

Group Board Meeting: In-Depth Summary

Date: Wednesday 3 December 2025

Location: Beamish Park Hotel

Chair: Alexis Cleveland

Context	Agenda Item
<i>Chair's welcome</i>	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies were received from Rachel Turnbull and Christine Smith • The previous minutes were approved, and no matters remained on the action register.
<i>H&S - Provides assurance around sound H&S practices and performance</i>	<p>Health & Safety</p> <p>Key areas of focus included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident and near miss trends • Lone worker training • COSHH assessment systems • Hand arm vibration • Legislative changes
<i>Quarterly CEO update on what is happening across the housing sector, anything impacting our operating environment, Government policy changes and across Group that Board need to be sighted on</i>	<p>Chief Executive's Strategic Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPI rise to 3.8% • National updates on the Social Affordable Homes Programme, with bids due April 2026 • An Inside Housing Development Award nomination, but sadly no win
<i>Strategic Direction, Budgets & Planning</i>	<p>IDA Improvement Plan</p> <p>Discussion centred on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress could enable a regrading by April 2026 • Need for a clear reporting line—task & finish group to be scoped • Whether TSMs were fully captured • Clearer signposting of where customer data is used in Board papers • Board noted progress and next steps <p>ICT/Digital Transformation Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong focus on training and capability development (following GARC presentation)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of cyber-security messaging to customers—opportunities to strengthen via ENCORE • Chair requested portal access for firsthand usability insight • Board members undertaking cyber/ICT training via BDA rather than Arctic Wolf <p>Procurement Strategic Plan</p> <p>Board welcomed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on implementation of the new Procurement Act • Positive feedback on the customer procurement panel, with strong diversity and a waiting list • Customer panel involvement in procurement testing and digital portal development <p>Budget & Financial Planning Assumptions</p> <p>Key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move towards full cost recovery for service charges; reconsidering unrecovered fire risk assessment costs • Need to manage supported housing contract risk carefully • Good to Great programme: £5m benefits expected, with £2.5m cashable—Board sought assurance on stress testing of those assumptions • Suggestion that benefits tracking be built into business plans
<p><i>Customer Voice – Customer Experience Roadmap, highlighting key projects and performance updates from 2024-25</i></p>	<p>Customer Experience Roadmap Review</p> <p>Key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong upward trajectory in customer experience performance • Importance of digital inclusion and not leaving customers behind • Younger customers show higher expectations; older customers give higher satisfaction scores • Opportunity to deepen collaboration between Karbon Association and 54NH • Customer Experience Committee feedback very positive
<p><i>Development and Asset Management – Session on Landlord H&S Compliance, Decent Homes Standard and Horizon scanning</i></p> <p><i>Also, an update on the Byker District Heating System</i></p>	<p>Decent Homes Compliance Update</p> <p>Board received updates on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord compliance • Decent Homes Standard calculations • DHS2 & MEES horizon scanning <p>Damp and mould (Awaab’s Law) currently reported as a Category 1 hazard; scope will widen to all 29 hazards</p> <p>Byker District Heating System</p>

	<p>i) Transfer & Phase 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer expected near Christmas • Scrutinised recently at BCT Committee <p>Board noted the update</p>
<p><i>Across Group there are nine headline performance indicators that we use to measure our performance.</i></p> <p><i>Management Accounts reporting</i></p>	<p>Performance Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Board Performance Report • Operational performance (Apr–Sept 2025): • Positive repairs trajectory • Strong colleague engagement <p>Board colleagues noted continued positive progress with the repair service review and DRS health check</p> <p>Financial Performance</p> <p>Management Accounts (to Oct 2025)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surplus £15.7m, against £15.4m budget—£0.3m favourable (2%) • All covenants and Golden Rules compliant <p>Half-Year Trading Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forecast £2.39m adverse (Empty Homes £1.3m; Responsive Repairs £0.9m; Asbestos £0.2m) <p>Key drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High volume of major voids (damp, mould, floor heave, magnesite flooring) • Subcontractor cost inflation and increased demand • Impact of Awaab’s Law on repairs complexity and cost <p>Board discussion acknowledged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic challenge forecasting property related costs • Changing legislative landscape makes forecasting inherently difficult • Despite pressures, customer satisfaction improving at 54NH
<p><i>Governance and Risk – Board Collective Effectiveness Review</i></p>	<p>Board Collective Effectiveness Review</p> <p>Positive overall assessment, with areas for ongoing focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer voice representation • Board diversity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer on Board trainee scheme seen as beneficial• External assurance already secured via Savills & Altair (every 3 years)• Suggestion to revisit peer review across the Group <p>Graphite Living – Stage 2 Registration Board approved submission of the Stage 2 application to the Regulator of Social Housing.</p> <p>Committee & Subsidiary Minutes The Board noted updates from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GARC• 54 North Homes• GRNPC• Graphite Living Board• Group Treasury Committee• Byker Community Trust Committee (key issues: DHS, Newcastle Options)• GCC (deep dives on SHAPE tool and ASB research)• GDC (SAP updates; new strategy emerging; all current programme targets met)
	<p>Next Meeting 26 January 2026</p>