



**Plymouth Community Homes Board  
Board Room, Plumer House and Microsoft Teams  
25 May 2023 at 5:00 pm**

**Present in person unless stated:**

Valerie Lee (VL) Chair  
Debbie Roche (DR) (Vice Chair)  
Lavinia Porfir (LP)  
Liz Nicolls (LN)  
Graham Clayton (GC)  
Maja Jorgensen (MJ)- Virtual  
Sally Haydon (SH)  
Tasawar Nawaz (TN) -Virtual  
Jill Gregg (JG)- Virtual

**In attendance:**

John Clark (JC) – Chief Executive  
Nick Jackson (NJ) – Director of Business Services and Development  
Gill Martin (GM) – Director of Corporate Services  
Charlotte Edwards (CE) – Head of Strategy, Performance and Policy- Part  
John Rees (JR) – Head of Finance  
Sally Foden (SF) – Head of HR- Part  
Lucy Rickson (LR) - Head of Governance  
Leanne Eastwood (LE) – Governance Officer (Minutes)  
Jenny Brown (JB) – Altair Consultant - Part

**Observers:**

[Redacted]  
[Redacted]  
[Redacted]

**Apologies:**

Julie White (JW)  
Peter Nourse (PN)

1	<b>Welcome and Introductions Confirm Quorum</b>	
	<i>The meeting started at 5:00pm</i>	
01/05/23	VL welcomed everyone to the meeting including observers who were shortlisted candidates for the vacant Board member role and returning Board GC & SH, which was confirmed as quorate.	

	<p>JB from Altair was also in attendance to answer any questions on the Governance Review report.</p> <p>All Board members had been given the opportunity to ask questions in advance via email with responses being circulated to all members ahead of this meeting and attached as an appendix to these minutes.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
02/05/23	There were apologies for absence from JW & PN.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
03/05/23	The guidance on declaring an interest was noted.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous meeting (23 March 2023) including redactions</b>	
04/05/23	The minutes from the meeting on the 23 March 2023 were discussed, some minor grammatical amendments had been suggested ahead of the Board meeting which had been incorporated. It was therefore <b>confirmed</b> that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting and that they could be electronically signed by the Chair.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
05/05/23	There were no matters arising.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Minute action log &amp; resolution tracker</b>	
06/05/23	<p>The Minute Action Log was reviewed.</p> <p>It was agreed to close:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20/11/22 Risk appetite review</li> <li>• 62/03/23 stress testing decarbonisation</li> </ul> <p>and to extend to July 23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 54/02/23 Clarity around housing management costs. An update was given to Board that there are two different measures (both correct) of this figure and the Board will be given the opportunity in July to decide which to use moving forward. This will be amended on the action log.</li> </ul>	
<b>7</b>	<b>Decisions since last meeting (refer to Resolutions on Convene for details)</b>	
07/05/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 28/03/23 Southway Land Purchase</li> <li>• 3/4/23 Graham Clayton Extension</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3/4/23 CEO Recruitment process</li> <li>• 13/4/23 Board member appointment Peter Nourse</li> </ul>	
<b>8</b> 08/05/23	<p><b>Briefing papers since last meeting (refer to Announcements on Convene for details)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woodland Court 31/03/23</li> <li>• Damp and mould Update 23/04/23</li> <li>• CEO Update inc. SRS 09/05/2023</li> <li>• Chair's challenge 16/05/2</li> </ul>	
<b>9</b> 09/05/23	<p><b>Chair's Urgent Business</b></p> <p>The Board were informed that an interim Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods, Tracey Gray, had been appointed and would be starting next week.</p>	
10/05/23	<p>It was agreed that the <b>Governance Review item 14</b> would be presented before <b>item 10</b>.</p>	
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Committee Minutes Circulated</b></p>	
11/05/23	<p>The minutes from the following Committee meetings were included for reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PCH Regeneration 7 March</li> <li>• PCH Energy 10 March</li> <li>• ARC 25 April</li> <li>• Remuneration and Nomination 7 March</li> </ul>	
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Audit &amp; Risk Committee meeting 25 April 2023 – Chair update including papers for approval at this meeting</b></p>	
12/05/23	<p>LN as Chair of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee provided the Board with an update on the meeting that took place on the 24 April where both the External Auditors KPMG and Internal Auditors Mazars were present.</p> <p>The KPMG programme of work for 23/24 and Mazars internal audit plan were discussed. The committee welcomed the focus on zero carbon and new tenant satisfaction measures.</p> <p>The internal audit actions follow up report showed 19 out of the 22 identified actions have been completed. At 86% this exceeds the sector average.</p> <p>Mazars internal audit annual report was discussed, and ARC welcomed substantial assurance on key areas such as lift safety and fire risk assurance.</p>	

	<p>The strategic risk register provoked discussion around the number of red items in the current tough operating environment, including differential inflation, resourcing and damp and mould.</p> <p>The Committee discussed at length the very comprehensive annual fire safety report. We received assurance that risk mitigation measures are in place we had a good discussion on resident fire safety education in the light of a number of kitchen fires especially since the cutbacks in government fire kill's campaign.</p>	
<b>11.1</b>	<b>Internal Controls Assurance Report</b>	
13/05/23	<p>LR Head of Governance presented the Internal Controls Assurance report to the Board. The Board is responsible for making a statement on internal controls assurance within its annual Financial Statements, both for the group and subsidiary accounts.</p> <p>This draft statement was set out within the report and had been considered along with a summary of assurance of internal controls effectiveness by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on the 25 April 2023.</p> <p>The conclusion of the assurance was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high regard for probity and good governance is fundamental to the day-to-day running and strategic direction of an effective organisation. A positive control culture is sought whereby risk and control considerations are integral to our everyday business. Open channels of communication exist between staff, and between staff and Board members. We identify, evaluate, and respond, on an ongoing basis, to the nature and extent of the risks identified. Where control weaknesses have been identified the control systems have been enhanced in response to these. We are seeking further enhancements and have an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement in the control environment and enhanced transparency throughout PCH.</li> <li>• EMT considers there are processes and plans which enable them to provide Board with assurance that there are sufficient effective controls in place to appropriately manage the business of PCH and the related risks.</li> </ul>	
14/05/23	The PCH Board <b>approved</b> the statement of internal controls for the Financial Statements 2022/23.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Development Committee 18 May 2023 Chair update and any items being brought to this meeting for approval- Some items redacted as Commercially sensitive.</b>	
15/05/23	NJ presented the update in lieu of the Chair, JW. The Committee had received an update on the following:	



<b>12.1</b>	<b>Development update and KPI's</b>	
16/05/23	<p>NJ Director of Finance and Business services presented the Development update and KPI report which enabled the Board to monitor progress across all Development Programmes.</p> <p>The report highlighted property completions, pipeline schemes, progress against the 2020-2025 development programme and an overall portfolio summary detailing the total number of homes to be built on schemes and those built since 2009.</p> <p>The Board were updated on projects that had moved forward since last week's Development Committee, confirming that the paperwork for purchase of 86 Houses from Annington Homes in Plympton has now been signed.</p> <p>It is expected that the purchase of land for Southway Drive will be completed next week, then the Sherford centre by the end of June.</p>	
17/05/23	The PCH Board <b>noted</b> the content of the Development Update.	
<b>13</b>	<b>CFC Chairs Update</b>	
18/05/23	<p>LP as Chair of CFC gave an update on the meeting from the 12 May. The full Chair report is attached as an appendix to these minutes which included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of the new resident scrutiny process</li> <li>• Agreed the revised Mutual Exchange Policy</li> <li>• Agreed the reintroduction of the urgent repair category</li> <li>• Compliance with the RSH Consumer Standards</li> <li>• Complaints reports</li> <li>• PCH website update</li> <li>• Update on CFC Co-optee payments</li> </ul>	
19/05/23	This item was presented before Item 10 on the agenda.	
<b>14</b>	<b>Outcome of the External Governance Review (Inc Governance Improvement Plan and Board Behavioural Framework)</b>	
20/05/23	LR Head of Governance presented the Governance Improvement Plan (GIP) and outcomes of the Governance Review to the Board for approval. JB from Altair was also in attendance to answer any questions that the Board might have about the review.	

<p>21/05/23</p>	<p>Assurance was given that the actions from the GIP 2022/23 had all been delivered and a new GIP for 2023/24 had been drafted. This plan pulled together improvements and actions from the Board away day, Board survey, behaviours discussion and the Chair's Challenge.</p> <p>The conclusion of the Governance Review was that PCH has sound governance with 11 recommendations made to increase effectiveness and strategic thinking:</p> <p>1.5. We have observed a significant amount of good practice across the activities we have reviewed and seen a great deal of dedication to getting governance right, both across staff members and the Board. Good practice we observed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strong underlying governance framework</li> <li>• A strong intention to include customer voice across the governance environment.</li> <li>• Clear following of values in behaviours and actions</li> <li>• Well-structured and organised documentation</li> </ul> <p>If agreed the Governance Review recommendations would be incorporated into the GIP and it was proposed that a Task and Finish Group be created to consider the delivery of these recommendations. The Terms of Reference for this group were included within the report for approval.</p> <p>A Board Behavioral Framework document had been developed to sit alongside the staff framework. The draft includes the outcomes from the Board away day and is shown as Appendix D. It is proposed the Task and Finish Group consider the draft and make a recommendation to a future Board.</p>	
<p>22/05/23</p>	<p><b>JB from Altair discussed the outcome of the Governance Review with the Board answering questions for clarity.</b></p> <p>Assurance was given that the report showed that this is an effective Board and there is good governance at PCH. When asked, two headline observations that really stood out were identified:</p> <p>The embedment of residents within the Governance of PCH was well established, and not something that was seen at every housing association.</p>	
<p>23/05/23</p>	<p>The Board were able to identify actions/behaviours that made them less effective, and then continued to do them particularly around questions and the level of detail that was being asked which moves the conversation from a strategic to an operational analysis.</p> <p>This was discussed at length and there was a view that some of this was being driven by the Board's needed for more assurance that our residents were being kept safe in their homes. Clarity was provided on</p>	

24/05/23	<p>this that the Board categorically need to do this, but it comes from the quality of the data and assurance they receive rather than drilling down to the operational details.</p> <p>It was discussed that by focusing too much on the operational detail the Board could lose sight of the strategic objectives. Additionally asking the Executive and their teams to provide significant operational detail could foster poor working relationships between Board and the Executive, who could start to feel defensive, as this is their field of expertise. It was noted that this is not where the PCH Board is at the moment, but it was a risk that should be considered.</p> <p>Additionally, it was discussed that on the flip side the amount of information that was being provided to the Board in the Board packs could also be driving these detailed discussions, and part of the Governance Review actions would look at streamlining this and improving the executive summaries.</p> <p>Some of the other actions from the review were discussed including the review of Board and Committee Terms of Reference, setting out the key priorities and objectives for each Committee for the year and the triangulation of information from different sources.</p>	
17:30	SB joined the meeting	
25/05/23	<p>The PCH Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>NOTED</b> the Governance Improvement Plan 2022/23</li> <li>2. <b>APPROVED</b> the draft Governance Improvement Plan 2023/24</li> <li>3. <b>DISCUSSED</b> the Governance Review and <b>APPROVED</b> the adoption of the recommendations</li> <li>4. <b>APPROVED</b> the draft Governance Task and Finish Group TOR</li> <li>5. <b>NOTED</b> the draft Board Behavioural Framework</li> </ol>	
15	<b>Q4 2022/23 Performance update</b>	
26/05/23	<p>CE Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance presented the Q4 2022/23 performance update to the Board for monitoring, highlighting that this was the final quarter under the previous business plan.</p> <p>It was explained that this quarter there had been a reduction in repair performance from 93.99% to 93%. 13,258 repairs were completed in Q4 which was 346 more than Q3. However, a lack of available resource and high levels of emergency call outs have been cited as a factor in 1,267 repairs being completed outside of the required timeframe. Going forward into this next quarter the Asset Team is going through a considerable restructure with three new heads of service due to be recruited, with a strong focus on improving our repairs performance.</p>	

	<p>Void re-letting continues to be higher than target there had been a slight increase to turnaround times in Q4 to 36.59 for the average number of days to re-let homes.</p> <p>Proportion of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out stands at 99.95% at the end of Q4, which represented seven properties overdue. The percentage of homes with a valid 5-year electrical test increased in quarter to over 98%. There are asbestos management surveys or re-inspections for almost all of homes with the Q4 position at 99.96%. There were 4 properties without an asbestos survey that transferred to us in Barne Barton. The KPI for legionella showed that just over 88% of homes have a risk assessment a slight improvement on the previous quarter.</p> <p>Rent arrears at year end were at 1.48% of debit, which was well within the annual target of 2.0% and an improvement against 2021/22 end of year position.</p> <p>Affordable home completions were lower than expected completion target for a variety of reasons but mostly due to slow delivery of S106 projects.</p>	
<p>27/05/23</p> <p>28/05/23</p>	<p><b>A number of questions on this report had been raised before the meeting which were included as an appendix to the minutes; in addition, the following was discussed:</b></p> <p>Tenant satisfactions measure on legionella were discussed and clarified: General needs single dwellings are low risk as per the HSE guidance for landlords and therefore no individual risk assessment is required. Therefore, this measure now reports on housing for older people /supported housing general needs blocks of flats. We will continue to carry our legionella flushing and risk assessment on all voids.</p> <p>Assurance was given that eviction is an absolute last resort for PCH and we have a policy that we will only proceed to eviction is people won't pay, not if they can't pay.</p> <p>Void timescales were discussed, and the Board found it reassuring that PCH were linked closely to external stakeholders who support vulnerable city residents such as Devon Home Choice and the Homelessness Executive Group. PCH are part of the House to Home initiative and have 25 homes in the Housing First programme.</p> <p>Modular accommodation has had some success in other areas of the country; however Plymouth does not have areas of land where these types of temporary homes would be suitable.</p>	

	<p>Conversations are also taking place on an alternative to Band B application auto bids on properties that are not suitable and thus delaying the void and allocation process even further.</p> <p>The current void target of 20 day was set pre-covid. Across the sector other providers are experiencing the same skills shortages and lack of contractors which is having an impact on how quickly properties can be turned around nationally. Consideration was being given to whether the current target was unrealistic and having a detrimental effect on staff performance and morale. An alternative would be to raise the target to 27 days, which would align our performance with Quartile 1; this was being discussed internally and would be brought back to Board for consideration later.</p> <p>The Asset Management restructure would see the department revert to a more traditional way of management with three head of service responsible for separate elements of the services we provide. The introduction of specific roles to cover damp and mould has already seen an improvement in timescales with the backlog of inspection being cleared. Work was now being undertaken to secure a contractor to who support us in delivering remedial works to those residents affected. This would enable PCH to identify the types of homes which would be susceptible to damp and mould and support residents to stop is happening, rather than having to be reactive to cases.</p> <p>The Board noted that the introduction of Any day lets would be a positive step for our residents; it was discussed that we are only able to implement this now that UC has been fully implemented in Plymouth.</p>	
29/05/23	The Board <b>noted</b> the Q4 2022/23 performance report.	
	The Board took a short break. CE, DN, SB left the meeting	
<b>16</b>	<b>March 2023 Management Accounts – Redacted as confidential</b>	
30/05/23	<p>JR Head of Finance presented the report to the Board to enable them to monitor the initial outturn position to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 before adjustments for the statutory accounts.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	

	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
31/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
32/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	



	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
35/05/23	<p>The PCH Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Noted</b> the outturn to the end of March 2023 prior to statutory accounts and other late adjustments.</li><li>2. [Redacted]</li></ol>	
17	<b>Stress Testing the Business Plan – Redacted a Confidential</b>	
36/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
37/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	

	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
37/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
38/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	

	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
39/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
40/05/23	<p>[Redacted]</p>	







	<p>RSH currently oversees compliance with Economic Standards but not Consumer Standards, as these are the Board's responsibility to oversee in conjunction with appropriate customer scrutiny. At PCH the Customer Focus Committee scrutinise compliance with the Consumer Standards and Audit and Risk Committee the Economic Standards.</p> <p>It was explained that in the previous financial year (2021/22) one area of non-compliance was reported relating to the adopted Code of Governance. As reported elsewhere on this agenda, we are now fully compliant with this adopted Code and are now fully compliant with all the RSH Standards.</p> <p>Our current regulatory judgment gradings are G1 and V2, and we reported one matter to the regulator for transparency (Woodland's fire safety incident, May 2022).</p> <p>As noted at February Board, we are awaiting new Consumer Standards from RSH and expect a consultation paper in the summer.</p>	
49/05/23	<p>The PCH Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Noted</b> the recommendation from Customer Focus Committee that there is sufficient assurance that PCH complies with the RSH Consumer Standards</li> <li>2) <b>Noted</b> the recommendation from Audit and Risk Committee that there is sufficient assurance that PCH complies with the RSH Economic Standards</li> <li>3) <b>Approved</b> the 2022/23 statement of compliance with RSH regulatory requirements in the annual accounts</li> </ol>	
<b>21</b>	<b>NHF Code of Governance Compliance Update</b>	
50/05/23	<p>LR Head of Governance presented the report which gave assurance that PCH is continuously reviewing and improving governance arrangements via the NHF Code of Governance Compliance Plan.</p> <p>As a regulated housing association, PCH is required to adopt an appropriate code of governance. The NHF Code of Governance is written specifically for the social housing sector and PCH Board adopted the updated 2020 version from April 2021 with the aim of being fully compliant by March 2023. There were 5 'amber' non-compliant areas reported May 2022 and none as at May 2023.</p> <p>Section 2.6.7 of the Code requires 'the parent Board (PCH) to consider and determine whether and how the code should apply to each of its subsidiaries'. It is appropriate for PCH's commercial subsidiaries to adopt the Code as evidence of good governance and to comply with the Procedure Agreements in place (covenant 2: adopt all best practice recommendations in regard to housing and financial matters). However</p>	

	<p>not all areas of the Code apply or are appropriate. PCH is the parent of the group and takes the lead on many of the Code’s requirements (i.e. setting the vision, values and strategy) and reports on H&amp;S, Board succession, etc. contribute towards subsidiaries’ compliance with the Code. PCH’s Committees cover all group entities.</p> <p>The PCHR and PCHE Boards received reports in March 2023 setting out which areas of the Code are to be adopted; these have been added to the Compliance Plan (Appendix A). Also, we have achieved ‘substantial’ assurance in our Governance internal audit (Feb 2023) and the Board will receive a positive external report of our governance from Altair at this meeting.</p> <p>The Code is based on ‘comply or explain’ where Board makes a compliance statement within the annual accounts including an explanation of any non-compliant areas. Our proposed code compliance statement for the annual accounts is shown below for Board consideration:</p> <p>“After consideration of reports by the Executive and other third parties, the Board certifies that to the best of its knowledge the Group complies with the adopted NHF Code of Governance 2020 (including the areas relevant to its commercial subsidiaries). The PCH Board has also chosen to extend the term of office of one financially skilled and one resident Board member beyond the recommended six years (Code ref 3.7.3) to eight years to ensure continuity and seek successors; recruitment is due in Summer 2023.”</p>	
51/05/23	<p><b>The PCH Board:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>DISCUSSED</b> the NHF Code of Governance Compliance Plan</li> <li>2. <b>APPROVED</b> the NHF Code of Governance compliance statement for the annual accounts</li> </ol>	
<b>22</b>	<b>Vice Chair Role Profile and Recruitment</b>	
52/05/23	<p>LR presented the report to the Board to approve the proposal for an updated PCH Board Vice Chair role profile and a plan for recruiting a new Vice Chair, as the current postholder is due to retire from the PCH Board later in 2023.</p> <p>The Board considered whether to introduce a SID role at the Board meeting last May. It was agreed to bring this decision forward to be part of the Governance Review and the recommendation from Altair is that a SID would not be required for PCH. The Chair is of the same view and is proposing that some aspects of the SID role are incorporated into the Vice Chair role update (shown as Appendix A).</p>	

	The Vice Chair recruitment is proposed to start in June, with a recommendation to July Board and a handover from the current postholder to be completed by the September AGM.	
53/05/23	<p><b>As a result of questions, the Board discussed the following:</b></p> <p>It was requested that consideration be given to the term for a Vice Chair becoming 2 years. This would give more members the opportunity to develop into this role during their potential full 6-year tenure.</p> <p>It was acknowledged by the Board that we have been fortunate that our Board members who are residents have filled the positions of Chair and Vice Chair over the years. Clarity was given that they were appointed on the basis on their skills and experience and all Board members have the opportunity to apply.</p> <p>There was a broader conversation in relation to the terminology of the people and communities that we serve with many terms being interchangeable.</p>	
54/05/23	<p>The PCH Board <b>approved:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the updated PCH Board Vice Chair Role Profile</li> <li>2. the process for recruiting a new Vice Chair for PCH Board</li> </ol>	
<b>23</b>	<b>Forward Plan</b>	
55/05/23	<p>The Forward plan was reviewed.</p> <p>Further information was provided on the recent rent increase and how this had impacted our residents. It was agreed that additional information would be provided to the Board on the support fund which had been set up to help people during this period.</p> <p>The Board were asked to note that an away day was being arranged for Thursday 21 September 2023 which would be held here at Plumer House.</p>	<b>JC</b>
	<b>LR, EL, GM, JR, NJ, JC left the meeting.</b>	
<b>24</b>	<b>CEO Recruitment Process CONFIDENTIAL</b>	
56/05/23	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	



Redacted as Commercially sensitive or Confidential.

Signature.....  
Valerie Lee – Chair

Date .....

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

Date.....