Karbon Residents Committee **10th March 2026**

Conference Room 2, Gosforth **10:00 am**

1. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

   Agreed as a correct record.

2. **Matters Arising**

   There were no matters arising.

3. **Customer Involvement Update**

An officer provided an update of Customer Involvement Activity during Q3 to date.

It was advised that engagement had led to policy changes such as amendments to the Pet Policy, contribution to procurement activity with customer input on contractor expectations, social value and improved local accountability.

Area Forums have contributed to providing feedback with the scrutiny of performance of repairs and ASB data, as well as strengthening building safety assurance, and increasing customer understanding of sustainability and asset planning. Additional outcomes have included improvements to vulnerability support, leaseholder information clarity, and policy reviews enhancing fairness and confidence.

It was advised that work would continue in terms of the scrutiny review of Karbon's approach to dealing with vulnerable customers. Resources were being re-allocated to ensure that the review continued.

A member commented that it is important that the scrutiny review continues as there had been some positive work completed to date.

A member suggested that the Sheltered Housing Forums continue to be well attended and allow customers an opportunity to discuss various issues.

4. **Damp and Mould**

An officer presented the report which updated the Karbon Residents Committee on actions and insights following a damp and mould data deep dive presented to the Group Customer Committee in June 2025, highlighting customer and property trends and subsequent improvements.

Data-driven service improvements: Following the deep dive, Voicescape was introduced to contact customers after case closure to ensure issues do not recur, alongside satisfaction surveys used to enhance service quality. The risk matrix for response prioritization was also updated to accelerate support for vulnerable customers.

Heating system insights and investments: Analysis revealed homes with electric heating were more prone to severe damp and mould symptoms due to inefficiency and high costs, prompting a planned programme to convert these properties to gas boilers, integrating this intelligence into future investment planning.

Targeted geographic and operational responses: Damp and mould prevalence is higher in County Durham, influencing communication strategies such as local articles; additionally, a dedicated damp and mould team with 10 operatives focuses on areas with the highest case severity, including Stanley, Consett, and Chester le Street.

Ongoing analytics and transparency: Continued development of predictive analytics for damp and mould is planned, with all deep dive reports now including outcome sections to demonstrate learnings and actions taken for customer benefit, as recently exemplified in an anti-social behaviour deep dive.

The committee acknowledged the positive steps being taken by Karbon to proactively deal with cases of damp and mould.

5. Karbon Foundation Update

An officer gave a presentation providing a progress update on the Karbon Foundation, covering work completed so far, the proposed strategic pillars, and the immediate next steps toward launch.

Progress To Date:

Set-up milestones completed: Key early activity included the Charity Commission application, strategy development, trustee recruitment, appointment of Heads of Service, brand development, and the first board meeting.

Three strategic pillars agreed: The Foundation is organising its work around three strategic pillars of Community Investment and Social Value, Employment, Skills and Financial Wellbeing, and Place Partnerships and Engagement.

Outcome-led approach: Across the pillars, there is a clear emphasis on creating measurable social value and ensuring that investment leads to visible customer and community benefit.

Strong alignment between strategy and delivery: The proposed priorities connect practical issues such as health, poverty, employment, and digital access with place-based engagement and influence.

In terms of next steps, the KRC were advised:

Formalisation and readiness: Planned next actions include completing registration, finalising service level agreements, and confirming the structure and appointment of a Chair.

Internal and external launch preparation: Activity is planned around communications, staff briefings, and opportunities to meet trustees

Further development work: The Foundation will continue to work on strategy, brand, and website development as part of becoming launch ready.

It was advised that focus is on formal completion, communications, and operational readiness ahead of launch.

The overall direction is toward a partnership-based, measurable, community-focused foundation with a strong emphasis on wellbeing, inclusion, and place.

A member welcomed the addition of the Karbon Foundation, advising that it would assist in bringing additional levels of support for customers and build upon the work already undertaken by Karbon Homes.

A member acknowledged that this was a positive step being made by Karbon to continue to support customers. He hoped that a foundation would bring additional opportunities in terms of funding and support.

6. General discussion Complaints, Compliments and Performance

There was a general discussion around Karbon Group's performance for complaints, compliments, and suggestions for year to date 2025-26, covering Karbon Association, 54North, and Leazes Homes across all tenures. The discussion covered complaint volumes, response times, satisfaction levels, and ongoing improvement actions.

Complaint volumes were stable with regional variations: Complaints had risen slightly for 54North and Leazes Homes but decreased for Karbon Association. The increase in 54North mainly relates to responsive repairs, with plans to enhance resources and service reliability.

Shift in complaint reasons and escalation focus: 'Timescales' for complaints decreased, reflecting improved repair wait times, while 'Quality of Service' complaints increased, especially in housing management and antisocial behaviour (ASB) areas, notably in Newcastle, North Tyneside, and Byker. The Group Director Housing is reviewing housing complaints and escalation patterns to identify improvement opportunities.

Improved complaint response and Ombudsman outcomes: Timely responses improved with 99% of Stage 1 and 98.4% of Stage 2 complaints answered on time. Four Housing Ombudsman cases from 2023 were adjudicated, with two upheld involving maladministration and service failure. Identified themes include case management, repairs, record-keeping, and communication, prompting several service improvement initiatives.

Customer satisfaction and positive feedback trends: Complaint handling satisfaction is on target year-to-date, though 54North is below target with noted customer frustrations. Recruitment and service model reviews are underway to address this. Compliments rose, with suggestions also increasing, reflecting positive customer engagement mainly in Operations and Support Services.

A member commented that overall, the performance figures were positive and made reference to improvements around Karbon listening and acting.

A member questioned the approach of handling issues raised and complaints concerning defects in new build properties and how this could affect feedback from customers. It was agreed that a member of Karbon's Development Team would attend a future meeting to explain the defects process and options available to customers for redress.

Action: Development Team to attend a future meeting of KRC concerning defects in new build properties.

7. Any Other Business

There were no items of A.O.B.

8. Meeting Close

The meeting closed at 12.00 p.m.