



**Plymouth Community Homes
Customer Focus Committee**

**Venue: Plumer House/Microsoft Teams
Date: 09 May 2025
Time: 10.00am**

Present in person unless stated otherwise:

Maja Jorgensen (MJ) – Chair
Lavinia Porfir (LP)
Joanne Bowden (JB)
Melony 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:

Michelle Dawson (MD) – Executive Director of Homes & Communities
Charlotte Edwards (CE) – Head of Strategy Data and Insight
Lucy Rickson (LR) – Head of Governance
Matt Cleveland (MC) – Head of Customer Experience
James Hancock (JH) – Risk & Assurance Manager
Mary O’Leary (MO) – Head of Communication Marketing and External Engagement
Ian Howse (IO) - Head of Homes and Safety
Richard Lunn (RL) – Resident Involvement Coordinator
Andy Kerswell (AK) – Resident Review Member (Part)
Jenny James (JJ) – Governance Officer (Minutes)
Alexia Bui (AB) - Governance Assistant (Observing)

Apologies:

N/A

1. Welcome and Introductions	
Confirm Quorum	
<i>The meeting started at 10.00am</i>	
MJ welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was confirmed as quorate.	
Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions on the papers prior to the meeting. These questions were asked and answered through Convene and made available for all members to view.	

2. Apologies for Absence	
There were no apologies for absence.	
3. Declarations of Interest	
JB, MG, TL, LW, CS and LP have standing declarations as Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) tenants which were noted.	
4. Minutes of Previous meeting (31st January 2025)	
The minutes of the previous Committee meeting on Friday 31 st January were discussed, and it was agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting and could be electronically signed by the Chair. There were no proposed redactions to the minutes and they would be uploaded to the website following the meeting.	
5. Chair's Urgent Business	
There was no Chair's Urgent Business	
6. Matters Arising	
There were no matters arising.	
7. Decisions since the last meeting: none	
8. Briefing papers (for information) circulated since the last meeting: none	
9. Executive Director's Report	
<p>MD, Executive Director of Homes & Communities, presented the report which contained a summary of key projects to improve services to PCH residents and work with partnerships within the Homes and Communities directorate.</p> <p>Some of the key updates included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Inspection – during Q4 preparations for the RSH inspection focused on completing briefing notes and preparing documents to submit to the inspection team. The RSH completed interviews with the Executive Management Team and Board. The inspection team observed the March Board meeting and a meeting of the Virtual Resident Group and also spoke to some involved residents. The result of the inspection was expected in Q2. • Total Connect Update – the project continued to progress, following the decision to delay the implementation to Q3. The decision was based on planned improvements to the functionality of the system. • Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Action Plan Update – progress had been 	

<p>made against most actions against the TSM improvement plan. Most notably in repairs, the end-to-end review of the resident journey started in March. The review was supported by an external consultancy, several workshops had taken place with engagement colleagues from the contact center, repairs, asset, digital and IT. As a result of the workshops three workstreams were being progressed, these would support the implementation of Total Connect and improve how PCH diagnose and schedule repairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Schedule – a schedule of policies across the Homes and Communities directorate had been collated. The schedule included over 30 policies which were in the process of bring prioritized for review and where relevant, resident consultation would be scheduled. • Pembroke Street Estate Management Board (PSEMB) – as reported to CFC in January Campbell Tickell presented their recommendation on working with PSEMB to improve governance and oversight of compliance with the Consumer Standard. During Q1 PCH would appoint a dedicated project manager to work with PSEMB, with continued support from Campbell Tickell. 	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p> <p>The Committee received assurance that ongoing efforts were being made to update and provide tenants with comprehensive resources, guidance, and support on the prevention and treatment of damp and mould in their homes.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Executive Director’s Report.</p>	
<p><i>RL and AK joined the meeting at 10.23am</i></p>	
<p>10. Resident Review – Shared Spaces</p>	
<p>RL, Resident Involvement Coordinator, and AK, Resident Review Member, presented the Resident Review on Shared Spaces which provided a summary of the scrutiny review undertaken and the group’s findings, alongside a summary of the group’s recommendations following completion of the review.</p> <p>A task and finish group of 11 residents, working collaboratively with PCH staff, had undertaken a Resident Review (scrutiny review) on the standard of PCH’s Shared Spaces.</p> <p>The completed scrutiny review made 14 observations for improvements, which could be made across areas including communication and engagement, tenancy management, service charge calculation, and communication and repairs to communal spaces.</p> <p>The review group made specific recommendations for improvements to be implemented, which sit across five main themes:</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repurposing land to benefit PCH • Community Walkabouts • Service Charges • CCTV • QR Code reporting <p>The full findings and detailed breakdown on the recommendations were detailed in the final report of the review (<i>Appendix 1</i>).</p>	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p> <p>The committee was reassured that since the resident survey work was being done to increase engagement and clarity with PCH opportunities like community walkabouts and action days. This work includes use of notice boards and QR codes, as well as making these events more accessible to residents and not just staff.</p> <p>Work is also being done to use shared spaces as efficiently as possible to aid with weekly bin collections.</p> <p>A resident panel member confirmed that the focus of Shared Spaces came about from complaints about fly tipping and exterior aesthetics of some blocks and estates, adding that by addressing this, it would elevate the blocks' appearance - improving residents' pride of living there.</p> <p>The committee thanked the residents and staff involved in the Shared Spaces Review. MJ encouraged the committee to think about how PCH might build on this review to engage residents in looking after communal spaces e.g. through community gardens.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Resident Review – Shared Spaces.</p>	
<p><i>RL & AK left the meeting at 10.47am</i></p>	
<p>11. Customer Insight Report</p>	
<p>MO, Head of Communication Marketing and External Engagement, presented the Customer Insight Report. This report was a new version of a Customer Insight report designed to provide the Customer Focus Committee with a strategic overview of activity delivered to ensure compliance with the Consumer Standard for Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TIA), focusing specifically on customer engagement, communications (primarily digital communications), resident scrutiny and resident involvement.</p> <p>The report aimed to demonstrate both how PCH inform residents about services and engage with residents as well as how residents have been able to shape services, summarising changes made as a result of resident feedback through consultations, groups and scrutiny processes.</p> <p>The report included an update on digital customer communications for Q4 2024-2025, including analytics for the period to show use of PCH's digital customer</p>	

<p>channels, as well as updates on the development and improvements made to PCH's digital communication channels including the website, MyPCH resident portal and other online channels.</p> <p>There was also a summary of resident engagement activity including consultations and scrutiny, and updates on changes made as a result of resident involvement from previous quarters.</p> <p>The intention was to edit and shape this report with feedback from CFC to guide content and ensure the report provides a helpful overview of PCH's work to meet the TIA standard in respect of communication and engagement.</p>	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p> <p>The Committee were informed that the Virtual Resident Advisors had now been rebranded as Resident Communication Advisors (RCA). This steering group meets monthly in person to review communication practices, materials, information and content; advise on newsletter content; and advise on approaches, strategies and methodologies. There was also a wider network of residents engaged via online methods (email) and asked to review written materials to provide feedback and improvements. This group had also rebranded as the Online Resident Communication Advisors (ORCA).</p> <p>Confirmation was given that the Communications team, collaborating with the Housing team, had been working hard to correct misinformation spread online regarding the motivations for decanting Marlborough House. This work included communicating with various social media groups, actively shutting down discriminatory content/messages, engagement with local councillors and frequent drop-in sessions at Marlborough House to discuss concerns with residents. The teams would continue to work hard to reinforce a consistent message on the redevelopment of Marlborough House and PCH's commitment to providing high-quality, affordable homes for everyone.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Customer Insight Report.</p>	
<p>12. Compliance with Ombudsman Code – Verbal Update</p>	
<p>MC, Head of Customer Experience, delivered verbal update on Compliance with Ombudsman Code.</p> <p>In April, the Housing Ombudsman (HO) announced that following feedback they had revised the submission date for Housing Association's to submit their self-assessments against the HO complaints code to end of September. Previously this was required in June.</p> <p>The Customer Experience team had been working on the self-assessment and drafting the annual complaints report – which is a key part of compliance with the code. The change in submission timescale had provided the opportunity to further refine the report and work would be taking place with the Communications team to</p>	

draft a designed version. Both the self-assessment and annual report would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting in July.	
As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:	
It was clarified that updates on new HO cases would include a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating system.	
The Customer Focus Committee noted the Compliance with Ombudsman Code – Verbal Update	
13. Customer Experience Report	
MC, Head of Customer Experience, presented the Customer Experience Report which provided an update on the customer experience in Quarter 4 of FY2024/25. Key highlights outlined in the report were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16% increase in calls in Q4, 90% of contacts were answered across the organisation. Key priorities had been identified to improve performance, including progress with procuring a new telephony system. • There was an increase of 16 stage one complaints compared to Q3, 76% stage 1 complaints were upheld or partially upheld. • Stage 2 complaint volumes were down by 1 case compared to the previous quarter and 50% of the stage 2 complaints were upheld or partially upheld. • The number of enquiries received from the Housing Ombudsman increased by 10 in Q4 which included requests for information relating to a complaint, proof of tenant/landlord relationship, queries in relation to a complaint being dealt with by PCH. • 102 compliments were received in Q4. • Project Engage to improve ways of working and the customer experience had progressed in Q4, including a review of performance metrics and reporting. Other activities included, the Head of Customer Experience visiting the Out of Hours contractor, Orbis, to identify performance improvements. 	
The Customer Focus Committee noted the Customer Experience Report.	
14. Annual Tenancy Satisfaction Measures Report	
CE, Head of Strategy Data and Insight, presented the Annual Tenancy Satisfaction Measures Report. This report contained the results of 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 performed as a landlord, and how we compare to others based on the previous year’s results issued by the RSH. TSM results were published on the PCH website quarterly and there would be an additional separate end-of-year report for residents setting out the methodology, an update on the action plan and the next steps for 2025/26.	

Overall, there was good performance against the customer perception measures, however there had been seen some reductions in satisfaction within some areas. However, PCH continued to compare very well with other housing associations and were in the top 10 based on the RSH's data. There would be a further data release from the Regulator for 2024/25, and it was expected to see some level of improvement across the sector. Last year the RSH reported that around 70% of social tenants were satisfied with the performance of their landlord, which is markedly lower than PCH's result. Benchmarking provider Housemark reported that on average it takes around 18 months for improvement plans to impact on customer perceptions but as noted below, there had already been some improvement in perception of PCH's approach to complaint and ASB handling.

For the management information metrics, there was improved performance in the building safety compliance theme, with a small number of homes without certification due to non-access which are being robustly followed up and either at or close to 100% compliance across all metrics.

There has been a considerable increase in the number of complaints this year, which was in part due to improved triaging and recording of complaints. The most complained about service was repairs which correlated to the performance in this area, specifically the time taken to complete jobs or jobs not being carried out. To balance this, there was also a seven-percentage point improvement in customer perception of our approach to complaint handling.

Additionally, there had been an improvement in customer perception of our approach to ASB case handling, although as with service-based complaints there had been an increase in reported ASB complaints as improvements had been made in how PCH records new cases. There continued to be customer comments about ASB not being dealt with effectively and a desire from residents for PCH to have a stronger presence in neighbourhoods.

The final key area focused on was repairs; there continued to be challenges with increased volumes of repairs and how they 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. In response to this the contact centre and repair planning teams were working more closely, and there had been improvements in performance against service standards over the past eight months.

To address these areas, an action plan was presented to the CFC in January 2025 that detailed improvements to:

- how PCH triage and handle service complaints and upskill colleagues in effective complaint handling and communication,
- review how PCH delivers responsive repairs, end-to-end review of how this currently works and how it could work in future had commenced. Additionally, preparations were underway for the introduction of Awaab's Law from October 2025.
- deliver the 2025/26 major works programme based on the stock condition survey works, consult with residents on how PCH communicate about these programmes

<p>and enhance how to use property data to support development of future programmes.</p> <p>- Improve PCH's ASB policy and procedures and work with residents to develop a neighbourhood management policy.</p> <p>To ensure consistency of what residents should expect from us, PCH launched an updated Service Standards in February 2025, and the CFC will start to see performance against those standards from June 2025.</p>	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p> <p>The Committee discussed the lower satisfaction levels outside of Plymouth, and it was confirmed that a working group was being formed to look at how PCH delivers services to a wider operating area, and how it will maintain a consistent standard of service provision.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the Annual Tenancy Satisfaction Measures Report.</p>	
<p>15. CFC Performance Report</p>	
<p>CE, Head of Strategy Data and Insight, presented the CFC Performance Report which provided an overview of the previous quarter's performance against a range of customer-related metrics. This was the final report in this format as it moved towards a dashboard report of performance against service standards and reduce duplication across other reports.</p> <p>Overall, there had been strong performance across the year and good improvements in a range of areas.</p> <p>The key highlights were:</p> <p>For repairs, there had been a consistent improvement over the past eight months as there was closer working between teams. There had been customer perception of repairs fall during this year, but transactional satisfaction remained very high.</p> <p>Additionally, there were improvements across all the building safety metrics during the year which were not already at 100% and have a very small number of homes outside of compliance, all of which were going through the legal process to gain access and complete the certification.</p> <p>Complaints had increased by 22% this year but was in part due to better recording and a service style that encourages residents to come forward and tell us when we aren't getting it right, so we have an opportunity to correct this and learn from the issue to prevent it happening again. Complaint handling had improved since 2023/24 and was handled more within the prescribed timeframe and customer approval of the approach to complaint handling had increased from 40% to 47%.</p>	

<p>Additionally, for the same reasons as above, there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour cases. There were two hotspots identified in Hillcrest and Stonehouse where PCH were targeting interventions. Hillcrest was a new community coming together in Plympton and many of the residents needed support to settle into their new home, and in Stonehouse work was ongoing with the Police and other agencies to tackle issues with drugs, drug dealing and county lines. Despite this increase, as with complaints there had been an increase in PCH's approval rating for our approach to ASB case handling.</p>	
<p>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</p> <p>The Committee were given assurance that the data from the performance reports was being utilised to continually improve service delivery. MD reassured the committee that her team are continually working towards improving the service and the red flags in the RAG (red, amber, green) system in the report. MD added that a reason there were so many was because PCH sets some targets higher than other organisations.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee noted the CFC Performance Report.</p>	
<p>16. RSH Consumer Standards Compliance</p>	
<p>LR, Head of Governance, presented the RSH Consumer Standards and Compliance, an annual report that provided an overview of Consumer Standards compliance, with a more detailed background paper developed with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Executive Management Team (EMT)</p> <p>Background</p> <p>CFC is responsible for obtaining assurance that PCH complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standard.</p> <p>The April Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) will also scrutinise the Economic and Consumer Standards assurance. The May Board would review both Standards and agree a regulatory compliance statement to be added to the annual Financial Statements. PCH is 100% compliant with the Consumer Regulations and they were subject to an internal audit which found no compliance issues.</p> <p>Due to the update of the Consumer Standards in April 2024 and the preparation for inspection, the Board had more compliance oversight in the last year and an internal audit had been carried out (outcome: adequate assurance).</p> <p>Current compliance</p> <p>The aim was not to demonstrate minimum compliance but to ensure continuous improvement in line with PCH's aim to be 'a sector leader in governance and regulation'. This means PCH comply with all Consumer Standards and have some actions in place to deliver improvements. The summary compliance was shown in the</p>	

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<p>report alongside actions, and a full compliance statement was provided as a background paper link.</p> <p>PCH's current regulatory gradings were G1 and V2; we will receive a C (Consumer) rating in the summer after the inspection was complete (expected Jun-Aug 2025).</p> <p>Next steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Complete recommendations from the consumer regulation internal audit.2. Bring a regulatory improvement plan to Board (once final regulatory judgement has been received from RSH); this would be monitored quarterly by EMT and SMT, and be brought to ARC, CFC and Board annually.	
The Customer Focus Committee noted the RSH Consumer Standards Compliance.	
17. CFC Risks	
<p>JH, Risk & Assurance Manager, presented the CFC Risks which provided an update on the Customer Experience Strategic Risk, which remained within tolerable levels of associated risk appetite.</p> <p>Actions continued to be implemented to improve service delivery, focusing on improving customer interactions and using data to deliver equitable outcomes based on the diverse needs of customers. Key actions to note included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A customer data verification exercises would take place during 2025/26. This would provide a 100% tenant profile and enable PCH to tailor communications and services to meet individual needs.• As part of Total Connect implementation plan, External consultants Double Diamond and PCH Business Analysts would conduct an end-to-end review into the customer repair journeys to drive future improvements from April 2025.• During Q1 25/26 PCH aimed to have recruited a permanent Head of Thriving Neighbourhoods and expanded the Complaints Resolution Team with the long-term requirements being presented to EMT in June 25. <p>No new emerging risks were identified, and the risk remained 'unlikely (2)'. However, this was pending the results of from the Regulator of Social Housing inspection which would provide PCH with its first Grading on the delivery of the new Consumer Standards Rating. This would validate PCH's approach to managing the risk.</p>	
The Customer Focus Committee noted the CFC Risks.	
18. Committee Objectives	
The Committee reviewed and discussed the Committee objectives for 2024/25, and it was agreed that all objectives relevant to this meeting had been met exception one	

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which would be moved into 2025/26. It was confirmed that development of the Home Standard, working jointly with the Capital Investment Committee, would begin once the new Executive Director of Place had been appointed (later in 2025).	
The Customer Focus Committee noted the Committee Objectives.	
19. How did we do? Did we deliver our objectives?	
The Committee reflected on the meeting and agreed that there were good questions raised on the reports and robust conversation on points of assurance. There was good contribution from all Committee members.	
20. Agenda Forward Plan	
The Agenda Forward Plan was presented to the Committee for information.	
The Customer Focus Committee noted the Agenda Forward Plan.	
21. Next Meeting: 25th July 2025	
<i>The meeting closed at: 12pm.</i>	

Signature.....
Maja Jorgensen – Chair

Date ...06/08/2025....

Certified as a true copy
Lucy Rickson, Head of Governance

Date ...06/08/2025....