



Strategic Plan

2021-31

Roots in the past, eyes on the future

5 year refresh, effective from April 2026

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Welcome to our Strategic Plan 2021-31

Welcome to our updated Strategic Plan which sets out how we'll deliver high quality housing, repairs, and maintenance services to meet the needs of council tenants and leaseholders in Barnsley. This plan has been shaped by the voices of tenants whose ideas and feedback through consultations and surveys have guided its priorities and direction.

When we set out the original plan in 2020/21, the housing and wider world was in a vastly different place. As we came out of the COVID-19 pandemic, we worked with tenants to develop an ambitious plan for the future. This year, we've taken stock of where we are now, the impact of factors including the pandemic, the cost of living crisis, regulatory changes, and increased legislation affecting the housing sector.

In light of these changes, we've worked with key partners, including Barnsley Council, tenants, and leaseholders, to reset the priorities for the next few years. While some things remain unchanged, our commitment continues and we'll work with as many tenants as possible to continue to improve services. We'll strive to be the best we can be within the resources we have available, and to provide the most efficient and effective services possible.

The revised plan covers the 5-year period from 2026-27 until 2030-31. We retain our focus on keeping tenants safe and strengthening our work around building and fire safety - this remains our first priority.

We know the impact a warm, safe, and secure home has on a tenant's physical and mental health and wellbeing. Good quality, energy efficient, and safe housing helps people stay healthy and provides a stable base to help achieve a decent quality of life.

We'll continue to collaborate with partners to maximise funding to meet the requirement to have warm homes (Energy Performance Certificate - C) by 2030.

As the new regulatory regime continues to expand with Awaab's Law effective from October 2025, and the new Competence and Conduct Standard for housing professionals from October 2026, our approach is to be proactive, ensuring we meet all these requirements and embrace the positive changes they will bring for tenants. The consumer standard C1 judgement and feedback from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) recognises we need to work with tenants and leaseholders to improve outcomes and services.

Thanks to everyone who has worked with us to develop the revised plan. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities it brings, ensuring we provide the best services we can to council tenants and leaseholders in Barnsley.



Steve Feast
Chief Executive

Ken Taylor
Chair of the Board

About us

Berneslai Homes is a Local Authority Housing Company, 100% owned by Barnsley Council, delegated to provide services to council housing across the borough.

Berneslai Homes is a company limited by guarantee and is overseen by a Board of Directors who attend Board and Committee meetings regularly throughout the year.

The implementation of policies and the day-to-day running of the organisation is delegated to the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team. Our overall performance is reported to the council on a quarterly basis.

We employ over 500 staff, of which around 3% are apprentices. Many of our apprentices go on to secure permanent employment with us or our partners.

We spend and invest wisely to achieve value for money.

Tenants are at the heart of all we do.



Robust governance

We have strong and robust governance, audited on a yearly basis. We ensure clear accountability, meet all regulatory requirements, and align our strategy with the council's priorities. We support effective risk management, tenant engagement, and value-for-money service delivery.



Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Berneslai Homes is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion by embedding fairness, dignity, and respect across all services and operations. We aim to remove barriers, tailor support to individual needs, and foster inclusive communities where everyone can thrive.



Co-regulatory tenant involvement

Our Board and Committee work alongside tenants through a strong co-regulatory tenant engagement model, providing multiple ways for tenants to participate in decision-making. This ensures customers are fully involved in developing, shaping, and scrutinising services. Following our new Customer Insight and Engagement Strategy and RSH feedback, we've broadened our approach to hear from more and different tenant voices, improved feedback mechanisms, including transactional surveys, and targeted work with the Gypsy and Traveller community and young care leavers. Complaints remain a key source of insight for service improvement. We're working with Tpas and tenants to strengthen our Engagement Framework and will provide updates to the RSH.



Making our communities stronger

We'll foster vibrant and cohesive communities by investing in safe, inclusive neighbourhoods where people feel connected, supported, and proud to live. Through strong partnerships and resident engagement, we'll promote social inclusion, wellbeing, and opportunities for all.

The external environment

Looking forward, there are several challenges we face, but Berneslai Homes is committed to adapting to meet the challenges.

We face tough financial constraints and at the same time we must also respond to increasing regulation. We continue to see significant changes in social housing regulation and policy. Berneslai Homes will navigate these financial constraints and regulatory pressures by driving efficiencies, strengthening compliance, and prioritising high-impact actions to maintain service quality.

The Social Housing Regulation Act came into force from April 2024 providing increased transparency and a stronger voice for customers, and greater accountability for landlords for the quality of the services we deliver. The introduction of Awaab's Law will strengthen our approach to timely resolution of damp and mould issues along with other health and safety hazards. The new Law quite rightly embeds a culture of respect and accountability.

We'll invest in our systems, training, and customer engagement to ensure every home is safe and compliant with the new legal standards. We're fully committed to meeting these requirements and ensuring our services reflect the standards and expectations set out in the legislation.



Berneslai Homes recognises the evolving landscape and is committed to meeting and, where possible, exceeding sector standards. We'll work nationally, regionally, and locally to maximise income for Barnsley.



The Building Safety Act is an important part of our future and is designed to ensure that housing providers help people feel safe in their homes. A key area for us is making sure that we're serving our customers and are compliant with all the elements of the Act.



We're taking steps to cut carbon emissions and aim to be carbon neutral by 2045. Our strategy includes enhancing the energy efficiency of council housing stock to meet EPC C standards by 2030 and reducing our environmental footprint.

By improving the basics of homes first (like insulation and windows), we can make properties more energy efficient and environmentally friendly, which will support residents in maintaining warm homes, lower energy expenses, and help alleviate fuel poverty.

Additionally, we remain committed to minimising our carbon footprint through optimising our vehicle fleet, refining operational activities, and implementing innovative renewable technologies.

Barnsley - the place of possibilities

We embrace our role as an anchor organisation in Barnsley. We'll work closely with Barnsley Council to ensure we align our services and Strategic Plan to meet the challenges and opportunities of their Corporate Plan and the Barnsley 2030 vision:

**Healthy
Barnsley**

Keeping ourselves and our families well is the key to living productive and happy lives.

**Learning
Barnsley**

Developing skills, talent, and creativity within people of all ages will open up exciting prospects.

**Growing
Barnsley**

Open for business, with our great location, excellent links to road networks, digital connectivity, and attractive local offer.

**Sustainable
Barnsley**

We all have our part to play in protecting our borough for future generations.

We'll continue to work in partnership to develop the vision onwards to 2040.

Barnsley
2030

Our values

Everyone who works for Berneslai Homes will embrace these values and make them relevant to their role.



Our vision is clear:



Creating great homes and communities with the people of Barnsley.

Getting the basics right

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. Our principles are:

Excellent customer services

Aligns to our value of 'customer first'. We'll deliver a consistent, responsive, respectful, and solution-focused service that meets the needs of our customers. We'll actively listen, build trust, and customer views will be at the heart of our decision-making. We'll continue to improve our services through learning from complaints and, although we're in a good position, recognise that more work is needed to improve our communications and to improve our Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

Successful and well-managed company

We'll continue to operate with a clear purpose, strong leadership, and a culture of responsibility and accountability through our ongoing culture work taking place within the organisation. We'll review our working practices to streamline processes and decisions and break down silo working to deliver our core services. We'll deliver value for money through effective governance (monitored by the Transformation Board), continuous improvement, and ensuring long term sustainability and trust whilst supporting the local economy.

Partnership working

We recognise the importance of partnership working across a wide range of areas. Collaboration is essential to achieving better outcomes for tenants and communities. We're proud to work with Barnsley Council, the Safer Barnsley Partnership, the Barnsley 2030 Board, our local communities, and organisations across all sectors to achieve the Council's vision of Barnsley being a place of possibilities.

Sustainable communities and neighbourhoods

Sustainable communities are places where residents thrive socially, economically, and environmentally, supported by quality, safe, and warm homes. To support this, we'll invest in green technology, empower residents, and work in partnership so that tenants and leaseholders are actively involved in shaping the future.

To ensure we continue to deliver, we've set out our priorities over the next 5 years. These strategic priorities will make a real difference for tenants by ensuring safer, well-managed homes, clearer communication, and improved opportunities that enhance wellbeing and quality of life.



Our priorities to 2031:



Listening and responding to our customers

We're a listening organisation: valuing and encouraging feedback from customers, working together to continuously improve services. Every member of staff will play a role in listening to tenants and addressing their concerns.

We will:

- Work together with tenants to co-design our services.
- Ensure all our service reviews and strategies have strong tenant input.
- Ensure customer feedback including complaints is used to continuously improve services.
- Offer a broad range of engagement and feedback opportunities, aiming to hear from 50% of tenants annually.
- Have a Customer Services Committee where the majority of members are tenants, ensuring that Board members have direct links to engaged tenants and their feedback, and hear the unfiltered tenant voice.
- Use digital tools to obtain instant feedback about the services we offer.





Keeping tenants safe and warm

Building safety

We will:

- Complete compartmentation (fire safety) works across our high rise buildings and Independent Living Schemes.
- Actively engage with tenants to improve the safety and quality of homes, increasing confidence and providing assurance that their homes are safe.
- Reduce fire incidents in and around the home through awareness raising, removal of risk areas, and improved systems/designs.
- Keep tenants informed throughout the repairs journey and learn from their feedback.
- Install smart monitoring devices in homes to help spot early signs of damp and mould, so we can prevent problems before they start.
- Provide electronic access to compliance certificates for all our tenants.
- Use smart technology to spot issues early and make improvements to homes before problems happen.
- Meet EPC C by 2030, keeping tenants warm.

Neighbourhood safety

We will:

- Work with partners to address the tensions that anti-social behaviour, crime, and nuisance can cause so that tenants can live in their homes without stress and fear.





Improving opportunities for employment and training

We will:

External focus

- Maximise social value through procurement, ensuring suppliers and contractors provide opportunities for local residents.
- Deliver to Barnsley Council's Employer Promise.
- Work with Barnsley Council to help tenants build confidence in accessing online services, developing skills, and finding work.
- Support Pathways to Work by helping residents into work by connecting them to training, apprenticeships, and local job opportunities. This boosts skills and confidence, benefiting families, communities, and the Barnsley economy.
- Develop partnerships with contractors and local organisations to create pathways to employment, apprenticeships, and skills development for tenants and the wider community.

Internal focus

- Berneslai Homes remains committed to being an employer of choice, continuing to ensure colleagues choose to work and stay because their voices shape our services and their contributions are valued - we will further build on this.
- Invest in a management development programme to strengthen leadership capability.
- Promote staff welfare initiatives to reduce sickness absence and improve wellbeing.
- Enhance staff satisfaction through engagement, recognition, and career progression opportunities.
- Maintain high standards of competency and conduct through training and clear frameworks.
- Provide continuous learning and development opportunities for all colleagues.





Increasing efficiency and effectiveness

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation, we'll focus on increasing productivity, streamlining, and reviewing internal processes, and harnessing predictive data and performance insights. This will enable us to deliver the right services at the right time for our tenants.

In partnership with Barnsley Council, we'll also work to influence the growth of council housing stock across the borough, ensuring that housing provision meets current and future needs.

We will:

- Continue to work to improve the quality of our data to improve insight.
- Use this insight to develop our future plans for investment and maintenance of homes.
- Work in partnership with Barnsley Council on the digital transformation journey.
- Work within our existing systems to improve processes for staff to automate wherever possible.



How we will measure success

- Quarterly reviews at management team and Board - considering key performance indicators and success measures.
- Our Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by our Board and the Council.
- Performance is reported to Barnsley Council and to our customers through our website. The information is presented in a way that is easy to read and gives tenants a quick overview at a glance. We also hold meetings twice a year with involved tenants to discuss our performance and the measures we use. In addition, performance is shared through the annual report and discussed with our Tenant Voice Panel.

Our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) will be reported to the Regulator by the end of June each year.

As a hearing organisation, we welcome feedback on our plan. Please share any comments or questions with us about our Strategic Plan by emailing governance@berneslaihomes.co.uk

Success measures

- **Maintain the highest C1 grading in delivering the Consumer Standards:**

Continue to meet the outcomes of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards

- **Annual increase in customer satisfaction:**

Annual increase in the proportion of tenants who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from Berneslai Homes (TSM TP01)

- **Tenant voice and experience at the heart of what we do:**

Strong engagement and meaningful feedback - capturing the voice of at least 50% of tenants annually, and using these insights to shape decisions.

- **All homes are safe:**

100% compliance across the five Building Safety TSMs (gas, fire, asbestos, water, and lifts), electrical safety, and Awaab's Law requirements.

- **Meet the requirements of the Competency and Conduct standard:**

All required staff to have or be working towards a recognised housing management qualification by 2029.

- **Data-driven approach:**

Successfully achieve the outcomes outlined in our Data Strategy, recognising the value of data.





www.berneslaihomes.co.uk

Berneslai Homes Limited is a company controlled by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council. A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, number 4548803. Registered office: 10th Floor, Gateway Plaza, Off Sackville Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2RD.

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