Minutes of Karbon Residents Committee (KRC)

16.09.25 11:00-13:00

Meeting held at Number Five Gosforth and Microsoft Teams

1. **Catch up, welcome and introductions**
   The Chair greeted KRC and staff. Welcomed observers to the committee.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting on 07.07.25 agreed.**

   Matters arising:
   A member asked if the inspection results had been announced. An officer shared that we have not received a report yet however will update the KRC when we receive it. A member noted the minutes of 07.07.25 stated questions had been asked by committee members however the questions should be noted and the name of the member. An officer confirmed that minutes will include the questions and responses.

3. **Q1 Complaints and Compliments Report Presentation and Discussion**

   An officer stated that up to now 54N has been reported separately however going forward from Q2 we will have a group Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions Report which will include 54N, formerly called Yorkshire Housing Assoc before the amalgamation. Whilst other forums use the same report, happy to take feedback from the KRC. As we have separate registrations with the Ombudsman, there will be individual annual reports for Karbon Association, 54North and Leazes.

   580 complaints were handled in Q1, down 33 on prior year Q1 and down 2 on the last Q4. The volume of complaints refused has increased, so an example of this is when a customer is complaining about a service the local council delivers. 22 complaints were refused.

   The number of stage 1 complaints have declined while stage 2 has increased. Housemark states that complaints per thousand homes continues to rise back to the levels seen in Q2 and Q3.

Protected

A decline in complaints upheld continue to 77.6% in this quarter, and most frequent are for complaints. Ther has been a shift in behaviour about categorisation, so identifying that the complaint isn't about a person, but the policy of procedure.

Compensation has been offered in a higher proportion of cases but with much lower average value from £202 per claim to £144. The range in this quarter was from £20 to £1022. In Q1 99.3% of complaints were responded to on time. This is a notable improvement on prior Q1 and a big improvement from Q4. This was one of the common reoccurring themes in upheld cases that were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman.

In Q1 we had 5 cases adjudicated by the Housing Ombudsman: one outside jurisdiction, 3 noncompliance and 1 not upheld. We have 10 cases awaiting formal adjudication and predict 5 may be upheld. Since hearing these cases we updated our Compensation and Goodwill Policy and centralised the calculation pf compensation for consistency.

Compliments and Suggestions Performance data requested by a member to be included: Q1 we have 223 compliments which is a decline from Q4 for increase from prior year. The compliments were mostly for our Operations and Support Teams (59%). Responsive repairs received 92 of these and trade staff behaviour and standard of work was highly commended.

Suggestions included adaptations in the SMS messaging to make it more personal i.e. which type of repair, hold music on phone lines and data verification process. A member agreed the music needed to be improved as it's annoying when you hold for 30 minutes. An officer explained due to music licensing only certain types can be used and added usually our Out of Hours service pick up phones in seconds, usually our Customer Relationship Staff pickup in 50-60 seconds. A member stated it is usually 2-3 minutes. An officer to follow up with the member re time/day to identify the hot spot. An officer stated we can recruit for hot spots, so more staff are available.

A member asked if there's a pattern for complaints re contractors/repairs service? The officer stated we are looking at how to record this. Our systems don't allow us to extract this data, but this is part of the 'Good to Great' project.

A member asked how we track abandoned calls. The officer stated when analysed our data shows only 5-6% of calls are dropped at around 50 seconds. The member agreed this is a good result.

The officer added that we are considering data verification so we could use IVR and enter information before you speak to a member of the Customer Relationship Team. A member stated that some disabled people might get confused by multiple menus. The officer confirmed we don't have massive menus but will find out where customers drop out and check with our Out of Hours provider.

A member explained at his healthcare centre there is a call back centre. The officer stated Karbon have 20000 calls per month, the officer has worked in organisations using this system, to call customers back isn't operationally as efficient. Our priority is to look at hotspots; Monday mornings, Tuesday after a Bank Holiday, and to increase self-serve options such as paying rent. The officer introduced new staff member, whose role has been introduced after restructure not just to handle complaints but to learn from them.

4. Q1 Customer Satisfaction Report

An officer had shared the report in advance of the meeting and summary provided below:

In Q1 this financial year most of the Tenant Perception Measures (TPMs) have improved compared to Q1 in 2024/25. The biggest improvement was seen in TP09 Complaints Handling which increased by 8.4%. The biggest decrease was in TP03 Time Taken to Complete a Repair, which decreased by 3.6% this quarter.

The main areas for improvement continue to be with the long wait times for repairs to be completed, lack of follow up when customers reported a repair.

Our main areas of positive feedback were around operatives being friendly and respectful in customer's homes. Customers feeling safe in their homes due to timely safety checks and maintenance and colleagues being supportive and helpful especially when customers were struggling financially.

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) has marginally reduced this quarter from +40.1 in 2024/25 to +38.8. However, there has been an increase in customers giving a promoter response (9 or 10) this quarter compared to last year. Satisfied customers mentioned colleagues being polite and responsive, repairs being completed to a high standard and good quality of grounds maintenance. Dissatisfied customers mentioned delays with repairs and damp and mould issues, and lack of follow up communication.

We currently have nine transactional surveys running monthly to gather customer feedback following an interaction with a Karbon service. These surveys are used to identify any service improvements in real time to help

improve customer satisfaction. We are reviewing what transactional surveys we collate in relation to newbuilds and anti-social behaviour issues.

A member stated that as Procurement are going to expand the contractors network residents will not know who they contractors are. A member asked how Karbon communicate with new residents who can't speak English. Karbon have translation services, online translation, mykarbon can be translated and a member stated that staff have Google Translate on their mobile phones.

5. **Summer Customer Get Together – Feedback**

An officer explained the previous customer event in November at Gosforth Park Hotel was for previously engaged customer. Our latest one in the summer at Beamish Museum was offered out to all customer not just engaged. The next event will be for engaged customers.

Customers were generally positive about the event and did not suggest any improvements. The weather and long queues for food at Beamish that were mentioned were out of our control.

Anecdotal feedback from Foundations for Life said it was a great day to meet customers, colleagues were able to help with some repairs on the day and had conversations about damp and mould. A colleague spoke to customers on the day who appreciated the Money Matters support.

Data collected after the event using surveys stated:

Event registration 96% said it was easy to register

100% said it had met expectations

A member asked how Beamish worked with us. Karbon have a corporate partnership with Beamish Museum and use the venue for events such as Silvertalk.

A member asked if anyone from KRC attended. One member applied but did not get tickets. An officer explained there was no priority or favouritism for engaged customers at this event.

6. **Discussion regarding Residents Committee receiving feedback from Karbon Homes Board and Group Committee**

The officer introduced herself and her role to new attendees and discussed the work that has been undertaken for the shared web space. The officer

explained it is important for the KRC to meet with the Board members, and we will continue to invite Board members to attend meetings.

The Sharepoint site will include KRC member photos and profiles, all minutes including Group Customer Committee.

The demonstrated the site and showed the summarised version of minutes as requested at the last meeting. The next steps are for the KRC members to give feedback. A member asked for support getting on the site in the form of IT coaching. A member requested a laptop to use for KRC activities.

7. **Resident Involvement Framework updates**
   Scrutiny panel will be planning meetings following summer holidays, and customer events to put a scope together to scrutinise how Karbon approach customers in vulnerable circumstances with colleagues.

   Environment group visited the Dawdon Mining centre.

   Building Safety has received an overview of the structure surveys of Byker Wall.

   Chester le Street Area Forum and Northumberland Area Forum have ran over the summer.

8. **Introduction/Overview of Role**

   Customer Experience Improvement Lead

   The officer discussed her role and how we can learn from complaints, the projects that she will be involved with and how resident interactions play a part.

   The officer will be developing a Resident Review Complaint Group to look how we can change things positively in the future. A member asked if the complainant will be involved. The officer explained the group will consider complaints after the case is closed. The officer shared the group would consider if we got to the root cause and did we handle it well. An officer added this group was in the Resident Involvement Framework (RIF) from day 1 and it will be a small panel scrutinising a case.

9. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

   Monday 24th November 11:00-13:00 at Number Five Gosforth.

Addendum

Customer representative from 54N, has a new job and will no longer be able to attend KRC meetings.