

MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	Wednesday, 22 January 2020
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Reception Room, Barnsley Town Hall

AGENDA

1. Declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
2. Leader - Call-in of Cabinet decisions

Minutes

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th January, 2020 (Cab.22.1.2020/3)
(Pages 3 - 6)

Items for Noting

4. Decisions of Cabinet Spokespersons (Cab.22.1.2020/4)

Petitions

5. Petitions received under Standing Order 44 (Cab.22.1.2020/5)

Items for Decision/Recommendation to Council

Regeneration and Culture Spokesperson

6. Response to Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations regarding Void Properties
(Cab.22.1.2020/6) (Pages 7 - 10)

To: Chair and Members of Cabinet:-

Councillors Houghton CBE (Chair), Andrews BEM, Bruff, Cheetham, Gardiner, Howard, Lamb and Platts

Cabinet Support Members:

Councillors Charlesworth, Franklin, Frost, Saunders, Sumner and Tattersall

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Chair of Audit Committee

Sarah Norman, Chief Executive
Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director People
Matt Gladstone, Executive Director Place
Wendy Lowder, Executive Director Communities
Julia Burrows, Director Public Health
Andrew Frosdick, Executive Director Core Services
Michael Potter, Service Director Business Improvement and Communications
Neil Copley, Service Director Finance (Section 151 Officer)

Katie Rogers, Head of Communications and Marketing
Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer
Martin McCarthy, Service Director Governance, Members and Business Support
Corporate Communications and Marketing

Please contact Martin McCarthy on email governance@barnsley.gov.uk

Tuesday, 14 January 2020



MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	Wednesday, 8 January 2020
TIME:	10.00 am
VENUE:	Reception Room, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present Councillors Houghton CBE (Chair), Andrews BEM, Bruff, Franklin (on behalf of Gardiner), Howard, Lamb and Platts

Members in Attendance: Councillors Saunders and Tattersall

147. Declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests

Councillor Tattersall declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Berneslai Homes Board in respect of Minute Numbers 155 and 156.

148. Leader - Call-in of Cabinet decisions

The Leader reported that no decisions from the previous meeting held on 11th December 2019 had been called in.

149. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th December, 2019 (Cab.8.1.2020/3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2019 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

150. Decisions of Cabinet Spokespersons (Cab.8.1.2020/4)

The Record of Decisions taken by Cabinet Spokespersons under delegated powers during the week ending 6th December 2019 were noted.

151. Petitions received under Standing Order 44 (Cab.8.1.2020/5)

It was reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 44.

Core Services Spokesperson

152. Calculation of Council Tax Base 2020/21 (Cab.8.1.2020/6)

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the year 2020/21 be approved including the necessary adjustments to reflect the revised Local Council Tax Support Scheme, as detailed in the report submitted;
- (ii) that the Council Tax Base for the year 2020/21 shall be £65,405.74. This figure has been calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012;

- (iii) that, calculated in accordance with the above regulations, the Council Tax Base for the year 2020/21 in respect of each Parish being listed in the table below:-

Parish Area	Band D Equivalent Chargeable Properties	95% of Band D Equivalent Chargeable Properties
Penistone	4,431.00	4,209.45
Billingley	97.10	92.25
Great Houghton	674.80	641.06
Little Houghton	191.90	182.31
Shafton	969.80	921.31
High Hoyland	68.70	65.27
Hunshelf	161.60	153.52
Langsett	111.60	106.02
Cawthorne	609.20	578.74
Dunford	248.20	235.79
Gunthwaite and Ingbirchworth	298.10	283.20
Thurgoland	757.50	719.63
Tankersley	666.90	633.56
Wortley	304.20	288.99
Oxspring	470.20	446.69
Silkstone	1,214.30	1,153.59
Stainborough	163.90	155.71
Barnsley and other Non-Parish areas	57,409.10	54,538.65
Total	68,848.10	65,405.74

- (iv) that the empty property premium be increased to 200% for properties left empty for 5 years or more as outlined at paragraph 5.5 of the report; and
- (v) that one month 100% discretionary Council Tax discount be amended to become one month landlord discount and amend the criteria so only landlord/letting agent would be eligible for the discount.

153. 2020/21 Business Rates - Calculation of the Authority's Local Share (Cab.8.1.2020/7)

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the process for estimating the retained Business Rate Local Share for 2020/21 set out in the report be noted and agree that the 'local share' for Barnsley will be £23.614m (excluding S31 Grants) in line with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); and
- (ii) that the final submission be approved by the Service Director Finance – Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Spokesperson for Core Services.

154. Corporate Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policies (Cab.8.1.2020/8)

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL ON 6TH FEBRUARY 2020 that approval be given to the policies with continued support and endorsement given to the corporate approach to minimise the risk of fraud, corruption and bribery within the Authority's overall ethical framework.

Regeneration and Culture Spokesperson

155. Billingley View - 'Barnsley Low Carbon Standard' Housing Development (Cab.8.1.2020/9)

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be given for the Council to progress the delivery of 10 x 2 bed and 6 x 3 bed semi-detached houses on a Council owned site off Billingley View, Bolton-on-Deane. The homes will be Council owned properties, managed by Berneslai Homes and to let to applicants on the Council's Housing Waiting list.

The homes will be delivered to the NEW Barnsley Low Carbon standard which seeks to deliver high energy efficient homes (on a fabric first basis) at SAP rating A. The homes will be 'off gas', low carbon/renewable focused and affordable to heat; and

- (ii) that approval be granted to appoint NPS Barnsley as Principal Contractor to construct the 16 residential units.

156. Berneslai Homes - Purchase, Conversion and Refurbishment of Former Council Offices, Berneslai Close by Berneslai Homes Ltd (Cab.8.1.2020/10)

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that Berneslai Homes Ltd be approved to procure and deliver the conversion and refurbishment of the retained building at Berneslai Close;
- (ii) that the relevant authorisation for the monitoring and authorisation of specific project decisions be delegated to Berneslai Homes Senior Management Team, in line with the Council's approved Standing Orders; and
- (iii) that the 9 market rented units be held within Berneslai Homes Ltd ('The Company') and let at market rent.

157. South Yorkshire Digital Connectivity Strategy (Cab.8.1.2020/11)

RESOLVED that the South Yorkshire Digital Connectivity Strategy and the 'direction of travel' set out therein, be approved.

158. St Michael's Avenue Housing Development (Cab.8.1.2020/12)

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that approval be granted 'in principle' for the direct development of the Council owned site off St Michael's Avenue, Monk Bretton by the Council. The site will provide 35 residential units with a mixture of open market sale, Council rented and market rented properties;
- (ii) that final scheme approval and responsibility for the appointment of suitably qualified contracts be delegated to the Executive Director Place, following consultation with the Executive Director Core Services. A final decision regarding the progression of the development will be made following a full financial appraisal at tender evaluation stage;
- (iii) that approval be granted to appropriate the 16 Council rented units into the Housing Revenue Account, which will be managed by Berneslai Homes; and
- (iv) that approval be granted to appropriate the 6 market rented units to Berneslai Homes Ltd ('The Company'), which will be held separately from the Housing Revenue Account and let at an affordable market rent.

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Chair

BARNESLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL (BMBC)

This matter is not a Key Decision within the council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan.

Report of the Executive Director Place

RESPONSE TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

1. Purpose of report

To respond to the recommendations made to Cabinet (Cab.27.11.2019/6) from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Thriving & Vibrant Economy Work stream meeting held on 1st October 2019 in relation to Void Council Properties.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Cabinet endorse the responses to each of the recommendations as outlined in section 4 of the report.

3. Introduction/Background

3.1 On 1st October 2019 the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's (OSC) Thriving & Vibrant Economy Work stream meeting considered the Council's voids management and lettings processes, delivered by Berneslai Homes and partner contractors: Kier; and Berneslai Homes Construction Services.

3.2 The committee considered the governance and monitoring of voids, service performance; as well as the associated challenges. The committee acknowledged the very positive performance in relation to the issues discussed; however made a number of recommendations to enhance or further improve services.

4. Specific Recommendations and Responses

4.1 From the investigation, 5 recommendations were made, each recommendation has been considered and the response included below.

Recommendation 1: Consider a decoration standard for Council properties

The committee raised a number of concerns regarding the decoration standard of some properties being let; especially given the increasing needs of clients accessing general needs provision. Decorating is currently done in special circumstances; however the committee felt there needed to be a higher basic level of acceptable decoration standard met for all properties and budget made available for this.

RESPONSE: This recommendation is accepted. Berneslai Homes is exploring if a limited and targeted tenant's decoration scheme should be re-introduced, particularly for properties that have a very poor decoration standard (for example where a habitual smoker had lived). Decoration schemes are widely used by Council's, ALMO's and Housing Associations and have operated in Barnsley

before. This will be in addition to the current scheme which provides decoration to voids in special circumstances.

4.2 Recommendation 2: Consider increasing independent inspection of completed works to void properties

Currently, random samples of properties which are considered as being ready to let are subject to spot checks. The committee, however, felt that every property should be independently checked and this could be done either by a Council/Berneslai Homes officer or by increasing the use of tenants trained as 'Service Excellence Assessors'.

RESPONSE: This recommendation is accepted. Berneslai Homes has agreed to seek to increase the pool of tenant volunteer Service Excellence Assessors and to increase the number of checks that they carry out on empty properties. The results of their checks will be routinely provided to the Tenants' Voice Panel for consideration and review.

4.3 Recommendation 3: Compile pictures alongside the database of properties

The committee recommend that alongside the database of properties, that a pictorial history is kept. Through this, clear evidence will be available as to if/when damage has occurred at a property and will also act as a quick reference for officers should they need to refer to a particular property and when maintenance may be required.

RESPONSE: This recommendation is accepted. Berneslai Homes will introduce this recommendation as soon as practically possible. The photographs will support their existing void checklist.

4.4 Recommendation 4: Consider increasing the number of properties put aside to prevent the need for use of temporary B&B accommodation

As part of the discussion, the committee recognised one of the key challenges in managing voids and lettings is the increasing demand on properties required due to homelessness. In recognition of this, the committee recommend that an increasing number are put aside for this purpose to avoid use of out of borough B&B accommodation.

RESPONSE: This recommendation is accepted. Following an analysis of demand over the last 18 months, Berneslai Homes is working with the Council's Housing Options Team to increase (by up to 20) the number of units of accommodation made available from the Council housing stock for temporary and emergency accommodation in order to reduce the need for Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

4.5 Recommendation 5: Neighbourhood Services to consider machines which can collect grass as it is cut

Linked with ensuring the quality of void properties being re-let, the committee discussed the cutting of grass in communal areas and the challenges of this. Members raised concerns from residents that given grass is now being cut less frequently, when it is done, large amounts of cut grass is left across pavements and pathways.

RESPONSE: The approach to grass cutting in 2019/20 was informed by the Future Council Improvement Review of Neighbourhood Services. The revised deployment

approach achieved an improvement to grass cutting standards delivering a cyclical cut frequency of 21 days compared the 25 days in previous years. This approach maximised all resources available to the service.

Neighbourhood Services would require significant investment to adopt a cut and collect approach across the borough:

- Cut and collect machinery - £560k (capital)
- Additional vehicles and staff resources to collect the grass from the cut and collect machines - £450k (revenue per annum)
- Disposal of the grass and vegetation collect £33 per tonne – anticipated £150k per annum

The service would be willing to support a cut and collect approach subject to the approval of additional investment and the development of a full business case.

5. Implications for local people / service users

- 5.1 The recommendations (and the subsequent responses) in this report are in support of improving services provided to our customers.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications in this report. In responding to the recommendations, the financial implications of these would need to be fully assessed by the appropriate services in advance of implementation.

7. Employee implications

- 7.1 There are no specific employee implications in this report.

8. Communications implications

- 8.1 The good work which is taking place by the Council and Berneslai Homes in relation to property management as evidenced in corporate performance reports should be shared and celebrated. It is important however that where properties do not meet acceptable standards, residents are given opportunity to express their concerns and the issues rectified as appropriate.
- 8.2 By utilising tenants trained as 'Service Excellence Assessors', this will help with communication between residents and Berneslai Homes as the managing agent. This also provides opportunities for tenants to gain knowledge of and share experiences of positive work being undertaken with residents as well as highlight concerns so that tenant feedback can be acted upon.

9. Consultations

- 9.1 Consultations have taken place with: Cllr Tim Cheetham; Council Officers David Shepherd, Richard Burnham, Sarah Cartwright and Paul Castle; Berneslai Homes Officers Amanda Garrard, Steve Davis, Bob Cartwright and Tony Griffiths; and the Council's Senior Management Team.

10. The Corporate Plan and the Council's Performance Management Framework

10.1 As outlined in the Corporate Plan, the three priorities for Barnsley are: a thriving and vibrant economy, strong and resilient communities; and citizens achieving their potential. To contribute to achieving these, we need to ensure that good quality housing is available to residents. The recommendations and responses to them in this report contribute to improving the performance of services.

11. Risk management issues

11.1 Failure to provide a good standard of Council properties not only risks damaging the health and wellbeing of tenants, but also sets a poor example to other landlords in the borough; thereby failing to support the provision of good quality housing in Barnsley. It is also recognised that by law, all Council properties should meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard.

12. Health, safety, and emergency resilience issues

12.1 The provision of a home that is warm, safe and comfortable is a fundamental requirement of the Council's Decent Homes Standard; this promotes good health and wellbeing and is a fundamental component of basic human rights. The recommendations and responses in this report are in support of ensuring that housing provided by the Council is meeting these needs in support of our residents' health and wellbeing, especially our most vulnerable.

13. Promoting equality, diversity, and social inclusion

13.1 The OSC highlighted that we need to ensure our customer needs are met, particularly those who are vulnerable, have disabilities and need additional support to set up a home.

14. Glossary

BMBC – Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

OSC – Overview and Scrutiny Committee

15. Background papers

- OSC Meeting Papers on Void Council Properties 01/10/19:
<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=224&MIId=5893&Ver=4>
- OSC Meeting Minutes from 01/10/19:
<https://barnsleymbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s59319/Minutes%20of%20Previous%20Meeting.pdf>
- OSC Recommendations to Cabinet further to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Void Properties (Cab.27.11.2019/6):
<https://barnsleymbcintranet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s59906/Recommendations%20to%20Cabinet%20further%20to%20the%20Overview%20and%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf>

Officer Contact: Richard Burnham/Sarah Cartwright Date: 6th January 2020