



Plymouth Community Homes Board
Microsoft Teams
20th May 2021 at 5pm

Present:

Debbie Roche (DR) (Vice Chair) - Chairing meeting
Simon Ashby (SA)
Graham Clayton (GC)
Lavinia Porfir (LP)
Liz Nicolls (LN)
Graham Stirling (GS)
Maddi Bridgeman (MB)
Valerie Lee (VL)
Julie White (JW)

In attendance:

John Clark (JC) Chief Executive
Nick Jackson (NJ) Director of Business Services and Development
Carl Brazier (CB) Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods
Belinda Pascoe (BP) Head of Governance
Charlotte Edwards (CE) Head of Strategy, Performance and Policy – part
Leanne Eastwood (LE) Governance Officer – Minutes

Apologies:

Gill Martin (GM) Director of Corporate Services
Nick Lewis (NL) Chair

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| 1. | Welcome and Introductions - Confirm Quorum | |
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| | <i>The meeting started at 5:00pm</i> | |
| | DR welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was confirmed as quorate. All Board members had been given the opportunity to ask questions before the meeting via email with responses being circulated to all Board members ahead of the meeting and forming an appendix to these minutes. Amended versions of the relevant questions are included within the minutes for brevity. | |
| 2. | Apologies for Absence | |
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| | Apologies for absence had been received from GM & NL | |
| 3. | Declarations of Interest | |
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| | The guidance on declaring an interest was noted as there were a number of standing declarations- additional declarations had been provided to the governance team which were not relevant to these papers. | |
| 4. | Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 25th March 2021 | |

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| | The minutes from the meeting on the 25 th March 2021 were discussed, and it was confirmed that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting and that they could be electronically signed by the Chair. | |
| 5. | Redacted written resolutions of Previous Meeting: 25th March 2021 | |
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| | The proposed redactions were reviewed and these were then approved by the PCH Board these will be published on the PCH Website in line with the PCH Transparency policy. | |
| 6. | Matters Arising | |
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| | There were no matters arising. | |
| 7. | Minute Action Log and Resolution Tracker | |
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| | The Minute Action Log and Resolution Tracker were reviewed and it was agreed that dates for completions for actions from the Away day report would be confirmed for the July board meeting. | |
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| | The following questions were raised and answered: | |
| | Minute Action Log 79/03/21 What are the implications for PCH following the change of leadership at PCC. | |
| | It is too early to say what the implications on PCH of change in political leadership will be. We will look to meet with the new administration at the earliest opportunity to assess their appetite for the existing arrangements or to extend/accelerate them. | |
| 8. | Decisions since last meeting | |
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| | There have been five Efficient Decisions made since the last meeting which were: | |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shareholding Membership for Nigel Pitt – 8th April 2021 2. PCH Manufacturing Services Chair Extension, GS – 19th April 2021 3. Appointment of the new Chair of Development Committee, JW – 20th April 2021 4. Appointment of Temporary Company Secretary – 30th April 2021 5. Rent Setting/Affordable Rent – 5th May 2021 | |
| 9. | Briefing papers since last meeting | |
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| | There have been no briefing papers since the last meeting. | |
| 10. | Chairs Urgent Business | |

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| | In the interests of transparency the chair updated the rest of the board on a confidential matter relating to the -potential opportunity to acquire additional stock in the Plymouth area. | |
| 11. | Committee Minutes Circulated | |
| | Development Committee – 18 th March 2021 Audit and Risk Committee – 11 th May 2021 - | |
| 12. | Development Committee Chairs Update (13th May 2021) - including items which are being brought to this meeting for Board information | |
| | <p>JW presented her update to the board as the new Chair of Development Committee.</p> <p>The committee where given an update on the Silver Hill’s joint venture which was progressing well and it was expected that the first properties would be ready for handover in Feb 21.</p> <p>The format of the Development update was undergoing a review and some of the first changes were included in the report presented this evening. Lots of great news within the Development programme -however particular note should be made of the performance against the Homes England targets which PCH had achieved in all but one area on unit handover- this was understandable due to the Covid pandemic. Whilst there had been some delays to S/O handovers the sales receipts far exceed that which was projected within the business plan.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the Development Risk Register and included a new risk to be managed relating to the concern that we would not be able to identify enough new sites to deliver on the 2022/2025 Development programme with the post Covid land boom.</p> <p>The Annual Resident Design Survey Feedback was presented to the committee which saw a decrease in PCH’s overall score to 84.5% of residents being satisfied or very satisfied with their homes. This decline against the 93.2% average was partially due to low scoring S106 projects which pre-dated the adoption of the minimum specification for properties which the Dev com approved in 2018.</p> | |
| 12.1 | Redacted as Commercially sensitive Development Update and KPIs | |
| | <p>The development update was provided to the board to enable them to monitor progress across all PCH Development programmes this had also been reviewed at Development committee on the 13 May 2021.</p> <p></p> | |

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| | <p>The following questions were raised and answered:</p> <p>What can be done about the shortfall in apprenticeships [REDACTED] given that they look unlikely to meet the target?</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] also reviewing which apprenticeships they have had actually working on site and are considering directly providing further work experience placements. Contractually we have limited scope to enforce these requirements but are actively investigating options with Employers Agent.</p> | |
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| | The PCH Board noted the Development Update and KPIs. | |
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| 13. | Customer Focus Committee Chairs Update (7th May 2021) | |
| | <p>LP updated the Board on the recent CFC meeting which had received an update on Regeneration/Asset Management performance. One of the areas that had been highlighted was the 134 outstanding actions from the Fire Risk assessments which related to leaseholder property fire doors. There were a number of reasons for this such as unable to gain access or the Leaseholder has sub-let the property and lives elsewhere, sometimes not locally. Board member will recall from our recent briefing that PCH do not have a legal right of entry initially.</p> <p>The Committee were also updated on the modernisation works that have been completed at Teats Hill and Frankfort Gate. It was discussed and agreed that consideration would be given to explore the possibility of conducting surveys with residents prior to embarking on a modernisation project in their community and upon completion to measure satisfaction. The survey could support the objective in tackling social housing stigma and assist in measuring social value.</p> <p>The Resident Review process has been continuing and the Steering group have identified the next topic for review PCH Contractors – Review communications between key PCH contractors and residents – are there issues and how could this be improved?’</p> <p>There had been an update on the MyPCH portal which had now had sign ups from 45% of residents (the target remaining at 60%)</p> | |
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| 14. | Redacted as Commercially Sensitive. PCH Manufacturing Services Chairs Update (12th May 2021) | |
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| | [REDACTED] | |

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| 15. | Audit & Risk Committee Chairs Update (11th May 2021) - including items which are being brought to this meeting for Board approval | |
| | <p>LN provided an overview of the Audit & Risk Committee meeting which took place on the 11 May 2021. A draft copy of the minutes for this meeting were included in the board pack however it was important that Board members are aware of the two items which are being brought to board for approval this evening which have been reviewed in detail by the committee.</p> <p>The committee had also received a comprehensive update on Fire Safety management the report highlighted the areas of progress achieved to date, and other fire safety measures underway within PCH stock. The report</p> | |

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| | <p>outlined the legal duties placed on PCH under the Fire Safety Order (FSO) 2005 and the Housing Act 2004.</p> <p>Mazars also attended the meeting to present the annual Internal Auditors report which concluded that PCH have in place an appropriate framework for identifying, evaluating and managing risks faced by the organisation. It was also noted that the recommendation implementation rate had risen to 70% for 2020/21 – whilst this felt short of the 85% target which Mazars felt constituted best practice it was understood that the outstanding 6 recommendations were of a minor priority therefore not vastly consequential to the organisation at this time. It was noted that recommendations were implemented within the context of COVID-19 challenges which resulted in a prioritisation of actions in some cases.</p> | |
| <p>15.1</p> | <p>Internal Controls Assurance</p> | |
| | <p>BP presented the Internal Controls report to the Board approval. The Internal controls framework was presented to the Board annually following scrutiny at Audit and Risk Committee.(11 May 2021)</p> <p>The report is intended to highlight any control weaknesses, and provide assurance to the Board that effective internal controls are in place in the Association.</p> | |
| | <p>The following questions were raised and answered:</p> <p>Will there be an opportunity to review skills training for NED’s? Yes absolutely – we will review learning and development for Board members and report back</p> <p>An amendment was made to the assurance level for Treasury management on page 9 which should read substantial.</p> <p>Do we know how many attempted frauds have been identified in the past by PCH staff directly? Potential fraud cases can be identified by residents, PCH staff, PCC and partner agencies. Our records confirm that since 2015 we have investigated and closed 74 sub-letting fraud cases, 62 non occupation fraud cases, 49 benefit fraud cases, 14 allocation fraud cases, 2 mutual exchanges and 6 tenancy succession fraud cases. We currently have 15 benefit fraud cases, 13 sub-letting cases, 14 none occupation cases and 1 Right to Buy case under investigation.</p> <p>Which are the most important actions put in place to prevent tenancy fraud? Pre- Tenancy assessments and checked confirm application facts. We have a dedicated fraud reporting email that is available on our web site which is duly monitored and information is then reviewed by the housing teams</p> | |

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| | <p>Do Housing Officers have an active role into this as they are the ones who know the tenants from their area?</p> <p>Yes- Housing teams receive in-house and corporate training relating to tenancy fraud. Housing officers complete the initial investigations prior to making an official fraud referral to Devon Audit Partnership (DAP) .PCH meet with DAP every six weeks to discuss current cases, seek advice and support. Enabling DAP to progress criminal prosecutions in relation to Social Housing Fraud. There are two Housing Officers who are PCH's Tenancy Fraud Champions.</p> <p>We provide awareness on tenancy fraud for residents and we have published articles within In Touch magazine and reported on numerous cases work on our social media and web page.</p> <p>Financial Regulations & Delegations were last comprehensively reviewed in 2016 and CSO in 2018. Confirmation was provided that We keep these under regular review and update as required. Updates for delegations and CSO will be coming during 2021</p> <p>Whistleblowing policy was last reviewed in 2016 and has been identified (through the implementation plan for the new Code of Governance) for review. Normally this would go to ARC for approval, but it can certainly be reviewed at Board.</p> <p>Resident Scrutiny: Confirmation was provided that The Scrutiny Steering Group have been meeting since November following the recruitment of three new members. As a result of a long listing exercise that the SSG completed, tenants were encouraged to vote for the next scrutiny topic – with Interactions between PCH contractors and residents being selected as the topic for the next review.</p> | <p>MS</p> <p>BP</p> |
| | <p>The PCH Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Noted that the Audit and Risk Committee discussed this report at its meeting on 11th May 2021 2) Accepted the contents of this report as assurance of the effectiveness of the internal controls framework | |
| <p>15.2</p> | <p>Compliance with Governance and Financial Viability Standard</p> | |
| | <p>BP presented the report which aimed to provide assurance to the Board regarding compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard. The Board is required (as part of the standard) to certify compliance with the standard in the annual accounts.</p> <p>The report included a number of appendices which explained in more detail how the various aspects of the Governance and Financial Viability standard are met.</p> | |

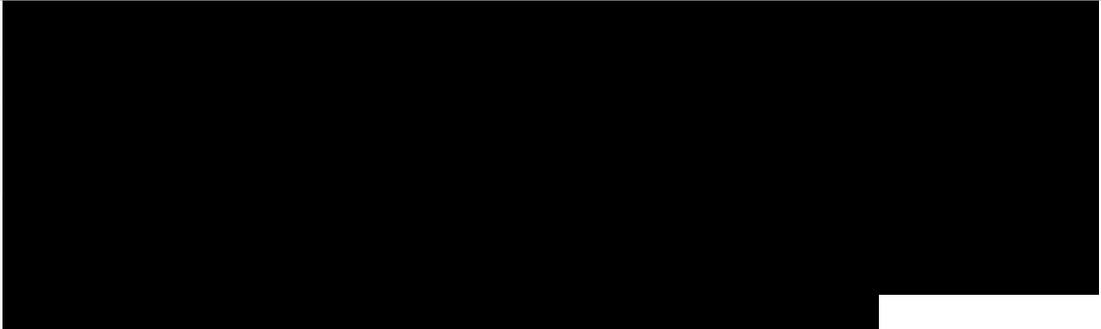
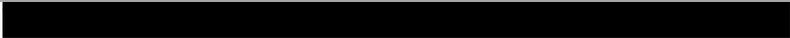
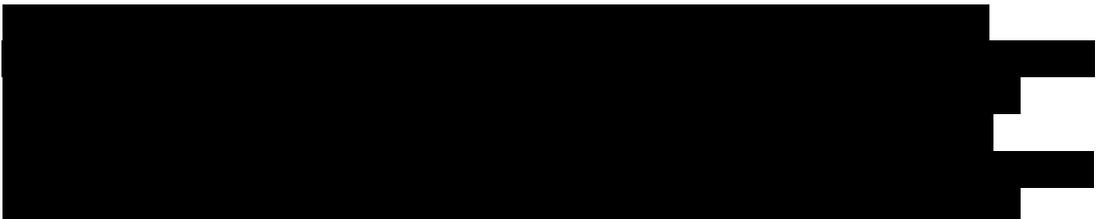
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| | <p>The report and appendices were scrutinised by Audit and Risk Committee on the 11th May 2021 and can provide assurance that the Association complies with the Standard. The committee also recommends that the Board certifies compliance in the PCH annual accounts for 2020/21.</p> | |
| | <p>At the meeting the following was discussed:</p> <p>The changes within the new adopted code of governance were discussed in particular the requirement for Equality Diversity and Inclusion to be actively managed at board level and how we envisage this to look.</p> <p>The ED&I strategy for the organization was in the process of being reviewed and within this there will sections relating to the board including its own diversity and the role of the board in delivering the strategy. The terms of reference for the remuneration panel have been expanded to include this and once the strategy has been approved there will be a much broader discussion around this.</p> <p>PCH has been part of the NHF's current national and regional work in this area so that providers can understand what this means in practice and how we will deliver the requirement.</p> | |
| | <p>The PCH Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Assured itself that PCH is compliant with the Governance and Financial Viability standard2) Agreed that it can certify compliance in the PCH annual accounts for 2020/21 | |
| 16. | Redacted as Confidential Q4 (Year-end) Management Accounts | |
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| | <p>The PCH Board noted the draft outturn to 31st March 2021 prior to statutory and other late adjustments.</p> | |
| 17.1 | <p>Redacted as Confidential Q4 and Annual Treasury Management Update</p> | |
| | <p>[Redacted]</p> | |

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18. Q4 and Annual Performance Report

CE presented the report to the PCH Board to give an update on performance for the end of year position for 2020/21. It was also explained that as we work towards meeting the requirements of the Together with Tenants Charter and the Social Housing White Paper, the Board was presented with an additional suite of performance indicators relating to building safety for the 2020/21 financial year.

Q4 2020/21 Performance Report:

The headline performance results were as follows:

- Green: 10
- Amber: 4
- Red: 2

Overall the organisation had performed well over the past year, and has been able to sustain high levels of performance across a wide range of core services.

There were particular challenges with void turnaround related to the pandemic, which was being addressed via a review of the process as the restrictions were lifted with the aim of working back towards achieving the target of 20 calendar days.

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| | <p>The other area off target is new build handover which is due to delays on site and issues with land ownership at Chaucer Way. The remaining homes are due to be handed over during Q1 of 2021/22.</p> <p>Q4 2020/21 Landlord and Resident Health and Safety Report:</p> <p>To summarise our performance on a range of building safety indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 99.95% of homes with a gas supply had a valid gas safety check (7 properties outstanding at the end of the year).- All 9 communal water systems in sheltered blocks were risk assessed during the year.- All 169 communal water systems in blocks of all types were monitored and checked on a monthly basis.- 99.96% of homes have an asbestos management plan, there are 5 properties without a plan and all are subject to tenancy action to gain access.- The condition of asbestos in every communal area was checked during the year.- All fire risk assessments are up to date. There are 134 individual actions which are overdue which all relate to leaseholder fire doors.- All passenger lifts were serviced during the year and are inspected monthly.- All smoke alarm systems have been checked during the year either as part of the annual gas servicing visit or via a separate visit for homes without gas.- All homes have carbon monoxide detectors and we are finalising a programme to install additional detectors in homes where there is a boiler in a bedroom. | |
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| | <p>The following questions were raised and answered:</p> <p>In regards to the plan to add carbon monoxide alarms to bedrooms which house a boiler. This seems quite high risk? Are we doing this as quickly as possible?</p> <p>We plan to complete the works by the end of October 21 subject to being able to gain access to the properties. Currently there is no legislative requirement to have carbon monoxide detectors in bedrooms and where there are boilers the risk is low due to modern boilers being room sealed and extract air from outside to burn as part of the combustion process. There is an expectation that this is going to become legislation, but may not be as specific as having carbon monoxide detectors in bedrooms where there are boilers.</p> <p>Are the numbers of Universal Credit cases amongst residents are still increasing? They did increase at the beginning of lockdown in March 2020 however over the past 12 months to mid-May 2021, the increase in numbers has returned to more normal and stable levels. For the year to mid-May</p> | |

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| | <p>2021, the average increase was around 17 per week. This is a net figure of new claims</p> <p>Additionally at the meeting the following was discussed:</p> <p>The Board noted that for the Annual report it would be useful to see long term trends to help clarify around our performance year on year.</p> <p>Reporting against ASB was discussed and assurance was given that this was monitoring closing on an operational level- with the chair of CFC confirming that it is reports through CFC with PCH recently achieving 100% satisfaction levels against the target of 90%.</p> | <p>CE</p> |
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| | <p>The PCH Board noted the performance outturns for Q4 2020/21.</p> | |
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| <p>19.</p> | <p>Redacted as Confidential Business Plan with updated Stress Testing including Business Plan Validation</p> | |
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| 20. | Terms of Reference – Remuneration Panel | |
| | The terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee have been reviewed for the PCH Board to consider, following discussions at the Board away day and also at the Succession planning working group meeting on the 1 st March 2021. | |
| | <p>The following questions were raised and answered:</p> <p>It was agreed that 1.2.2 would be amended to be phrased the same as 1.2.1 to read :</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The “in case of dispute” phase is in the terms of reference for all the committees and the subsidiary boards - it was originally inserted in 2011 on the basis that it was good practice (I think the recommendation came from the Institute of Chartered Secretaries). I can remove it, but it does mean that there is a consistent approach in all the terms of reference.</p> <p>As there now there are more duties the committee will meet a minimum of twice a year.</p> | |
| | The PCH Board agreed the reviewed terms of reference for the Remuneration Committee presented in Appendix A of the report. | |
| 21. | Forward Plan | |
| | The forward plan was reviewed by the Board and it was agreed that a review the forward plan format and include a list of reports that each board /committee should see throughout the year. | LE |
| 22. | Date of Next Meeting: 29th July 2021 | |
| | <i>Meeting closed at 6:53pm</i> | |

Signature.....Nick Lewis, Chair

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Date

Certified as a true copyBelinda Pascoe, Head of Governance

Date.....