



Roots in the  
past, eyes on  
the future.

Strategic Plan 2021-31

Creating great homes and communities for the people of Barnsley



**2030**

Working with  
Barnsley Council on the  
Barnsley 2030 Vision.

# Foreword by the Chair and Chief Executive

Welcome to our Strategic Plan which sets out what Berneslai Homes aims to achieve over the next 10 years for our customers, our colleagues and the communities in which we work.

It explains who we are, what we do and outlines the opportunities and challenges that we face. This is the first year of a new 10 year plan set in a period of change and a world shaken by the Covid 19 pandemic.

This plan acknowledges the difference Covid 19 has made to the way we work, how we deliver services and the importance of ensuring that the safety of tenants and staff is our top priority. In recognition of this impact the focus for the plan is for the period up to April 2022. Further consultation will take place during 2021 to align with the Barnsley 2030 vision and work with our customers, communities and staff to develop the full 10 year vision.

During the next 12 months we will focus on recovering from the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, supporting tenants and communities and building on the positives that are emerging from the crisis. Our resilience, flexibility and commitment have all been challenged during 2020 but we are determined to emerge a better and stronger organisation focussing on what really matters to our customers and communities. The economic impact of the pandemic is still unfolding but the opportunity to deliver a jobs led recovery is one in which we are well placed to respond.

We will embrace our role as an anchor institution in Barnsley, working with the Council and partners to develop a clear vision and ambition for Barnsley 2030. As this vision is developed we will align our services and ensure we have a pivotal role in meeting the challenges and opportunities the new vision will bring.

We continue to strengthen how we govern the organisation, refreshing the Board and appointing a new Chair during 2020 as part of the new chapter in Berneslai Homes' story.

The relationship we have with tenants and residents remains one of our strengths and we acknowledge the importance the new tenant engagement structure has in working alongside us to maintain our excellent service offer.

As the post Covid 19 world emerges we remain well placed within Barnsley and the region to influence policy, make the most of devolution and seize the opportunities that arise to build on the strengths of Berneslai Homes – an exciting time indeed to start our next chapter.

We look forward to working with our partners developing a new strategic vision during 2021, for the next ten years.



*A. J. Garrard*  
**Amanda Garrard**  
Chief Executive Officer



*G. Ellis*  
**Gary Ellis**  
Interim Chair  
of the Board

# Contents

Executive Summary	<b>05</b>
About Us	<b>07</b>
Our Opportunities and Challenges	<b>10</b>
Our Service Offer	<b>13</b>
Appendices	<b>22</b>

# Executive Summary

Berneslai Homes was established in December 2002 and is the Council's Local Housing Company for the management and maintenance of council housing in Barnsley.

The services we provide include the delivery of a high quality service to tenants - letting homes, collecting rents, repairing and investing in homes. But we provide much more than this, putting customers at the heart, our vision is to create great homes and communities for the people of Barnsley.

To do this we are more than a landlord, we provide a broad range of services that allows us to achieve our vision. We will continue to deliver excellent services to tenants but we will do much more than that, enhancing tenant engagement, providing tenancy support to sustain people in their homes, tackling fuel poverty, addressing the carbon agenda and creating real opportunities as a major employer in Barnsley. We will utilise regional, national and European funding to support employment initiatives for our customers and communities.

Underpinning our aspirations are some clear objectives for the period up to 2022 as we recover and reset as part of the Covid 19 pandemic. Our objectives include:

- Creating employment and training opportunities for tenants and their families.
- Developing and implementing our approach to the zero carbon agenda, retrofitting our homes, developing employment opportunities and reducing fuel poverty.
- Seizing opportunities to grow as an organisation and sustain levels of social housing in Barnsley.
- Working with tenants to embrace the outcomes of the Social Housing White paper (Autumn 2020) and the Hackitt Review on Fire Safety.
- Work with the Council to develop digital inclusion throughout the Borough.

We will continue to work with the Council and partners to develop the Barnsley 2030 vision and align our objectives to deliver the vision.



---

**Berneslai Homes recognises its key role in the delivery of the emerging Barnsley 2030 vision and our contribution includes;**

- Making the best use of and maintaining the existing housing stock.
- Providing early targeted support for households and families facing multiple problems.
- Allocating social housing fairly and to those in most housing need.
- Working with the Council to provide a co-ordinated response to homelessness and eradicating rough sleeping in the Borough.
- Investing in renewable energy and meeting the challenges of the carbon zero agenda, using retrofit as an opportunity for a jobs led economic recovery.
- Providing choice and options to help vulnerable and older people live independently in their own homes.
- Providing a managing and lettings agent service to private rented landlords.
- Community involvement and engagement to support strong and resilient communities.
- Increasing employment opportunities and support as a major employer, signed up to the Apprenticeship Pledge, Local Spend targets and Employer's Promise and using ESF funding to support people into employment.
- Providing financial inclusion and digital inclusion support for people to maintain their tenancies and access employment.
- Making links between housing and health to mitigate or prevent escalating health and social care costs.

# About Us

Berneslai Homes is a company limited by guarantee and is overseen by a Board of Directors who meet six times a year.

Underpinning the Board and Committee formal governance structure is our co-regulatory tenant involvement and engagement model, to ensure our customers are fully involved in developing, shaping and scrutinising our services.

Our service standards are developed with our tenants and regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing.

The implementation of policies and the day to day running of Berneslai Homes is delegated to the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team. The executive are held to account by the Board against annual Service Improvement Plans. Overall performance is reported to the Council on a quarterly basis against headline priorities and asks of the shareholder. We have strong and robust governance which is audited on an annual basis.





**Our Vision is**  
**Creating great homes and communities for the people of Barnsley**



**Our Values are**  
**Great Place, Great People, Great Company**



# Our Values

To deliver our vision we have dedicated and committed staff who care about the services we provide and ensure we deliver excellent services.

Our values underpin all that we do.

**Great Place** - We are a local housing company, rooted in Barnsley and working in collaboration to deliver excellent customer focused services.

**Great People** - We are an organisation with a can do, positive culture that is outward facing, learning from others and using this to improve peoples lives.

**Great Company** - We are agile and responsive, able to react quickly making the most of any opportunities to improve and grow.



# Our Opportunities and Challenges

**The External World** – The initial stage of the new strategic plan is set within the context of the impact of Covid 19. The full implications for individuals, communities and the economy are not yet fully understood, however there are real challenges and opportunities to review how we respond and consider what and how we deliver.

Beyond the Covid 19 response, the themes of zero carbon, economic recovery, the outcomes of the Social Housing White Paper and the digital agenda, all remain and are the backdrop to the 10 year strategy.

**Financial Landscape** – The company operates a zero based approach to establishing its management fee and year on year continues to contain budgetary pressures and deliver savings to the Housing Revenue Account, managed by BMBC. Value for money is at the forefront of all decisions and the efficiency register captures annual efficiencies.

Since its establishment in 2002 the company has accrued a surplus due to efficiencies and successful delivery of the repairs and maintenance contract. This surplus is reinvested in the modernisation of the company, housing growth and fuel poverty projects to support the economic development and well-being of Barnsley.

**Policy Landscape** – In August 2018 the Government published a consultation paper entitled 'A New Deal for Social Housing'. The white paper is expected in Autumn 2020. The principles are likely to remain unchanged, ensuring homes are safe and decent, ensuring swift and effective resolution of disputes, empowering residents and making sure their voices are heard, tackling stigma and boosting the supply of social housing and supporting home ownership. New key performance indicators will emerge and will need to be reflected in future targets. The accountability and transparency to customers will be central and the new Housing Ombudsman's "Complaints Handling Code" effective from September 2020 requires joint work with tenants to self assess our performance in relation to complaints and ensure we learn and improve.

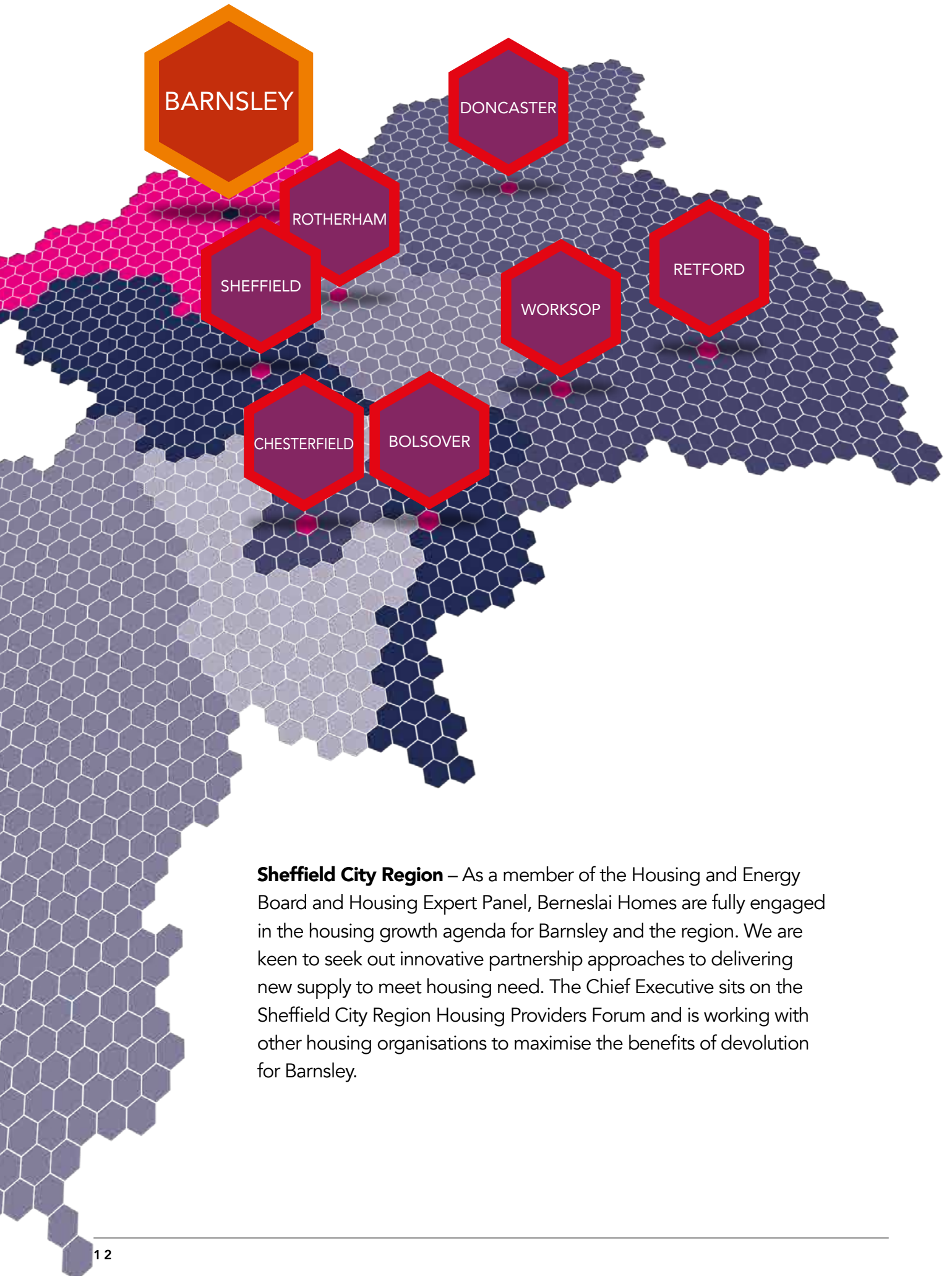
The safety of tenants and staff remains our number one priority. Significant work completed in 2020 has strengthened compliance and as the Hackitt Review concludes we will ensure we implement the recommendations in the 'Building a Safer Future Report'.

**Demographics** – Our current customer profile shows that 59% of customers have a disability and over 32% are aged 66 years and above. All indications are that people are living longer with increasing support needs but with the desire to remain independent in their own home.

The number of households who are vulnerable with dependency and support needs is growing. Health inequalities continue to be a challenge with many communities in Barnsley being ranked in areas of deprivation. A large number of our customers have increasingly complex lifestyles and our focus continues to be on early help and prevention within the community. Levels of employment amongst our customer base require coordinated actions with partners to support customers into work.

**Tenants Voice** – As a local council housing company we listen to our tenants and talk to our Council and we do more than just manage homes.

– we help develop communities and support the needs of tenants. We believe that tenant engagement is essential in shaping and improving services as well as building trust and communication with our customers. Our customers continue to tell us that the repairs and maintenance service is the main determinant of satisfaction with the company and we will take this into account in ensuring the Council's assets are protected within our service offer. Customer expectations are changing with more people wanting to use the website and social media to contact us, and our focus continues to be ensuring a balance between self-serve on-line and personal face to face dependent on the service required. We will continue to work with tenants to understand the best way to deliver services and meet their needs.



**Sheffield City Region** – As a member of the Housing and Energy Board and Housing Expert Panel, Berneslai Homes are fully engaged in the housing growth agenda for Barnsley and the region. We are keen to seek out innovative partnership approaches to delivering new supply to meet housing need. The Chief Executive sits on the Sheffield City Region Housing Providers Forum and is working with other housing organisations to maximise the benefits of devolution for Barnsley.

# Our Service Offer

Although the strategic plan is until 2031, we have focussed our offer on the period to April 2022. We will work during 2021 to develop a longer term vision linked to the Barnsley 2030 emerging vision. Following consultation with our customers and shareholder we have developed four priorities to assist us in delivering our vision:

- ◆ Excellent Customer Services
- ◆ Sustainable Communities
- ◆ Partnership Working
- ◆ Successful Well Managed Company



# Excellent Customer Services

## **What will we deliver in the period to April 2022?**

- We will review with customers how we deliver services and embrace the learning from the Covid 19 experience.
- We will make best use of the council's social housing assets and introduce a new asset management strategy.
- We will maintain all homes to the Barnsley Homes Standard.
- We will introduce new policies on compliance to keep tenants safe.
- We will improve the IT systems and enhance cyber security.
- We will introduce new technology into the contact centre, enhancing the customer experience and improving value for money.
- We will use technology to improve how we deliver our repairs service making it more efficient and easier for tenants.
- We will have an "Access to Services" strategy promoting self-service and value for money including a range of digital services for customers.
- We will provide support for tenants on their digital journey including piloting new initiatives including use of tablets to access services.
- We will provide a tenancy support service that helps tenants pay their rent and sustain their tenancies.
- We will signpost support to help tenants in fuel and food poverty.
- We will have robust tenant engagement practices to help communities be resilient and shape local services.
- We will work with TPAS to review the effectiveness of our approach to engagement.

### How will we measure our results?

- We will strive to maintain our overall satisfaction levels.
- We will deliver an annual Barnsley Homes Standard programme.
- We will ensure core business processes and outcomes are at or above industry standard.
- We will ask customers if they would recommend Berneslai Homes as a provider of choice to family and friends.
- We will ask customers if they believe we treat them fairly and with respect.



# Sustainable Communities

## **What will we deliver in the period to April 2022?**

- We will work with the Council to increase Council Housing in the Borough.
- We will identify and support vulnerable people to live independently.
- We will commit to 'Harry's Pledge' to make a real difference in the support provided to carers.
- We will review the housing offer to Care Leavers.
- We will provide an enhanced service offer supporting tenants further towards employment.
- We will deliver skills workshops for tenants providing training on a range of topics including repairs and IT.
- We will develop a pre-tenancy support / housing coach model to improve tenancy sustainment.
- We will review how we identify and support those tenants that need to continue to shield from Covid 19 now and in any potential future waves.
- We will support communities to be strong and resilient and work on solutions for those affected by floods.
- We will develop a zero carbon strategy for Berneslai Homes.
- We will extend the Solar PV scheme to more homes.
- We will continue to move towards sustainable energy sources.
- We will encourage active travel to reduce car usage amongst staff.

**How will we measure our results?**

- We will be a key partner of choice in strategic housing growth programmes.
- We will increase the number of properties with sustainable energy technology.
- We will have a manageable level of tenancy turnover.
- We will find out whether customers believe people from different communities get on well together.



# Partnership Working

## **What will we deliver in the period to April 2022?**

- We will be strategically aligned to BMBC's housing strategy, regeneration and growth priorities.
- We will be a key partner in developing and delivering the Barnsley 2030 vision.
- We will work with Partners to improve the digital infrastructure and accessibility for our tenants and communities.
- We will maintain our reputation at a regional and national level.
- We will work with a range of national and regional organisations to learn and adopt best practice from within and outside the sector.
- We will have a strong and sustainable tenant engagement and involvement framework.
- We will work with partners at a local and regional level to seek shared value for money solutions.
- We will work with partners to assist in tackling anti-social behaviour and community tensions.
- We will continue to be engaged with the third sector.



### How will we measure our results?

- We will be a key partner of choice in strategic housing growth programmes.
- We will contribute to Future Council outcomes.
- We will be partner of choice within partnership frameworks.
- We will contribute to the national policy debate through recognised trade bodies.
- We will increase uptake of volunteering by the community and staff.



# Successful Well Managed Company

## **What will we deliver in the period to April 2022?**

- We will review how we use offices and create a working culture that maximises productivity and the wellbeing of staff.
- We will maintain our focus on delivering high performance services whilst providing excellent value for money.
- We will introduce new governance arrangements with refreshed membership and enhanced skills.
- We will invest in communities to the best of our abilities.
- We will focus on generating efficiencies to support economic development and affordable housing growth in Barnsley.
- We will be an employer of choice.
- We will retain a skilled and flexible workforce which is responsive to change.
- We will provide management development schemes for staff to allow them to achieve their potential.
- We will establish the carbon footprint of Berneslai Homes and set ambitious targets for its reduction aligned to the Council's Zero 40 and Zero 45 net carbon zero targets.
- We will ensure that our working methods are modern and make the best use of technology.
- We will have a profitable in house Construction Services trading arm employing a skilled and safe workforce.

### How will we measure our results?

- We will maintain staff satisfaction levels.
- We will spend at least 70% of our funds locally supporting the Barnsley economy.
- We will have an in house Construction Services trading arm which is profitable and has a first class safety record.
- We will have technology that enables our front line employees to work effectively.
- We will employ as a minimum 3% of our workforce as apprentices.
- We will maintain our company wide Health and Safety audit ratings.
- We will meet our equality and diversity commitments reducing the gender pay gap and increasing the diversity of our staff.



# Appendices

1. Strategic Alignment
2. Key Performance Indicator Data set 2020/21
3. Financial Statement
4. Board and Committee Structure
5. SMT Structure

# 1. Strategic Alignment



We will work with the Council to ensure that our priorities outlined in our service offer are aligned, building on the Covid 19 reset themes currently in place relating to :

- Health and Wellbeing
- Business and Economy
- Building Resilience
- Education and Skills
- Infrastructure and Environment

During 2020/21 we will play a key role as an anchor organisation developing and delivering the Barnsley 2030 vision. As the priorities emerge we will highlight how our priorities and work relates to making the vision a reality for Barnsley.

Health & Wellbeing	Business & Economy	Building Resilience	Education & Skills	Infrastructure & Environment
<p><b>Great Place to Work</b></p> <p><b>Improving Mental Health</b> Part of the BMBC Mental Health Partnership.</p> <p><b>Active Travel</b> - Staff cycling and walking to work.</p> <p><b>Wellbeing of Tenants</b> - Increased investment in aids and adaptations.</p> <p><b>Homelessness</b> - Work with the Council to reduce homelessness.</p>	<p><b>Excellent Governance</b></p> <p><b>Service Delivery</b> Review of delivery methods to increase capacity and productivity.</p> <p><b>Repairs online</b> and dynamic scheduling.</p> <p><b>Tenants at the Heart of Decision Making</b></p> <p><b>Great Performance</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Communities</b></p> <p>Support for tenants into employment and housing coaches . Support for carers - Harrys Pledge.</p> <p>Support for care leavers.</p> <p><b>Accessible Services</b></p> <p><b>Flood defence work</b> - Burton Grange.</p>	<p><b>Employment &amp; Training</b></p> <p>Employment projects expanded - Community Refurbishment scheme, ESF, Kickstart - Jobs led recovery.</p> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <p>Expansion of free/low cost broadband (with BMBC).</p>	<p><b>Zero Carbon 2040</b></p> <p>Zero carbon strategy with solar PV programme and Heating system replacement - moves away from gas.</p> <p><b>Safe Homes</b></p> <p><b>Growth</b> Social housing growth with BMBC.</p>



## 2. Key Performance Indicator Data set 2020/21

Ref.	Description	Outturn 2018/19	Target 2019/20	Actual 2019/20 Q3	Target 2020/21
BH1	The percentage of all tenants satisfied with the overall service provided.	89%	+/- 3%	89%	89% +/- 3%
BH2	Thinking about the building you live in how satisfied are you that your landlord provides a home that is safe and secure.	---			86% +/- 3%
BH3	Number of complaints received (cumulative).	118	+/- 20%	91	118 +/- 20%
BH4	The percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service.	89%	+/- 3%	87%	89% +/- 3%
BH5	The proportion of local authority dwellings which are non decent dwellings at the start of the financial year.	3.98%	4%	Measured at year end	4%
BH6	Priority 1 Repairs– 24 hours percentage completed on time.	99.85%	99.50%	99.40%	99.50%
BH7	Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency reactive repairs (new PRIP KPI 11).				9 days
BH8	Percentage of appointments kept (new PRIP KPI 1).				99.10%
BH9	Average time to re-let local authority housing (calendar days).	20.28	23	22.26	23
BH10	Rent collected by the local authority as a proportion of rents owed on HRA dwellings.	97.85%	96%	97.75%	96%
BH11	We will employ as a minimum 3% of our workforce as apprentices.	4.21%	3%	3.95%	3%
BH12	We will spend at least 50% of our funds locally supporting the Barnsley economy (cumulative).	78.63%	70%	75.61%	70%

### 3. Financial Statement

**Berneslai Homes Management Fee** £12.225m

**Housing Revenue Account funded services which Berneslai Homes performance manage**

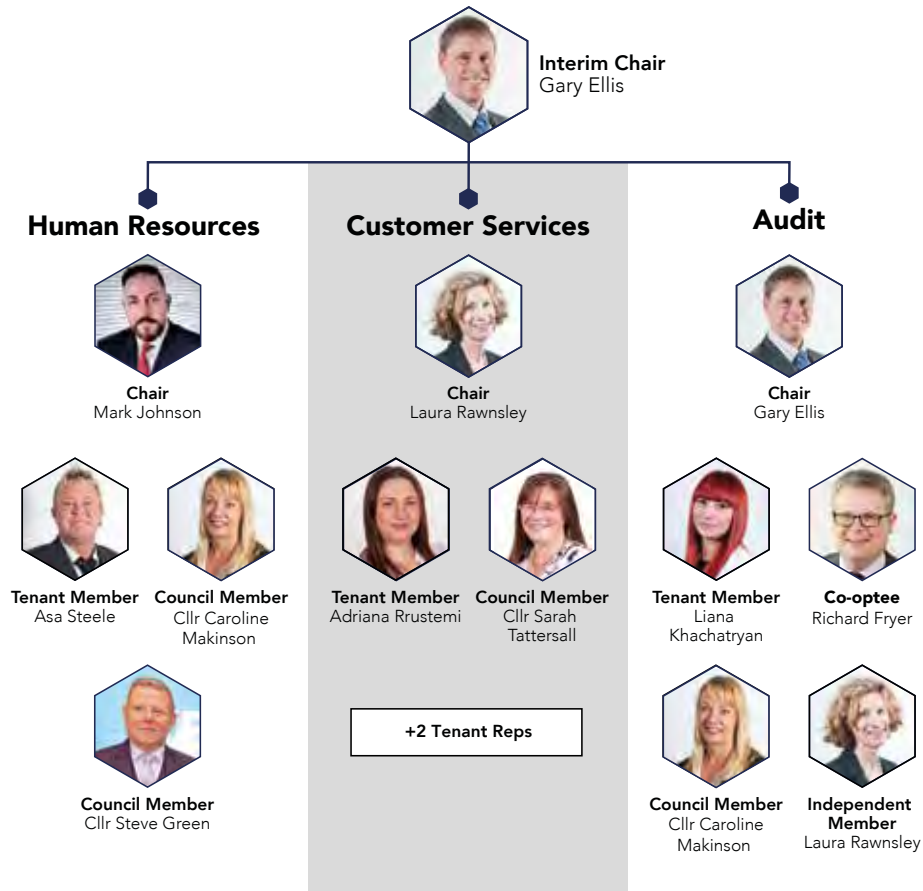
Grounds Maintenance	£1.43m
Barnsley Connects	£0.83m
Repairs and Maintenance	£19.171m

**Housing Capital Investment Programme elements which Berneslai Homes performance manage**

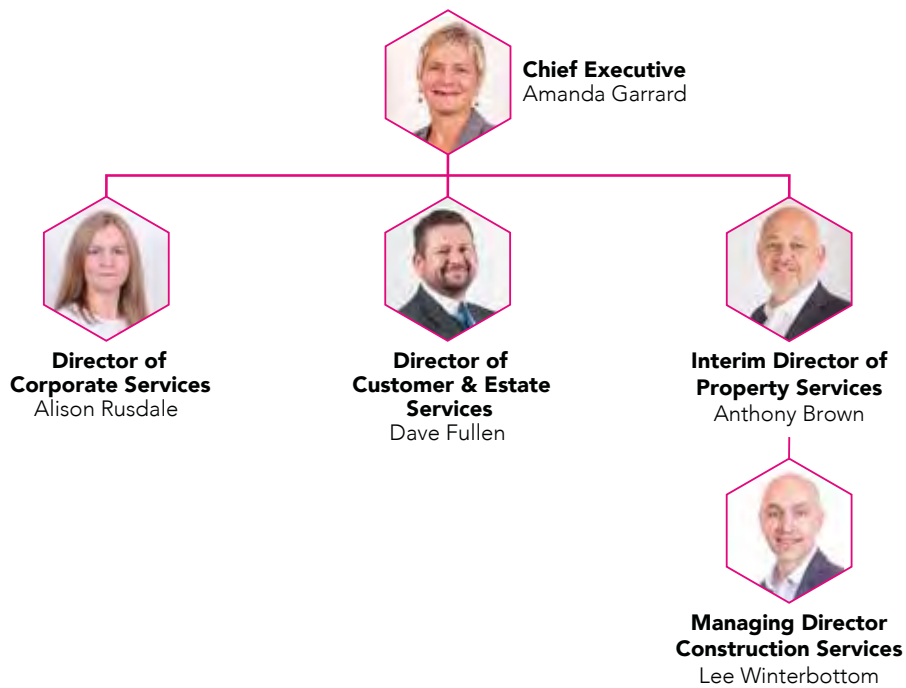
Core Programme	£21.65m
Acquisitions	£4.45m over 3 years

**Berneslai Homes surplus contribution to Housing Growth** £8.9m

## 4. Board and Committee Structure



## 5. SMT Structure





[www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://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, BARNESLEY, South Yorkshire S70 2RD.

August 2020