



**The Barnet Group
Annual Service Report
2012-2013**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Barnet Group was created by the Council in February 2012 to oversee Your Choice and Barnet Homes. In April, the Councils Homelessness service, now known as Housing Options transferred across and this first annual report sets out the first year and the achievements/performance over this period.

2.0 Performance

- 2.1 The tables within this section set out the key performance areas across the Group, with those highlighted in red showing the areas of most concern:

(a) Barnet Homes

Barnet Homes had a positive year in respect of performance. Out of 18 main indicators, 10 finished the year as green, 2 as amber and 6 as red. The majority of the reds related directly to the Housing Options service which was in its first year and was a challenging period.

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
Housing Options	Number of Applications for Housing in Quarter	2,827 (2012/13)	N/A	2,402 applications were made in the previous year.
Housing Options	Number of Homeless Presentations in Quarter	1,120 (2012/13)	N/A	1,113 presentations were made in the previous year.
Housing Options	Number of Homeless Acceptances in Quarter	591 (2012/13)	N/A	339 acceptances were made in the previous year.
Housing Options	Number of Households in Emergency Accommodation	635 (End Q4)	370	359 at the end of 2011-12. The introduction of welfare reforms, increasing private sector rents and a number of socio-economic factors meant the service faced both increased demand and a reduction in affordable supply (an overall reduction

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
				<p>of 455 lettings in 12/13 compared to 11/12). There were several factors that compounded difficulties in sourcing accommodation to meet demand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand has been relatively stable throughout the year; however the number of acceptances due to loss of private rented accommodation has increased significantly. • Barnet became the most expensive outer London borough in which to secure private sector accommodation¹ • Only 5.9% of properties available at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in Barnet² • Barnet has been impacted by the migration of households from inner London and the number of LHA claims in Barnet rose by 27% between March 2011 and November 2012 • North London is a hotspot for temporary accommodation (TA) with almost 1 in 5 households in TA in the country being placed by north London authorities. This has led to increased pressure in competition for affordable supply. • A large number of re-generation scheme decants were carried out in 12/13 where households were prioritised for affordable alternative supply. This is excellent news

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
				<p>for regeneration customers and in relation to the progress of the schemes but also contributed to the increased demand for emergency accommodation.</p> <p>Despite the challenges, the service has responded positively. For example, benchmarking data has shown that Barnet Homes has been relatively successful and out-performed its counterparts in sourcing affordable emergency accommodation. Further, innovative developments such as the re-branded Let2Barnet and delivery of new long-term leasing schemes in collaboration with Housing Association partners have also helped to mitigate the impact of the challenges faced.</p>
Housing Options	Average Weeks Spent by Households in Emergency Accommodation	30 weeks (End Q4)	26 weeks	<p>29 weeks at the end of Q3 (figures not available for the previous financial year).</p> <p>See commentary above.</p>
Housing Options	Cost of Temporary Accommodation Units Procured above Housing Benefit Subsidy Cap	£1,026k (End Q4)	£43k	<p>£943k at the end of Q3 (figures not available for the previous financial year).</p> <p>Whilst the direction of travel remains the same, with a further increase in the proportion of stock acquired above subsidy rates, the rise in cost slowed at the end of the quarter.</p>

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
				<p>There are also some positive signs moving forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are experiencing some increases in the volume of daily vacancies enabling us to secure properties at lower rates. • The block-booking scheme, where properties are secured from emergency accommodation providers at affordable rates in exchange for a guaranteed length of stay has been successful with over 50 properties now acquired through this scheme • The new registered social landlords (RSL) pilot will increase supply which will in turn offer alternative supply for those who would otherwise go into emergency accommodation. <p>We have now beaten last year's full year total of 121 direct lets, with 171 acquired by the end of Q4. This has helped to offset reliance on emergency accommodation.</p>
Housing Options	% of Discretionary Housing Payment Budget Spent	61% (2012/13)	100%	<p>42% at end of Q3 (figures not available for the previous financial year).</p> <p>Budget was substantially increased for this year and over 1,000 awards made, in both instances this was more than the past two years added together. There were some issues around process and criteria which prevented more being paid in the early part of the year.</p>

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
Housing Options	% Statutory Homeless Appeals Completed within 56 day time limit	100% (2012/13)	100%	85% in the previous year.
Housing Options	Number Awaiting Banding	471 (End Q4)	N/A	517 awaiting banding at end of Q3 (figures not available for the previous financial year).
Housing Options	Average days taken to complete banding assessment and issue decision.	103 days (2012/13)		A significant impact has been made on the number of unbanded cases by the backlog team project which was set up on 10 September 2012 and was wound down at the end of March 2013. The lessons learned from the backlog project have fed into the service review and identified significant shortcomings in the role of the housing needs officers.
Housing Options	Average number of days to rehouse client following a banding decision	180 days (2012/13)		<p>The service has now moved to an appointment based system which has helped to resolve issues around case allocation and is moving the nomination function away from housing needs officers to free up more time for prevention and assessment.</p> <p>It should be noted that there are 1,010 cases banded, which represents the true housing demand in the absence of a waiting list. Of these 150 are Barnet Homes' tenants who have been banded for a transfer to an alternative property. Excluding the transfer cases 536 have been placed into bands 3 and 4 which represent a growing number</p>

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
				of households that are not likely to access social housing and are going to place increasing demand on temporary accommodation and private sector supply.
Lettings	Average Days to Re-let Empty Properties (All Barnet Homes)	19 days (2012/13)	24 days	<p>28 days for the previous year.</p> <p>Performance for 2012/13 was ahead of target for all areas other than sheltered.</p> <p>The improved performance was due to more efficient working and synergies brought about by the voids and lettings team being placed in the Housing Options service; a sizeable reduction in number of lettings down from over 950 in 11/12 to nearly 680 in 12/13 and increased levels of demand.</p> <p>We believe that a relet time of 19 days in 2012/13 will place us firmly in the top quartile of London boroughs as the best performance achieved in 2011/12 showed a voids relet time of 19.9 days.</p>
Lettings	New tenant satisfaction: new home is clean and tidy AND safe and secure (two questions)	90% (2012/13)	92%	<p>Our overall result was 90% with Mears hitting 92% and performing very strongly in Q4 (99%)</p> <p>New staff carrying out surveys have been trained to ensure consistency, and more work will be done in the first quarter of 2013/14 to ensure good relations with the other contractors.</p>

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
Lettings	End to End Time for Major Adaptation Jobs Completed in the Month (weeks)	19.9 (2012/13)	15 weeks	<p>28.9 weeks in previous year.</p> <p>Performance in Q4 showed a greater consistency with an average monthly turnaround of 17 weeks which showed a significant improvement to Q4 last year with a turnaround of 28 weeks.</p> <p>Following the result of the system thinking review for the service challenging targets were set for each quarter and although we did not reach the target set for year end, the end to end time has reduced by 9 weeks for 2012/13. We will be working closely with the contractor and the Occupational Therapist to keep waiting times for residents down.</p>
Rental Income	All Tenants with Arrears (any value over £0.01)	3,806 (end Q4)	N/A	<p>4,338 awaiting banding at end of Q3 (figures not available for the previous financial year).</p> <p>Total live accounts 10,386.</p>
Rental Income	Arrears as % Debit	2.38% (2012/13)	2.50%	<p>It is pleasing to report that following a strong performance in quarter 4, the team beat the arrears as a per cent of debit target by 0.12% (approx. £50,000) and improved on the performance outturn for 2011/12.</p>
Rental Income	Housing Options % of Income Collected	92% (2012/13)	94%	<p>94% for the previous year.</p> <p>Unfortunately we failed to reach our end of year target of 94% finishing the year at 92% due to a number of factors:-</p> <p>(a) A sizeable increase in number of households</p>

Business Area	KPI	Performance (Q4 12-13)	Target	Commentary
				<p>placed in temporary accommodation which resulted in an increase in the debit from £7.7m to over £11m.</p> <p>(b) an initial lack of procedures and processes in place to effectively manage temporary accommodation accounts and tackle the debt</p> <p>(c) A reduction in Housing Benefit of 1.3% which equates to having to collect an additional £150k.</p> <p>(d) performance issues and a lack of resources to help effectively deal with the increasing workload</p> <p>We have subsequently reviewed processes with managers from across all areas involved with temporary accommodation, have increased staff resources and are seeking a further temporary increase in resources to turnaround performance in 2013/14.</p>
Leaseholder Services	% Annual Service Charge & Arrears Collection	108% (2012/13)	100%	<p>The team exceeded our high expectations in collecting 108% against the 100% target. This is the 6th consecutive year that the team has exceeded 100%</p> <p>The year also saw a significant increase in interest around Right to Buy following the governments re-launch of the scheme. The CEO Board report provides further detail concerning this.</p> <p>There was also a sizeable increase in major work billing</p>

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				partly as a result of the major scheme at Granville Road and the commencement of the electrical rising main programme. The knock on impact of this was a fifty three per cent increase in the sum of major work money collected.
Antisocial Behaviour	ASB Cases Opened	251 (2012/13)	N/A	Figures are not available for the previous financial year.
Repairs	Responsive Repairs Customer Satisfaction (Mears: KPI R1)	97.8% (2012/13)	90%	97.6% end of Q3 (figures not available for the previous financial year).
Repairs	Responsive Repairs Completed in Time (Mears: KPI R4)	91.9% (2012/13)	96%	91.7% end of Q3 (figures not available for the previous financial year). Although not hitting year-end target, this indicator showed gradual and consistent improvement towards required levels throughout the year.
Repairs	% Properties with Current Gas Servicing Certificate (Mitie: KPI G4)	99.9% (2012/13)	100%	99.9% end of the previous year. A concerted effort by both the Barnet Homes Gas team and MITIE managed to achieve a compliancy figure of 99.9 per cent for year end. This is a good outturn against the context of a poor overall first year for MITIE delivering gas services to Barnet Homes' properties.
Major Works	% Satisfaction with Major Works	95% (2012/13)	90%	89% for the previous financial year.

(b) Your Choice Barnet (figures for 2012/13)

Service	Sessions Attended vs. Commissioned	Attended vs. Capacity
BILS	69%	34%
Community-Space	83%	74%
Flower Lane	90%	86%
Rosa Morison	85%	81%
Supported Living	149%	91%
Valley Way	96%	72%

- The figures have remained fairly consistent over the year across the services.
- The introduction of our new Business Intelligence system Covalent will ensure that attendance figures are provided to managers in an easy to understand format, allowing more regular and critical reviewing of the figures.
- We do not feel that measuring capacity within community and day services is a meaningful measure of how well the services are utilised especially as all our services will be developing outreach support as a target. CommunitySpace and BILS are already providing this support to the majority of our customers. We therefore propose to capture capacity in this way only for Support Living and Valley Way in the future.

Service	Sessions Attended vs. Commissioned	Attended vs. Capacity	Commentary
Safeguarding	Number of safeguarding incidents	9 (2012/13)	For 2013/14 we will be collecting more information in this area including: Total number and %, to include: raised by YC staff about YC services; raised by YC staff about relative / other agency; % upheld by care management as safeguarding; % not upheld as safeguarding being dealt with internally.

(c) Complaints (2012/13)

Barnet Homes Complaints	Year	Number Logged	% in Time	% Justified
Stage 1	12-13	821	97%	44%
	11-12	672	96%	36%
Stage 2	12-13	58	90%	8
	11-12	47	94%	9
Stage 3	12-13	7	100%	1 upheld
	11-12	6	100%	1 upheld
Ombudsman enquiries	12-13	18	100%	0
	11-12	8	100%	3 partially upheld

Figures for 2012-13 include Housing Options. Removing this service gives comparable figures for the year against last year of 747 Stage 1 complaints logged and 39 Stage 2 complaints, and 4 Stage 3 complaints. Ombudsman enquiries would have been 15 without HO.

Your Choice Barnet Complaints	2012-13	2011-12
Stage 1	1	n/a

We have still received just one formal complaint for Your Choice in the first half of the year. Details of this were included in a previous report.

During 2012/13 we received 11 compliments across the services.

(d) Sickness

Average Days Sickness per FTE	2012-13	2011-12
Barnet Homes	6.8 days	6.8 days
Your Choice	15.3 days	n/a
No. staff with 20 or more consecutive days sick leave in period (% of FTE workforce)	2012-13 Mar 13	2011-12 Mar 12
Barnet Homes	11 (3%)	7 (3%)
Your Choice	10 (9%)	n/a

Barnet Homes' sickness performance met target of 6.8 days and out-turned the same as 2011/12.

Business Services out-turned at 4.0 days vs. 7.4 days for operations, with our worst performing area being environment (10.3 days) which is driven by high sickness levels in caretaking. HR is working very closely with the caretaking management team, and some of the actions taken include seeking alternative medical assessments in two cases.

Your Choice sickness, whilst high is better than previously reported to the board. This was due to some incorrect data held in the system.

We will always see higher sickness levels for care and support services to minimise infection control for staff that have colds / viruses. In a normal office environment staff may still come to work, but can't in these services in case they pass these on to vulnerable clients.

3.0 Key activities

3.1 In addition to embedding Your Choice and Housing Options into the Group, in the last year we successfully delivered a wide range of key projects which include:

- New Business – We successfully tendered for two of the nine early intervention lots tendered by LBB Children's services and these are due to commence shortly
 - 2012 saw the launch of our successful tenancies project. Our so far so good report is attached as appendix a setting out our achievements to date
 - We obtained a four star rating in respect of Health & Safety management within Barnet Homes and are now seeking a similar achievement across the Group.
 - We launched Let2Barnet, an initiative for home owners to rent their properties out to Barnet Homes
 - We saw the launch of Safe places within the Borough, enabling service users of Your Choice to feel safe when they are out in the Community
 - We saw the preparation for the launch of Casserole, an initiative created by Future Gov enabling people to share portions of their dinner with those who do not have access to healthy food themselves
 - We delivered an Autism training service and provided support with our own expertise in Autism, which included our involvement in Autism Awareness day
 - We put in place skills to commence new build development on behalf of the Council
 - We began a major IT project entitled All systems go which will see us replace all of our main systems over a two year period.

4.0 Resources

- 4.1 The creation of the Group has seen the numbers of staff nearly double in size with the introduction of Your Choice and the Housing Options service. The Director of Operations, Amanda Jackson left Your Choice towards the end of the year and we decided not to replace this role directly but to create a Head of Care & Support to bring together Your Choice services and the Barnet Homes Sheltered Housing and ASSIST services. In addition we also created two new Head of Service posts in New Build and New Business.
- 4.2 The year end sickness figures for the Group differed significantly across Barnet Homes and Your Choice. Within Barnet Homes we managed to meet our target of 6.8 days but for Your Choice we finished the year with 15.3 days. The Your Choice Board is focussing on sickness this year to ensure we exceed our target of 12.5 days. Barnet Homes new target is 6.5 days for 2013/14.
- 4.3 In respect of staff turnover, these figures are high due to the restructures that we have carried out across the business. The table below shows the current turnover figures:

Barnet Homes	Your Choice
11.6%	9.2%

- 4.4 All permanent employees within the Group had appraisals in 2012/13 and all employees within Your choice held Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks with the majority of Barnet Homes staff also having been checked. Changes to CRB are now in place which will see a reduction in those checked.
- 4.5 The table below sets out the diversity information in respect of the Group employees:

Ethnicity	Barnet Homes	Your Choice
Asian	10%	5%
Black	21%	29%
Mixed	2%	3%
White	59%	50%
Other	2%	1%
Unknown	6%	12%

5.0 Financials

- 5.1 The Group financials show a strong position for the Year 2012/13 with a surplus of £550k achieved through a surplus in Barnet Homes of £620k and a loss within Your Choice of £70k.
- 5.2 The surplus in Barnet Homes was an excellent achievement as the management fee was reduced by £0.5million for the year as part of a series of agreed management fee reductions over five years. In addition we were able to achieve General Fund efficiencies within the Housing Options service of £330k.
- 5.3 The loss of £70k within Your Choice was a positive outcome for the first year and was delivered following £180k worth of efficiencies. The move from a block contract, paid in advance to payment by use, paid in arrears has created some financial challenges for Your Choice as this will mean we will receive approximately £1million less income in the next year.
- 5.4 It has been a difficult process moving to payment by actuals as we are yet to agree a charging policy and this means there are a number of invoice disputes which in turn has meant payment from the Council has been delayed. These issues are being rectified but there are still areas outstanding in respect of payment which includes accompanying service users when they are being transported to, and from the services and non attendance.
- 5.5 Significant effort was put into validating service users needs at year end and whilst this is not fully complete this work has meant the new year has been easier to reconcile.
- 5.4 To support these changes, Barnet Homes lent Your Choice £1million to be repaid over three years and consultation commenced in March over a number of proposed changes within Your Choice aimed at addressing the financial shortfall and enabling Your Choice to operate at the market rates set by the Council.
- 5.5 The proposed changes have generated significant external interest and many aspects of the proposals have been misrepresented as a consequence. The Your Choice Board will be shortly considering the final proposals.

6.0 Risks

- 6.1 The Group has a risk management strategy which is overseen by the Group Audit & Risk Committee. We also have a process for ongoing review of risks with the Council. The key risks we are currently managing are:

- Demand on temporary accommodation and housing need could lead to significant overspends in respect of temporary accommodation and general fund expenditure
- Welfare reform and impact on revenue collection and tenancy sustainability could lead to significant reductions in HRA revenue and increases in homelessness.
- Health & safety of residents and their properties could lead to significant increase in expenditure on repairs
- IT infrastructure could lead to inability to implement self service for staff and customers
- Management of homes in Regeneration areas in respect of delays causing difficulties in housing management and expenditure on repairs
- Financial position of Your Choice in respect of moving from a block contract to payment by use and the cashflow implications of moving to payment in arrears
- Introduction of personal budgets and direct payments to service users within Your Choice leading to a reduction in revenue

7.0 Review Meetings

- 7.1 The Barnet Group and the Council have operated to the structures created last year with monthly meetings occurring separately for Your Choice and Barnet Homes with colleagues in the Council. These meetings carry out a number of key tasks such as reviewing performance and dealing with emerging issues.
- 7.2 We are expecting these to change slightly with the introduction of the new commissioning structure within the Council and its new service delivery partners.

8.0 Customer Involvement

- 8.1 In Your Choice, we have not progressed customer involvement as much as we should have done. The Your Choice Board approved a customer engagement strategy and implementation has begun but this didn't occur until the end of the year. We continue to run meetings for carers and families in some of our services but not across all, but these will be in place and operating effectively this year. In addition we will be setting up a scrutiny panel in Your Choice where family members can be trained in scrutinising our services.
- 8.2 Within Barnet Homes we have continued to use our tried and trusted approaches and whilst we still have improvements to make we now have several thousand residents involved in some way. Examples are:
- Resident Associations - There are 14 resident & community associations who we actively support with advice, training and grants

- Mystery Shopping – 78 residents taken from the VIEWPOINT group and CIH training report back on their experiences following real interactions with the company
- Resident Inspectors - 6 Resident Inspectors have been trained using CIH and 4 of these are now part of the reality checking programme
- Stage Three Complaints Panel – a panel of four residents drawn from a pool of twelve which includes resident Board directors, meets as required across the year to hear complaints. In 2011/12 the panel heard six complaints.
- Performance Advisory Group (PAG) – comprising nine tenants and one leaseholder the group meet every six weeks with an agenda that is agreed together with Barnet Homes. The current focus is on covering the different consumer service standards included in the HCA Regulatory Framework for social landlords, a review of resident involvement provision across the company, PAG also write the annual report to residents and receive regular performance and complaints reports.

9.0 Governance

- 9.1 The new Governance arrangements put in place for the creation of the Group have served us well for the first year of operation. The Group Chair, Deep Sagar resigned during the year which led to the appointment of an interim Chair, Terry Rogers, who will remain in place until the Council have completed the appointment process for a new Chair.
- 9.2 Within Your Choice, we have continued to struggle to appoint to the vacancy on the Board for a service user. We have carried out two separate processes but as yet have not been able to appoint someone suitable.
- 9.3 Within Barnet Homes, we saw one of our independent and Leasehold Board Members step down and we appointed two new members to replace them.
- 9.4 All of the Board have recently met to review the Groups Governance arrangements and will have further discussions about how these can be improved.

10.0 Looking forward

- 10.1 The Barnet Group has developed a five year business plan which has the following high level goals:
- Support that enables our customers and service users to lead improved and where possible more independent lives

- Value for money services that our customers and service users want
- Developing the Group to meet our strategic goals

These goals link directly to the Council's strategic objectives 'improve the satisfaction of residents and businesses' and 'support families and individuals that need it'.

10.2 In conjunction with the Council we have agreed the following 'super kpi' activities:

- Undertake a healthy living campaign for its employees and customers
- Commence a new build programme in borough and seeking access to properties outside the borough to support the demand on housing
- Deliver employment and training opportunities including apprentices and graduates
- Implement a programme aimed at identifying and support dementia amongst its customers

10.3 The other key improvement activities we are focusing on are:

- Renewal of the Barnet Homes Management agreement
- Completion of our All Systems Go programme
- Preventative work around welfare reform
- Digital inclusion programme
- A series of service reviews aimed at improving satisfaction
- Further progression of new build opportunities
- Further growth through new business
- Changes to driver further efficiencies
- Embedding our changes within Your Choice

10.4 Over the next twelve months within Your Choice we will be seeking to achieve the following:

- Implement the new staffing structure, embedding new teams and new roles, without impacting on service delivery
- Support and increase customer choice and/or maintain people's independence
- Achieve high quality standards and improve outcomes for our customers
- Make our income go further by maximising our revenue and delivering efficiencies where we can
- Raise our profile and achieve growth and new business for future financial viability

10.5 Over the next twelve months within Barnet Homes we will be seeking to achieve the following:

- Deliver against our Asset Management strategy, complete viability assessments on our stock and agree plans in respect of new build development
- Ensure we are safeguarding our customers, employees and assets
- Develop our service offer to be as great in as many service areas as possible
- Build upon the success of successful tenancies
- Transform our ways of working and develop our internal talent