



**Plymouth Community Homes  
Customer Focus Committee**

**Venue: Plumer House/Microsoft Teams  
Date: 31 January 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) – Interim Director of Homes & Communities  
Charlotte Edwards (CE) – Head of Strategy, Performance & Insight  
Alice Potter (AP) – Communities Team Manager (Virtual) (Part)  
Jonathan Cowie (JC) – Chief Executive (Part)  
Lucy Rickson (LR) – Head of Governance  
Nicola Kingston (NK) – Interim Head of Income, Commercial & Home Ownership  
James Revell (JR) – Interim Head of Customer Experience  
Matt Cleveland (MC) – Head of Customer Experience  
James Hancock (JH) – Risk & Assurance Manager  
Jenny James (JJ) – Governance Assistant (Minutes)

**Apologies:**

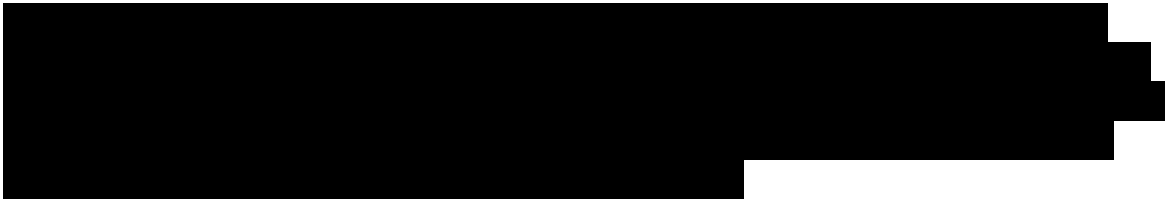
Zoe Reilly (ZR)  
Marc Gray (MG) – Interim Fire Safety Manager

<b>1. Welcome and Introductions</b>	
<b>Confirm Quorum</b>	
<i>The meeting started at 10.00am</i>	
MJ welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was confirmed as quorate. The Committee welcomed MC to his first CFC meeting as the new Head of Customer Experience.	
Committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions on the papers prior	

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to the meeting. These questions were asked and answered through Convene and made available for all members to view.	
<b>2. Apologies for Absence</b>	
Apologies were received from ZR & MG.	
<b>3. Declarations of Interest</b>	
JB, MG, TL, LW, CS and LP have standing declarations as Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) tenants which were noted.	
<b>4. Minutes of Previous meeting (8<sup>th</sup> November 2024)</b>	
The minutes of the previous Committee meeting on Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> November was discussed and it was <b>agreed</b> 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 these would be uploaded to the website following the meeting.	
<b>5. Chair's Urgent Business</b>	
The Committee were updated that a briefing update on the pets policy would be circulated in February.	
<b>6. Matters Arising</b>	
There were no matters arising.	
<b>7. Decisions since the last meeting: none</b>	
<b>8. Briefing papers (for information) circulated since the last meeting: none</b>	
<b>9. Customer Insight Report</b>	
AP, Communities Team Manager, and CE, Head of Strategy, Policy & Insight, presented the Customer Insight Report which contained an overview of the previous quarter's performance against a range of customer-related metrics and the topics heard from the customer voice through the tenant perception surveys and resident engagement activities.	
The report was an amalgamation of the existing performance report and the customer insight report, combining business metrics with the things residents are saying about and to PCH, as we deliver services and engagement programmes.	
The report will evolve over time to bring in more structured reporting around the	

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service standards recently agreed by Customer Focus Committee (CFC), along with the customer sentiment and engagement analysis.	
<b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b>  	
As a result of the Stock Condition Surveys (SCS), more incidents of damp and mould in properties were being reported. Cases identified through the SCS surveys were categorised and assurance was given that any category 1 hazards were being prioritised and addressed urgently. Confirmation would be brought back to the Committee to confirm whether residents who report issues received a pack from PCH with items to help address and prevent damp and mould.	<b>1/25 MD</b>
It was agreed that some comparative information would be added to the report regarding customer contact to understand contact centre performance over the last year.	<b>2/25 MC/CE</b>
The Committee discussed the clarity of the prescribed wording of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) in particular the question around contribution to the neighbourhood and it was agreed that a probe would be added to this question to ask residents <i>“What does ‘contributing to the neighbourhood’ mean to you, and what contribution do you believe PCH should be making to your neighbourhood”</i> as part of the Q4 2024/25 survey to better understand customer expectations around this subject and assess current services.	<b>3/25 CE</b>
The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Customer Insight Report.	
<b>AP left the meeting at 10.37am.</b>	
<b>10. Tenancy Satisfaction Measurement Plan Update</b>	
MD, Interim Executive Director of Homes & Communities, presented the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Action Plan. In November 2024 the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) issues a statistical release of TSM data submitted by 364 Registered Providers of Social Housing for 2023/24. PCH were ranked 8 <sup>th</sup> for overall satisfaction with landlord services (85%).  The Customer Insight report provides Committee members with an update on current performance in Financial Year (FY) 2024/25. Whilst overall performance remains good, four key areas of focus have been identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Repairs</li><li>- Customer complaint handling</li><li>- Anti-social behaviour complaint handling</li><li>- Quality of the home and compliance with minimum standards</li></ul>	

<p>Further analysis has been completed into the customer sentiment captured in the comment section of the TSM surveys. This has helped to build a rounded picture of where more needs to be done to address customer concerns about service delivery in relation to their homes and neighbourhood. Work has been taking place during FY2024/25 to improve service delivery in these areas, this includes the development of service standards which will be launched in February 2025.</p> <p>The report provided an overview of a focused action plan that would be overseen by the Interim Executive Director of Homes &amp; Communities, to continue to drive service improvements using resident feedback. The action plan will be monitored by the Strategy, Insight and Performance team, to track performance against TSM and customer sentiment.</p>	
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p> <p>It was confirmed that this report would be brought back to CFC on a quarterly basis to allow the committee to monitor progress.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the importance of clear and consistent communications, especially in relation to complaints, and encouraged the use of the Virtual Resident Advisor (VRA) to advise on the wording of letter templates.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Tenancy Satisfaction Measurement Plan Update.</p>	
<p><b><i>JC left the meeting at 10.52am.</i></b></p>	
<p><b>11. Grenfell Paper Update</b></p>	
<p>LR, Head of Governance, presented the report which provided a summary of the Grenfell Enquiry Phase Two report (published in September 2024), an update on PCH's position and considered the lessons to be learnt. This report was brought to the Board in October 2024 and an update on progress will be provided to the March 2025 Board. CFC were provided with a copy of the report for monitoring to ensure that the Committee is aware of the inquiry's findings and how PCH has responded.</p> <p>The inquiry has concluded findings relating to the following key themes, which are relevant to PCH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management of Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)</li> <li>- Fire safety</li> <li>- Customer voice, communication and engagement, and complaint handling and escalation</li> <li>- Procurement and supplier/contractor management</li> </ul> <p>With respect of our TMO at Pembroke Street, we retain management and oversight of compliance, complex repairs and complaints and therefore control over these matters (note: a separate report on the TMO was provided at this meeting).</p> <p>We carry out fire risk assessments across our wider estates and must submit a</p>	

<p>quarterly Fire Remediation Survey to the RSH. In the quarter two survey (October 2024) we reported a medium risk, we reported this in the survey as ‘life critical’; as of January 2024, actions to mitigate the risk had been completed and issues resolved.</p> <p>We have a clear process for residents to raise complaints, and have specific complaints process relating to building safety concerns in line with the requirements of the Building Safety Regulator.</p> <p>We also provide assurance that the materials and suppliers names in the Grenfell Inquiry do not pose a risk to the safety of our tenants and our ability to procure materials and suppliers.</p> <p>Since the Board report in October, we have made a public statement on our approach to the lessons learned from the Grenfell Inquiry (there were stories in InTouch and on socials): <a href="https://www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk/news/articles/safety-should-not-be-a-luxury-the-steps-we-re-taking-to-make-our-tall-buildings-safer-1">https://www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk/news/articles/safety-should-not-be-a-luxury-the-steps-we-re-taking-to-make-our-tall-buildings-safer-1</a></p>	
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p> <p>The Committee were informed of a recent incident at Briarwood Heights, Phase 5 where the heating and electrical systems in the building were not working, although the fire system remained operational, and the building is safe. Assurance was given that staff from all over PCH, including Tenancy Management, Repairs and Communications were already in place and on site to support residents and continue repairs.</p>	
<p>The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Grenfell Paper Update.</p>	
<p><b>12. Pembroke Street Tenancy Management Organisation Update</b></p>	
<p>LR presented the report which provided an update on the external review commissioned by PCH into the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) at Pembroke Street. The review has been commissioned to ensure that there is effective governance and oversight in place between PCH and the TMO, in line with the new Consumer Regulations introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in April 2024.</p> <p><b>The role of a TMO</b></p> <p>A TMO is an organisation set up by residents to take on the responsibility of managing their housing. The role of a TMO typically includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Day-to-Day Management: Handling repairs, maintenance, and cleaning of communal areas.</li><li>• Tenancy Management: Addressing issues such as anti-social behaviour and enforcing tenancy agreements.</li><li>• Resident Engagement: Involving residents in decision-making processes and ensuring their voices are heard.</li></ul>	

- **Financial Management:** Managing budgets and ensuring financial accountability.

TMOs aim to improve the quality of housing services by giving residents more control and a direct say in how their homes are managed. Within PCH stock we have one TMO at Pembroke Street.

### **Pembroke Street Estate Management Board (PEMB)**

Pembroke Street residents' group started in 1987 and PEMB was set up in 1994. PEMB is a resident led TMO which carries out the functions of a social housing provider on behalf of PCH.

The Board comprises of a majority of local residents, members from Plymouth Community Homes (PCH), City College Plymouth, Shekinah Mission and a Plymouth City Council (PCC) Ward Councillor.

The PEMB management functions include voids (empty properties), minor repairs, estate and grounds maintenance (including cleaning of stairwells), lettings, low level anti-social behaviour (ASB), communal area maintenance (including some painting) and other tenancy management issues at a low level, prior to any legal sanctions. PCH retains responsibility for compliance (such as Gas, Electrical and fire risk assessments), rent collection, higher level ASB, and major repairs and refurbishments.

### **Social Housing Regulation**

In April 2024 the RSH introduced a revised Consumer Standard and a new regulatory approach designed to protect tenants and improve the service they receive. ,

The RSH clear that despite any 'outsourcing' to a TMO, the Housing Association Board "remain accountable for tenant safety and service quality. They must ensure clear responsibilities, compliance with policies and laws, and manage risks, including counterparty failures and conflicts of interest. Boards need to maintain oversight and have contingency plans to protect tenants and the landlord's reputation" (this was noted in the Regulator of Social Housing's Sector Risk Profile 2024).

### **Review**

In the light of new regulation and the impact on landlord services, PCH need to ensure the longstanding agreement with PEMB is fit for purpose and effective governance arrangements are in place in line with the Consumer Standard.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p> <p>It was clarified that residents have a Right to Manage where they can step forward and form a TMO to take over management of an area or building. PCH would still have the responsibility to ensure that there is the correct governance, and oversight is in place and would provide support to residents and help to manage it. It was discussed that the formation of a TMO can be a complex legal entity but there are other ways for residents to get involved in the maintenance of their areas/blocks. It was agreed that details of any formalised arrangements within blocks to help promote cleanliness and upkeep would be brought back to the Committee.</p>	<p><b>4/25 MD</b></p>
<p>The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Pembroke Street Tenancy Management Organisation Update.</p>	
<p><b>13. Building Safety Act – Update on Resident Strategies</b></p>	
<p>MD presented the Building Safety Act, Resident Strategy Update. In April 2024 CFC members were provided with an overview of the Tall Building Resident Engagement Strategy (RES) and plans to consult residents. The RES was introduced in the response to the Building Safety Act (BSA) 2022, which came into force April 2023. The BSA introduced new regulations for fire and building safety, particularly in high-rise residential buildings (HRBs). PCH has been proactive in ensuring compliance with these regulations, focusing on safety measures, resident engagement, organisational capability, and continuous improvement.</p>	

<p>Key highlights included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. 145 residents responded to a customer consultation on the Tall Building RES. The feedback from the consultation informed the publication on the PCH Tall Building RES in July 2024</li><li>2. Introduction of quarterly Tall Building Resident panel at 4 venues to cover PCH's 6 tall buildings. The panel is supported by weekly drop-in sessions and activities to engage residents. In December 2024 37 residents attended the panel sessions.</li><li>3. Dedicated Tall Building team has been created, the team consists of a dedicated Housing Officer and a Tall Building Liaison Officer. This has enabled a positive change in resident engagement with an increased number of residents joining in with the community activities such as 'Tea and Toast' and drop-in sessions.</li><li>4. The publication of documents on the PCH website for residents to access including Building Safety Case Summary report, Tall Building Resident Handbook and a Tall Building Resident Engagement Strategy appendix that is specific to each building.</li></ol> <p>During FY 2025/26 the Tall Building Strategy will continue to be reviewed and objectives from the strategy will be incorporated into the Building Safety Corporate Management Plan.</p>	
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p> <p>It was agreed that details of actions taken to improve resident satisfaction would be included in the next report. It was confirmed that this report would come back to CFC bi-annually to monitor progress.</p>	<p><b>5/25 MD</b></p>
<p>The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Building Safety Act – Update on Resident Strategies.</p>	
<p><b>14. Supporting Residents (Welfare Reform)</b></p>	
<p>NK, Interim Head of Income, Commercial &amp; Home Ownership, presented the report which provided an update on rent arrears performance and how PCH is supporting residents to sustain their tenancies. The report highlighted measures to mitigate the impact of welfare reforms for PCH residents in receipt of Government benefits and to protect PCH income.</p> <p>Key performance highlights included:</p> <div><div></div><div></div></div>	



<div data-bbox="245 156 619 201" style="background-color: black; width: 234px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Department of Work and Pension (DWP) continue the managed migration of legacy benefits e.g. Income Support to Universal Credit. Analysis has taken place to understand likely impact on rent arrears and resource has been prioritised in the income and welfare team to mitigate the risk to income and support residents.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="197 394 1326 902" style="background-color: black; width: 707px; height: 227px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>	
<p><b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b></p> <p>The Committee discussed how residents could get in touch with the financial inclusion officers, and it was suggested that more promotion would be utilised to ensure residents are aware of how to contact the team.</p> <p>It was clarified that the financial inclusion team will get in touch with a resident as soon as there is a missed payment to understand how to best support them. Assurance was given that the team work closely with all residents that are unable to pay and help to establish affordable payment plans for arrears.</p> <p>It was agreed that clarification of how PCH communicates local services and events to residents would be brought back to the Committee. It was suggested that digital and non-digital resources could be put in place to help signpost to services specific to the local areas.</p>	<b>6/25 MD</b>
<p>The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Supporting Residents (Welfare Reform) report.</p>	
<p><b>15. Housing Ombudsman Update</b></p>	
<p>James Revell, Interim Head of Customer Experience, presented the Housing Ombudsman Update.</p> <p>The Housing Ombudsman's (HO) Complaint Handling Code sets out best practice for landlord's complaint handling procedures, to enable a positive complaints culture across the social housing sector, regardless of the size or type of landlord. The Code encourages landlord-tenant relationships so that residents can raise a complaint if</p>	

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things go wrong.

The Complaint Handling Code became statutory on 1 April 2024, meaning that all members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme are obliged by law to follow its requirements.

The Housing Ombudsman also has a legal duty to ensure landlords complaint procedures and responses are compliant with the Code.

This report provides CFC an update on the recent HO determination of maladministration for a complaint first raised by a resident in October 2022. The report provides an update on the number of cases currently being investigated by the HO.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Head of Customer Experience is leading a review of complaints, to include interaction with the HO. This is detailed in the TSM action plan report.

**As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:**

[REDACTED]

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To allow the Committee to monitor the risk of the complaints, future reports would include a Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating system.	
The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Housing Ombudsman Update.	
<b>16. Customer Experience Engage Project Update</b>	
JR presented the Customer Experience Engage Project update.  Following the presentation of the CX Engage project to the CFC 08 <sup>th</sup> November 2024, we would like to update the Committee on the progress against the actions. The project seeks to improve the customer and colleague experience, elevating the services we provide and laying the foundation for further enhancements.  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Team Collaboration &amp; Structure: Customer experience teams (Planners, Contact Centre, Customer Assurance) are now working in the same area improving cross-functional collaboration and support for frontline teams, with a focus on building capacity for non-ops activities such as quality and management of incoming volumes. Our out of hours service is currently going out to RFQ (request for quote)</li><li>2. Process &amp; Customer Experience Focus: New stage 1 complaint letter templates now in place. Repairs department restructure complete with team split into 2 teams, either trade support or planning. We now have full visibility on who is doing what and accurate measurements of incoming volumes for the first time.</li><li>3. Technology &amp; Self-Service Enhancements: Key tech upgrades projects are underway, including a new CRM (Customer Relations Management tool) system, telephony supplier, improved IVR (Options you choose when you phone our customer service number) In addition the evolution of knowledge management and self-serve functionalities projects have started and will start to come to life more by the middle of 2025</li></ol>	
<b>As a result of questions, the following was discussed and clarified:</b>  It was agreed that another update on this project would come back to the next meeting and would include information about resident feedback, timelines and metrics.  The Committee thanked JR for his work on this project and for his contributions during his time at PCH.	<b>7/25 MC</b>
The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Customer Experience Engage Project Update.	
<b>17. CFC Risks</b>	
JH, Risk & Assurance Manager, presented the updated <b>Customer Experience</b> Strategic Risk.	

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<p>The <b>Customer Experience</b> Strategic Risk was last presented to the Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2024. The Risk Rating score for the <b>Customer Experience</b> Strategic Risk remained (3,2) <b>6</b>. This means it is considered to have a <i>Serious (3)</i> impact but is <i>Unlikely (2)</i>.</p> <p>The risk continued to have <b>Green</b> Assurance indicating the risk is well within tolerable levels and meets the levels of risk appetite for the Associated Risk Categories below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Customer: <u>Open</u></i></li><li>• <i>Data Management: <u>Balanced</u></i></li><li>• <i>Data Security: <u>Balanced</u></i></li><li>• <i>Reputation, Trust &amp; Transparency: <u>Open</u></i></li><li>• <i>Governance, Legal &amp; Compliance: <u>Cautious</u></i></li></ul> <p>There had been no further emerging risks noted for inclusion.</p> <p>As per Action 2/24 in the CFC action log, the control regarding ground maintenance had been removed as it is no longer applicable to CFC.</p>	
The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the CFC Risks.	
<b>18. Agenda Forward Plan</b>	
The Agenda Forward Plan was presented to the Committee for information.	
The Customer Focus Committee <b>noted</b> the Agenda Forward Plan.	
<b>19. How did we do? Did we deliver our objectives?</b>	
The Committee reflected on the meeting and agreed that there were good questions raised on the reports, as well as suggestions for improvement and robust debate. There were good contributions from all committee members.	
There was discussion to lift conversations to a higher level and to stray away from operational suggestions.	
<b>20. Next meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b>	
<i>The meeting closed at: 12.05pm</i>	



Signature

Maja Jorgensen – Chair

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Date 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucy Rickson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Certified as a true copy

Lucy Rickson, Head of Governance

Date 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025