



Plymouth Community Homes
**STRATEGIC
BUSINESS PLAN**
2023 - 2028



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Having been appointed Chair of PCH Board at the end of 2022, I am delighted that one of my first official roles is to introduce our new business plan.

It is a great privilege to become the chair of an organisation which has achieved so much in its 14 year history, and to have the opportunity to help PCH continue with its great work to make a real difference to the lives of people across Plymouth.

As we launch our new five-year business plan, it is also a time to focus on the future. Within this plan, we set out how we want to grow and improve as a business.

We want to provide a quality, affordable home for everyone who needs one, alongside continuing to deliver truly excellent services for our residents.

At the heart of the plan remains our ambition to be a top performing social housing association but with the current cost-of-living crisis, it's essential we prioritise supporting local people in housing need, and working to help address homelessness.

We're also setting new targets to help us become a more sustainable business, moving towards net carbon zero, and to help us build new partnership opportunities, as it is only through working closely with aligned organisations and building constructive relationships that we can ensure long-lasting change. Finally, one of the key areas of focus in our new business plan remains the need to listen openly to the voices of residents and customers and respond to what they tell us.

We welcome new ideas to give us a wider perspective so we can avoid becoming inward-looking as an organisation, and instead endeavour to get things right for our customers.

Valerie Lee
Chair of the Board





CEO WELCOME

Seven years after I joined Plymouth Community Homes as Chief Executive, I am enormously proud to say we are a leading social housing association in the sector: a high performing, efficient and effective housing business providing good quality affordable homes for local people, well respected in the city for the excellent services we provide to our residents.

But we cannot sit back if we want to continue delivering great services – and with such a significant need for social housing right now as we deal with rising cost of living pressures, it has never been more crucial for housing associations like PCH to focus on improving what we do for the benefit of the residents we work for, and the communities we work within.

We've developed our new Strategic Business Plan with a clear Mission to do just that – and a Vision to guide us as we work to not just maintain our housing stock, but invest in and improve it, making our homes more energy-efficient, comfortable, and welcoming.

We're also focused on ensuring we remain financially strong and viable

with the resources to fund further investment in our communities, our services, and our neighbourhoods – and to build more new affordable homes to meet the growing local need.

Our values remain to 'care', 'listen', 'support' and 'do the right thing', and we'll be supporting our staff to make sure they can live these values for the benefit of our residents.

Our business plan provides clear priorities within four key themes, setting out how we intend to achieve our ambitions, and we'll be governed by our Board of non-executive directors to make sure we deliver on these targets over the next five years, reporting against specific metrics to assess the outcome of our work for local people.

We can't do it alone, and we're proud to work collaboratively with our partners and our stakeholders, especially local authorities like Plymouth City Council, the health community including Livewell, the voluntary and community sector and bodies like Devon and Cornwall Police, along with our funding partners, including Homes England.

Together, we can deliver real, impactful change for the people who live in our homes, and for the city of Plymouth and the surrounding area. And we are proud to play our part, committing ourselves to our Mission of providing a good quality, affordable home to everyone who needs one, and delivering our Vision to create strong, welcoming, safe communities where people can thrive.

This way, we hope to make a real difference in peoples' lives.

John Clark
Chief Executive



MISSION & VISION

Who are we and what do we want to do?

Plymouth Community Homes is a leading social housing association focused on delivering great services and improving lives in the communities we work within. This booklet explains our business plan for 2023 to 2028, including our primary objective (Mission); what we're aiming to deliver (Vision); and the code which guides how we act as an organisation (Values). The plan is broken down into four key themes with 12 priorities which explain how we intend to achieve the Mission and Vision, underpinned by 36 measurable outcomes from table of metrics which we'll use to monitor our performance.



MISSION

A high-quality affordable home for everyone

Our Mission is simple – we believe everyone has the right to a clean, comfortable, safe and secure affordable place to live.

We are committed to ensuring our existing homes provide excellent social housing for our residents, with social rents of up to 50% less than the private sector, as well as building more high-quality, affordable homes for rent or shared ownership sale to meet the local need.

VISION

Providing homes and communities where people want to live

Our Vision goes beyond simply delivering good quality social housing – we need to make sure we get the basics right as well, and help improve lives by building safe, strong communities where people can thrive. We're focused on providing first-class services to our residents, and listening to their feedback so we can adapt and grow to meet the local need.







**LISTEN.
CARE.
RESPECT.
DO THE RIGHT THING.**

OUR VALUES

Our values guide how we act as an organisation and provide a code of behaviours for our staff to live by, so we act fairly, honestly and with integrity. They ensure we behave with care and respect towards our residents, listen to what they tell us, and always strive to do the right thing – for our residents, for the business, and for one another.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN OVERVIEW

2023 - 2028



CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

HOMES AND SPACES

PLANET AND PLACES

Deliver an ongoing programme of long-term financial planning that meets PCH's ambitions

- Value our people
- Be a sector leader in governance and regulation

Know and listen to our customers

- Deliver outstanding services for residents
- Be a partner of choice

Decarbonise our homes and business by 2050

- Deliver new homes that are fit for carbon-free standards
- Manage our community land and neighbourhoods in a way that promotes biodiversity

Maintain our homes and buildings

- Increase the number, type and tenure of our homes to meet a growing need for affordable housing
- Deliver high-quality outdoor and community spaces

THEME ONE – CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY

People are at the heart of everything we do – and our residents, our customers and our partners are always our primary focus.

We want to make sure we are both a housing provider and a partner of choice, delivering exceptional services but always listening to the residents we're working for, so we can shape, adjust and improve those services to meet the changing need.

And we can't do that alone, so we need to ensure we have great partnerships with local authorities and like-minded organisations and can work together to get the best results for PCH residents.

Priority One: Know and listen to our customers

It's critical we know who our customers are, what they expect of us as their landlord, and where we need to improve. We need to make sure we're keeping our residents, partners and stakeholders regularly updated about our performance – both our successes and where we need to improve, so we can be properly held to account, and are able to use their feedback to help shape our services so we can grow as an organisation. And we want to ensure we engage with a broad, diverse and inclusive group of residents to help influence our decision making.

Metrics:

1. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for listening to residents' views and acting upon them.
2. Achieve a 100% customer profile and ensure data-driven decision making is embedded.
3. Maximise the number of residents influencing decision making and broaden resident engagement to boost diversity.

Priority Two: Deliver outstanding services for residents

Once we have a clear understanding of our residents' expectations, we need to turn our aims into action and provide fast, efficient and effective services, from repairs and building improvements to community events and housing support. We want to get the basics right, respond quickly and meet expectations, so we can grow

and improve our services, and ensure we stay as one of the top performing landlords in the country for customer satisfaction, maintaining our reputation for excellent customer services.

Metrics:

1. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for service quality.
2. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for all customer satisfaction measures.
3. Transform our customer portal and have 80% of residents signed up and using MyPCH.

Priority Three: Be a partner of choice

We're serious about helping to improve lives, and we can only do this if we're able to work in close partnership with other like-minded organisations locally, regionally and nationally to support local people. We're committed to building and developing projects and initiatives with local authorities, health services and community groups, delivering schemes which help people to live independently, access healthcare more easily, and gain support for education, training and personal development.

Metrics:

1. Have effective strategic partnerships in place locally, regionally and nationally.
2. Deliver improved health outcomes for the city through our partnership with Livewell South West and other partners.
3. Achieve a positive reputation within the social housing sector for resident engagement and involvement.





**“ WE WANT TO GET THE BASICS
RIGHT, RESPOND QUICKLY AND
MEET EXPECTATIONS... ”**





**INVEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES
TO KEEP OUR HOMES SAFE,
COMFORTABLE, WARM AND DRY.**



THEME TWO – HOMES AND SPACES

Our Mission is to ensure everyone has a high-quality, affordable home, so it's vital we focus on delivering programmes of work which improve and upgrade our existing properties at the same time as building more, good quality social housing for local people.

We're also making it a key priority to improve and enhance the outdoor spaces around our homes, providing inviting, accessible community areas within welcoming, clean and safe environments. This will help us to create thriving neighbourhoods– and to deliver our Vision of providing homes and communities where people want to live.

Priority One: Maintain and improve our homes and buildings

To ensure everyone has a good quality home, we first need to look after the places we already own, and invest in our communities to keep our homes safe, comfortable, warm and dry. We'll use our new Asset Management Strategy to guide programmes of work to refurbish and upgrade our homes and blocks, decarbonising more properties to help reduce energy bills for our residents. We're also planning to improve how we manage damp and mould in our homes, responding more quickly to any reports of damp and tackling ongoing issues.

Metrics:

1. Complete and maintain 100% of stock condition and energy surveys.
2. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for repairs and voids.
3. Meet all building, fire, safety, and regulatory standards for our homes.

Priority Two: Increase the number, type and tenure of our homes to meet a growing need for affordable housing

There is a growing need for good quality social housing in the city and beyond, so we'll stay focused on building and acquiring more affordable homes for social and affordable rent - as well as for shared ownership and open market sale, which generates funds which can be reinvested back into our social homes. We'll seek opportunities to buy housing stock as well as land where we can create new developments, and work with developers to deliver affordable homes on major new-build schemes across the region.

Metrics:

1. Deliver a net increase of 10% of our housing stock through development and acquisitions.
2. Actively engage with regeneration and development opportunities in Plymouth, including the West End masterplan.
3. Grow and re-provision older people's housing and other tenures in response to identified housing need.

Priority Three: Deliver high-quality outdoor and community spaces

People want to live in neighbourhoods which are clean, safe, welcoming and friendly – and that means we need to look after the land around our homes too, carrying out essential maintenance and cleaning services on a regular basis. We're also dedicated to tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in our communities, working collaboratively with our partners including the police and local authority to help prevent and address ASB issues.

Metrics:

1. Ensure we have Neighbourhood Plans in place for all PCH communities.
2. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for customer satisfaction with the environments where people live.
3. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for customer satisfaction with communal areas.



THEME THREE – PLANET AND PLACES

We all want to help the environment, and PCH is fully committed to reducing our impact on the environment and becoming greener in our business practices.

We've created a theme focused entirely around delivering objectives to help us become more environmentally-friendly as a business, as well as to meet Government targets for decarbonising properties and operations.

Working to become carbon-free will help our residents by making their homes more energy-efficient, reducing heating bills, and we'll also create more welcoming communities with green spaces for wildlife to boost biodiversity.

Priority One: Decarbonise our existing homes and our business by 2050

In order to meet Government targets of being net carbon zero by 2050, we'll be rolling out programmes of upgrades to our existing homes to make them more energy-efficient, initially ensuring all our homes meet the minimum band C energy rating ahead of 2030. We'll also work to decarbonise the business itself and the properties we own, looking at investing in electric vehicles, solar energy, recycling initiatives, and exploring how we can work in a more environmentally beneficial way.

Metrics:

1. Finalise and start implementation of our Decarbonisation Strategy.
2. Ensure 95% of our housing stock meets the minimum C banding for energy performance by 2028.
3. Convert 25% of our vehicle fleet to green transportation.

Priority Two: Deliver new homes that are fit for future carbon-free standards

From 2025, a new future homes standard will require new-build properties to use low-carbon technologies for heating – and PCH wants to set the standards for this in any new affordable homes we create with our development partners. We will also explore new ways of building homes using modern methods of construction to help reduce carbon and become more environmentally-friendly in our approach to development.

Metrics:

1. From 2025, ensure 100% of new homes are heated by low-carbon technology.
2. Ensure 100% of new developments have access to charging facilities for electric vehicles or green transportation.
3. All homes to achieve a minimum of EPC B.

Priority Three: Manage our community land and neighbourhoods in a way that promotes biodiversity

As well as 16,000 homes and 160 shops, we own a significant amount of land across the neighbourhoods we manage – and there is an opportunity to manage this in a better way to promote biodiversity, encourage wildlife, and create more green spaces for our communities. We'll be reviewing our open spaces to see where we can provide improved outdoor amenities for residents like parks, play areas and planting, and designing new open spaces with wildlife in mind, working in collaboration with residents throughout.

Metrics:

1. Meet national standards for biodiversity net gain in all new-build developments.
2. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for customer satisfaction with our contribution to neighbourhoods (a Tenant Satisfaction Measure).
3. Transform a proportion of our land for community benefit, in consultation and agreement with residents.





“PCH IS FULLY COMMITTED TO REDUCING OUR IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND BECOMING GREENER IN OUR BUSINESS PRACTICES.”





“NEW REGULATION FOR SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDERS POSES SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES BUT WE WANT TO BE LEADERS IN THE SECTOR”



THEME FOUR – EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

We need to stay financially strong to achieve our ambitions, so it's crucial we carefully manage how we borrow invest and spend our money, as well as how we operate as an organisation so we can meet the increasing regulations and targets for social housing associations.

We'll need to drive forward new efficiencies, and take on more within existing resources, to help us manage increasing economic pressures as a result of rising inflation and the increased cost-of-living, to ensure we can continue to provide excellent services for our residents.

And we need great staff to help us achieve this – so we're focused on remaining an employer of choice, valuing our staff, and empowering them to live our values and always 'do the right thing' for our residents.

Priority One: Deliver an ongoing programme of long-term financial planning that meets PCH's ambitions

It's essential we manage our financial arrangements effectively to help us meet our Mission and Vision whilst staying strong, resilient, and sustainable as a business. This means ensuring we secure borrowing to fund our ambitions and achieve more financial freedoms from our lenders by reviewing our covenants whilst remaining viable. We will also implement a new, sustainable finance framework, linking our borrowing to our environmental performance, and considering ethical lending more fully.

Metrics:

1. Secure long-term funding to support the organisation's future plans.
2. Maintain an A-grade credit rating with a stable outlook.
3. Implement a full recovery model for all areas where service charges are applied.

Priority Two: Value our people

We're proud to be an employer of choice but we want to retain that positive culture, and this means investing in our staff through our pay and reward arrangements, as well as investing in training and career development opportunities to support employee growth. We need to equip our staff with the right skills to deliver excellent services, but we also want to motivate and empower them to live our values and do the right thing for our residents and our communities.

Metrics:

1. Achieve the Investors in People Platinum award.
2. Score in the top quartile of performance reports for staff satisfaction with PCH as an employer.
3. Ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce and Board.

Priority Three: Be a sector leader in governance and regulation

New regulation for social housing providers poses significant challenges but we want to be leaders in the sector when it comes to meeting the requirements from the Government, the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator for Social Housing, as well as regulation like the Building Safety and Fire Safety Acts. We will also share more performance information with our tenants as we work with them to meet the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and also review how we can better manage damp and mould in our homes.

Metrics:

1. All new consumer standards implemented.
2. Maintain a G1 rating for governance and a minimum of V2 viability rating from the Regulator of Social Housing.
3. Hold a strong reputation for being a purpose-driven housing association.



STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

2023 - 2028



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