



**Plymouth Community Homes
Customer Focus Committee**

Venue: Plumer House/Microsoft Teams

Date: 2nd August 2024

Time: 11am

Present in person unless stated otherwise:

- Lavinia Porfir (LP) – Chair
- Zoe Reilly (ZR)
- Joanne Bowden (JB)
- Mel Gallagher (MG) – CFC Co-optee
- Tracy Lowings (TL) – CFC Co-optee
- Louise Webb (LW) – CFC Co-optee
- Clare Stevens (CS) – CFC Co-optee

In attendance:

- Tracy Smith (TS) – Director of Homes and Communities
- James Hancock (JH) – Risk and Assurance Manager (Part)
- James Revell (JR) – Head of Customer Experience
- Charlotte Edwards (CE) – Head of Strategy, Performance & Insight
- Nicola Kingston (NK) – Head of Income, Commercial & Home Ownership
- Lucy Rickson (LR) – Head of Governance
- Leanne Eastwood (LE) – Governance Officer
- Jenny James (JJ) – Governance Assistant (Minutes)

Apologies:

- Gaynor Southerton (GS)
- Maja Jorgensen (MJ)

1. Welcome and Introductions	
Confirm Quorum	
<i>The meeting started at 11.00am</i>	
LP welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was confirmed as quorate.	
2. Apologies for Absence	
Apologies were received from GS & MJ.	

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3. Declarations of Interest	
LP, JB, MG, TL, LW and CS have standing declarations as Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) tenants which were noted.	
4. Minutes of Previous meeting (10th May 2024)	
<p>The minutes of the previous Committee meeting were discussed, and it was agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting and could be electronically signed by the Chair.</p> <p>No redactions were proposed to the minutes; they would be uploaded to the PCH website following the meeting.</p>	
5. Chair's Urgent Business	
There was no Chair's Urgent Business	
6. Matters Arising	
<p>A verbal update was given on the following items on the action log:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">59/05/24 – <i>The Committee discussed the reduction in number of complainants being contacted following a complaint and it was agreed that this would be looked at internally to see how it could be improved.</i> <p>The Committee were updated that since the last report the number of surveys completed had gone up from 13 to 39, however, this was not a reflection of the number of people that had been contacted. As part of a review of the complaints process, work would be done to look at how to improve the success rate of contact and how to capture data in different ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">60/05/24 – <i>It was agreed that a review of the communication around when a complainant could contact the Housing Ombudsman would be carried out to ensure residents are fully aware of the process.</i> <p>The Committee were informed that some updates had been added to the PCH website, however, as part of the review of the complaints process this would be looked at again to ensure all the information was available and accessible to as many people as possible, including those who do not use social media and technology, and ensuring the right language and terminology is used.</p> <p>These updates would be recorded on the action log.</p>	JJ 1/24
7. Decisions since the last meeting: None	
8. Briefing Papers (for information) circulated since the last meeting:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Ownership Policies and Fees 	
<p>9. CFC Risks</p>	
<p>JH, Risk and Assurance Manager, presented the updated Customer Experience Strategic Risk. This risk is one of thirteen risks within the Strategic Risk Register (SRR). The latest update was completed in July 2024 and was first presented to the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) on 16th July 2024 and has since been presented to PCH Main Board on 25th July 2025.</p> <p>The Customer Experience Strategic risk was last presented to the Committee on 10th May 2024. Appendix 1 included the redacted SRR with all changes highlighted in red.</p> <p>Risk Score The Risk Rating score for the Customer Experience Strategic Risk remained (3,2) 6. This means it is considered to have a <i>Serious (3)</i> impact but is <i>Unlikely (2)</i>.</p> <p>Assurance & Risk Appetite The Associated Risk Categories and Level of Risk Appetite include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Customer: <u>Open</u></i> • <i>Data Management: <u>Balanced</u></i> • <i>Data Security: <u>Balanced</u></i> • <i>Reputation, Trust & Transparency: <u>Open</u></i> • <i>Governance, Legal & Compliance: <u>Cautious</u></i> <p>This risk continues to have <i>Green</i> assurance indicating the risk is well within tolerable levels and meets the levels of risk appetite above.</p> <p>Updates to Risk Mitigations This risk is also closely linked to two of PCH’s top 5 priorities, ‘<i>Know and Listen to Customers</i>’ and ‘<i>Deliver Outstanding Services for Customers</i>’. Additional measures are now in place to improve understanding of how to manage the risk. These include the National Customer Satisfaction Key Performance Indicators (UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI)) and confirmation of our Customer Service Excellence assessment accreditation.</p> <p>Further actions have been identified to further mitigate this risk and these are included in the Risk Context and SMART actions Sections of the report. However, one action in particular that the Committee were asked to note was the transfer of customer related activity to the Homes & Communities Directorate from 1st July 2024.</p> <p>There were no emerging risks noted for inclusion.</p>	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p>	

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<p>During the risk management briefing session that took place just prior to the meeting, the Committee discussed the risk appetite and it was noted that the ‘Open’ risk appetite currently held for Customer was deemed appropriate however it was important this was reviewed regularly to ensure this is the right approach for PCH.</p> <p>The Committee discussed customer satisfaction and benchmarking against peers and assurance was given that PCH had higher overall satisfaction than top organisations in the private sector. It was noted that there is ongoing work taking place looking at benchmarking against wider services, not just the housing sector.</p> <p>It was agreed that the controls regarding ground maintenance could be removed as it is no longer applicable to CFC.</p> <p>The Committee noted that one of the aims of the new complaints process would be to provide consistency in terms of responses, and work would be done to see whether links could be made with the Virtual Resident Advisors (formerly Armchair Advisors) as part of the review process. As part of this, the Committee also discussed the important of grammar and spelling checks, as well as ensuring all communications are personal to the recipient. It was agreed that feedback would be given to the Communications team to include this advice into their Write Right training.</p>	<p>JH 2/24</p> <p>JR 3/24</p> <p>JJ 4/24</p>
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the CFC Risks.</p>	
<p><i>JH left the meeting at 11.35pm.</i></p>	
<p>10. Customer Experience – Verbal update</p>	
<p>JR, Interim Head of Customer Experience, introduced himself to the Committee and gave a verbal update on the progress that had been made within the customer experience team.</p> <p>Customer Experience moved from Corporate Services to Housing and Neighbourhoods from 1 July 2024. JR is the interim head of service with a permanent member of staff to be recruited.</p> <p>The Committee noted that a full review of the complaint process was taking place, looking at all aspects of the complaints journey, including the contact centre, repairs and responses. An external consultant had been commissioned to help with the review, the results of which would be used to help create a more joined up approach to resident interaction and customer service. As part of the review there were a number of quick fixes that could be implemented within the next few weeks and details of the review and new processes would come back</p>	<p>JR/JJ 5/24</p>

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<p>to the next CFC meeting and at this time a briefing would be provided to all PCH Board Members as well.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the importance of moving away from the negative narrative surrounding making a complaint, noting that more visibility from Housing Officers may help generate more organic conversation where residents could feel more comfortable discussing any issues they have. It was confirmed that neighbourhood walkabouts had been reintroduced, a list of the areas and dates had been published on the website, and it was agreed this would be checked to ensure it is correct and up to date.</p>	<p>TS 6/24</p>
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Customer Experience – Verbal Update.</p>	
<p>11. Performance Update</p>	
<p>CE, Head of Strategy, Performance and Insight, presented the Q1 2024/25 Performance Update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There continued to be challenges with repair completions within timeframes as a result of a 7% increase in repairs being reported, higher complexities of repairs and vacancies/absence in the operation teams. The Head of Repairs, Voids and Compliance is developing a plan to bring this back into line, and the Executive Team are reviewing this at their meetings.• Current tenant arrears remain very low in spite of the mandatory transition to Universal Credit commencing in Plymouth. There had been no evictions for rent arrears during the quarter.• Void turnaround times had increased over 30 days; there had been a number of longer term voids being re-let which has an impact, along with a number of new homes coming online and annual leave. Whilst the letting period for new homes is not part of this measure, the increased volume has an impact on the lettings team which can affect letting of existing homes.• Compliance measures performed well overall; there had been a small increase in the number of no-accessed properties for gas servicing, but these are being taken through the legal process to gain access.• Customer perception measures had generally reduced by a small amount, which also occurred in Q1 in the previous year. A deep dive into the 2023/24 data was carried out and gave some pointers to investigate further with the aim of developing a clear plan to address these areas.	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p> <p>The Committee discussed the work being carried out by Wordnerds, who process the responses to understand the sentiment (positive and negative); and it was confirmed that results were being reviewed and there were some</p>	

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<p>emerging themes already developing. An overview of the results, plus an action plan to address the issues, would be brought to the next meeting.</p> <p>The repair completion times were also discussed, and it was noted that some of the main challenges for repairs being completed out of time were related to staffing levels and not having access to the properties. The Committee were given assurance that work was being done to help address both these issues, including ongoing recruitment and improvements to internal systems for booking/re-booking appointments.</p> <p>In regards to the levels of dissatisfaction around the handling of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) it was agreed that more information about how PCH approaches and handles ASB would be brought back to CFC as either a paper or briefing note.</p>	<p>CE 7/24</p> <p>CE 8/24</p>
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Performance Update.</p>	
<p>12. Supporting Residents (Welfare Reform) - Confidential</p>	
<p>NK, Head of Income, Commercial & Home Ownership, presented the report on supporting residents (welfare reform).</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The first phase of Managed Migration has been completed. This means that the next phase has been brought forward and is due to complete by the end of September 2024 instead of March 2025.</p> <p>The final phase of Managed Migration is due to be completed by the end of December 2025 instead of March 2029.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	

<p>[REDACTED]</p>	
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	
<p>[REDACTED]</p>	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p> <p>Following discussions it was agreed that a briefing session would be organised with NK and interested Committee members to gain a deeper understanding of the PCH and general processes related to Universal Credit.</p>	<p>NK/JJ 9/24</p>
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Supporting Residents (Welfare Reform) report.</p>	
<p><i>NK & JR left the meeting at 12.30pm.</i></p>	
<p>13. How did we do? Did we deliver our objectives?</p>	
<p>The Committee reflected on the meeting and agreed it was a good meeting where everyone was able to ask questions and received appropriate responses and assurance when needed.</p>	
<p>14. Agenda Forward Plan</p>	
<p>The Agenda Forward Plan was presented to the Committee for information.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Agenda Forward Plan.</p>	
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Next Meeting: 8 th November 2024 (note: an extra meeting will be booked in September to consider the suite of Service Standards).	
<i>The meeting closed at: 12.31pm.</i>	



Signature

Lavinia Porfir – Chair

Date 08/11/2024



Certified as a true copy

Lucy Rickson, Head of Governance

Date 08/11/2024