

Strategic Plan

2019-2024

The Barnet Group

Foreword

When we first launched our Strategic Plan 2019-24, we said that the opportunities and challenges facing the housing and adult social care sectors have never been greater. In early 2019, we faced a shifting landscape of a growing and ageing population, high housing and care demands, and rising homelessness, together with a challenging financial environment and the anticipated impact of the EU referendum.

The environment in which we work looks very different now to that of the start of this year. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt acutely in social housing, adult social care, and in the communities supported by The Barnet Group. The UK is likely to face the strongest economic downturn in a generation, and it is more important than ever that our business continues to adapt and be responsive whilst operating in a responsible and sustainable manner.

We are enormously proud of the way our

organisation is responding to the ongoing crisis, and of the individual and collective efforts of our employees to continue to support our customers and each other. Our Values of Show Respect, Find Solutions, and Make a Difference reflect our common understanding of what we stand for, how we shape our decision-making, and how we show our customers and stakeholders what is important to us. The Barnet Group's plans for recovery are a priority for the business, as we consider the nature of the services we provide as well as the way we provide them, to ensure we do so safely and with the aim of maximising positive outcomes for those who are most vulnerable, whilst driving greater equity and inclusion. We believe that the strategic objectives we set out in this plan in 2019 continue to set the right direction for our customers, our employees, and the Group itself.

One of the greatest strengths of The Barnet Group is our ability to protect public investment



Pictured: The grand opening of TBG's new Extra Care scheme at Ansell Court

by transforming struggling services to ensure better outcomes for customers and stakeholders, whilst delivering improved efficiencies and effectiveness. This capability, together with our success in creating new, innovative services and growth that help to sustain the social heart of our business, represent real value; not just for our customers, stakeholders, and regulators, but for wider communities.

The tragic Grenfell Tower disaster in June 2017 had a significant and lasting impact on attitudes to social housing, and has brought to the forefront the fundamental importance of fire safety and standards, in addition to the need to ensure that people living in social housing are not marginalised or denigrated. We remain committed to ensuring the safety of our customers, as well as to playing our part in national efforts to tackle climate change.

Whilst our growing organisation is diverse, we celebrate our successes as one team. We acknowledge the incredible commitment of our employees to, despite the challenges of reduced

budgets and funding, deliver people-centred services that make a lasting difference to the lives of our customers and the communities in which they live. Our registered provider Opendoor Homes and our private lettings company Bumblebee continue to grow, and in doing so help to address the housing crisis in Barnet and support those who are in need. We are also particularly proud of the impact we have seen with our Your Choice (Barnet) service users, and the ways in which we support vulnerable customers and those who are most affected by welfare reform, including our domestic violence one-stop shop, BOOST, and other community-based programmes.

During the life of this strategic plan, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of The Barnet Group and the 20th anniversary of Barnet Homes. Whilst we reflect on the fantastic things we have achieved, we are also looking forward and want our organisation to continue to be successful in the future. This five-year strategic plan sets out how we will ensure we stay true to our Values and achieve our ambitions.



Eamon McGoldrick, Chair



Tim Mulvenna, Group Chief Executive

Summary

The Barnet Group's Strategic Plan sets out our five-year vision from 2019-24 for how we will continue to deliver good services whilst supporting our customers and Barnet Council through the challenges they face. The objectives we have set are based on our review of the external environment, the needs of our customers and employees, and our own strengths and weaknesses. This plan is complemented by a strategic action plan of priority activities that support our aims and will ensure we reach our goals.

By 2024 we want The Barnet Group to be seen as a leader in the sectors in which we operate, and for our customers to be our biggest advocates. To do this, we will need to be more innovative in the way we deliver services and to make continual and sustained change. We must also attract the best staff by being a great place to work. If we are to realise our ambitions, we must continue on our journey to transform and modernise.

We must ensure we achieve the greatest impact from everything we do, including our financial decisions, the way we deliver our services, what we expect from our people, and the investments we make in systems and technology. We will make sure that operations across the Group's diverse range of activities meet the high standard expectations of customers, regulators, and our stakeholders and partners. We will focus our efforts on driving value for money in all our activities.

We are committed to supporting the Council in investing in fire safety and implementing best practice fire safety measures in our high-rise blocks. As a result of a review of our approach, we will continue to prioritise and enhance the safety of our customers, and will engage with residents and increase awareness.

We will provide excellent services in our core areas of operation, and will seek to maximise potential outcomes and achievements and ensure appropriate skills and resources are shared by

continuing to work with partners, as we have in the Welfare Reform Task Force, BOOST, and Love Burnt Oak. We will support customers who continue to be affected by welfare reform. In order to address the wide range of issues that can be linked to homelessness, we must continue to find ways to address the growth in demand and deliver early intervention.

We will develop and adopt more flexible and efficient services, focusing on the priorities of our customers, and providing choices to meet their needs and aspirations. We will review and simplify our service delivery, aiming for resolution at the first point of contact. We will aim to optimise our processes with a view to increase digitisation and offer increased choices to customers who prefer to access services in this way.

We will grow and transform the services within Your Choice (Barnet) to deliver efficiencies whilst ensuring improved outcomes, increased effectiveness, high customer satisfaction, and the promotion of greater independence and choice.

The provision and management of housing, homelessness, and adult social care services are why The Barnet Group exists; however, the growth of our business over the past 3 years has had the added benefit of acting as a catalyst to achieve savings, improve services, and retain and develop quality staff. We therefore intend to achieve further growth in future years in order to sustain our core services.

We will continue to grow and potentially diversify our Registered Provider Opendoor Homes and our private lettings company Bumblebee, adopting innovative service models in order to achieve positive outcomes and deliver effective and efficient services. We will also continue our ambitious development and acquisition programmes in order to increase the housing supply within the borough and help to meet growing demand across different tenures.

We recognise that our staff are our greatest



Pictured: Opendoor Homes residents (left and centre) with Cllr Gabriel Rozenberg (right)

asset. We will focus on employee wellbeing and engagement to make The Barnet Group a great place to work, and to attract, develop, and retain the best staff. We will continue to find ways to deliver social value, including providing apprenticeships and training. We will also invest in technology that supports our staff to deliver effective services and provides positive outcomes for customers, and will focus on realising the benefits of this investment.

We will continue to be transparent and accountable to our customers for the decisions we make and the services we provide. We will be responsive to changes within the housing and adult social care sectors and mindful of the current economic climate, but will continue to make long-term strategic decisions for the benefit of this and future generations.

Through our ambitious growth and development of new homes, arising opportunities in Adult Social Care, and our robust approach to

supporting Council initiatives and other services over recent years, we have supported the London Borough of Barnet to overcome many of its challenges. We believe we have developed a proven model for local government delivery where more is achieved with fewer resources.

By the end of the life of this strategic plan we will have outperformed our peers, our customers will experience easy-to-use services and increased positive outcomes from their engagement with us, and our staff will be proud of our accomplishments.

The Barnet Group to 2024

Having developed a successful track record of improvement and demonstrated our organisations competence, we are confident in and excited by the prospect of continuing this growth over the next five years. Ultimately,

however, success is not just measured through figures, and we remain focused on the experience of our customers and the outcomes we achieve through working together.

If you are a customer you will be satisfied that your services are being delivered reliably to a good standard, with a concern for your wellbeing. You will feel that our staff are friendly, approachable, and have your best interests at heart. You will find services inclusive, easy to access, and appropriate to your needs, and you will feel confident that we will get things right when you contact us. You will be treated fairly and with respect.

If you are a tenant or leaseholder you will feel safe and connected in your community, and proud of your home. You will have opportunities to be meaningfully engaged to improve services and decision-making, and enhance local cohesion. You will receive services that are delivered in a manner to enable and empower you. You will have increased opportunities to access key services online so that you are able to have your needs met in a way and at a time that is convenient for you.

If you use our Care and Support services you will be satisfied that your services are provided in a way that ensures you are kept safe and your welfare is safeguarded. You will be treated with kindness, dignity, and respect, and in a caring manner that puts you, and your goals and ambitions at the centre of how your support is delivered. You will receive services that achieve good outcomes and support you to maintain a high quality of life, delivered by staff who are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to provide positive and individualised support.

If you are an employee you will perceive The Barnet Group as a great place to work, and an organisation of which you can feel proud. We want our customers and partners to feel our passion, and for our staff to feel empowered to be their best. You will feel highly engaged and will both understand and support the objectives of the Group and how you contribute to our aims, and you will feel confident that your efforts will be supported and recognised. It will be clear that the diversity of our employees makes us stronger and better-able to help our customers.

If you are a stakeholder you will think of The Barnet Group as a trusted partner. You will feel confident that the Group is a financially robust, high-performing organisation that is able to deliver on its promises. The Group's ability to innovate and effectively bring other organisations together to achieve the best results for the borough and its residents will provide assurance to stakeholders that it can be trusted to grow and diversify.

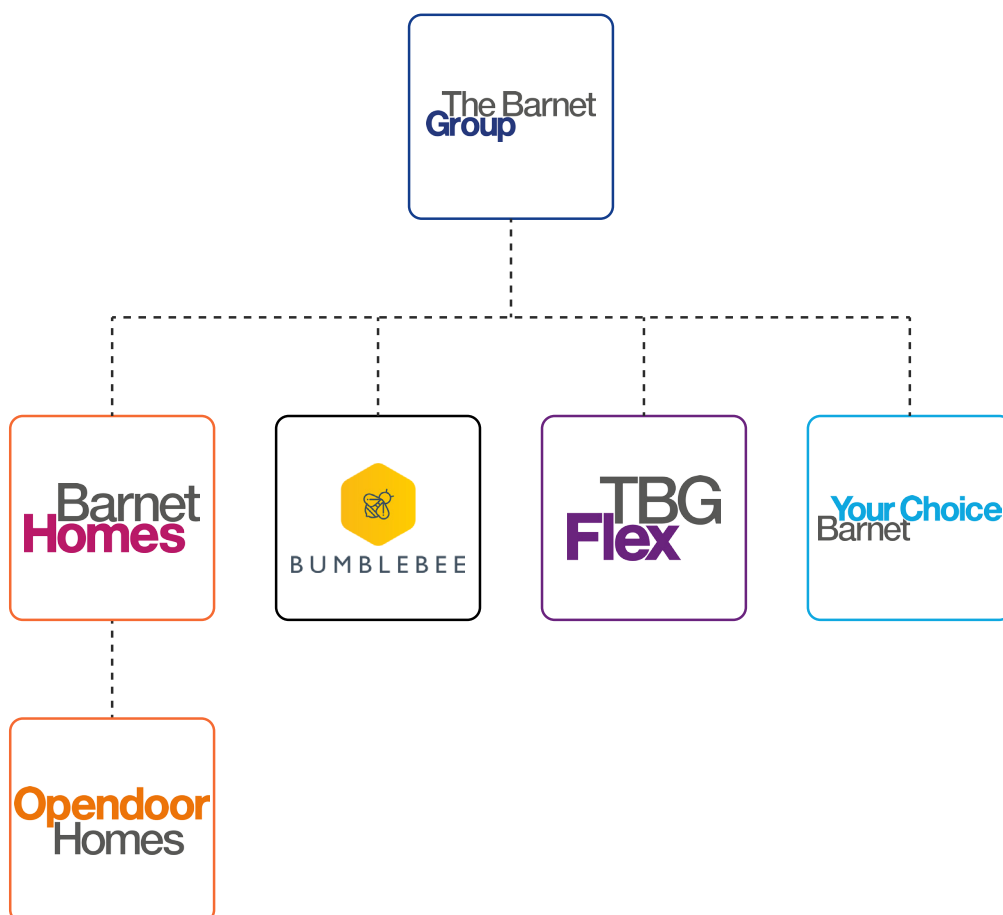
About The Barnet Group

In 2004 Barnet Homes was established as an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) for the London Borough of Barnet (LBB) to manage approximately 15,000 council-owned properties within Barnet. In 2012 Your Choice (Barnet) was created to receive the transfer of Adult Social Care services from LBB, and The Barnet Group, a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) was created as the parent company to both Barnet Homes and Your Choice (Barnet). Later in 2012 the Council's Homelessness service transferred to Barnet Homes.

In 2013 The Barnet Group began the development of the first council housing to be built in the borough for 20 years. The first 3 properties were completed in early 2014, with another 40 in 2016 including 10% wheelchair-accessible accommodation, and 90 in 2018/19 including 53 Extra Care units. We have committed to fulfilling a development and acquisitions programme that will deliver 1,000 homes by 2024.

In 2015 TBG Flex was created to employ and supply new employees within the Group, offering more flexible terms and conditions of employment. We also created a new subsidiary to Barnet Homes, TBG Open Door ("Opendoor Homes"), which went on to become a Registered Provider with the Homes and Communities Agency in April 2017 and which supports the Group's ambitions for growth whilst providing much-needed Affordable rented housing within the borough. In May 2018, Bumblebee was launched to provide an online private lettings service in Barnet, drawing upon the success of the Group's Let2Barnet service.

Across the Group we employ over 500 staff, providing a range of services to people who live in Council-owned homes, people who are homeless or facing homelessness, Care and Support clients from Barnet and other local authorities, and private customers.



Our Vision

What we want to achieve

For customers to be our biggest advocates.

Our Mission

Why we are here

To make a real difference to every customer

We will achieve this and support our vision through our strategic aims of:

Providing customer-focused services

- We will put our customers at the heart of what we do, and provide person-centred services that support their aspirations and achieve positive outcomes.
- We will meaningfully engage and listen to our customers to improve services and decision-making, and empower individuals and communities.
- We will deliver services in ways that are cost-effective, accessible, easy to use, inclusive, and offer choice to our customers, with a focus on digital and self-service where customers prefer this.

Developing and empowering our people

- We will support, involve, and develop our employees, and empower and enable them to deliver great services to our customers.
- We will foster a culture of passion and pride in what we do, and make The Barnet Group a great place to work.
- We will develop a solutions-focused culture of joint-working and collaboration that is strengthened by the diversity of our people.

Sustaining our business through growth

- We will sustain our business through seeking new opportunities that build on our existing strengths and capabilities and support us to achieve our vision.
- We will improve our financial strength in order to sustain our core services and increase our opportunities for growth.
- We will combine our expertise and ethos with insight, innovation, and technology to deliver efficient, effective, and consistent services individually and with our partners.

How we do business

At the heart of our business are The Barnet Group's Values, which support our promise to be person-centred in all that we do. These were developed with our employees and set out the way we will conduct ourselves and how we do business:

Show respect: we respect each other and our customers

Find solutions: we find solutions to meet people's needs

Make a difference: we make a positive difference to people's lives

Responding to a changing world

We believe that understanding our operating environment is crucial to making the right decisions about The Barnet Group's future. In recent years, we have seen significant change, including in UK housing supply and affordability, cost of living pressures, welfare reform, legislation and regulation affecting both social housing and adult social care, local and national politics, and a reduction in funding for adult social care. In recent months, we have felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its wide-reaching implications for our customers, communities, stakeholders, employees, and the way we work.

While we constantly monitor our performance, effectiveness, efficiency, and the outcomes we deliver for our customers, we also take into consideration the world in which we operate and adjust our approach to keep pace. As we look forward in 2020, we anticipate the impacts of COVID-19 on our customers and communities, as well as the impacts of changing legislation and regulation with the anticipated Social Housing White Paper, building safety reform, and the drive to decarbonise.

COVID-19 is likely have far-reaching effects, with increased unemployment and greater numbers of households reliant upon Universal Credit, and falling incomes likely to impact upon our

customers' ability to pay their rent. We expect significant financial implications locally, including on regeneration schemes and local infrastructure projects, a strain on Barnet Council's budgets, and an impact on the local housing market including home ownership, sales, and market rent that is likely to result in greater demand for our services.

The pandemic has thrown street homelessness into the national spotlight, and whilst temporary legislation recently ensured that additional support could be provided to this vulnerable group, we expect in time to see an increase in private rented sector evictions and therefore homelessness due to the economic impact of the virus. We will work with our partners to make the most of the opportunity we have to address the rough sleeping crisis.

As Barnet Council is our sole shareholder it is important that the activities of the Group support the priorities of the London Borough of Barnet and the delivery of key strategies including the Local Plan, Housing Strategy 2019-24, Homelessness Strategy 2019-24, and Adult Social Care Committee's Commissioning Plan. We will work closely with the council and key partners to ensure the success of these shared goals.

In 2020 we have also been reminded that not everyone is treated equally all of the time, sometimes with tragic consequences, and that this has been felt personally by some of our people and customers, who have often found themselves subject to prejudice or unfair treatment because of the colour of their skin. Whilst we cannot change the world, we can aim to create more fairness and greater equity for the people we work with and for, and we are working together to make a difference through our Race Equality Steering Group.

We must rise to the challenge of ensuring positive outcomes for our growing customer base with its changing demographics and expectations. Barnet's population is expected to increase by 16% from 391,500 to 466,500 by 2041, putting

pressure on the demand for new homes and care and support services. Although there is currently uncertainty in the housing market, average house prices of £545,000 are 15 times higher than the median household for Barnet, and private sector rents are also high, averaging at £1,350 per month within the borough, both of which result in significant demand for affordable rented housing in both the social and private sectors.

The majority of our customers continue to be typically the most economically disadvantaged within the borough, and as a result the most impacted by both welfare reform and the squeezing of disposable incomes. As such it will continue to be important for us to seek to build community resilience and enable opportunity through our services.



New Opendoor homes at Mayhill Road

The Barnet Group's Balanced Scorecard

Our balanced scorecard is intended to connect the dots between our strategic direction (our Vision, Mission, and Priorities), and our operational measures and targets. It sets out how we will measure our success in delivering our Strategic Plan 2019-24.

Vision	For customers to be our biggest advocates		
Mission	To make a real difference to every customer		
Strategic priorities	Providing customer-focused services	Developing and empowering our people	Sustaining our business through growth

Strategic Objectives		Measures
Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will put our customers at the heart of what we do, and provide person-centred services that support their aspirations and achieve positive outcomes. We will meaningfully engage and listen to our customers to improve services and decision-making, and empower individuals and communities. We will deliver services in ways that are cost-effective, accessible, easy to use, inclusive, and offer choice to our customers, with a focus on digital and self-service where customers prefer this. 	Achieve targets in performance indicators relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer satisfaction score Customer outcomes score
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will support, involve, and develop our employees, and empower and enable them to deliver great services to our customers. We will foster a culture of passion and pride in what we do, and make The Barnet Group a great place to work. We will develop a solutions-focused culture of joint-working and collaboration that is strengthened by the diversity of our people. 	Achieve targets in performance indicators relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee engagement score Employee retention score
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will sustain our business through seeking new opportunities that build on our existing strengths and capabilities and support us to achieve our vision. We will combine our expertise and ethos with insight, innovation, and technology to deliver efficient, effective, and consistent services individually and with our partners. 	Achieve targets in performance indicators relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business growth score Business innovation score
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will improve our financial strength in order to sustain our core services and increase our opportunities for growth. 	Achieve targets in performance indicators relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of financial requirements across all companies Delivery of corporate projects

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