manage and sustain their tenancy. This forms a key element of our new Tenants First service launched in April 2018 which encompasses intensive support, mental health, financial inclusion and furnished tenancies. Tenants First is a specialist service focused on providing a personalised package of support to assist in tenancy sustainment.

## Community Safety

Obviously, not all crime and anti-social behaviour can be solved using the above approach. Where problems require specialist interventions they are referred to the Council's Community Safety Service. This team advises and leads on Berneslai Homes' more complex cases providing specialist knowledge under the terms of a Service Level Agreement currently valued at £550,000.

## Financial inclusion

The combined effect of Welfare Reform, Government austerity measures, recession, and rising utility bills makes Financial Inclusion work a priority for the company. Not only does this type of work alleviate financial problems for individual families, put extra money into the local economy - it also works to mitigate the impact on rent collection rates and bad debt.

We actively participate in the work of the Anti-Poverty Group which reports to the Stronger Communities Partnership.

To mitigate against the impact of Welfare Reform on our tenants and the Business Plan we have put a number of measures in place including:

- A multidisciplinary Welfare Reform Project Team leading and co-ordinating all activity and related action plans
- A one-off £3m from HRA working balance to mitigate against increased rent arrears;
- Increased bad debt provision to £1m (1.5%) in 2018/19 with 3% in 2019/20 to 2021/22, reducing to 2% from 2022/23. This reflects the potential roll out of Universal Credit and a return to more normal levels afterwards;
- Continuation of funding for a further three years for the CAB 'Money Advice Worker' post

Our Tenant Support Team continued to provide assistance to customers affected by the welfare reform changes, in crisis and requiring intensive financial, emotional and social support. In 2017/17/8 some 1,979 families have been supported by the team in sustaining a tenancy by maximising their income by achieving a benefit gain of more than £791,210 transferring to a smaller property, accessing grants for white goods and finding training courses to improve their employment opportunities. For every £1 spent on this service a return of £6.75 was generated.

Whilst the CAB provides general independent debt advice, we have recognised the specialist skills and knowledge within its pool of employees and volunteers and financed a money advice worker post to support and engage with our tenants to help them improve their financial capabilities, maximise their income and where appropriate offer guidance in resolving issues they are experiencing. 301 tenants engaged with the Money Advice Worker (MAW) during 2017/18 with a cumulative debt balance of £710,179 the MAW achieved a benefit gain of £113,670.

We continue to view and support the Credit Union as an effective alternative to high interest payment stores and provide a means to escape loan companies. The financial services it offers are based on sound economic and moral principles. Through our partnership working we are able to reduce financial hardship, prevent the escalation of rent arrears and promote sustainability of tenancies and communities.

### Community Buildings and Non-Residential Dwellings

The Community Buildings Team which was established in mid-2013 continues to focus on ensuring that these valuable assets support the company's objectives and represent Value For Money. The team focuses on increasing the number of centre users through social activities particularly around Health And Wellbeing and promoting independence.

We will continue to review the usage of the communal facilities, to ensure that they are well used, and alternative usages e.g. closure, conversion to residential dwellings or disposal are considered where there is little demand for the facility as a community asset.

The Central Team will continue to support volunteers who run 13 of the Community Centres for the benefit of local communities and community groups. Running the Centres by volunteers means that we can save on staff costs, whilst ensuring that they are used for the benefit of the local area.

A pro-active approach to the management of HRA shops has seen the total number of shops reduce with a number being converted into residential dwellings and where this is not feasible sold at auction to generate capital receipts to support the General Fund. At the end of 2017/18 there were no vacant HRA shops.

### Procurement

The Berneslai Homes Procurement strategy provides a clear focus and targets for the further development of our approach to modern procurement including collective purchasing, e procurement and partnerships.

The Procurement Strategy sets out the companies objectives for ensuring we meet company contract procedure rules and the wider Public Contract Regulations. This sets out key actions to ensure we follow a clear and transparent process when buying works, goods and services whilst making sure we support the local economy.

The Procurement Strategy Action plan we have in place ensures we consider local companies in our procurement exercises and that we consider social value, environmental and sustainability into our higher value procurements. This has resulted in our local spend reaching a level of 74.88% for 2017/18.

We use a regional web based supplier and contract management system, Yortender, for the majority of our tendering activities. The number of procurements carried out on the Yortender system has increased year on year as we continue to improve our procurement activities.

The strategy concentrates on rationalising our suppliers this enables the organisation to control costs and achieve optimum efficiency. Procurement

needs to develop and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the business and its needs in terms of products (goods and services), quality and service expectations. This process is helping us to align suppliers to our business needs. The integrated financial system SAP allows us to maximize the opportunities that e procurement can bring e.g. electronic invoicing and ordering.

### Invoice Automation

To increase the development of SAP, increase efficiencies and reduce costs the Council's Financial Services outsourced the scanning of invoices. All invoices are now scanned in within 24 hours of receipt.

Work continues to be undertaken on improving the way orders are raised and when information is received from suppliers. This has resulted in the number of invoices going into the query system falling from 50% to an average of only 12% of all invoices going into query. This means the number of invoice queries dealt with by Berneslai Homes and Financial Services staff has reduced and ensures that suppliers are paid in line with contract terms and conditions.

There is a large number of procurements taking place to ensure Berneslai Homes are compliant with procurement regulations. Procurement plans are developed to ensure this continues over the next few years as we strive to achieve value for money, be compliant with legislation and support the local economy.

A Procurement Plan is approved annually by Berneslai Homes Senior Management Team. This plan sets out the procurement route to be undertaken, the estimated contract value, identifies all contracts that are due to be reviewed and any new procurements that are identified as a new requirement or through spend analysis.

Procurement continues to raise its profile within the company and training has been provided to all relevant staff during 2017/18.

The efficiencies made through procurements are now included on the company efficiency register to ensure all savings are recorded.

As Procurement is becoming more mature within the company we are consider how we can drive further efficiencies through our procurements. We need to ensure we carry out active supplier management to drive continuous improvement. This is an action in the Procurement Strategy Action Plan for 2018/19.

### Property Improvement and Repair Partnership (PRIP)

The partnership commenced in April 2010 and involves the Berneslai Homes Construction Services Division and Kier. The contract has been extended following review and will run until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Our partners work on a two thirds one third split of work and each work in defined geographic areas delivering a full range of improvement, repair and planned maintenance. Work

developing a strategy for the period from 2020 has commenced and will be considered by the Council Cabinet in June 2018.

The PRIP governance structure has been designed to include tenants at all levels and to ensure full customer engagement. Performance in Repairs and Maintenance continues to be high. Overall 93% of tenants are satisfied or very satisfied with our repairs service. This has increased from 76% in 2006, 79% in 2007 and 81% in 2008.

As part of the PRIP contract a performance payment mechanism is used with both Kier and Berneslai Homes Construction Services operating under that the mechanism. The mechanism rewards success on 21 key performance areas including Cost, Time, Quality and productivity measures. The targets set are stretching and focused to achieve upper quartile performance across all benchmarked areas. A suite of 14 non-incentivised KPI's is also being used and measured.

### Procurement Consortia

We utilise procurement consortia to take advantage of their bulk buying power, expertise and to minimise the cost to Berneslai Homes of procurement. Consortia currently used include YPO, Northern Consortium, Procurement for Housing, Crown Commercial Services and Efficiency North. Frameworks are considered at the procurement planning stage and a decision made as to whether they can best meet the needs of the business before a decision is made to undertake our own procurement exercise. Local spend is also a key factor when consider the use of a framework.

Frameworks can deliver demonstrable savings and provide a clear project management route and structure for staff undertaking procurement exercises. We will assess the value of these against any benchmarking data we have to ensure value for money.

### Corporate Procurement

We continue to purchase jointly with the Council, to ensure efficiencies based on economies of scale. The relationship on joint procurement with the council has improved and we are seeing the benefits of this improved relationship. We currently jointly purchase gas and electricity, stationery, skips and a contract for Agency staff. Berneslai Homes and BMBC have set up a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for training under the levy in the Apprenticeship scheme.

### Going Green and VFM

Berneslai Homes has developed a low carbon strategy, which sees the gradual shift from fossil fuel based energy to renewable, sustainable technologies and micro electrical generation. We have tried to tailor our investment decisions with VFM and income generation very much in mind, particularly schemes which will attract Feed in Tariff and payment through the Renewable Heat Incentive. Reducing fuel poverty is also an important part of VFM in this area.

We have completed in recent years:



- a large solar PV project which will generate income and forecast profit for the next 25 years.
- A large solar PV project funded by Energise Barnsley
- Four Heat Network biomass projects which will attract RHI for a 20 year period
- Seven Heat Network ground sourced heat pump projects attracting RHI for a 20 year period.

We are also investing in domestic air sourced heating and have completed over 500 installations. All of these will attract RHI funding for a period of 7 years.

### **Role & responsibilities**

The responsibility for VFM lies with all members of staff within Berneslai Homes. It is not restricted to senior management or those with financial responsibilities.

The Board takes a strategic overview of VFM to ensure the strategy is being delivered and provides challenge to ensure VFM is at the heart of the decision making process.

The Audit Committee must satisfy itself that satisfactory arrangements are in place to promote economy, efficiency and effectiveness through Best Value practices. The Chair of the Audit Committee is the VFM Champion reporting to the Board on the VFM Strategy.

The Senior Management Team is responsible for implementing arrangements that will ensure VFM is being sought. The Director of Corporate Services takes the lead on VFM

Managers have the responsibility to be aware of good practice in their own area of operation and to ensure that this is followed appropriately.

All staff should endeavour to seek and achieve VFM in all activities and to bring to management's attention any opportunities for improvement or financial savings.

### **Awareness raising and involvement**

Customers shape the services we delivery through the wide range of involvement methods available. We have consulted directly on our VFM strategy at the Strategy & Policy Review Group. Our budget process involves discussions on VFM and Budget priorities with the Tenants Federation and the Customer Panel.

Board awareness on VFM is raised through reports and workshops.

VFM is part of the Managing Resources section of our Staff Core Competencies It is covered by the Chief Executive at staff induction. The profile of VFM is also raised through items in the team brief & key messages