

Blackpool Council

Blackpool Coastal Housing

Background: Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) was set up by Blackpool Council (BC) in 2007 to manage their housing stock of almost 5,000 properties.

Mechanism of accountability to Blackpool Council	Mechanism of accountability to residents of Blackpool	Mechanism of accountability to both
<p>The Shareholder Committee is an executive decision making body relating to BCH. The committee also has several overview functions:</p> <p>a) To evaluate the effectiveness of the company boards and the delivery of the company performance against strategic objectives and the business plan.</p> <p>b) To provide the necessary oversight from a shareholder’s perspective that the governance arrangements, policies and boundaries that the council has established are being adhered to.</p> <p>c) To provide a holistic review of risk to the council offered by Council companies.</p> <p>d) To periodically review whether each entity provides the most effective vehicle to deliver the outcomes it requires and whether there are viable alternative models which might offer a more effective means of delivering its priorities.</p> <p>e) To review and monitor (as appropriate) Shareholder/ Management Agreements and Articles of Associations, in particular where there are areas of concern.</p>	<p>Reports for Shareholder Committee meetings are largely restricted by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as containing commercially sensitive information. However, there is a public version of the agenda pack and public minutes available for each meeting of the committee.</p>	<p>Shareholder Committee</p>
<p>BC have appointed two members of staff to monitor BCH in their duties as social housing landlords. A Health and Safety Lead (Blackpool Council's Head of Property Services) is responsible for monitoring BCH's compliance with health and safety regulations. A Consumer Standards Responsible Person (Blackpool Council's Head of Housing) is responsible for monitoring that BCH is meeting the requirements set out in the Consumer Standards.</p>	<p>Residents are able to report a complaint or compliment via the website. BCH use customer feedback to measure how services are performing. This is done via:</p> <p>a) Transactional satisfaction surveys e.g., following completion of a repair.</p> <p>b) STAR survey (general survey sent to all customers once every 2 years).</p> <p>c) use learning from complaints to help improve service delivery.</p> <p>d) on occasion, send customer feedback to the Housing Ombudsman for further investigation.</p>	<p>Reporting - the Annual Report details achievements and developments from across the organisation over the past financial year along with their service priorities for the year.</p>
	<p>BCH have a Customer Engagement Strategy in helping BCH listen to, understand the views, needs, expectations and aspirations of customers so that BCH can continually improve and develop the services they deliver.</p>	
	<p>The BCH Board reviews service through a range of Key Performance Indicators. Progress is reported in the Annual Report and feedback on outcomes can be found on the website.</p>	
	<p>Residents who are current tenants, leaseholders or household members are able to become an 'involved customer volunteer', helping to improve services and providing lived-experiences to help BCH learn and develop. Training is offered, as well as financial support to cover some of the costs of getting involved eg., transport and childcare.</p>	
	<p>Residents can take part in a Mystery Shopper scheme to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of services so that improvements can be made. The scheme aims to monitor customer experiences in real time and record the specific details of interactions with different service departments within BCH.</p>	
	<p>Residents can become a member of the Complaints Panel, and will jointly hear and assess certain customer complaints with a BCH director. Members are required to attend quarterly meetings where they will be asked for feedback, have the opportunity to highlight issues and help to create ways to improve service delivery by learning from previous complaint cases.</p>	
	<p>Residents can become a member of the Reading Panel, and will ensure that publications and communications with customers are clear and relevant to residents. On an ad-hoc basis, members are sent draft documents/publications and asked to fill in a survey either online or by post, that asks for comments/feedback. Comments/feedback are then be considered and the necessary changes are made to the document prior to publication.</p>	
	<p>Residents are able to become a Clean Warden to help monitor the cleaning contract, that areas are being maintained correctly and that BCH objectives are being met. This feedback is given via a survey, which asks residents to rate the standards of cleaning in communal areas where they live.</p>	
	<p>Residents are able to become a Green Warden to help monitor the grounds maintenance contract and assess how well BCH maintain green spaces around their home. Feedback is given via a survey.</p>	
	<p>Ad hoc Community Drop In sessions give residents the opportunity to meet with staff and discuss concerns around ASB and nuisance behaviour reports.</p>	
	<p>Contact details are available on the BCH website and enable residents to raise any matters that they wish to.</p>	

London Borough of Barnet

Barnet Homes

Background: Barnet Homes (BH) was established as an ALMO in April 2004, and manages and maintains the council's housing stock. Barnet Homes is part of The Barnet Group (TBG), a local authority trading company wholly owned by the London Borough of Barnet (LBB) which provides a wide range of services on behalf of the council. In 2012, the Management Agreement with Barnet Homes was varied to include the homelessness and housing advisory services (Housing Options) that had previously been provided by the Council. In 2016, Opendoor Homes was set up as a subsidiary of Barnet Homes. It is a Registered Provider that has now grown to 850 homes, providing much needed affordable housing and benefiting the council's General Fund by reducing the costs of temporary accommodation. Opendoor is the provider of choice for affordable new build development in the borough. In 2018, Bumblebee Lettings was created as part of TBG, a for-surplus lettings company that also provides flexibility to support other LBB priorities around homelessness preventions. In addition, TBG took responsibility for managing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and writing and producing key policies for the council. This has included the Allocations Policy, the Housing Strategy and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. 20 years after being set up, TBG provides most of the council's housing services, is the council's largest single provider of care and support services for adults in the borough and is the main developer of affordable housing. TBG employs over 1,000 local people and its aims and objectives are wholly aligned with the council.

Mechanism of accountability to London Borough of Barnet	Mechanism of accountability to residents of London Borough of Barnet	Mechanism of accountability to both
Cabinet is the executive decision making body relating to BH e.g., members reviewed the management agreement with Barnet Homes which was set to expire in 2026, and agreed to retain Barnet Homes (July 2024). Cabinet approves the annual report, and also receive reports relating to performance (including KPI's). Barnet Homes and TGB Board consider and input into annual delivery plans. The Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration leads on the strategic relationship with Barnet Homes.	Barnet Homes has a Resident Board which provides scrutiny and strategic direction. BH provide a financial incentive of £75 for each business meeting attended, which are held four times a year. A few shorter, formal meetings may also take place in between these meetings.	TBG has a board, which includes two residents (open to all BH residents and leaseholders) and two councillors. The Chair of the TBG Board is appointed by the council. Barnet Homes works together with the Council to deliver resident focussed services. It's vision, mission and person-centred approach are focused on delivering positive outcomes for the people who receive its services; and are aligned to the priorities in the council's 'Our Plan for Barnet'. TBG regularly reviews its offer and objectives to ensure ongoing alignment with the council.
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Barnet Council has responsibility for scrutinising the work of Barnet homes e.g., on 30 Jan 2025, the committee will consider reports on the Barnet Homes Repairs Service (including performance and resident satisfaction) and Barnet Homes Resident Communications (the process for and context of communications to residents).	Tenants were involved in the exercise of developing the priorities for Barnet Homes. Priorities are reviewed through resident satisfaction surveys.	A Healthy Homes Team has been created to respond to cases of damp and mould.
A representative of Barnet Homes is a member of the Safer Communities Partnership Board. The Safer Communities Partnership Board is the inter-agency organisation in Barnet who work to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and reoffending, and promote social cohesion.	Newsletter for residents, athome, is published four times a year and distributed to 13,000 homes. Residents are able to put forward items for future editions.	For any review of the management agreement with Barnet Homes, a Steering Group will be set up to facilitate stakeholder engagement. Key stakeholders, including residents and Unions will be engaged throughout the process.
The council's code of conduct for officer member relations covers officers that work in Barnet Homes.	Resident support group - members are invited to be involved in a range of opportunities that include taking part in focus groups, mystery shopping, service improvement projects as well as providing valuable feedback on how BH can continue to improve their services. This group feeds directly into the Resident Board.	Performance reports, plans and strategies are available on the Barnet Homes website.
	The opportunity to form a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), an organisation set-up by tenants and/or leaseholders to manage their estate/block. TMOs can choose to take all or part of the management functions such as caretaking, rent collection, repairs, ground maintenance and receive management and maintenance allowances for the services it provides. Tenant Management is inevitably more expensive than management by a housing provider, although this is supported by the belief that it is a more responsive and better-quality method of delivering the service, which leads to greater levels of resident satisfaction. BH can provide assistance in the setting up of a TMO.	
	Resident Procurement Group - an opportunity to be involved in appointing contractors who carry out a range of external repairs and improvements to homes. Resident involvement will range from evaluating contractors' proposals, being on an interview panel or monitoring the quality of their service. Full training and support is provided.	
	Focus Groups - an opportunity for residents to be invited to help BH shape or improve an existing or new service.	
	Resident Association - a group of local residents/leaseholders who represent the interests of everyone living in one of the homes, particular area or building managed by Barnet Homes. BH provide training and support in setting up new and existing groups, including providing annual grants to registered associations.	
	Mystery Shopper scheme - residents can become mystery shoppers to quality check the services they receive. The aim is to understand if BH are giving good customer service.	
	Telephone surveys - talk about what works well and not so well with BH services.	
	Four Million Homes Programme - provides free knowledge, guidance, training and regular free webinars on resident rights and how to stand up for them, how to deal with difficult landlords, how to form and get involved in resident groups and how to shape the services they pay for.	
	BH has a Resident Involvement and Engagement Policy. BH also has a Customer Care Principles and Customer Behaviour Charter to improve how BH's assists customers by using customer care principles in place that everyone works to, along with a customer behaviour charter for how they expect customers to behave when engaging with staff.	
	Residents are able to report a complaint or compliment via the website.	
	Contact details are available on the BH website and enable residents to raise any matters that they wish to.	