

## 5.1.1 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

*Start date for Decent Homes Programme:*  
November 2002

*Status:* Public Private Partnership (PPP)

*Housing stock:* 24 000

*Total contract value:* £100m

*Duration of partnership:* 5 years (with  
option to extend for a further 2 years)

*Start date of training programme:* 2002

*Duration:* as above

*Training spend:* £300k

*Number of trainees taken to date:* 42

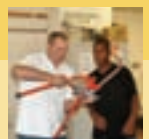
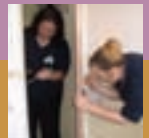
*Percentage of BME trainees:* 0%

*Percentage of female trainees:* 0%

*Number of trainees intended to be taken  
in future:* annual target is to maintain  
trainee numbers at approximately 10% of  
the 375 craft workforce

*Retention rate to date:* 97%

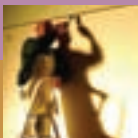
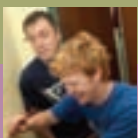
In 2002, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) procured its housing stock maintenance work using a strategic partnering arrangement. Selection criteria for Partners included a strong commitment to training and the provision of employment opportunities for the local community, as well as the ability to develop regeneration initiatives and promote growth in Barnsley's economy. Partner organisations were also required to show a commitment to the Respect for People agenda. A Public Private Partnership was established between Inspace – the Property Services arm of Wilmott Dixon – and Building Works – Barnsley Council's Direct Labour Organisation. The project is ongoing and



now in year 4. In December 2003 the management of the housing stock, and hence the management of the housing stock maintenance contract, passed to Berneslai Homes (the Council's Arms Length Management Organisation - ALMO).

### *Procurement and partnering*

Following the appointment of the partner contractors, an event for local businesses was arranged to initiate communication and integration of the supply chain. This built upon an existing networking group hosted by BMBC called Construction Forum, which includes CITB-ConstructionSkills. From this initiative a number of task groups were established, comprising both internal and external stakeholders. Task groups included the Local Business Group that looked at supply chain strategies, and the Respect for People Group that raised awareness in the local industry about this initiative. The Recruitment and Training Task Group had a wide remit, starting with identifying local skill shortages, advised by the local CITB-ConstructionSkills Training Adviser. They focused both on reskilling adult construction workers, and in promoting careers in construction at school level.



This task group was instrumental in initiating the local Skills Build Centre.

Along with Sheffield, Doncaster and Rotherham, Barnsley is part of the South Yorkshire Pathfinder area, identified for housing renewal investment in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan.

### *Applicants*

42 individuals are currently on the Partnerships training scheme. This figure is expected to increase substantially with the opening of the Skills Build Centre, as numbers have been limited until now by a shortage of places with training providers. The Centre will not only have an annual intake of young apprentices, it will also provide reskilling for experienced adult workers, including a number of former miners. The Centre will also provide a range of short courses to local businesses, aimed at improving the skills of existing workers.

The Partnership does face an ongoing challenge in recruiting female and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) applicants to its scheme. It is currently seeking examples of best practice and advice on how to do this effectively, and is working on a strategy to address this.

## Training

A strong commitment to training is integral to the ethos of this Partnership. 42 trainees have been placed since its inception in 2002, with a notably low drop out rate of just 3%. In several cases apprentices have been promoted to full tradespeople. *Inspace* and *Building Works* have also achieved success in relation to a number of pre-established Respect for People Key Performance Indicators. These measures included 10% of the workforce becoming apprentices; employee satisfaction in these two organisations being 80%; and employees of these two organisations have achieved an average of 3.2 training days per year.

Positively, the Partnership has helped to reduce the local skills shortage, introduced investment to the locality, improved local firms' performance and the quality and morale of the workforce. Some challenging aspects of implementing a training programme have included a pronounced lack of time and resources to devote to it, exacerbated by a number of internal reorganisations, and problems in finding suitable training centres for potential apprentices. Securing sufficient places for their trainees has proved very difficult, as has providing sufficient flexibility in training provision.

In response to these problems, the Partnership has pursued a proactive path and established an innovative Skills Building Centre in Barnsley, in conjunction with Barnsley Community Build (BCB). A well-established local charity that has provided local construction training opportunities for some time, BCB has been instrumental in developing this Centre and securing funding for it.

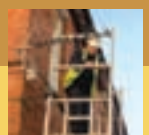
The Centre comprises three derelict Victorian villas in a run-down area in Barnsley that are currently being cleared and some office areas provided which will be used by BCB. A significant part of the properties will be left undeveloped and used as an on-site training

facility for trainees. The Centre is due to open in April 2006 and take its first intake of trainees shortly afterwards.

As is common with many of these projects, there is a shortage of suitably qualified trainers in the Barnsley area. A number of mature construction workers amongst Inspace's employees, inherited from BMBC at the Partnership's inception, are being trained to fill this gap.

## Funding

The Skills Build Centre is being funded partly by the Coalfield Regeneration Trust, a charity concerned with encouraging regeneration in former coal mining communities. Their donation of £375k is being supplemented by many local construction businesses who are contributing materials and time to the Centre.



### *Outcomes and next steps*

The focus of this initiative is very strongly on providing sustainable, long-term solutions. The Skills Build Centre has the potential to make a significant impact on the local community. In providing additional training facilities, it will address a key factor limiting sustainable training in Barnsley. It provides additional assessors, as well as a career path for mature construction workers. It is physically regenerating a run down property in Barnsley, and the trainees it produces will help to improve the quality of homes in the area. Significantly it is the product of partnership: between the Council, Berneslai Homes, Inspace, Barnsley Community Build, local businesses and the local community.

For further information contact Karen Temple, BMBC

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### **Project team**

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council  
Berneslai Homes  
Barnsley Community Build

### **Contractors**

Inspace Partnerships  
Building Works – DLO of BMBC

