



Cabinet

Title	Barnet Homes annual Delivery Plan 2024/25
Date of meeting	16 th April 2024
Report of	Councillor Ross Houston - Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member - Homes and Regeneration
Wards	All
Status	Public
Key	Key
Urgent	No
Appendices	Appendix A – Barnet Homes Annual Delivery Plan 2024/25
Lead Officer	Kate Laffan, Group Director of Resident Services, The Barnet Group
Officer Contact Details	Tel: 0208 359 4829 Email: Kate.Laffan@barnethomes.org

Summary

Barnet Homes, a subsidiary of The Barnet Group and the Council's Arm's Length Management Organisation, is a key partner for the Council in delivering the Council's Housing Strategy (2023-2028) and its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2023-28).

The Barnet Homes management agreement with the Council requires the development of an annual delivery plan which outlines the required outcomes and targets for each service year of the agreement. This report recommends that Cabinet approves the Barnet Homes 2024/25 Annual Delivery Plan.

The Barnet Homes 2024/25 Annual Delivery Plan in Appendix A provides information as to the outcomes achieved in 2023/24 against each of the Housing and Growth Committee's priorities, along with setting out the outcomes, performance measures and high-level risks for the 2024/25 year.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note and approve the Barnet Homes 2024/25 Delivery Plan.

1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1. The Housing Committee approved the Heads of Terms for the Barnet Homes Management Agreement for a term of ten years at its meeting on 29 June 2015. Following this, the Management Agreement was finalised and commenced in April 2016. The Management Agreement requires that an Annual Delivery Plan is produced between the Council and Barnet Homes outlining the required outcomes and targets for each service year of the agreement.
- 1.2. Cabinet is requested to review and approve the content of the Delivery Plan to ratify the proposed outcomes and performance measures and their alignment with the strategic priorities of the Council. The Barnet Group Board and the Council Overview & Scrutiny / Cabinet will provide ongoing oversight of performance against commitments and outcomes.
- 1.3. As evidenced in the Delivery Plan, Barnet Homes' performance in 2023/24 against Housing and Growth Committee priorities has been strong, particularly when considering the wider socio-economic issues and changing regulatory pressures.
- 1.4. Across London, local authorities face significant supply and demand challenges that are leading to increased placements in temporary accommodation ("TA"). In the 2023 calendar year, Barnet Homes received 51% more housing applications than in the previous 12 months. In this context, Barnet Homes has performed well to deliver 1,028 prevention outcomes by end of Q3 2023/24 - exceeding the full year's prevention target, and exceeding the outcomes delivered in the first 3 quarters of the 4 previous financial years. These efforts have helped to limit the increase of placements in TA – with 2,253 total households in TA in December 2023, compared with 2,111 in December 2022.
- 1.5. Whilst there has been a sector-wide decline in tenant satisfaction since the pandemic and the cost of living challenges experienced by tenants, for core housing management services, Housemark's latest benchmarking (from 2022/23) shows that Barnet Homes is a top quartile performer for:
 - Overall Satisfaction with Barnet Homes as a Landlord
 - Satisfaction with overall quality of home
 - Satisfaction that home is safe
 - Satisfaction with neighbourhood as a place to live.
- 1.6. In addition, out of 13 peers, Housemark's benchmarking shows Barnet Homes has the lowest cost per property when combining the cost of Estate Services, Repairs, Maintenance & Void Property Refurbishment (excluding Major Works), and Housing Management.
- 1.7. The Council and The Barnet Group responded to the tragic death of Awaab Ishak through the Housing & Growth Committee's approval, in January 2023, of £2.2m per annum of funding over 4 years to transform our approach to tackling damp, mould and condensation. Key milestones achieved in the first year include:
 - Setting up a Healthy Homes Team to survey properties and arrange repair works to address damp and mould
 - Introducing a standalone Damp and Mould Policy and Procedure in line with the new legislation
 - Surveying 100% of the Council's social housing stock – and completing repairs to rectify the 131 'severe' cases of damp and mould that were identified in tenants' homes

- Delivering training for technical and non-technical staff on identifying and reporting damp and mould in tenants' homes
- Expanding and simplifying the options available to residents for reporting damp and mould issues and running a communications campaign as we look to 'find our silence'.

1.8. The Delivery Plan sets out new targets for Barnet Homes for 2024/25. Delivering against these targets will continue to support the Council to deliver its priorities within the new Housing Strategy and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy and will support greater scrutiny and continuous improvement in areas that matter most to tenants, such as building safety and repairs, through a robust response to the introduction of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures by the Regulator for Social Housing. Performance against the full set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures will be reported to the Council on an annual basis.

2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

2.1. The requirement for having an annual delivery plan is a contractual one and alternative options were not considered. However, the process for agreeing the outcomes and their respective targets outlined in the Delivery Plan has been subject to significant review by the Council and The Barnet Group Board.

3. Post Decision Implementation

3.1. Subject to Cabinet approval, Barnet Homes' performance against the Delivery Plan will be monitored by The Barnet Group Board and Cabinet/Council Overview & Scrutiny throughout 2024/25.

3.2. An annual review of the Delivery Plan will be completed ahead of the 2025/26 financial year and a revised version again submitted to Cabinet for approval.

4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations

4.1. Corporate Plan

4.1.1. Barnet Homes has a successful track record of delivering improvements to the housing stock and housing services, tackling and preventing homelessness, delivering new affordable homes and supporting the Council to address the financial challenges it faces. Barnet Homes and The Barnet Group are therefore in a good position to continue to manage and deliver services to contribute to the Council's strategic objectives.

4.1.2. Our Plan for Barnet 2023 – 2026 is centred around being a Council that cares for people, our places, and the planet. The Barnet Homes Delivery Plan will in particular support the 'Quality, affordable homes' objective of the 'Caring for our places' theme through delivering improvements to the housing stock and housing services, tackling and preventing homelessness and delivering new affordable homes.

4.1.3. In 2023, Barnet Council published its Housing Strategy and its Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, both for the period 2023–2028. These key strategies support the Council's corporate aims in its plan entitled 'Our plan for Barnet to care for people, its places, and the planet', and they also take account of major changes in the housing sector and wider demographic and economic changes.

4.2. Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures

4.2.1. As outlined in the Delivery Plan, the outcomes for Barnet Homes for 2024/25 have been developed to support the Council to deliver its Housing priorities. Additional outcomes have

been introduced relating to regulatory changes around damp and mould, smoke and carbon monoxide alarm regulations, and the Tenant Satisfaction Measures.

- 4.2.2. In addition, Barnet Homes is involved in complementary policy agendas. Community Development work is an important part of the housing portfolio, for example, activities such as implementation of the homelessness legislation, Welfare Reforms, work to promote digital inclusion. The initiatives of BOOST (operated by Barnet Homes) contribute to better outcomes for residents, more sustainable tenancies, and reduced rent arrears. They also have an overall positive impact on other service areas within the Council and the local community and economy. The need for such work has been further heightened over the last year.

4.3. Sustainability

- 4.3.1. Barnet Homes manages the construction of new homes, as well as the repair and maintenance of existing properties. These activities have an environmental cost which must be considered as a part of the approach. Barnet Homes must keep homes at the Decent Homes Standard, and make improvements relating to damp and mould, which can involve the installation of insulation in residents' homes.

4.4. Corporate Parenting

- 4.4.1. Barnet Homes works closely with relevant Council departments to ensure that care leavers make a successful transition to independent living.
- 4.4.2. Our ability to place care leavers into accommodation has been developed in 2024/25, through tightening joint working links and above target performance on key indicators.

4.5. Risk Management

- 4.5.1. There is a risk that Barnet Homes fails to meet delivery expectations and does not achieve the performance indicators and outcomes set out within the Delivery Plan and/or Barnet Homes does not manage its income and expenditure effectively within the agreed budget envelope.
- 4.5.2. The Delivery Plan includes two joint risks that have been assigned a rating of 15 or more as at Q3 2023/24. These are: (i) increased demand for temporary accommodation, and (ii) health, safety and compliance issues. These risks will be mitigated through the robust governance and performance management frameworks currently in place.

4.6. Insight

- 4.6.1. No specific insight data has been used in this report.

4.7. Social Value

- 4.7.1. There are no specific Social Value aspects to this report.

5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)

- 5.1. Barnet Homes receives a management fee consisting of a combination of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund revenue and capital resources as set out in Appendix A, section 5.
- 5.2. Barnet Homes is committed to delivering a range of initiatives to achieve the Council's Medium Term Financial Savings commitments relating to the Housing General Fund, the details of which for 2024/25 are set out in Appendix A, section 5.

6. Legal Implications and Constitution References

- 6.1. As noted above, the Management Agreement between the Council and Barnet Homes requires that an Annual Delivery Plan is produced outlining the required outcomes and targets for each service year of the agreement.
- 6.2. The Local Authority has duties to assist and accommodate certain homeless applicants under Part VII Housing Act 1996. It also has a duty to allocate properties under its allocations scheme (either into social housing or in to the private sector) under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 and to manage its social housing stock as a landlord. Such responsibilities are delegated to Barnet Homes, part of The Barnet Group.
- 6.3. The Council's Constitution Part 2D sets out the terms of reference of Cabinet which includes responsibility for the following functions:
- Development of proposals for the budget (including the capital and revenue budgets, the fixing of the Council Tax Base, and the level of Council Tax) and the financial strategy for the Council;
 - Monitoring the implementation of the budget and financial strategy;
 - Recommending major new policies (and amendments to existing policies) to the Council for approval as part of the Council's Policy Framework and implementing those approved by Council;
 - Approving policies that are not part of the policy framework;
 - Management of the Council's Capital Programme; and
 - All key decisions

7. Consultation

- 7.1. A consultation exercise with Barnet Homes' tenants and leaseholders was completed as part of the Management Agreement development in 2015 and this exercise identified the priorities for Barnet Homes. These priorities are further reviewed through resident satisfaction surveys. Consultation with residents was also undertaken as part of the current Housing Strategy. Additionally, The Barnet Group Board considers and inputs into annual delivery plans, and the Barnet Homes Resident Board has had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the proposed Delivery Plan targets.
- 7.2. Further consultation with residents, tenants, leaseholds, care leavers and partners took place in 2023, as the Council refreshed and launched its revised Housing Allocation Scheme, its new Housing Strategy and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028. These strategies have subsequently fed into the 2024/25 Delivery Plan and its performance targets.

8. Equalities and Diversity

- 8.1. The 2010 Equality Act, Section 149 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equality Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant characteristic and persons who do not.

- 8.2. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and being married or in a civil partnership.
- 8.3. Changes to policies, and services are analysed in order to assess the potential equality impacts and risks, and identify any mitigating actions that are needed, through an equalities impact assessment, before final decisions are made. Consideration will also be made to the equalities and data cohesion summary.
- 8.4. A full equality impact assessment (“EIA”) was completed for both the Housing Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy. These findings are reflected in the Delivery Plan and the EIAs will be kept under review and updated as appropriate. The Barnet Group has an equalities strategy in place which fully supports the Council’s equalities aims and principles. Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken as and when required.

9. Background Papers

9.1. Relevant previous decisions are listed in the table below.

Housing Committee 29 June 2015	Commissioning and Delivery of Housing Services and the Management of the Barnet Housing Stock	https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s24079/Commissioning%20and%20Delivery%20Of%20Housing%20Services%20and%20the%20Management%20of%20Barnet%20Housing%20Stock.pdf
Housing Committee 26 June 2017	Item 10 – Barnet Homes 2017/18 Delivery Plan	https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s40390/Barnet%20Homes%202017-18%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf
Housing Committee 7 February 2018	Item 9 – Barnet Homes 2018/19 Delivery Plan	https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s44846/Barnet%20Homes%202018-19%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf
Housing Committee 1 April 2019	Item 10 – Barnet Homes 2019/20 Delivery Plan	https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s51901/Barnet%20Homes%20Delivery%20Plan%202019-20.pdf
Housing and Growth Committee 16 March 2020	Item 10 – Barnet Homes 2020/21 Delivery Plan	https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s58334/BH%202020-21%20Delivery%20Plan%20Committee%20Paper%20-%20for%20publication.pdf
Housing and Growth Committee 14 June 2021	Item 10 – Barnet Homes 2021/22 Delivery Plan	Barnet Homes Delivery Plan 2021-22.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)
Housing and Growth Committee 13 June 2022	Item 9 – Barnet Homes Delivery Plan 2022/23	20220613HAG Barnet Homes 2022-23 Delivery Plan.pdf (moderngov.co.uk)
Housing and Growth Committee 26 June 2023	Item 9 – Barnet Homes Delivery Plan 2023/24	https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s78553/Appendix%20-%20BH%202023-24%20Delivery%20Plan.pdf