



Plymouth Community Homes  
PCH Board

**Venue: Boardroom, Plumer House/Microsoft Teams**  
**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024**  
**Time: 5pm**

**Present in person unless indicated otherwise:**

- Valerie Lee (VL) - Chair
- Jill Gregg (JG)
- Julie White (JW) (Virtual)
- Lavinia Porfir (LP)
- Maja Jorgensen (MJ)
- Sally Haydon (SH)
- Joanne Bowden (JB)
- Emma Lovett (EL) (Virtual)

**In attendance:**

- Jonathan Cowie (JC) – Chief Executive
- Gill Martin (GM) – Executive Director of Corporate Services
- Nick Jackson (NJ) – Executive Director of Business Services & Development
- Michelle Dawson (MD) – Interim Executive Director of Homes & Communities
- John Rees (JR) – Head of Finance (Part – Virtual)
- Charlotte Edwards (CE) – Head of Strategy, Performance & Insight
- Jenny James (JJ) – Governance Assistant (Minutes)
- Lucy Rickson (LR) – Head of Governance (Virtual)
- James Hancock (JH) – Risk & Assurance Manager (Part)
- Victoria Matthews (VM) – Observing (Virtual)
- David Greenhalgh (DG) – Observing
- Alistair Smyth (AS) – National Housing Federation (Part-Virtual)

**Apologies:**

- Zoe Reilly (ZR)

<i>The meeting started at 5.00pm</i>	
<b>1. Welcomes &amp; Introductions – Confirm Quorum</b> VL welcomed everyone to the meeting which was confirmed as quorate. VM and DG were welcomed as observers. All Board members had been given the opportunity to ask questions in advance with responses being made available to all members. Board members were made aware the running order for the meeting would be moved around after feedback from the Board pre-meeting. The minutes would reflect this.	

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<p><b>2. Apologies for Absence</b> – Apologies were received from ZR.</p>	
<p><b>3. Declarations of Interest – redacted as Confidential</b></p> <p>[Redacted]</p>	
<p><b>5. Minutes of Previous Meeting Including Redactions (24<sup>th</sup> October 2024)</b>  The minutes of the previous meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024 were discussed. It was <b>confirmed</b> that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting and that they could be electronically signed by the Chair.</p> <p>In response to questions raised on the redacted minutes, it was <b>agreed</b> that the paragraph regarding Category 1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System would be reworded and unredacted.</p>	<p><b>28/24 LE</b></p>
<p><b>6. Matters Arising/Minute Action Log</b></p> <p>The Board noted that the PCH Home Standard would come to Board in 2025 after review by CIC, this would be added to the forward plan.</p>	<p><b>29/24 JJ</b></p>
<p><b>7. Efficient Decisions since last meeting – None</b></p> <p><b>Board Briefing/Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 November – Budget impact PCH and Housing Sector</li> <li>● 7 November – CO2 Update to Regulator</li> <li>● 8 November – Sector Risk Profile</li> <li>● 21 November – Gender Pay Gap</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Alistair Smyth – from NHF - Overview</b></p>	
<p>AS, Director of Policy and Research, for the National Housing Federation (NHF) presented an outlook of Social Housing Politics &amp; Policy which included updates on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Current operating environment</li> <li>● Social Housing Renewal Plan</li> <li>● Government ambitions for social housing</li> <li>● Autumn Budget</li> <li>● Rent Consultation</li> <li>● Building Safety Funding</li> <li>● Grenfell Tower Inquiry</li> <li>● Policy Reform – including updates on Rent Convergence and Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements</li> <li>● Better Social Housing Review</li> </ul>	


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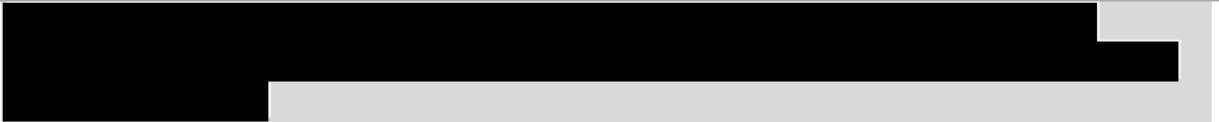



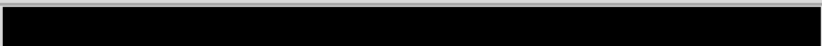
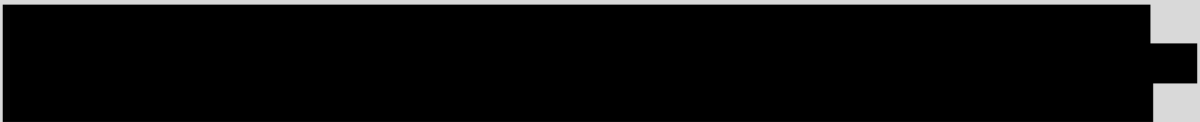
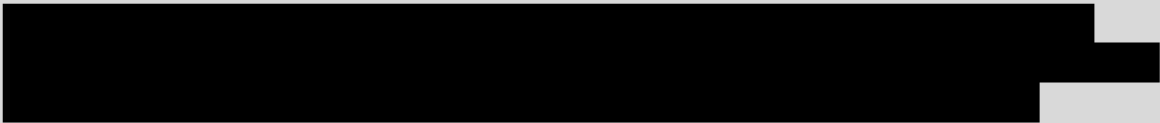





The slides of the presentation would be made available for view on Convene.	
AS left at 5.45pm.	
<b>8. Chair's Business</b>  VL gave a brief update on the Board recruitment process and confirmed that DG and VM (observers at the meeting today) were the prospective Board members. The first phase was nearly complete with efficient decisions for prospective members due to take place shortly, subject to sufficient checks.  PCH were awaiting a formal response from Plymouth City Council (PCC) regarding council nominations.	
<b>9.1. Away Day Actions</b> VL presented the report which provided the Board with a summary of the Board Strategy Days held on 21/22 November. There were four different sessions facilitated by Simon Fanshawe of Diversity by Design. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difference Exercise' where pairs identified two or three differences from their background/identity/experience, which affect the way they work.</li><li>• The power of difference within teams; how to “see difference, value it and combine it” to produce high levels of performance.</li><li>• Smaller groups work on the connection between the combination of difference in the Board that will enhance PCH's ability to achieve its goals.</li><li>• Disagreeing Well programme: an interactive exploration of how to create a culture within the Board which is “safe FOR disagreement, NOT FROM it” and using practical tools and approaches that help members to build their confidence to develop this atmosphere in the Board.</li></ul> The outcomes of the session were as follows: 1. Board skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Use our knowledge of what individual Board members bring to the Board both professionally and personally to act as “mirror” or for specific inputs e.g. Chair has a retail customer segmentation background, useful when reviewing customer insight approach at Board.</li><li>b. Actively consider the specific combinations of perspectives which would improve when making decisions.</li><li>c. Use our refined skills matrix more widely in Board meetings and consider how to ensure we recognise the different way people process information to improve decision-making e.g. individual thinking time in meetings, papers in advance, use of visuals and storytelling.</li><li>d. Consider recruiting to these skills:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treasury (finance/treasury skills being consider for new recruitment about to start)</li><li>• Regeneration</li><li>• Digital</li></ul></li></ul> 2. Board insight – agenda/papers:	

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- a. Look to include trends more in Board papers i.e. financial or performance over a 3+ year period.
  - b. Bring papers to Committees in formation stage to allow Board to shape and develop direction – to then bring back fuller detailed options to Board.
  - c. Improve the Board level dashboard and less verbatim comments i.e. develop a Board level balanced scorecard for performance and for strategy delivery, incorporating better insight.
  - d. Include key learnings where possible on things gone well/not so well – develop a learning culture in the organisation.
  - e. Customer Insight – opportunity to bring other resident voices into the Board room (or Board briefings).
  - f. Staff insight – use staff networks, etc to bring the conditions of success for different staff groups to the Board room.
  - g. Evolve CEO report to broaden overview across the organisation.
  - h. Evolve Board papers to include clear problem statement, any key principles, options for Board to consider and “where” in the process is this i.e. what milestones are next.
  - i. Review the mix of papers at Board to balance between strategy, governance/scrutiny, performance.
3. Board development:
- a. Board to review mission/vision – too broad in definition i.e. vision – “providing homes and communities where people want to live” – future away day?
  - b. Integrate new desired progressive behaviours such as being curious/inquisitive and disagreeing well into leadership JDs, appraisals and succession planning.
  - c. Arrange a team building event for early 2025 to build a new team with our many new Board members.
4. Strategic Priority One - Know and listen to our customers
- Greater segmentation of our customers. How would that then drive our decisions? How do we improve the voice of customers into Committees? Invest in digital.
  - Take a longer-term perspective on customer needs. Create a 5-year balanced scorecard of customer need.
  - At Board level how do we measure how effective we’re being? Look at trends and patterns across segments of customers. How do we define and drive the right behaviours in staff to achieve improvement in services?
  - What should we measure at different levels: Board, Exec and Team?
  - Ask residents about the “conditions of success to help you live well” rather than requesting vulnerabilities and health issues.
5. Strategic Priority Three - Maintain and improve our homes and buildings
- Ensure our social purpose is at the centre of our decision making at all times
  - Be clearer and open about conflicting investment priorities – e.g. repairs/long term maintenance. Do we ever lower a target in order to spend more on another priority (e.g. is the marginal cost of say a 2% increase in one score is not worth

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<p>the extra cost and it'd be better spent elsewhere). How to measure cost vs increased efficiency? Do we need to go through a cost effectiveness exercise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan more for the long-term</li> </ul> <p>6. Strategic Priority Four - Increase the number, type and tenure of our homes to meet a growing need for affordable housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we get a fuller picture of need? Can we be clearer on what people need?</li> <li>• We need more insight to understand the mix of tenure that would meet local need (it's not necessarily just social rent – it might be affordable or market rent)</li> <li>• How do we talk to residents to get greater 'texture' on what they need?</li> <li>• Do we need to care or is it enough to give a really good service? We need to have empathy, but that's no use without great services.</li> <li>• What data do we need at Board level – what do we want from the Exec?</li> <li>• Should we revise our mission: "A high-quality affordable home for everyone" to focus it more specifically on meeting local/regional need of current and future residents?</li> </ul>	
<p>The Board <b>approved</b> the outcomes from the Board away day.</p> <p>It was agreed that the outcomes, Board skills, Board insight and Board development would be reviewed by Governance and the Executive team. An update on the implementation would be provided to the board.</p> <p>The Strategic priority outcomes would be incorporated into the Strategic Update with a revised action plan due to come to Board in March 2025.</p>	<p>30/24 LR</p> <p>31/24 CE</p>
<p><b>9. CEO Update redacted as Confidential</b></p>	
	
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p>	

	32/24 NJ
	
The PCH Board <b>noted</b> the CEO Update.	
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All staff rejoined the meeting at this point.	
<b>10. Sector Risk Profile</b>	

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JH joined the meeting at 6.17pm	
JH, Risk & Assurance Manager, presented the Sector Risk Profile (SRP) 2024 report.  Overall, the Board were given assurance that the SRP 2024 was in alignment with PCH’s Risk Management Framework. The SRP risks could be aligned with the Strategic Risk Register (SRR), and it was believed that the levels of risk appetite were in line with what the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) would expect.  Of the twenty-one risks set out in the SRP 2024, nine risks had been noted which may impact PCH and four risks had been noted which would impact the wider sectors which the Board should be mindful of.  The Sector risks most relevant to PCH and the wider sector were as follows and a full analysis of the risk were set out in the report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial Viability</li><li>• Counter party Risk</li><li>• Health and Safety</li><li>• Existing stock quality</li><li>• Delivering services to residents</li><li>• Data Integrity</li><li>• Cost and access to skilled Labour</li><li>• Data and cyber security</li><li>• Construction process risk</li></ul> Key Risks for the wider sector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversification</li><li>• Rental Income and arrears</li><li>• Low-Cost home ownership and market sales</li><li>• Fixed asset sales</li></ul>	
<b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b>  The Board discussed the sector risk profiles and the risks that had been highlighted – it was important risk ratings on the Strategic Risk Register moving forward clearly set out clarity of the actions, the mitigations and the realistic impact of these on the scores. Board and committees would actively challenge and scrutinise in these areas.	
The PCH Board <b>noted</b> the Sector Risk Profile 2024.	
JH left the meeting at 6.32pm	
<b>11. Budget Considerations- redacted as Confidential</b>	
	

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[Redacted content]

33/24  
JB/JR


	
The PCH Board <b>noted</b> the Budget Considerations.	
JR left the meeting at 7.10pm	
<b>12. 2024/25 Mid year Tenant Satisfaction Measures Report</b>	
<p>CE, Head of Strategy, Performance &amp; Insight, presented the report which contained the mid-year results for the Regulator’s Tenant Satisfaction Measures for 2024/25. The measures were split between customer perception and management information metrics and gave a rounded view of how PCH were performing as a landlord, and comparisons to others through the end of year benchmark exercise carried out by Housemark.</p> <p>Overall, PCH performed very well against the customer perception measures, with overall satisfaction being in the top 5 landlords in the Housemark benchmark exercise. However, there had been some decreases in satisfaction across a variety of perception measures and there was now the capability to better understand and act upon the customer comments being made through the survey fieldwork and over the coming months this would be combined with transactional survey data to give a rounded analysis of what tenants are saying to PCH and about PCH.</p> <p>For the management information metrics, there continued to be strong performance in the building safety compliance theme, with only a small number of homes without certification due to non-access which were being robustly followed up. There was still more to do on complaints and complaint handling and the creation of a Customer Care Team would enable improved co-ordination of complaint handling and ensuring that promised actions were delivered effectively.</p> <p>There had been an increase in anti-social behaviour volumes compared to the same period last year and this is an area where PCH need to understand more in terms of volumes and reasons why volumes had increased. Also needing to be addressed were the issues raised by customers around how PCH handle anti-social behaviour, in particular the perceptions about PCH not acting upon concerns and feeling fobbed off by the Housing Officer.</p> <p>The final key area focused on was repairs: there continued to be challenges with increased volumes of repairs and how these were prioritised (there were many more job types assigned to the Emergency category than others as an example) and then the knock-on effect this has on job scheduling and operative availability. This had been further impacted upon by the recent stock condition survey which identified a few catch-up repairs which had since been booked in for resolving.</p> <p>Before the end of the financial year, there would be a workshop held with the senior managers responsible for the frontline services to determine what further course of</p>	

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<p>action is required to enable improvements, in particular with the perception measures, repairs, complaint handling and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>A clear plan to address the issues relation to anti-social behaviour, complaints, and repairs would be brought to the next meeting of the Customer Focus Committee (CFC) in January 2025.</p>	<p><b>34/24</b> <b>CE/MD</b></p>
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p>	
<p>The Board were updated that the TSM’s national benchmarks had been received, the top and lowest performing TSM’s were presented to the Board. The full suite of TSM’s and their ranking were detailed in the presentation and were available for the Board to view on Convene.</p> <p>The Board were given assurance that the lowest performing TSM’s were being looked at by the appropriate departments and the action plans to address these would be presented to CFC in January 2025. Plans were progressing to make improvements to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) which included recruitment to ASB roles, improvement to case management and work on how ASB is categorised.</p> <p>It was noted that changes to the repairs category made previously had not yielded the intended improvements and that this would continue to be monitored by CFC.</p>	<p><b>35/24</b> <b>IH</b></p>
<p>The PCH Board <b>noted</b> the updated Tenant Satisfaction Measures results.</p>	
<p><b>13. Environmental Strategy – Annual Monitoring</b></p>	
<p>CE, Head of Strategy, Performance &amp; Insight, presented the report to update the Board on progress with the delivery of the Environmental Strategy which came into effect in November 2021.</p> <p>A lot of work was taking place to understand PCH’s current position to inform the roadmap to net zero. The roadmap will model the effect that planned actions would have on the carbon footprint of areas of the business to ensure targets are met and identify opportunities to implement further changes.</p> <p>The carbon footprint of housing stock had been calculated for the first time, estimated around 28.5k tonnes of CO2e per annum, which would allow the impact of energy improvement works to be measured in terms of carbon reduction.</p> <p>The 2023/24 ESG report had been published and included a new structure to make it more accessible, while still confirming to the Sustainable Reporting Standard.</p>	
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p>	

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It was noted that revisions to the report were needed, included details on outcomes and impact measurements. Confirmation of timescales and next steps would be sought and added to the forward plan.	<b>36/24 CE</b>
The PCH Board <b>noted</b> the strategy updates.	
<b>15. Committee Minutes – Chair’s Updates of these meetings provided at Board</b> 1. PCHR 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2. CFC 1 <sup>st</sup> November	
<b>16. Customer Focus Committee Chairs Update 1<sup>st</sup> November</b> MJ, Chair of Customer Focus Committee, had provided a written update to the Board on the meeting which took place on 1 <sup>st</sup> November 2024.	
<b>17. CIC Committee Chairs Update 25<sup>th</sup> November</b> JW, Chair of Capital Investment Committee, had provided a written update to the Board on the meeting which took place on 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2024.	
<b>18. Forward Plan &amp; How did we do</b>	
The Board noted the Forward Plan for 2025.  The Board reflected on the meeting and agreed there was good awareness of the bigger picture in the sector as well as good focus on strategic oversights across PCH, including budget and development. There was good contribution from all Board members and observers. Assurance was given when challenges were presented, and there was good encouragement for Board members to offer further challenge through Boards and Committees, especially regarding risk.  Officers were reminded to be mindful when using acronyms and provide clarification when necessary.	
<b>Date of next meeting: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2025</b>	
The meeting closed at 7.55pm	

Signature..........Valerie Lee – Chair

Date ...6<sup>th</sup> February 2025...

Certified as a true copy ..........Lucy Rickson, Head of Governance

Date...6<sup>th</sup> February 2025.....