



BYKER COMMUNITY TRUST AT A GLANCE BRIEFING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

HOW WAS BCT FORMED

The Byker Community Trust (BCT) is a Housing Association which was formed in July 2012 following the successful ballot of Byker tenants, proposing the transfer of the Estate from Newcastle City Council to a new independent organisation.

WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

The Board has developed new strategic objectives for 2025 and they are:

- Making Byker an Estate of Choice;
- Contributing to a thriving Byker; and
- Ensuring that BCT's community ethos is sustained.

The organisational values are set around doing our best for Byker by being:

- Ambitious for people and the community;
- Energetic in our work with and for our diverse neighbourhoods;
- Innovative in providing excellent services;
- Open and transparent in the conduct of our business; and
- Unrelenting in our focus on positive change.

HOW IS BCT RUN?

BCT is an independent, not-for-profit Registered Provider of Social Housing and a Community Benefit Society. BCT is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Regulator of Social Housing.



The Board has 12 Non-Executive Directors with ultimate legal responsibility for BCT:

- Five independent members appointed by the Board and approved at the AGM;
- Three tenants elected at the AGM by tenant shareholders/members of BCT;
- Two Council nominees appointed by Newcastle City Council; and
- Two additional members who can be either Tenants or Independents.

The Board meets eight times a year (including a Board workshop and away day) and the first part of each meeting is an open session where anyone is welcome to observe. Commercially sensitive and other confidential business is conducted in a private session. Papers for the public part of the meeting are published on the BCT website in advance. The AGM takes place in September each year; it is open to shareholders who participate and others who can observe the proceedings.

Key areas for the Board to determine are:

1. Setting the strategic direction. Owning, supporting and demonstrating the mission, vision and values of BCT;
 2. Approval of key policies for the organisation expressed through the Corporate Plan;
 3. Setting the financial framework through the Business Plan and Budget;
 4. Ensuring there is a current strategy for identifying and managing risk and overseeing systems to give assurance about how these are managed;
 5. Compliance with legal requirements and any regulatory obligations; and
 6. Oversight and accountability for the Chief Executive and performance of the organisation.
- The **structure of the organisation** in terms of how services are delivered (Appendix A How BCT Deliver Services), the appointment of the Chief Executive who has delegated authority over the operational work of BCT, and any support required for the organisation to operate efficiently; for example the appointment of our Audit and Risk Committee, Governance and Remuneration Committee or Customer Scrutiny Committee;
 - The **financial resilience and performance** of the organisation to ensure we are robust, solvent and able to deliver to residents as well as ensuring value for money including approval of the **Business Plan and annual budget**;
 - **Risk assessment and mitigation** policies so we operate successfully and guard against difficulties in the operating environment;
 - **Governance policies** to ensure that we act with transparency and propriety with strategic oversight of the organisation's performance;
 - Ensure compliance of **Health and Safety** (H&S) and other **legal responsibilities**; and
 - We have a set of **Governance Principles**, observe the **Code of Governance** of the National Housing Federation (of which BCT is a member) and publish corporate policies which govern our operations, for example our **Code of Conduct, Scheme of Delegations and Financial Regulations** among others.

The key reports considered by the Board in overseeing BCT's work include:

- Corporate Plan updates;
- Strategic Risk Register reviews;
- Operational and Financial Performance reports;
- Investment Programme reports;
- Business Plan approvals;
- Annual Review of H&S Policy and Bi-annual Review of H&S Performance and Practice, with verbal updates on H&S compliance provided at every Board meeting;
- Periodic reports from the Committees; and
- Approval of the Annual Report and Financial Statements.

The Board is supported by three Committees:

- The **Audit and Risk Committee** scrutinises financial statements, manages internal and external audit, internal controls and business assurance, monitors and scrutinises BCT's risk management systems/processes and compliance with the terms of our loans.
- The **Governance and Remuneration Committee** oversees all matters of Governance and Board membership, skills and planning, approves salaries of the Board members/Chief Executive and key HR matters.
- The **Customer Scrutiny Committee** reviews service standards in line with budget parameters, monitors customer satisfaction and complaints, and encourages tenant involvement.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO DATE?

Since the stock transfer in July 2012 we have:

Completed the majority of investment promises with only the environmental upgrade of the Byker Estate remaining

- The improvements to the former sheltered housing scheme Avondale House have been completed and it is now home to Armed Forces Veterans;
- The external refurbishment of the Byker Wall and the upgrade of the concierge and security system are complete;
- The District Heating Infrastructure Upgrade is complete and a new biomass boiler has been installed stabilising heating and hot water charges on the Estate (now frozen for seven years);
- Chirton House has been converted to house older residents including adapted properties for residents with disabilities;
- Over 170 unimproved homes have now been modernised internally to the "Decent Homes" standard as part of an Omits programme;
- Converted 10 'hobby rooms' into much needed new apartments with two adapted for residents with disabilities;
- The five 'link' bridges connecting the link blocks to the Byker wall have been repaired and redecorated;
- The external and communal upgrade of BCT's two sheltered housing schemes Tom Collins House and Mount Pleasant are complete;
- Ralph Erskine's former office on Brinkburn Street has been converted into four apartments, two of which have been adapted for residents with disabilities;
- 2020/21 sees the delivery of:
 - District Heating internal improvements to all 2000 homes connected to the system which commenced in June 2018 and is expected to complete in 2021;
 - Phase 1 of the environmental upgrade works which include essential environmental health and safety works which are in design ahead of submitting planning and listed building consent applications;
 - The passenger lift replacement of 13 original lifts in the Byker Wall, from Byker Crescent to Northumberland Terrace with vandal resistant energy efficient lifts commenced in May 2019. All lift replacements are expected to complete by September 2020;
 - An external upgrade of the Dunn Terrace section of the Byker Wall from Wolseley House to Salisbury House, including Graham House commenced in February 2020. All works are expected to be complete by March 2021;

- Re-roofing of 378 properties with original concrete tiled roofs and 33 properties with original metal roofs from when the Estate was built, commenced in June 2019. It is expected that all roofs will be completed by October 2020;
- As part of essential fire safety recommendations works are being carried out to the Byker Wall from Bamburgh Terrace to Gordon House, including the five link blocks. This work includes replacing all the bin store and landlord cupboard doors and inspecting/sealing any fire compartmentalisation breaches between floors. Works have started on site and it is expected to be complete by March 2021;
- Following our comprehensive stock condition survey, 2020/21 will also see the start of essential planned investment across the Estate. This includes the replacement of 110 doors, 272 kitchens and 354 bathrooms. Surveys have commenced ahead of going out to tender for a contractor to complete these works; and
- To date we have committed over £35.7m in investment with a further £10.6m planned up to 2025.

Improved communications and engagement on the Estate in consultation with residents

- Since stock transfer this has been a priority area for BCT. Shortly after transfer we recruited external specialists to work with tenants on an intensive consultation exercise to develop a Byker specific **Community Engagement and Empowerment Strategy** and **Equality and Diversity Strategy**.
- Tenants' contribution to BCT is invaluable and their support for the organisation is continually helping us to shape and improve services as well as delivering value for money. During 2018, with the help of our tenants, we implemented a Customer Scrutiny Committee and Tenant Engagement Framework (Appendix B) to reinvigorate involvement and our tenant's role in reviewing performance and service standards. Working in partnership with tenants in this way supports BCT's Corporate Plan and strategic objectives for 2025.
- BCT were awarded Customer Service Excellence, a national charter-mark that recognises the delivery of excellent customer services, following an assessment being undertaken by the Centre for Assessment in February 2020.

Undertaken a comprehensive review of service delivery and put in place new arrangements with effect from October 2016 aimed at achieving higher quality services, improved performance and satisfaction and value for money. The new arrangements are a mixture of 'in house' housing management services and partnering arrangements with Karbon Solutions Ltd (**KSL**) through an innovative cost sharing partnership. The new service delivery arrangements saved BCT over £700k per annum.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

BCT's day to day operations are financed through the rents and service charges it collects. This income is also used to pay the interest and repayments which we have negotiated. These loans have enabled BCT to carry out major investments immediately and as required. BCT has also secured grant income to help fund the renovation of empty buildings on the Estate.

- BCT's major loan facility is a 10 year agreement to 2025 of £26m agreed with **Yorkshire Building Society** to deal with the majority of the Estate renewal and investment programme;
- The District Heating Upgrade is funded by a loan facility from **Newcastle City Council**;
- The Bolam Coyne rebuild was funded through grant aid from Homes England and borrowing from NCC. We have paid off the loan element so this asset is now debt free;

- Grant funding was provided by a MOD Community Covenant Grant towards the refurbishment of Avondale House;
- Newcastle City Council provided empty homes grant funding towards the conversion of Chirton House into 16 new apartments; and
- Empty Homes funding has been obtained from Homes England contributing towards the costs of creating 14 new apartments from disused Hobby Rooms and an old council office on Brinkburn Street converted into four apartments.

WHAT ARE OUR CHALLENGES AND RISKS?

Stock transfer organisations face significant challenges, especially in their early years:

BCT has an established **Strategic Risk Register** which highlights the main risks and strategies to mitigate them. The Board reviews these risks quarterly and they are monitored closely by the Audit and Risk Committee. Our most important current risks are as follows:

Risk No.	Description	2020/21 Q1
SR1	BCT cannot deliver its objective to make Byker an estate of choice	HIGH
SR2	BCT does not collect enough income	HIGH
SR3	BCT expenditure is too high	HIGH
SR4	Serious Health and Safety Incident	HIGH
SR5	Business Disruption	HIGH
SR14	New housing White Paper and strengthening the RSH powers on consumer regulation	HIGH

HOW ARE WE REGULATED?

As a 'Registered Provider', BCT comes under the regulatory umbrella of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), which publishes a framework of **Consumer and Economic Regulatory Standards** that housing associations must adhere to.

RSH monitors compliance with its Economic Standards which cover the Governance and Viability of housing providers through annual checks and "In-Depth Assessments". BCT has been given the following ratings:

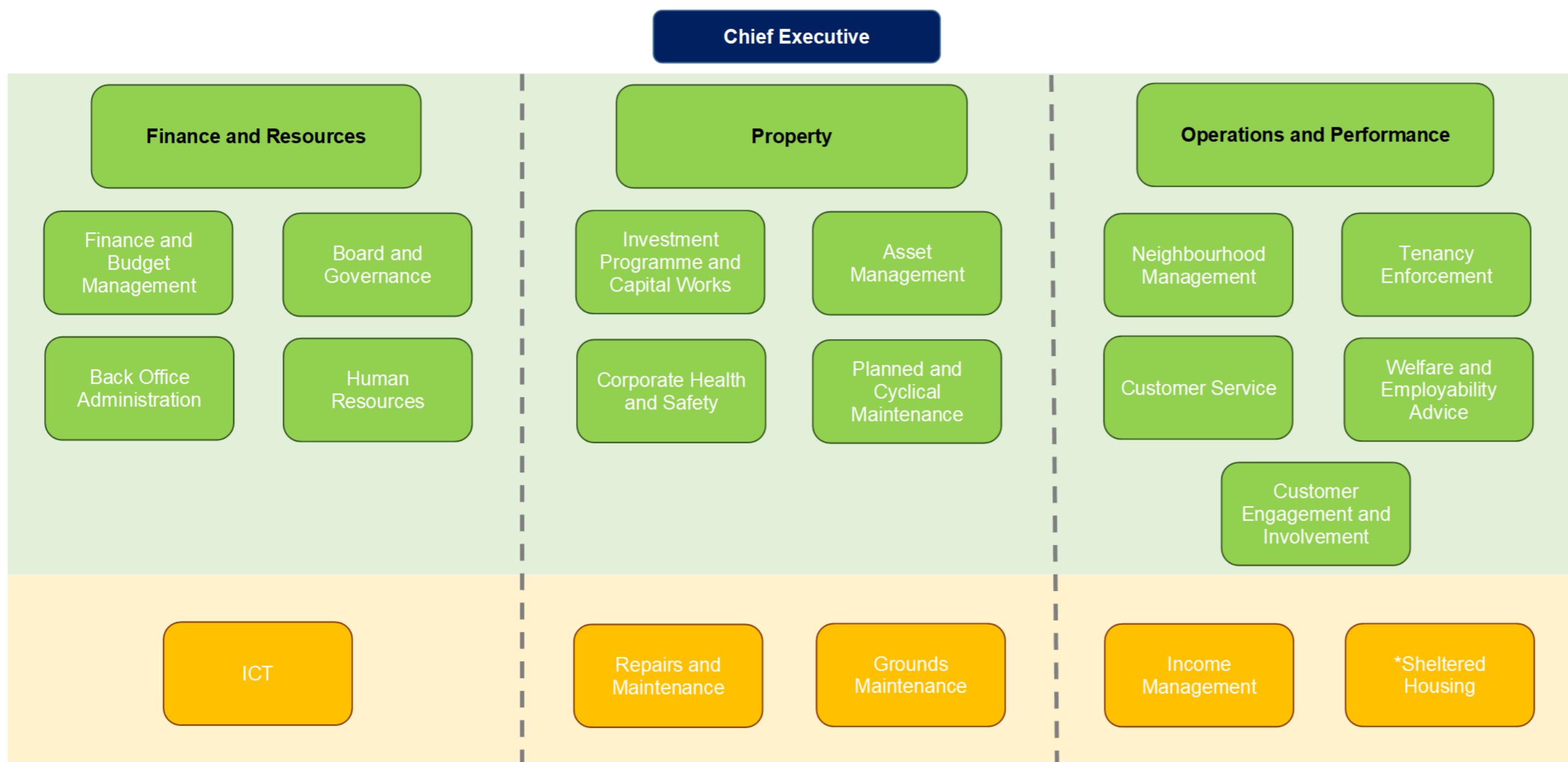
Governance G1 (Compliant)
Viability V2 (Compliant)

G1 is the highest rating for Governance. BCT's V2 rating is determined by the strength of its Financial Business Plan. The Board and Executive Team continue to look for good value for money and new initiatives to improve the organisation's financial strength.

Covid-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, BCT is working to maintain a full service, while keeping the H&S of tenants and staff as a priority. Some services are being delivered remotely. We are working together with our staff to hopefully resume normal service delivery during September 2020 and providing that government guidance allows to do so.

September 2020



Contact Us

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Delivered directly by BCT



Delivered in partnership with Karbon Homes – Karbon Solutions Ltd



Delivered under contract with Newcastle City Council



Delivered under contract with G & A Security

Concierge Cleaning

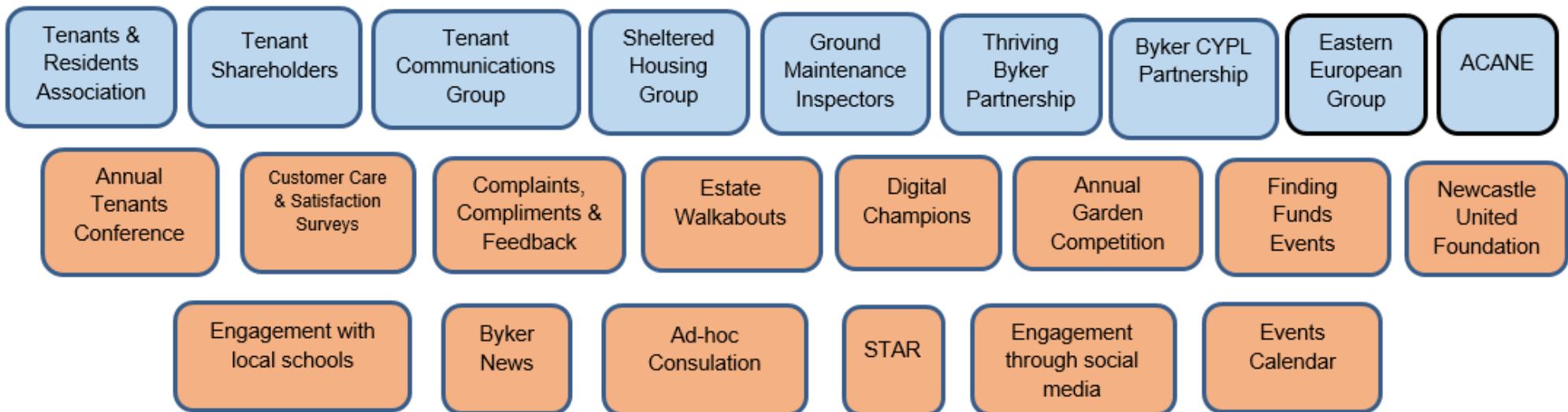
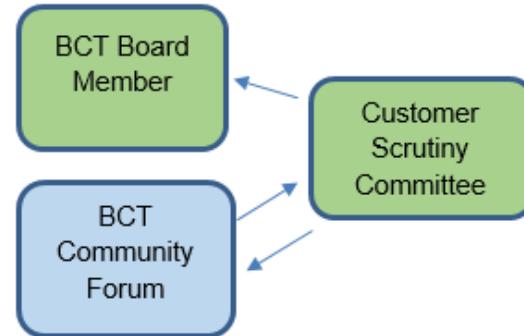
Concierge Security and Enquiries

* Sheltered housing properties are allocated by the BCT's Neighbourhood Housing Team.

Tenant Engagement Framework

Each colour code indicates the level of tenant engagement

Governance	
Engagement	
Customer Care	



The diagram below shows Byker Community Trust's, three tier Tenant Engagement Framework.

Tenant Engagement Framework

The table below shows the Tenant Engagement Opportunities which are presently available to Byker Community Trust tenants. This three tier structure acknowledges and encourages tenants to get involved in a way which best suits them

Each colour indicates the level of tenant engagement

Governance	
Engagement	
Customer Care	

Tenant Engagement Opportunity	What type of issues Tenants and residents will be involved in
Tenant Board Member	The BCT Board regulate BCT, approving policies and service changes. They set long term objectives for BCT to determine the strategic aims and outcomes required to achieve the Business Plan.
Customer Scrutiny Committee	The Customer Scrutiny Committee scrutinise and co-regulate BCT's services and provide reports for the Board to consider in relation to their findings.
BCT Community Forum	The Community Forum is BCT's overarching community forum. All residents groups will be able to join and representation will be encouraged from all groups across the community.
Tenants and Residents Association	The Byker Village Tenant and Resident Association (TARA) consider issues effecting the Estate and community in which they live.
Tenant Shareholder	Tenant Shareholders can attend and vote on issues raised at the BCT Annual General Meeting and Special General Meeting. They can also vote in BCT Board Member Elections.
Tenant Communications Group	The Tenant Communications Group look at how we communicate with tenants and review our publications, such as our Byker News newsletter and our Annual Report to Tenants.
Sheltered Housing Group	The Sheltered Housing Group help us to understand and explore the issues which effect tenants living in our older person's accommodation.
Grounds Maintenance Inspectors	The Grounds Maintenance Inspectors provide feedback in relation to the work that has been completed in their area by the Grounds Maintenance Team as well as other Estate environment issues.
Thriving Byker Partnership	The Thriving Byker Partnership comprises of around 30 partners from a number of sectors who work and provide services within Byker. They work together to deliver to the aims of the Thriving Byker Strategy.
Byker Children and Young People's Partnership	This group, made up of community partners, will provide opportunities to understand what young people's views are in relation to the community they live in. This group is supported through the partnership arrangements to engage with and co-ordinate activities for young people.
Eastern European Group	An Eastern European Group provides a voice to this section of our community so that we can understand the issues which they face, and adjust our services accordingly.
ACANE	Working closely with ACANE allows BCT to engage with a well established organisation that operate on the Byker Estate dealing predominantly with the African community.

Annual Tenants Conference	The Annual Tenant Conference is open to all tenants to attend. It is an opportunity for tenants to find out about BCT and plans to develop and improve these services in the future. The conference also provides the opportunity for tenants to meet and speak to members of staff providing services across the Byker Estate.
Customer Care and Satisfaction Surveys	All tenants will receive an annual Customer Care Visit to obtain feedback upon the services that BCT provide. This also allows BCT to complete a property inspection. Satisfaction Surveys are also used to enable them to provide feedback in relation to the service which they have just received. We use this feedback to bring about service improvements..
Ad-hoc Consultation Events	BCT hold ad-hoc consultation events to outline future projects or changes to services in order to seek tenant's feedback in relation to these proposals. This may include consulting on issues such as waste management, estate environmental and other topical projects.
Complaints, Compliments and Comments	BCT welcome feedback from tenants about the services they receive. BCT want to get things right first time however if we don't we welcome feedback to provide us with the opportunity to remedy the problem. BCT use the learning from that experience to improve services further for the future.
Estate Walkabouts	The Neighbourhood Housing Officers carry out four Estate Walkabouts each year. The Estate Walkabouts are promoted widely and we encourage tenants to join and tell us about any particular issues that are affecting their area.
Digital Champions	There are several Tenant Digital Support Volunteers who provide I.T. training to encourage people to improve their confidence and skills and help them get online. This also allows BCT to obtain feedback relating to service provision.
Annual Garden Competition	BCT support the delivery of a Garden Competition, with Newcastle City Council, to encourage tenants to look after the environment they live in. This also allows BCT to obtain feedback relating to environmental issues on the Byker Estate.
Funding Events	These are sessions delivered in partnership with the NCVS aimed at community groups, charities and residents looking to attract funding for projects that involve and/or support the community living in Byker. The events provide BCT with an opportunity to obtain feedback around community needs and aspirations.
Calendar of Events	BCT publish a rolling calendar of events that allow BCT to engage with tenants through various activities that are delivered either by BCT or through various partnerships.
Social Media	BCT use social media in order to engage with tenants and residents. This allows BCT instant access to tenants in terms of the provision of information and receiving feedback.
Byker News	Byker News is an award winning publication that is produced on a quarterly basis by BCT. The publication allows BCT to consult and receive feedback upon issues included in the publication.
Engagement with local schools	By engaging with local schools, BCT have an opportunity to engage with all school age children on the Estate. This may be through one off initiatives or ongoing projects.
Survey of Tenants and Residents. (STAR)	BCT undertake a biennial STAR to obtain feedback in relation to services and understand the needs of the tenants. STAR allows BCT to review performance and benchmark against similar housing organisations.
Newcastle United Foundation (NUF)	NUF is an independent registered charity supported by Newcastle United football club. The foundation work with BCT in the local community to make a difference and help people achieve their goals on the pitch, in the classroom and in life.