Karbon Residents Committee

Tuesday 4th August 2026
Conference Room 2, Gosforth Number 5 Offices
10.00am – 12.20pm

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising

A member advised that he had received a call from an officer regarding grounds maintenance issues raised at the previous meeting. He thanked the officer for contacting him.

3. Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) Quarter 1 2026-27

Summary of report: Outline of Karbon Homes Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) performance in quarter 1 2026/27.

In Q1 this financial year overall satisfaction has increased by 4% compared to last year with most other Tenant Perception Measures also improving. The biggest improvement was seen in time taken to complete a repair (7.5%) and overall repairs service (5.1%). The biggest decrease in satisfaction was seen in complaints handling (4.1%) and kept informed (3.5%).

The report provides actions that are currently being taken to improve customer service including the introduction of webchat and WhatsApp to expand Karbon's digital offer for how customers can contact them.

Net Promoter Score (NPS) – customer loyalty metric that measures how likely customers are to recommend Karbon – has greatly increased this quarter from +38.8% in 2025/26 to +52%. Satisfaction with the effort it takes to contact Karbon has decreased this year, however trust has improved.

Customer feedback highlighted strengths in staff interactions and weaknesses around repairs and communication.

Member questions and discussion:

A member requested clarification on the use of AI in communication and customer contact.

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Response: Karbon has introduced AI to identify and verify customers before they speak to an advisor which saves time on calls which will help to lower wait times for customers.

A member stated that Karbon's overall performance is improving.

4. Customer Contact Vision

Summary of report: Outline of Karbon's Customer Contact Vision, explaining how Karbon will improve digital services while keeping human support available when it is needed most.

The Customer Contact Vision builds on Karbon's Stronger Foundations Strategy aim to provide great digital choice for customers. The vision is 'Digital when we can, human when we should', This means making digital services simple and accessible where they work well, while continuing to offer compassionate human support where it is most needed.

Two studies are underway: one to understand why customers contact Karbon, and one to understand customers' digital preferences and behaviours. Early insights are expected later in 2026. The findings will inform action plans to improve digital services for customers who choose to use them, and to support customers to use digital options where this is right for them.

A key risk if excluding customers who have limited access to, or confidence using, digital services. The vision addresses this through the commitment to be 'human when we should' and to retain human support where it is most needed.

Once the contact driver and customer persona studies are complete, an update and action plan will be brought back to Karbon Residents Committee for comment.

Member questions and discussion:

A member asked how Karbon would build 'Wayne's' trust in the customer persona whereby Wayne is able to use digital services but is actively choosing not to.

Response: It's early days in delivering the vision, however, word of mouth recommendations and sitting with customers face-to-face to register them onto the MyKarbon portal are some of the ways to build trust with customers to use digital services.

A member commented that older Karbon customers may require help in using and accessing digital services.

Response: Karbon would not link customer personas to any specific demographic. Experience of using digital services rather than age is important. 15 or 16 members

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of Karbon's Digital Engagement Network for example are aged 60+. One Network member is 92 years old.

Members discussed the use of WhatsApp in communicating with Karbon and the response wait time for a reply. When a message is sent, a colleague will pick this up and reply in good time.

A member raised the frustration of having to type a 12-digit code to access the MyKarbon portal. Biometrics is an easier approach.

Response: The 12-digit password requirement is set within Karbon's systems as an appropriate level of security.

ML queried what would happen if Karbon's systems failed.

Response: Karbon's ICT team have built-in safeguards within our systems.

A member queried whether the interactive map shared with customers when an operative is on route to a job actually works.

Response: The map function is new, but happy to feed this back.

5. Development – Defect Management Performance

Summary of report: Outline how Karbon measure new homes customer satisfaction against 7 Key Performance Indicators (KPI), including defect management performance. Highlight previous/ongoing activity to improve customer satisfaction with defect management.

7 established KPIs to assess new homes customer satisfaction on a group-wide basis. They are: -

1. Overall Satisfaction
2. Application Process
3. Handover Process
4. Build Quality of Home
5. Home Demonstration
6. Layout & Design
7. Outcome of Reported Defect

Customer Satisfaction (CS) surveys are undertaken 8 weeks after a new build property is occupied. Phone surveys undertaken by an independent organisation – M.E.L in April 2026 (formerly Acuity). Target for all KPIs - **91.25%**

Through the work of the multi-disciplinary New Homes customer experience action (CEAM) working group, Karbon are focussed on driving improvements & sustaining

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high levels of CS for all 7 KPIs through analysis of CS alongside complaints & compliments.

Key areas of focus:

- **Application processes –** streamlined & improved communication

- **Handover process –** employer's agent & clerk of works service strengthened, increased construction team resource & strengthened contract management focus/skills, introduced higher retentions/penalties, tender selection influenced by contractor performance

- **Build quality –** as per handover process

- **Home Demonstration approach** – needed major focus - amended question to gain greater insight into the customer experience/needs at handover – resulted in creation of 4 introductory videos to help customer as they settle in: ahead of completion email; here to help guide, welcome e-card and 14-day email.

- **Layout & Design** – ongoing feedback considered within house-type/specification review e.g. storage - positive feedback on space standards, energy efficiency

- **Defects** - Weekly defect reports generated & issued to contractors with weekly monitoring / chase ups to ensure defects are resolved

Group approach to defect management needs improving & embedding across Karbon & 54Homes North

- **Defect question, timing of question & sample basis** does not offer as insightful/holistic a response as it could

- **Triage quality & referral –** knowledge strength from 1st call & processing accuracy & issues

- **Not have a defect management system, automated workflows or a dedicated team resource** – manual processes, multi-disciplinary teams, communication/follow-up issues, variations between KH & 54N

- **Information quality to customers** has been inconsistent

- **Contract disputes** can result in delays for customers on defect resolution – standard contract terms have not supported intervention/step-in rights

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Next steps include developing business requirements for an integrated defect management system & feed into the Good to Great programme over the coming months

Member questions and discussion

A member asked for clarification as to what a home demonstration consists of.

Response: demonstration of heating controls, how to operate windows and doors, ventilation systems, stopcock for example

A member asked who carries out snagging of a new property.

Response: Contractor snags the property as well as a clerk of works appointed by Karbon.

A member shared feedback of handover process, as someone who lives in a new build property, outside of the meeting. The member was thanked for feedback and advised his comments reflect several of the key themes Karbon has identified through our customer satisfaction research. The first point relates to the quality of information provided to customers, and the second concerns contract management. Both are areas where they've recognised there is room for improvement.

6. Karbon Homes iWitness Service

Summary of Report: Overview of Karbon's partnership with the iWitness out of hours service. Unique service offered by Karbon Homes across the North East. To our knowledge, no other regional housing provider offers a comparable out-of-hours ASB response service

iWitness provides crucial support during evenings, nights, and weekends when anti-social behaviour is most common. The service responds to live incidents, enabling trained officers to witness behaviour directly and collect timely evidence. iWitness operates independently, offering credible evidence and reassurance to residents complementing existing police services. The service helps residents feel safer by ensuring anti-social behaviour concerns are addressed even when offices are closed.

The service is delivered by trained and accredited officers with policing or enforcement experience and specialised training in professional service delivery. Officers are skilled in capturing clear witness statements and gathering legally compliant evidence for various actions. The independence of officers ensures impartiality, enhancing residents' trust in the accounts provided. Officers provide reassurance and emotion support to residents during difficult and distressing situations.

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The iWitness service responded to 415 callouts in six months, averaging 69 incidents monthly. Each call represents urgent resident needs where timely evidence gathering was essential.

The fixed monthly retainer to deliver the service is £2,763.17, covering out-of-hours service availability across the North East region. Each call-out costs £112.36, with 415 callouts resulting in £46,629.40 total expenditure over six months.

Case studies and staff testimonies demonstrate the value of iWitness….

Durham case regarding a noise complaint- iWitness reports corroborated the reports of noise nuisance and were used as part of court schedule. Possession granted by the courts.

Durham case regarding drugs/nuisance case- iWitness reports corroborated the reports of noise nuisance and nuisance behaviour. Used as part of the evidence when considering legal action, which resulted in an eviction.

Jarrow nuisance & ASB behaviour- iWitness reports corroborated the reports which were used as evidence resulting in tenancy warnings against the perpetrator.

Undertaken covert ("incognito") deployments in ASB hotspot areas to gather intelligence, identify persistent ASB issues and support proactive enforcement action.

Member questions and discussion

Members thanked SD for a comprehensive presentation and overview of the iWitness service.

A member asked if Karbon can recoup costs from perpetrators in conjunction with anti-social behaviour cases.

Response: Yes.

STAIRs: Your right to information

Summary of report: Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs). A new policy that gives people who live in social housing stronger rights to information about their home and landlord.

The requirements are designed to make landlords more open, accountable and responsive.

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Know – see information your landlord should publish routinely about governance, spending, services and performance.

Ask – request relevant information about the management of your social housing – even if you do not mention STAIRs.

Challenge – use clearer information to question decisions, service quality and how your request has been handled.

From 1st October 2026 customers will be able to identify and access these classes of information without having to make a fresh request each time., known as the Routine Publication Scheme.

Governance and decisions

Senior roles, governance, decision processes, tenant consultations meeting records

Housing stock management

Plans, maintenance work, net zero progress, stock transfers and stock profile

Housing services

Descriptions of services, advice and guidance for landlords

Spending

Spending, grants and use of service charge revenue

Performance

Inspection outcomes, ratings, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, complaints and safety performance

Lists and registers

Registers required by the law and other lists about social housing management

Social housing management

Polices that explain how the landlord manages social housing

From April 1, 2027, a valid request must be in writing, and the applicant must be identifiable, landlords should help tenants clarify requests. Must relate to housing management services.

Member questions and discussion

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Members welcomed the introduction of STAIRs

A member asked if you need to use specific wording to make a request for information?

Response: No, you don't need to state it is a STAIRs request

A member asked if there is a fee involved in making a request?

Response: No, there is no charge

10. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 6th October 2026
Conference Room 2, Gosforth

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