



**Plymouth Community Homes Board
Board Room, Plumer House and Microsoft Teams
26 May 2022 at 5pm**

Present in person:

Nick Lewis (NL) Chair
Debbie Roche (DR) (Vice Chair)
Lavinia Porfir (LP)
Liz Nicolls (LN)
Valerie Lee (VL)
Graham Clayton (GC)
Tasawar Nawaz (TW)
Maja Jorgensen (MJ)
Julie White (JW)

In attendance:

John Clark (JC) Chief Executive
Gill Martin (GM) Director of Corporate Services
Nick Jackson (NJ) Director of Business Services and Development
Lucy Rickson (LR) Head of Governance
Charlotte Edwards (CE) Head of Strategy, Performance and Policy
Maria Schingen (MS) Head of Procurement
John Rees (JR) Head of Finance
Leanne Eastwood (LE) Governance Officer – Minutes

Apologies:

Carl Brazier (CB) Director of Homes and Neighbourhoods

1.	Welcome and Introductions - Confirm Quorum	
	<i>The meeting started at 17:00</i>	
01/05/22	NL welcomed everyone to the meeting which was confirmed as quorate. 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. Two new Board members TW & MJ were welcomed to their first meeting. Note was made that PCC had changed their nominations this year and therefore Maddi Bridgeman and Ian Tuffin were no longer their nominated Board members. The two new nominees are going through the Board approved recruitment process.	
2.	Apologies for Absence	
02/05/22	Apologies for absence had been received from CB.	

3.	Declarations of Interest	
03/05/22	The guidance on declaring an interest was noted and there were a number of standing declarations.	
4.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 24 March 2022	
04/05/22	The minutes from the meeting on the 24 March 2022 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. The proposed redactions were reviewed, and these were approved by the PCH Board. They will be published on the PCH website in line with the PCH Transparency Policy.	
5.	Matters Arising	
05/05/22	The responses to the questions raised before the meeting were discussed and it was agreed that the Board would receive short briefing notes on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning from the Air Score Heat Pump trial at 2 void properties. • Outcomes of programme of customer insight activities relating to data collection, customer profiling and segmentation and views from the EMT on the way forward (check wording on this with Gill. • The People Strategy Action plan. 	AL CE SF
6.	Minute Action Log and Resolution Tracker	
06/5/22	The Minute Action Log and Resolution Tracker were reviewed, and no changes made.	
7.	Decisions since last meeting	
07/05/22	There had been Efficient Decisions relating to the appointment of Board members that were approved. Richard Connolly Co-optee to Development Committee and Tawasar Nawaz, Jill Gregg & Maja Jorgensen as PCH Board Members and Mike Day as Independent Board Member to the Regeneration Board.	
8.	Briefing papers	
08/05/22	There were no briefing papers.	
9.	Chair's Urgent Business – redacted as confidential	

09/05/22	<p>[Redacted]</p>	
10	Committee Minutes Circulated	
10/05/22	<p>The Minutes from the following Committee meetings were included for reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCH Regeneration Board – 18 March 2022 • PCH Energy Board – 7 March 2022 • Audit & Risk Committee – 10 May 2022 	
11	Audit & Risk Committee Chair’s update including items brought to this Board for approval- 10 May 2022	
11/05/22	<p>LN as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee provided an update to the Board on the meeting that took place on the 10 May 2022. The draft minutes were included within the meeting pack.</p> <p>[Redacted]</p> <p>The Committee were provided with assurance on how PCH complies with the RSH Economic Standards and the Internal Controls Assurance, which they had reviewed and are detailed in a report later this evening.</p> <p>The Whistleblowing Policy had been amended to include best practice and was approved at the meeting.</p> <p>Two internal audits (Complaints & Gas Safety) were discussed at the meeting, which had received adequate assurance rather than substantial which we aspire to achieve. It had been agreed that the actions from these reviews would be followed up by Customer Focus Committee. Note was made that Mazars had not included in the audit the number of complainants who were contacted within 48hrs which was agreed policy. Assurance was given that while this didn’t form part of the audit, PCH do monitor this closely to ensure the contact is made within the timescale given.</p> <p>The Committee briefly considered Risk Appetite. A full session on this was due to be held at the Beacon with Board and EMT over the summer.</p>	
11.1	Internal Controls Compliance	
12/05/22	<p>A robust and effective internal control system contributes to protecting PCH’s assets and the investment made in them.</p>	

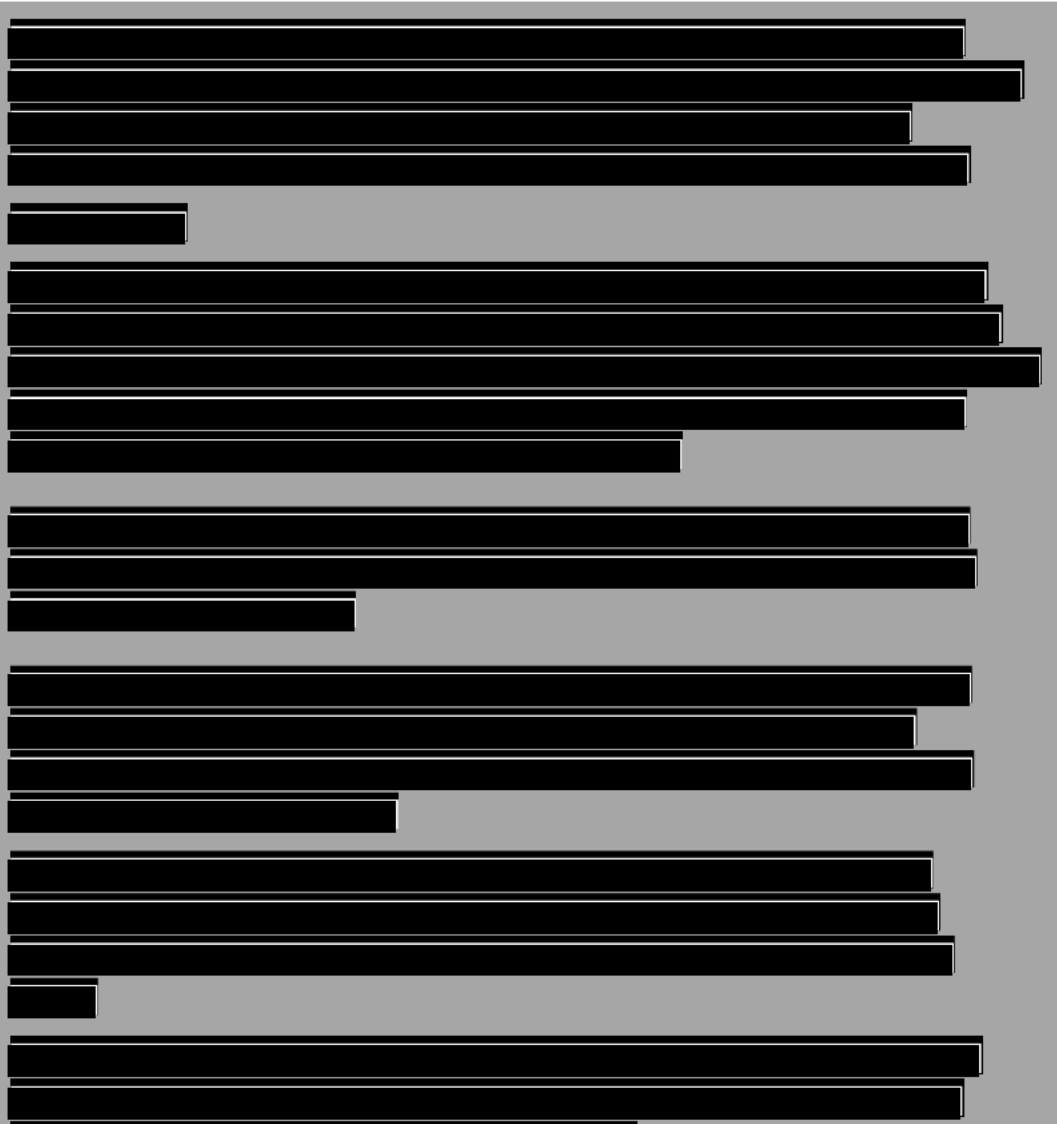
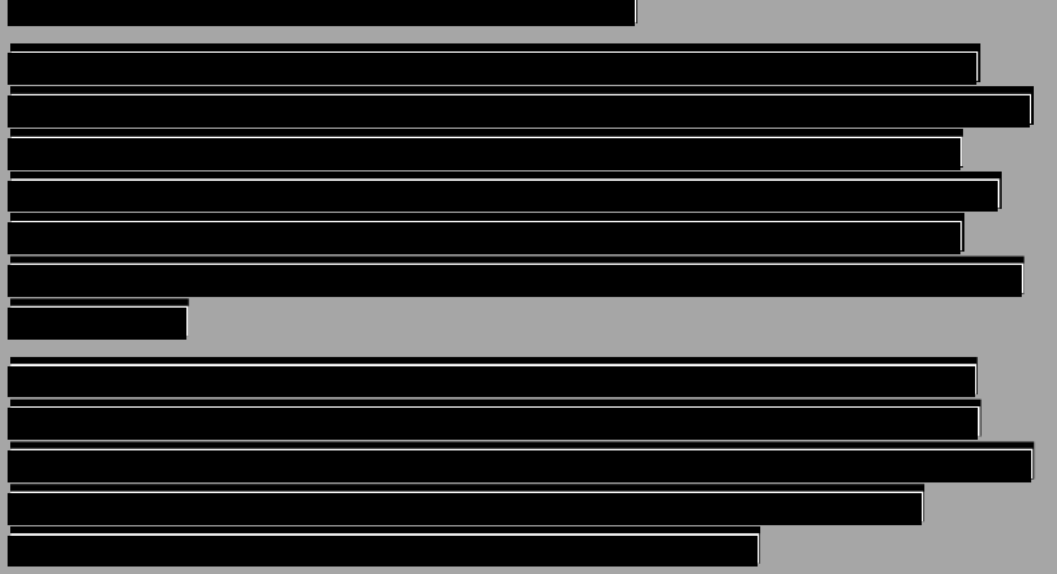
	<p>Board is responsible for making a statement on internal controls assurance within its annual Financial Statements, both for the group and subsidiary accounts.</p> <p>The May 2022 Audit and Risk Committee considered a summary of assurance of internal controls effectiveness across all areas of the organisation and was therefore recommending the adoption of the draft statement shown as Appendix A of the report.</p>	
13/05/22	There was a question raised before the meeting which is included as an appendix.	
14/05/22	The PCH Board approved the statement of internal controls (Appendix A) in the Financial Statements 2021/22.	
12	Development Committee’s Chair’s update – 19th May 2022 including items brought to this Board for approval	
15/05/22	<p>JW presented the Chair’s update from the meeting held on the 19 May 2022 where the Committee had been given an update on the current development projects.</p> <p>There had been 41 affordable homes handed over since the last update and there were 307 affordable homes under construction with an additional 27 for open market sale at the Halsall Homes JV site.</p> <p>It had been agreed that the PCH contact centre would handle any aftersales defect calls from these properties, with the estate management being provided by PCH as agreed by the Board.</p> <p>The Committee reviewed in detail the resident design feedback where PCH increased its satisfaction score to 90% based on the surveys returned. These mostly came from Butchers Park in Tavistock, Trevethan Meadows in Liskeard and North Prospect Phase 5, where we received 100% satisfaction scores.</p>	
12.1	Development Quarterly Performance Update and KPI’s - redacted as commercially sensitive	
16/05/22	<p>NJ as Director of Business Services and Development provided the update to the Board which enabled them to monitor the progress across all PCH’s development programmes.</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>	

17/05/22	[Redacted Content]	
18/05/22	There were questions raised before the meeting, which are included as an appendix.	
19/05/22	The PCH Board noted the Development Quarterly update and KPI's.	
13	Customer Focus Committee Chair's update – 6 May 2022.	
20/05/22	<p>LP provided the Board with an update on the meeting that took place on 6 May 2022, which included updates on PCH's Annual Customer Services Excellence accreditation and the ongoing review of tenancy agreements and policies.</p> <p>The Committee received an update on social value measures, not just across PCH's strategic contracts but also information on the Social Value Allocation Panel, which considered requests for emergency aid from our residents (typically furniture and white goods). Further information was requested on the demographics and numbers of those applying through the fund.</p> <p>The following was also discussed:</p>	
21/05/22	Complaints had increased in the quarter with one complaint in relation to mutual exchange going to the Housing Ombudsman after going through the PCH complaints process. Lessons had been learned from this which	

<p>22/05/22</p>	<p>were already being implemented before the Ombudsman gave his determination; these included improved training on types of tenure and better communication around mutual exchanges. It was agreed a copy of the Ombudsman determination would be circulated to the Board.</p> <p>The recent internal audit on complaints suggested reporting on lessons learned to our residents. It was discussed that the Board receives an internal annual report on lessons learned and has responsibility for ensuring they are understood and implemented; this is delegated to Customer Focus Committee. This is then cascaded to our residents through our In-Touch magazine and news stories. Predominantly this relates to change in services in a “you said -we did” format although our new Head of Communications will be looking at additional ways we can expand on this. This forms part of the actions of the internal audit and will be reported back through the monitoring of actions.</p>	<p>LE</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Quarterly performance update</p>	
<p>23/05/22</p>	<p>CE, Head of Strategy, Performance and Policy, presented the report to the Board to give an update on performance for Q4 2021/22 which also included an update on a range of building safety measures.</p> <p>The headline performance results, show that there has been some really good performance across a wide range of core services.</p> <p>While Void re-letting times remained above the overall target they continued to show sustained reduction on the in-month figure, which had a positive impact on the cumulative year to date position.</p> <p>Four homes were without a valid gas safety certificate at the end of the quarter, this was a reduction of 10 since the previous report. Similarly, the four properties which had been identified as being non-compliant for legionella have now been resolved.</p> <p>Assurance was given that passenger lift inspections and servicing were on schedule, with all lifts on the programme being serviced in the past month.</p> <p>There were 41 homes without an asbestos management plan of which 39 were properties recently acquired in Barne Barton, and the remaining two are existing PCH properties being progressed via legal means. Appointments are now booked in and will be resolved by the next quarter.</p> <p>The delivery of repairs within timescale remained off target and was mainly attributable to labour shortages with both contractors and in-house staffing.. The performance team were working closely with the repairs service to have a deep dive into the type of repairs that are coming through to see if anything is changing and if we can adapt our approach to help reduce the timescales.</p>	

	<p>The overall position for the percentage of complaints responded to within timescale was 99%, with six cases going out of time in Q3. All complaints were responded to within the time allowed during Q4.</p> <p>Current tenant rent arrears stood at 1.51% of the annual debit at the end of the year, which is an improved position compared to Q3.</p>	
<p>24/05/22</p>	<p>There was a question raised before the meeting which is included as an appendix.</p> <p>As a result of discussion and questions the following was clarified:</p> <p>Voids The in-month figure was now down to 29.5 days and assurance was given to the Board that work is continuing to reduce this to our target of 20 days. It takes a little time for this to come through on the quarterly figures which is why we are measuring in-month as well.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the relet times were being impacted by delays from Devon Home Choice in so far as the data that is received from them is in an unverified position. This means staff from our letting team have to get verification before we can offer a property.</p> <p>It was also worth noting that previously there has been no penalty for applicants bidding for a property and then not taking it up. This adds additional pressure on the process through having to readvertise the property when potential tenants do not arrive for the viewing. We have worked with the Council to highlight the impact of this.</p> <p>Additionally, the number of people who have been allocated a band B has increased significantly; this means more detailed assessments taking place around homelessness, disability and domestic violence which takes longer for people to get approval to move.</p> <p>Energy rating There were c30% of our properties which had a below C energy rating. Work is underway to identify which properties can and cannot be improved, which will be brought back to the Board at the end of 2022 to agree a way forward. It was noted how important this work was in taking into consideration the continued rise in energy costs and the impact this has on our residents.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Currently Tozers were representing PCH in ASB cases due to the in-house legal advisor vacancy. It was explained to the Board that the role has been reviewed so that it meets the organisation's requirements, and analysis was underway to understand the most cost-effective route for PCH to take for legal work (in-house or outsourced, as many other providers). It was agreed that in further information would be provided to the Board once the costs are known in the form of a briefing note , as this was an operational</p>	
<p>25/05/22</p>		

	decision for EMT to make .	
26/05/22	The PCH Board noted the performance outturns for Q4 2021/22.	
17:54	CE left the meeting	
15	6 Month Procurement Update - redacted as confidential	
27/05/22	<p>MS Head of procurement presented the procurement projects for the next 36 months to the PCH Board for delegation of contract approval to EMT (in accordance with Contract Standing Orders). It was explained that this was a rolling list which will include all known procurements for the foreseeable future requiring Board delegation (excl. Bath Street development, which is subject to separate delegation).</p> <p>A review of supply chain risks, actions and performance was presented including stores and fleet performance.</p> <p>A clarification of Contract Standing Orders was being recommended bringing the financial sign off levels devolved to staff in the Financial Regulations in line with the authority to accept and sign procurement contracts in the Contract Standing Orders.</p>	
28/05/22	<p>As a result of discussion and questions the following was clarified:</p> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 100%; min-height: 150px;"> <p>[Redacted content]</p> </div>	
29/05/22	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The PCH Board agreed to delegate all contract approval authority to EMT and SMT respectively (dependent on value) - except for any contracts which contact relate to -Marlborough House) 2. The PCH Board to noted procurement, stores, and fleet performance. 3. The PCH Board approved the amendment to Contract Standing Orders recommended allowing two SMT members to sign contracts up to £ 500k thereby removing discrepancy between Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations 	

18:02	MS left the meeting	
16	Business Plan Stress Testing – redacted as confidential	
30/05/22		
31/05/22		

32/05/22	<p>[Redacted content]</p>	
33/05/22	<p>[Redacted content]</p>	
34/05/22	<p>[Redacted content]</p>	

	<p>[Redacted Content]</p>	
35/05/22	<p>[Redacted Content]</p>	
	<p>[Redacted Content]</p>	

	[REDACTED]	
	The meeting restarted at 18:45	
17	Quarterly Management Accounts – redacted as confidential	
36/05/22	[REDACTED]	
37/05/22	[REDACTED]	

	[REDACTED]	
38/05/22	[REDACTED]	
39/05/22	[REDACTED]	
18	Quarterly & Annual Treasury Update- redacted as confidential	
40/05/22	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	

41/05/22	[Redacted]	
18.1	Treasury Strategy – redacted as confidential	
42/05/22	[Redacted]	
43/05/22	[Redacted]	

	<p>[Redacted content]</p>	
45/03/22	The PCH Board approved the Treasury Strategy.	
19	Governance Improvement Plan and NHF Code of Governance	
46/05/22	<p>LR Head of Governance presented the report which provides assurance that PCH is continuously reviewing and improving governance arrangements via the Governance Improvement Plan (GIP) and NHF Code of Governance Compliance Plan.</p> <p>Both plans support compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing’s Governance and Financial Viability Standard (which requires us to adopt an appropriate code of governance), relevant legislation and good practice.</p>	

	<p>The GIP (Appendix A) brings together actions from a range of sources including Board appraisal, Board and Committee effectiveness reviews and In-Depth Assessment (IDA) outcomes; it is the basis for the Governance Team Service Plan 2022/23. All actions are 'in progress' or 'completed', none are 'at risk'.</p> <p>At its meeting in February 2021, the Board agreed to adopt the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Governance 2020 with effect from April 2021. The NHF Code Compliance Plan was shown as Appendix B. 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. In the year since PCH adopted the code, we have progressed well and are compliant with 96% of the code; the 5 non-compliant areas noted in the report are low risk and each has an action and lead officer.</p> <p>The aim is to be fully compliant by March 2023.</p>	
47/05/22	<p>An amendment was made to the statement in paragraph 3 to now read as follows:</p> <p>The Board has also chosen to extend the term of office of one resident Board member beyond the recommended six years as there are currently no natural successors [addition follows] and one independent with financial skills until March 2023 to ensure continuity.</p>	
48/05/22	<p>The PCH Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DISCUSSED the Governance Improvement Plan 2. DISCUSSED the NHF Code of Governance Compliance Plan 3. APPROVED the NHF Code of Governance compliance statement for the annual accounts 	
20	RSH Standards Compliance and Update	
4905/22	<p>LR Head of Governance presented the report.</p> <p>The Board is responsible for compliance with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Economic and Consumer Standards, and corresponding RSH codes of practice (provided to amplify the VFM and Governance and Viability standards and assist in understanding how compliance might be achieved). The Board must annually assess compliance and provide a statement in the annual accounts.</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 this is via the Customer Focus Committee, and they were reviewed in February 2022). The Social Housing White Paper proposed to change this approach and Board will have more responsibility for consumer regulation. The May</p>	

	<p>2022 Audit and Risk Committee reviewed compliance with the Economic Standards.</p> <p>This report provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an overview of current Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) regulation • assurance that PCH complies with the RSH Standards • a summary of the annual RSH Consumer Standards Regulation Review • a roundup of regulatory downgrades • a summary of the proposed changes to consumer regulation <p>The only area of non-compliance was within the Governance Standard SE 2.1 which requires us to comply with our adopted Code of Governance; this work is ongoing and subject to a separate report elsewhere on this agenda.</p>	
50/05/22	<p>As a result of discussion and questions the following was clarified:</p> <p>Suggestions were made for further information that could be included in the narrative for the Consumer Standards compliance which were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mazars internal audit on complaints – publicity on lessons learned • Social Value Allocations Panel • PCH being part of the Community trigger Panel together with Livewest (ASB) 	
51/05/22	<p>The PCH Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) NOTED the recommendation from Customer Focus Committee that there is sufficient assurance that PCH complies with the RSH Consumer Standards 2) NOTED the recommendation from Audit and Risk Committee that there is sufficient assurance that PCH complies with the RSH Economic Standards, with the exception of full compliance with the adopted Code of Governance 3) APPROVED the 2021/22 statement of compliance with RSH regulatory requirements in the annual accounts 4) NOTED the remainder of the report 	
21	Senior Independent Director	
52/05/22	<p>LR Head of Governance presented the paper to the Board explaining that the Chair had requested a review of the role of Senior Independent Director (SID) and whether it would be suitable for the PCH Board.</p> <p>This report provided the Board with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an overview of the SID role 	

Confidential and Commercially sensitive information redacted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the differences between a SID and Vice Chair • the opportunity to consider how these roles might work for PCH Board • options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ no change, keep existing Vice Chair role ○ appoint a SID role in addition to Vice Chair role ○ replace Vice Chair role with a SID role <p>During discussions, Board may wish to consider these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would Board members feel able to raise conflict/concern through existing roles/structures? • Does the Board think a SID is needed in addition to the existing Chair role? 	
53/05/22	<p>The Board discussed the role of SID and there were a variety of opinions and examples given including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples and benefits of SID working effectively and ineffectively on other Boards. • A view that the role of Vice Chair and SID should be amalgamated. • A view that the role of Vice Chair and SID should be kept separate. • The view that in a well-run organization, the role of the SID would be redundant because all of the control measures that are in place work effectively. <p>It was discussed that no single member of the Board had a strong view.</p>	
54/05/22	<p>The PCH Board having discussed the role of the SID agreed to pick this up as part of the governance review later in the year.</p>	
22	Forward Plan	
55/05/22	<p>The PCH Board noted the Forward Plan.</p>	
25	Next Meeting: 28 July 2022	
56/05/22	<i>Meeting closed at 7:26pm.</i>	

Signature.....Nick Lewis, Chair

Date

Certified as a true copyLucy Rickson, Head of Governance

Date.....