The Thriving Byker Strategy (TBS) provides our foundation for strategic partnership working. Its objectives and priorities are based upon what our customers asked for and how they will impact positively on customers in the Byker Estate.

Following the successful delivery of Stage One of the TBS, the BCT Committee approved Stage Two which sets out what we aimed to achieve beyond 2021.

Our strategy for 2025, is to:

- **Make Byker an Estate of Choice**
- **Contribute to a Thriving Byker; and**
- **Ensure that the BCT community ethos is sustained**

To achieve the TBS priorities and increase community activities, we work in collaboration with key strategic partners, stakeholders, the community and voluntary groups.

Our strategic partners are:

- Newcastle City Council
- Local Ward Councillors
- Northumbria Police
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue
- Local schools in Byker
- Barnardo’s
Stage Two of the TBS is widely influenced by the views of customers over the following key themes:

- Pride and Ownership in the area
- Health, Wellbeing and Mindfulness
- Income Maximisation
- A Cleaner and Greener Byker
- A Safe Place to Live
- Children and Young People
- Hard to Reach Groups
- Community Training and Employment
- Digital Connectivity

All projects and initiatives delivered through the TBS Stage Two are subject to an impact assessment to demonstrate the investment is achieving value for money and is having a positive impact delivering the priorities outlined in the strategy.

This supplement highlights our progress during 2022/23, delivering against our key themes and highlighting some of the fantastic outcomes achieved.
### IN SUMMARY (DURING 2022/23)

#### Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community events held</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Numbers of hard to reach groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCT customers involved</td>
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#### Homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>New bathrooms and shower installations</td>
<td>679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairwells improved</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New kitchens installed</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes received internal door replacements</td>
<td>778</td>
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</table>
Customer

124
Customers supported through hardship funds

104
Customers signed up to content insurance

752
Customers signed up to MyKarbon

Costs

£935,444
Additional money gained for Byker customers

£4.2M
Spent on improvements

£24,800
Secured from Newcastle City Council Hardship Fund

£19,534
Spent on community activities and programmes
PRIDE AND OWNERSHIP IN THE AREA

Empowering and enabling customers and community groups to take responsibility for the estate and be proud of the area.

Community engagement events

Jubilee Party hosted by the Byker Pantry (June 2022).
Funding of £1,000 awarded and 350 people attended.

Byker in Bloom gardening competition in partnership with Newcastle City Council.

Remembrance Day event in partnership with AF&V Launchpad.
Funding of £400 awarded with over 60 pupils from Byker Primary School engaged.

Tom Collins House communal garden improvement consultation with 16 of 39 customers.
Upgrade of communal stairwells
Communal stairwell upgrade programme complete with £700K invested in asbestos removal, new flooring and redecoration.

679 new bathrooms and shower installations
184 new kitchens installed
778 homes received internal door replacements
38 stairwells completed.

90.91% customer satisfaction
RE:GEN Group reappointed to continue delivery of bathrooms in Year 3

I would like to say how impressed I have been by the way the work was managed. Everything was dealt with swiftly and in a highly professional manner.

The work itself was carried out to a satisfactory level and I am grateful for the improvements.

I look forward to having my kitchen renovated and hope very much that the same team will be in charge of this project!
JDDK engaged to develop neighbourhood plans with Dunn Terrace identified as the first neighbourhood to benefit from external environmental improvements.

Customer consultation commenced on pilot bin stores and the introduction of new recycling facilities for Dunn Terrace and Headlam Green. Consulted with over 50 customers from Dunn Terrace including adults and young children on the plans. Positive feedback received which has been reviewed and incorporated into the final design(s).

Established an engagement group for Dunn Terrace customers to directly influence and have their say on the proposed plans for their area. 9 volunteers have come forward to adopt an area for planting and work will start with them over the summer.

Transformation of the Environment

As a customer of the Dunn Terrace Community who has lived and been a customer for 33 years, I am excited to see the development of the estate with the new proposed bin areas and play areas for the children such as the field areas and especially the MUGA.

I have attended a number of consultations and have really enjoyed them and feel as though my suggestions and opinions have been taken on board as well as other customers.

I am hoping with the new bin areas this will help prevent fly tipping within our community along with any littering also. The plans for the MUGA and other surrounding areas such as the fields and local “squares” look AMAZING and cannot wait to see the plans put into place.

Dunn Terrace customer.
Marketing the estate to attract new customers

All properties are advertised on NewcastleHomes and we have started using Zoopla to market BCT’s hard-to-let properties with customer incentives. We have also installed new signage around the estate.

Hobby Rooms and shops

- In partnership with customers on the estate, discussions are ongoing to convert the old photography studio on Raby Way into a Byker archive and visitor centre.
- 66a on Raby Street to be brought back into use as a community facility.
- Fire risk assessment completed on all hobby rooms.

Customer Scrutiny Panel

Five customers expressed interest in joining the Customer Scrutiny Panel – two are current BCT Committee members. The panel have reviewed and signed off the Complaints and Compliments Policy, were part of the review for building safety and have recently started a review of the lettings process.

Valued Customer Status

Iris Howell of Grace Street selected as winner of £500 worth of vouchers in 2022.

Site investigations at Bolam Street completed for the proposed plans to develop 24 new affordable homes for rent.
Planning application submitted.
HEALTH, WELLBEING AND MINDFULNESS

Addressing the links between housing and health; both physical and mental. This theme will address food poverty, promote the value of a healthy lifestyle and improved physical and mental wellbeing.

Community engagement events

£2,049

funding comprising two grants was awarded to Nourish Food School to deliver budget-friendly, healthy cooking courses to 140 customers.

- 47 households benefitted from recipe kits.

281

customers were fed during our free trips over the year.

Three BCT colleagues completed training to become Mental Health Allies.

Winter Warm Spaces were provided at Byker Sands and Byker Fire Station for our customers.

Karbon staff took time out to walk along the Quayside to support mental health at work.
The Byker Pantry estimates **300** BCT customers have accessed their service, saving **£6K** since the beginning of January 2023.

**The Bread and Butter Thing (COMING 2023!)**

Initial discussions have commenced about launching TBBT project in Byker. Suitable venues are being explored.
During the year:

- 40 kids (avg.) participated in the Premier League Kicks programme delivered on Tuesday evenings
- 568 Byker pupils engaged in the project during the holidays
- 100 participants engaged in Primary Stars programme at Byker Primary School
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- 100 participants engaged in Primary Stars programme at Byker Primary School
- 2008 children for youth provision and 20 adults for sleep and stress workshops
- 30 children to NUCASTLE Community Hub and gave them a free pair of football boots/trainers each
- NUF provided 6 tickets to NUFC home games where Byker customers benefitted

Programmes delivered were:

- Schools Delivery (Byker Primary School) for up to 100 pupils
- Soccer Schools (Byker Primary School) for up to 60 per cohort x 4 summer 2022 (2 weeks of delivery), Easter and Summer 2023
- Adult workshops for improving sleep and stress
- Youth or Adult Mental First Aid course. Up to 10 sessions during the 18 months which will reach up to 80 children for youth provision and 20 adults for sleep and stress workshops
- NUF took 30 children to NUCASTLE Community Hub and gave them a free pair of football boots/trainers each
- NUF provided 6 tickets to NUFC home games where Byker customers benefitted

During the year:

- 568 Byker pupils engaged in the project during the holidays
- 100 participants engaged in Primary Stars programme at Byker Primary School
- 40 kids (avg.) participated in the Premier League Kicks programme delivered on Tuesday evenings

For a number of years, the NUFC Foundation Kicks programme, working in partnership with the Michael Carrick Foundation, have made an incredible difference to the lives of the children in our school. They provide both boys and girls with the opportunity to engage in fun, inspiring football activities in a safe and secure space. They open up new opportunities by providing visits to the new NUCASTLE building, they broaden horizons by introducing the children to new people and engaging them in purposeful workshops.

“The Boot Room events allow children access to free football boots which make a huge difference to some of our pupils. Since starting this project, the school has seen a significant increase in both boys and girls playing football, supporting Newcastle United and most importantly, developing essential life skills through the power of football.”

Joe Danquah, PE teacher
Byker Primary School
INCOME MAXIMISATION

Providing opportunities for customers to access training and employment as well as increasing the range of financial products and services available, which will improve the economic activity of customers and the community.

Community engagement events

124 customers supported through hardship funds.

£24,800 secured from Newcastle City Council Hardship Fund.

Karbon's Foundation for Life Team organised events on the estate – one BCT customer is now £168.81 per month better off.

BCT started working with a customer who had long term health issues. We carried out a full benefit check and identified additional benefit entitlement. We helped the customer to claim extra money of Universal Credit and applied for the hardship payment of £200. They said:

"The Trust is great. I’ve never known a housing association with such fantastic services available to customers. You get free advice, it’s accessible, friendly, and professional. I feel very settled and have never been with a housing association for such a long time. The hardship support payment came in the right time, when I struggled a lot with the costs of living crisis and poor health. It helped with food and other essentials.

Aneta helped me with the Universal Credit, I got additional benefit entitlement. It means a lot; it means I can take care of myself. She has encouraged me to apply for some other benefits, that may hopefully support my extra disability living costs. I could not recommend the Trust enough. Everyone is lovely and helpful; they take care of you and have lots of patience."

I was elated I got the help that I did not know I could get and needed. I would not have known about this as no one tells you anything at the Job Centre!"
Customers Content Insurance

104 customers signed up to Karbon’s scheme.

Additional Karbon support to maximise income collection

88 Food provision
164 Grant applications
149 Pre-tenancy checks
3 Money Matters to NCC
25 Foundation for Life (FFL)

Maximising benefits

£957,042.13 Total gains this year
Customer case study: Ryan Dodds

Ryan Dodds has been a carer for a number of years for a family member, but was really keen to get back into the workplace. He was referred as part of our New Start programme.

Employment Advisor Jenn supported him to discuss his goals and skills; and create a CV and look more closely at the New Start roles available. He received a Better Off Calculation which showed he would be more than £200 better off per week in a New Start role, and it would not have any negative impact on his mothers UC claim; a benefit check was offered to his mother as well to ensure this was the case.

He received support developing his cover letter application for the New Start Grounds Maintenance role, and he attended an Interview Prep workshop.

He was successful in gaining one of the Grounds Maintenance New Start roles and he’s really enjoying it! As part of the programme, he continues to get support from our FFL team to flourish in his role, and gain additional qualifications to help ensure the follow on progression into longer term sustainable employment.

The New Start programme created 6 potential roles in Byker and 2 placements were filled with Byker customers.
A CLEANER AND GREENER BYKER

Educating and enabling customers to take responsibility and support waste management improvements to ensure the results are meaningful and have a lasting impact.

Provision of skips

Skips provided quarterly across the estate to help customers dispose of their waste and bulky items responsibly.

Partnership working

Monthly litter picks initiative launched with customers.

£500 awarded to Northern Culture Projects to transform a piece of land to encourage customers to grow healthy food.

Grounds Maintenance Team remove offensive graffiti across the Byker Estate.
Estate Walkabouts
New promotional material to encourage more customers to take part and have their say being implemented.

Gounds Maintenance Inspectors (GMI’s)
88.07% customer satisfaction of service.
14 customers are GMI’s.

I do it because it helps and I like to contribute to the place being nice and clean.
Sonia Codling
Cleaning Inspector

Byker Wall cleaning inspectors
77.23% customer satisfaction of service over the year.
2 inspectors across the estate.

“Taking action against fly tipping perpetrators”
Working in partnership with Newcastle City Council to take action against perpetrators. One perpetrator was caught fly tipping and issued with a fine and two fixed penalty notices were issued, awaiting legal proceedings.

Estate activity tracker
Tracker implemented and Neighbourhood Housing Officers use Total Mobile during their quarterly walkabouts. This is enabling accurate recording and actioning of environmental matters raised by the team or our customers.
A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE

Working with customers, the Police and partners to tackle crime and the fear of crime within Byker. BCT will take a preventative approach to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) working in partnership through education, diversion and empowerment.

Transformation of the Environment

JDDK Architects were appointed to complete the designs for pilot bin stores at Dunn Terrace.

Working in partnership with the Police for CCTV and to tackle ASB across the estate.

Working with the Fire Service on vehicle access to the estate.

Fire safety information within the Wall

All customers issued with fire safety information leaflets about the evacuation strategy for their home.

Actions recommended by Karbon’s Customer Scrutiny Bank on fire safety improvements are being delivered.

Drug Reduction Outreach workshop

Installation of temporary CCTV cameras to deter drug use in areas users frequent.

Temporary CCTV units have successfully deterred drug use in two of the three locations they were installed.

Secure door fitted at Mount Pleasant sheltered scheme to prevent people entering the building.
Partnership working with Northumbria Police

Monthly meetings take place with the Police and bi-monthly meetings with wider partner agencies to discuss ASB.

Last year, the following were put in place following ASB activity:

- **6** Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (ABA’s)
- **2** ABA breach meetings
- **1** Community Protection Warnings and Notices
- **0** Injunctions
- **1** Closure Order
- **0** Criminal Behaviour Orders
- **6** Notices Seeking Possession
- **3** ASB related evictions

Reducing Youth ASB

Safer Communities Officers attend the Community Partnership Group and the Byker Children and Young People’s Partnership. The officers are actively referring and signposting families to services to divert young persons from ASB. This has included signposting a family to the multi-sports sessions run by Hatrick on Tuesday evenings at the MUGA in Dalton Crescent.

“My daughter has attended one of the multi-sports sessions at the MUGA. She thought it was alright and she’ll be going down again.”

Provided **£4,260** funding to Foundation Futures to extend a youth ASB project which provides diversionary activities including trips, gaming and cooking activities. 10-15 young people are included per session.
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Working with partners to ensure that the children and young people of Byker have the best opportunities to improve educational attainment and raise aspirations, creating meaningful experiences which will enhance their outlook on life and encourage them to be the best they can be.

Community engagement events

We provided 6 free trips to customers throughout the year. Places visited included Whitehouse Farm, Gibside, Beamish Museum, Northumberland Zoo, Belsay Hall and Alnwick Gardens.

“We have enjoyed all the trips, even the National Trust ones which I never thought we would like, the kids loved it, it gets people together, get families out of the estate and creates friendships between families. I’ve made new friends from the trips.”
Byker Sands hosted an art exhibition created by young people and families from the estate.

Funding of £1,415 awarded to projects to support holiday hunger:

- **Foundations Futures** – 100 food bags provided to BCT customers
- **Byker Mutual Aid** – 500 warm meals provided to young people and their families
- **ACANE** – 140 meals provided to children attending activities during school holidays
- **Hat Trick** – 15 customer attended a two-hour session.

14 children attended a theatre school at Byker Primary School, delivered by Mendez Management in partnership with RE:GEN Group.

20 children attended sessions by Northern Cultural Projects delivering singing and song writing - [https://youtu.be/kmvzd7VhT5U](https://youtu.be/kmvzd7VhT5U)

Kids Kabin workshops delivered creative arts, crafts, pottery, woodwork and cookery classes for young people. 10 customers attended.

Glenkemp planted wildflower seeds at Byker Primary School and St. Lawrence Primary School for the children to take care of as they grow.

**£1,000 funding** was provided to Children North East Forest School to provide outdoor activities over the summer holidays. 24 children aged 5-13 attended.

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Annual BCT Christmas Card competition with children from Byker Primary School.
HARD TO REACH GROUPS

To understand our community and the people within it by identifying and working with underrepresented groups ensuring that the voice of the wider community is heard.

Community engagement events

We undertook a review of all the languages spoken on the estate and identified the top seven which includes English, Arabic, Slovak, French, Czech, Polish and Portuguese. We then arranged for the languages panel to be updated and applied to all communication material.

Community partnership funding approved for the provision of a greenhouse and accessories for the communal gardens at Mount Pleasant sheltered scheme.

£500 funding awarded to ACANE to purchase a Smart TV.

£249 funding awarded to Tom Collins House for a new TV.

15 people attended a free trip to Alnwick Gardens for over 55’s.
Wider engagement

The Elders Council are working with BCT to grow the customer engagement framework.

Older people told The Elders Council what they think would make their neighbourhood more age friendly. Examples included:

“Pavements are not lowered at St. Peters Road and middle of Commercial Road”

“Good neighbours looking out for each other”

“Advocacy is available face to face and telephone – not everyone has the internet”

Customer Care Visits relaunched to encourage engagement through Cleaning Inspectors, Grounds Maintenance Inspectors and Customer Scrutiny Panel members.

Lots of interest in Grounds Maintenance Inspectors and five new members joined the Customer Scrutiny Panel.

Consultation events

Meetings held with customers living in Dunn Terrace on wider external environmental improvement plans.

Dunn Terrace focus group leading the way on the external neighbourhood redesign.
COMMUNITY TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Working with our contractors and partners to maximise opportunities for customers and their families to access meaningful training and employment support.

Employment and educational opportunities

Three BCT customers successfully applied for grounds maintenance apprenticeships to Karbon’s New Start programme. Foundation Futures started 12-week pilot to support young people into employment and training.

Referrals to Karbon’s Foundations for Life project

72 referrals for employability advice and of those, 11 customers were supported back into work, 7 completed training courses, 7 received mental health support from our Senior Support Worker and 1 commenced volunteering.
Digital Connectivity

Working with partners to improve digital access to enable the community to get affordable online access to digital services.

Explore fibre connectivity to the Byker Estate (Coming 2023!)

Meetings held and discussions ongoing with Openreach to explore digital connectivity.

Digital Poverty and increase digital connectivity

WiFi workshops held with customers living in sheltered schemes.

752 customers access the MyKarbon portal to report repairs and make payments.
Next steps in delivering the Thriving Byker Strategy

As part of our Karbon’s refreshed approach to Placeshaping, outlined in their recently launched Fair Foundations report, Byker will become a pilot Karbon Impact Area where we’ll work in partnership with local government, health, education, community organisations and major employers to understand how we can best support and embrace a place-shaped approach to this local community offering long-term growth and prosperity.

The next steps identified are:

• Mapping with Newcastle City Council to identify gaps and need linked to commercial and community assets.

• Work with Newcastle City Council to progress the High Street Project.

• Work with public and third sector organisations to consider proposals for key assets like Byker Community Centre and other empty buildings across the Byker Estate.

• Progress the detailed designs for the 11 neighbourhoods in the external improvements project.

• Continue to work with community and voluntary partners to deliver projects and initiatives aligned to the TBS.

• Refresh the Thriving Byker Strategy to incorporate the Fair Foundations Mission.