



A fresh approach to people, homes and communities

“Ensuring Our Estates Look Right”

Berneslai Homes Estate Management Strategy 2017-2020

Introduction

The Council's shared vision for partnership working in Barnsley is

“ Working together for a brighter future, a better Barnsley “

And the council's priorities are

- Thriving and vibrant economy
- People achieving their potential
- Strong and resilient communities

Berneslai Homes ensures it's priorities and outcomes are strategically aligned to these and are actively engaged at a senior level across many partnership boards, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children's Trust, Safer Barnsley Partnership, Stronger Communities Partnership and the Strategic Housing Partnership Board.

Berneslai 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 – 2021 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 company objectives

- Excellent customer services
- Sustainable communities
- Partnership working
- Successful well managed company

Company Values

Our approach to achieving these strategic objectives is embedded in our strap line:

Great Place, Great People, Great Company

Berneslai Homes is committed to supporting all people living in the properties that we manage. We recognise that a lack of appropriate support and lifeskills can generate huge costs to public services. Support is vital in enabling an independent, healthy and well balanced life where people are connected to services, work, education, training and social contacts.

Our approach to housing management is twin track - supporting the individual (please refer to our “Something Doesn't Look Right” Vulnerability Strategy) and supporting the community ('Ensuring our Estate Look Right' Our Estate Management Strategy). We believe that these are key to instilling civic pride in the communities we serve whilst reducing the dependency culture and promoting personal aspirations.

Supporting the Community- “Ensuring our Estates Look Right” – Our Estate Management Strategy

Overview

An Estate Management Strategy is a requirement of the Housing Regulator.

Our Estate Management Strategy 'Ensuring our Estate Look Right' underpins our approach to tenancy and estate management. The Strategy outlines the framework and our approach in ensuring that we fulfil our Strategic Objective "to continue to deliver sustainable communities which are safe, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods which are accessible to all".

Resident Involvement

We recognise that all estates have differing priorities and we have developed strong local partnerships working to make sure that we address local needs - these are reflected in our Local Housing Offers. Your Community Your Say (Steering Groups) Meetings see local people setting local priorities at a local level. They are at the centre of our approach to co-regulation as a vehicle for many of our services to be scrutinised and the organisation 'held to account' by our customers.

Proactive Approach to Environmental Management

We have a strong Service Level Agreement (SLA) with BMBC's Neighbourhood Services. Tenants are involved in reviewing, agreeing and monitoring the Grounds Maintenance Specification. Your Community Your Say (Steering Groups) Meetings and local Tenants and Resident Associations (TARAs) are . practical ways in which we empower our local communities.

We publish an annual schedule of estate inspections which involve a range of interested parties including elected members, tenant representatives, Board members and senior managers from Berneslai Homes and the Council. These walkabouts encourage local people to get out and be involved in managing their estates and are used to 'grade' the estates and develop local action plans. Your Community Your Say Meetings consider any issues on their estates. Any grounds maintenance issues that need tackling are fed back through the monthly SLA monitoring meetings. This approach continues to be a successful one with tenants generally expressing high levels satisfaction with their neighbourhoods as places to live.

To promote positive press and public perceptions of young people and minimise youth nuisance we have developed and embedded our Youth Engagement Scheme delivered in partnership other providers Working with the local schools, we have recruited young volunteers to help identify, challenge and raise awareness with their peers on issues around community safety and the environment.

Triple track approach to Tenancy Management

The Teams provide a balanced triple track approach of prevention, non-negotiable support and enforcement.

The Housing Management Teams are the cornerstone of our approach to tenancy and estate management. Formed as a direct response to customer demand they were set up to be a highly visible, patch-based, proactive service and they are responsible for ensuring the general cleanliness and upkeep of estates, as well as providing generic tenancy and housing management services. These include void management, accompanied viewing, comprehensive sign ups, new tenancy visits, responding to complaints, providing low level tenancy support, addressing low level anti-social behaviour and dealing with neighbour nuisance and low level rent arrears. The teams adopt a problem solving, proactive and planned approach empowering and reassuring communities.

Our comprehensive sign up process ensures that new tenants have a full understanding of our services, their rights and responsibilities. This initial contact is an important opportunity to identify any support needs and a support assessment is completed if appropriate. We have operated an introductory tenancy scheme since 2003. Introductory tenants receive a minimum of 3 visits in their introductory period (those with support or special needs may have more dependant upon their re-housing plan).

We have also a number of Flexible tenancies issued for a fixed term period who receive 5 visits in the final 2 years of their tenancy.

A high profile '100 Worst Gardens' exercise is run twice a year identifying and targeting the 100 worst gardens, where Housing Management Officers request that tenants rectify the problem, offer appropriate advice and signposting if support required -or legal action takes place. We also have a Garden Competition that is held annually to recognise and thank residents for the good work that a large number of residents do in maintaining their gardens to a high standard. This assists in ensuring our estates are attractive and maintained to a high standard and contributing to their local environment and by encouraging others to maintain their gardens to a similar standard.

Offer

Housing Management Teams will:

- Carry out an advertised estate inspection a minimum of once a year to ensure estates are attractive and well maintained where people choose to live and the outcomes will be published on the website;
- Support people who live, on our estates to minimise the impact of serious breaches of tenancy regulations on others;
- Be equipped to identify early, signs of vulnerability, appropriate referral pathways, and actively participate in the identification and delivery of multi agency support packages with both internal and external partnerships to ensure tenants have the best opportunity to sustain their tenancy.
- Visit all new tenants within 28 days of their tenancy starting to provide advice and offer any support where required;
- Conduct thorough and in-depth investigations into breaches of tenancy regulations and liaise with the Safer Neighbourhood Service or other partners and stakeholders where required;
- Take a proactive approach to address prevalent tenancy breaches;
- Consider the effective use of tools and powers to address breaches of tenancy regulations and to provide and facilitate appropriate support to victims;
- Keep in regular contact with complainants to provide regular updates;
- We will remove graffiti within five working days and offensive graffiti within one working day of finding it;
- We will hold a Community Planning Event once a year;
- We will contact people who have complained about anti social behaviour in three working days;
- Provide a timely response to reports of Hate & Hidden Crime and incidents of disability discrimination;
- Participate in Local Safeguarding Boards and sub groups as appropriate.
- Participate with Council's Public Sector Hub and Locality Teams
- Do an annual Star Survey that looks at satisfaction with the Neighbourhood as a place to live (this can be broken down to reflect profiling including protected characteristics to develop action plans).

Our Approach

Our approach is to ensure that there is a visible and proactive Tenancy Management Service within the community dealing with basic issues of tenancy conduct and support and ensuring the provision of on-the-spot assistance and advice with issues of concern to our tenants. This is achieved by our "Can't Do" versus "Won't Do" approach. Where tenants are having difficulty in maintaining their tenancy satisfactorily and this is because they "can't do", we will ensure that appropriate support is in place to enable them to sustain their tenancy. Where tenants are breaching their tenancy regulations and this is down to them choosing not to comply with the terms of their tenancy and clearly "Won't Do" then this will be dealt with using the appropriate enforcement powers and procedures.

Identifiacion of Potential Environmental Improvement Schemes

Through proactive approach to Estate Managent we will continue to identify potential improvements schemes and disposal/ development site and refer to the Regeneration Teams for consideration

Fire Saftey - Communal Areas

We will liase with Fire Safety Officer within Berneslai Homes and SYFS to ensure we work in partnership with other sections of Berneslai Homes to deliver appropriate actions identified

Partnership Working

We work in partnership with BMBC to tackle and address serious issues relating to Tenancy and Estate Management and further details are contained in the BMBC Community Safety and Enforcement Service Social Housing Policy Statement.

We have a partnership with South Yorkshire Fire Service with the aim to reduce the occurrence of domestic fires and arson and to proactively promote fire safety to our Council House tenants. We continue to deliver this by encouraging active participation by the fire service in our estate walkabouts, routine referral of vulnerable tenants in order that appropriate fire prevention advice can be delivered and involvement with particularly vulnerable customers to fit appropriate fire prevention equipment. A couple of examples have been to install specialist fire alarms for hard of hearing and the provision of fire resistant bedding.

Access to service

To report an incident relating to social housing, in the first instance contact the local Housing Management Officer (HMO), for Berneslai Homes tenancies contact (01226) 775555 or visit the website at www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/do-it-online/.

Consultation and Policy Review

This strategy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier, in line with Government guidance, best practice and legislative changes. As part of the review, we will consult with residents and other stakeholders on the contents and effectiveness of the strategy.