



Be a Great Landlord Strategy

2020 - 2023

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1.0	New Strategy	30 th April 2020	Group Common Board	Annual Review – April 2021

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1. What is this strategy all about?

- 1.1 This strategy sets out Ongo's vision in relation to being a great landlord. It looks to determine the way in which we can fulfill our ambitions to ensure that our landlord service not only meets but exceeds our customer's expectations. Over the next three years this strategy will move Ongo from being a good, to a great landlord.
- 1.2 The strategy sets out the key areas that will have the greatest impact on our customer experience and provides an overview of the key actions that will ensure we:
 - 👉 **Involve customers in our decision making**
 - 👉 **Provide excellent services to our customers**
 - 👉 **Run an efficient landlord service**
- 1.3 It is inextricably linked with the three Ongo strategies; Create Opportunities, Offer Quality Homes and One Ongo.
- 1.4 These four strategies lead the way to create opportunities and determine a clear journey for our tenants, enable us to develop our landlord services from good to great and continue to build a range of quality homes, all delivered by one team, #OneOngo.
- 1.5 Our aims, objectives and performance indicators complement each strategy and puts the customer at the heart of Ongo, whilst ensuring that the core business is both deliverable and sustainable.

2. Where are we now?

- 2.1 We currently have a housing stock of almost 10,000 properties, in Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, with the majority of our stock located in North Lincolnshire.
- 2.2 These properties provide homes for around 25,000 people and we come into contact with even more people who are applicants for housing or customers making enquiries for other services Ongo offers.
- 2.3 We have a number of formal and informal ways for customers to get involved in helping us to improve our services. Our Community Voice group is an integral part of our Governance structure and approves all of our customer facing policies. Our customer groups also influence our handling of complaints, the delivery of our repairs service and can scrutinise any area of service delivery that they are concerned about.
- 2.4 We have an excellent track record in delivering customer service, however we know that we can do better because some of our processes have been designed around what

works best for Ongo and maybe not always around what works best for the customer. We want to be an organisation that is easy to do business with.

- 2.5 We are currently working hard to improve our digital offer and have introduced a number of digital options to our tenants and customers, including the MyHome App, iPads in our customer reception areas to access the choice-based lettings services and introduce tenants to the MyHome App. We also offer online contact via our website, web chat, ChatBot and social media platforms. Our approach is digital by design but leaving no-one behind.
- 2.6 Our aim is to let our homes as quickly as possible whilst creating truly vibrant and sustainable communities. We are developing new lettings processes that are accessed digitally. We are also finding long-term solutions for our low demand stock.
- 2.7 We deal with anti-social behavior on our estates quickly and effectively, working closely with our customers and other agencies. With the aim of making our estates places where people really want to live. We also support our customers who struggle to maintain their home in order to protect our asset, sustain tenancies and reduce tenancy turnover.
- 2.8 Our “Rent First” culture together with our excellent benefit and money advice services have led to our top quartile performance on current tenant rent arrears at a time of customer migration from Housing Benefit to Universal Credit. Excellent control of rent arrears and bad debt means that we can invest more of our rental income in our customer services.

3. Where do we want to be?

- 3.1 This strategy sets out the ambitions for Ongo to achieve its Corporate Plan objective of being a great landlord.
- 3.2 The consultation and analysis of the feedback we’ve received has helped us to identify key priorities that will ensure we achieve our future ambitions. These are:
 - 👉 To have an effective feedback framework in place that all of our customers can be part of, in a way that they want to be and that supports the improvement of our services.
 - 👉 To deliver services that get things right first time for customers, are available when customers need them and are accessed digitally wherever possible, but leaving nobody behind.

- 👉 To have an efficient delivery model for the landlord services that ensures our assets and income streams are protected.

4. How will we get there?

4.1 Involve customers in our decision making

- We will review our approach to tenant involvement and build on our existing offer to ensure we gain feedback, insight and involvement from a wider range of customers. We will specifically focus on techniques and solutions to build up a stronger youth voice.
- We will implement new ways of obtaining real time feedback to allow us to celebrate where we have done a great job but also to rectify quickly if things go wrong.
- We will review the way we manage complaints to make sure we address the root cause of the issue and use the learning to avoid the same thing happening again. As part of this we will re-launch our STAR approach in relation to customer service and drive a leadership culture around empowerment and ownership.

4.2 Provide excellent services to customers

- We will understand and redesign our customer journey for all key service requests, to improve the experience for our customers, remove unnecessary hand-offs and duplication. We will create the capacity and ability for decisions to be made at first point of contact.
- We will develop sector leading digital platforms, which will result in 75% of customer contacts coming through self-serve within the next 5 years. We will work hard to deliver solutions and measures of success for the next three years to work towards our 75% target.
- We will explore solutions available outside of the sector and look to embed good practice and innovative solutions across Ongo. We will however ensure that 'nobody is left behind' by continuing to offer non-digital methods of contact for those who need them.
- Our teams are key to this and we will work actively to ensure they have the best technology available and IT solutions to enable a digitally enabled efficient service. Our teams will be a key part of building future 'to be' processes.
- We understand that customer effort is out, and easy to do business with is in, alongside a new generation of customers who may demand more from services.

When developing our ways of working we will consider how others outside of the sector operate and use some of these key learnings to ensure we are easy to do business with.

- From an operating hours perspective we will offer services at times that match the needs of our customers including evenings and weekends.

4.3 Run an efficient landlord service

- We will redesign the service delivery model for the Communities Directorate via our “Transforming the Way we Work” project to ensure we are providing a great landlord service in the most efficient but effective way. This will include removing duplication of processes and creating more decision making at our Customer Service Centre.
- We will implement a new risk based visit to customers who we consider to be vulnerable or at a ‘high risk’ of tenancy failure. This will ensure that we are providing the right support at the right time, but also enable Ongo to better protect its assets.
- Building on the successful projects at Caistor Road and Westcliff we will continue to concentrate our resources in key areas to ensure we create truly vibrant communities.
- As our stock becomes more dispersed we will develop innovative ways of managing our stock and providing services to our customers.
- We will promote the Ongo offer to potential customers who may not have previously considered social housing or an Ongo product via our Ready to Rent offer, with the aim of broadening our customer base, improving demand for our properties and achieving balanced and sustainable communities.
- We will ensure that we have the necessary systems and processes in place to flag up and deal with debt as early as possible and will provide customers with the advice and help they need to claim the benefits they are entitled to and to manage their money effectively.

5. How will we know if we have succeeded?

- 5.1 We have listened to our staff and our customers and believe we have incorporated their ideas and captured the issues raised from the information we learned and are confident in achieving the targets we have set ourselves.

5.2 We will make any adjustments in the content through each annual plan to ensure we keep on top of emerging issues and opportunities, and monitor our progress in relation to the strategy by setting clear measures and timelines:

Measure	Outcome	Timescale
Communication	Clear communication plan across the business Performance update Directorate away days Share best practice	Ongoing throughout the life-cycle of the strategy
Balanced scorecard & KPIs	Monthly updates against team/service priorities	Monthly
Customer Satisfaction information	Ensure that we are meeting customer expectations to ensure regular monitoring against actions, implementing improvements and engaging listening to customers to help shape future services.	Monthly
Reports	Key News, CEO briefings and Board papers Core Brief	Quarterly Monthly
Cross team case studies	Practical examples of how our people are helping us achieve the aims of this strategy	Monthly
Value for Money savings and the Social return on investment	Landlord service to be delivered at or below the costs achieved by similar housing associations Deliver the expected efficiency savings	Annual
Annual review	Carry out an annual review of the strategy and action plan	Annual

5.3 Each year of the strategy we will deliver a number of performance outcomes linked to the three themes:

	Theme	Performance aim	Annual Outcome
a)	Involve Customers in our decision making	Percentage of total engaged tenants that are younger voices.	Age 30 and under = 11%
		Customer satisfaction that Ongo listens to and acts on customer views.	Upper Quartile (minimum 80%)
b)	Provide excellent services to customers	Customer contact switches from telephone to digital and self- service.	Customer contact by telephone = 60%
		Deal with customer enquiries right first time.	90% satisfaction
c)	Run an efficient landlord service	Overall satisfaction with landlord service.	Upper Quartile (minimum 90%)
		Average days to let vacant properties.	28 Days by Q3
		Current Tenant Rent Arrears.	Upper Quartile (maximum £750,000)