

BARNESLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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 OF PLACE TO CABINET ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

Berneslai Homes Asset Management Strategy

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.0 This report provides cabinet with a draft of the Berneslai Homes Asset Management Strategy 2021-26 for approval. The report sets out the framework for the management of council stock over the next 5 years and complements recent activity to update the Asset Management Database (PIMMS) which holds all property information relating to the Council's 18,645 stock. PIMMS is used to inform investment planning decisions for the Council's housing stock within both the short and longer term (HRA 30-year business plan).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the draft Berneslai Homes Asset Management Strategy is approved; with Cabinet delegating any further minor amendments to the Head of Housing, Sustainability and Climate Change in discussion with the portfolio holder for PLACE.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 At a Strategic ALMO Liaison meeting in December 2020, it was agreed that Berneslai Homes would develop an Asset Management Strategy (AMS) which sets out a framework for the management of Council stock over the next 5 years. This was to complement a piece of work to enhance the quality of information that is held on Council stock; ensuring that robust baseline data is held on all stock (in one system) which can be used to inform repairs and maintenance programmes, decency and our approach to energy retrofit over the next 5 years. It would also be used to inform a Growth Strategy for Council Housing.
- 3.2 The strategy is to cover:
- The approach to developing/enhancing/improving the information that is held on our stock and ensuring that our baseline information is significantly robust to inform investments/disinvestments and decency/retrofit programmes.
 - The approach to ensuring that our estates are places where people want to live and 'sustainable communities'.
 - The approach to ensuring that our homes are 100% decent and plans to ensure that all stock has an EPC rating of C or above (wherever possible) by 2035.

- The approach to building safety (including our High Rise).
 - The approach to managing communal areas and green spaces as well as just the ‘bricks and mortar’.
 - The approach to responding to the Council’s Zero40/45 targets.
 - The approach to maximising opportunities for social value, employment and training and local spend in our repairs and maintenance activities.
- 3.3 Further to a workshop on the proposed approach to the AMS in April 2021, a DRAFT Strategy was presented to Berneslai Homes Board on Thursday 27th May and was endorsed by the Board. However, the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Culture advised the Board that the Strategy would need further consultation before being formally submitted for approval by the Council via the usual governance routes.
- 3.4 The DRAFT Strategy was presented to the Council’s Clienting Group, both Place and Communities DMT and SMT during June/July where a number of proposed recommendations were made to strengthen the alignment of the strategy to Barnsley 2030 and to ensure that our customers were involved in the decisions made about investments in their homes, their environment and their communities.
- 3.5 The final draft of the strategy is included at Appendix 1.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Asset Management Strategy is approved by Cabinet and published on the Berneslai Homes website. The Strategy Roadmap which accompanies the strategy will be reviewed by the Council on a quarterly basis as part of the clienting performance management framework.

5. Justification

- 5.1 It is important that Berneslai Homes provides the Council with a clear strategy on how it is going to manage and maintain our stock, as our long-term managing agent. This strategy needs to align with the Council’s strategic priorities; ensuring that our customers are involved in the co-production of investment strategies for their homes and estates, that these align with the Council’s wider strategies to develop healthy, sustainable, strong and resilient communities; making Barnsley the place of possibilities for our residents. To go further, it is essential that we make the right investment in our homes to make them energy efficient and sustainable, and that we maximise opportunities to add social value in procurement; creating jobs and training and ensuring that money spent in Barnsley, stays in Barnsley.
- 5.2 It is essential that the Council and Berneslai Homes can positively respond to the Charter for Social Housing, giving tenants a stronger voice and ensuring that they are involved in ensuring compliance with the consumer standards and health and safety.

6. Impact on Local People/Service Users

- 6.1 The Asset Management Strategy sets the framework for how Berneslai Homes will manage the Council's housing stock over the next 5 years; involving customers and the wider community. There are some significant investment decisions to be made in ensuring that our stock remains 100% decent, addresses issues of fuel poverty and tackles health inequalities and meets both general need as well as those of more vulnerable customers, who require more support to live independently or maintain their tenancy.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer).
- 7.2 The proposed Berneslai Homes Asset Management Strategy outlines the vision for the Council's housing stock for the period 2021 through 2026. The strategy outlines six key strategic aims, that have been developed with key consideration and alignment to the Council's 2030 plan.
- 7.3 Whilst there are no direct financial implications from the approval of this overarching strategy, there are wider implications that may present themselves in the future, that must be considered at this stage.
- 7.4 The financial implications of any future expenditure that presents itself as a result of this strategy will be accounted for and financed within the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Like the Council's General Fund, the HRA has a limited, finite level of resources that can be used for future investments.
- 7.5 Currently, there are no resources set aside for any future expenditure as a result of the implementation of this strategy. Therefore, due consideration will be given to these future implications at that point, within the context of both the annual financial planning and the 30 years business plan processes, whilst also considering the HRA medium term financial strategy position.
- 7.6 Any future investment requirements must be, therefore, considered in the context of the overall HRA financial position which means that such investments will be required to be prioritised at that point, alongside other HRA investment proposals such as investment in housing growth for example.

8. Employee Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct employee implications.

9. Communication Implication

- 9.1 There are no direct communication implications. The Tenant Voice Panel were involved in the shaping of the strategy, representing their communities. Once approved, the strategy will be published on the Berneslai Homes Website.

10. Consultations

10.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Berneslai Homes Board, Place and Communities DMT as well as SMT members. Consultation responses were received with thanks from Adult Svs, Public Health, Communities, Finance, procurement, Housing, Sustainability and Climate Change and Audit.

11. Promoting Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

11.1 The impacts of the Asset Management Strategy have been considered as part of the strategy review and Berneslai Homes has completed Equalities Impact Assessment.

12. Tackling Health Inequalities

12.1 A key element of the Asset Management Strategy is to ensure that we have the right homes in the right places to meet need and that we prioritise investment in those properties which are least energy efficient (and on those tenants who are in fuel poverty) to ensure a positive impact on health inequalities. Involving customers in decision making about their local neighbourhood and green space, as well as promoting asset-based community development and ownership, increases community cohesion and well-being and reduces loneliness.

13. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Asset Management Strategy

Sarah Cartwright

Head of Housing, Sustainability and Climate Change

Financial Implications/Consultation



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*(To be signed by senior Financial Services officer
where no financial implications)*