



GROUP COMMON BOARD MEETING

**ONGO PARTNERSHIP LTD (Company Registration Number: 08048224)
and ONGO HOMES LTD (FCA Mutuals Registration No 7639) (the Association)**

**Held at 2.00pm on Tuesday 24 January 2023
Board Room, Ongo House, High Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6AT and via MS Teams**

MINUTES

Present:

Group Common Board: Bob Walder (Chair), Steve Hepworth, Paul Warburton (Teams), John Wright, Rachel Cook (Teams), Paula Gouldthorpe, Natalie Cresswell, Helen Lennon, Gerraint Oakley (Teams), Kacper Merta

Officers: Jo Sugden, Karen Cowan, Fiona Ruddick (Minutes), Ashley Harrison, Pete Stones, Kevin Hornsby

Apologies: Melvin Kenyon (Senior Independent Director), Michael Finister-Smith

Absence: None

Also Present: Ahmad Khozad (Trainee) (Teams), Lisa Whelan (Trainee) (Teams), Christian James (Trainee) (Teams), Anna Beckett of Trowers (agenda items 1, 2, 3, 4, 10 and 11 only) (Teams), Amy Halliday of Trowers (agenda items 1, 2, 3, 4, 10 and 11 only) (Teams), David Rider of Link (agenda item 4 only) (Teams), Katie Hardiman of Trowers (agenda items 10 and 11 only) (Teams)

Time meeting opened: 2.00pm

Quorum: It was reported that proper notice of the Meeting had been given in accordance with the Rules of both Ongo Homes and Ongo Partnership. A quorum being present, the Chair declared the meeting open.

Declarations of Interest: Each Board Member considered whether he or she was interested for the purposes of rules D14 to D23 of Ongo Homes' Rules and D15 to D24 of Ongo Partnership's Rules, directly or indirectly, in any of the matters to be discussed at the meeting (including interested personally or by virtue of being a director or other officer of a business trading for profit or in any other way whatsoever in any contract or other transactions with Ongo Homes or Ongo Partnership other than as an officer, committee member or employee of a body whose accounts are or ought to be consolidated with Ongo Homes' or Ongo Partnership's accounts) and it was noted that any Board Member who disclosed an interest was requested to remain present by the other members of the Board but did not vote upon the matter under discussion. Gerraint Oakley explained he is employed as Executive Director of Growth and Development at

Platform Housing Group. The Chair explained this was disclosed and discussed as part of his interview process and not considered to be an issue.

1. Agenda item 3: Minutes of Previous Meetings & Matters Arising

The minutes from the meeting held on 30 November 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record for the Group Common Board and will be signed by the Chair. It was agreed the notes from the Away Day held 10 November 2022 captured the discussions accurately.

2. Agenda item 4: Action List

Updates on the action list were noted as per the meeting pack.

3. Agenda item 5: Chief Executive's Update

Summary: The report provides an update on activity undertaken to achieve the key strategic objectives agreed in the Ongo Corporate Plan 2019-2023 and the attached Key Performance Indicators (KPI) report tracks progress against these strategic objectives. The cost of living crisis presents significant challenges both for our tenants and for the organisation.

Discussion points/questions:

- The situation around damp and mould (D&M) is worsening as more reports are being received.
- There are several adverts currently out to recruit additional staff in the repairs and customer service areas to help with increased demand.
- Officers are in talks with Equans and United Living to engage them to help clear some of the backlog of repairs work.
- Local companies have already been exhausted to help with this so that is why national companies are now being approached for support.
- Pete Stones explained that engaging external companies to help with repairs will cost more money and this had to be accepted.
- The increase in repairs jobs is across different trades. Usually gas repairs decrease in summer but this was not the case last summer.
- For the next meeting, officers hope to have a standardised suite of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Board that will include figures for D&M.
- A Member commented the funded post working within Citizens Advice Bureau was a really good idea.
- Another Member offered to liaise with Steve Hepworth direct as his employer is taking part in the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) trials and can share information on this.

Ongo Partnership and Ongo Homes Agreed: Board considered the report and performance data detailing progress made towards meeting the Corporate Plan strategic priorities and debated issues affecting the sector and highlighted any additional work or activities required.

David Rider joined the meeting at 2.12pm.

Review delivery of the overall strategy and financial plan

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

4. **Agenda Item 6**

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

David Rider, Anna Beckett and Amy Halliday left the meeting at 2.38pm.

5. **Agenda Item 7**

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

6. **Agenda Item 8**

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

7. **Agenda Item 9**

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

8. **Agenda Item 10**

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

Katie Hardiman, Amy Halliday and Anna Beckett joined the meeting at 3.19pm.

9. **Agenda Item 11: Management Accounts and Performance**

Summary: This report presents the abridged management accounts of Ongo Homes, and full management accounts of Ongo Partnership (the entity) and the Ongo Group providing information on financial performance for the period ended November 2022.

Discussion points/questions:

- The planned programme of development and improvement work is gearing up to deliver.

Ongo Homes Agreed:

- Approved the management accounts and noted the contents of the report and associated information for the period.
- Noted the red status of one financial golden rule, the red status of four business plan stress test indicators and the amber status of a further stress test indicator and continues to consider the impact of rising inflation on future costs and rent settlements.

Ongo Partnership Agreed:

- Noted the contents of the report and associated information and approved the management accounts of Ongo Partnership (the entity and group) for the period.

Governance

10. **Agenda Item 12**

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

11. **Agenda Item 13**

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.



Katie Hardiman, Anna Beckett and Amy Halliday left the meeting at 3.32pm.

12. Agenda Item 14: Annual Development Plan

Summary: The report provided an update on the Development Plan over the last year.

Discussion points/questions:

- There were 3000 properties in our pipeline. The quality of work completed on the ground is good. Development and acquisitions are key to our future.
- Pete Stones explained the official start on site happened today at Ashtree Close in Belton. It has taken 2 years to commence. This is the reuse of an area of our stock and may be a more common conversation in the future.
- It was acknowledged the work that the Development Team do which is a small team of staff. Board asked for their thanks to be passed to the team.

Ongo Homes Agreed: The Board discussed progress against the Development Strategy Action Plan and confirmed they were satisfied with current progress.

13. Agenda Item 15: Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Summary: The report presented an overview of compliance on key health and safety areas.

Discussion points/questions:

- This report will be presented at every other meeting as previously agreed to keep meeting papers manageable. Audit & Risk get a report at each meeting Ensuring assurance was not lost in this area.
- Mental health was an area that had increased. Staff are dealing with stresses of tenants and then going home and dealing with their own issues. People are more willing to openly talk about mental health. There are over 50 mental health first aid trained staff and specific mental health ambassador roles have also been created.
- A Member stated that Ongo needed to be mindful of the people who are left at work and are picking up the work of individuals who are off sick.
- A Member asked about a fire risk assessment requirement that was overdue. Pete Stones undertook to find the details for this and share with Board in the next two weeks. **Action 1/23**
- There is a good update within discretionary reading on work towards the Building Safety Act.
- At the last meeting Board were informed of Ongo Homes' progress fitting carbon monoxide alarms. The RSH were contacted as the deadline of December was not met. Ongo Homes stated the intention to be fully compliant by the end of March. No feedback has been received from the RSH. There are 3,451 outstanding alarms to be fitted.

Ongo Partnership and Ongo Homes Agreed: The Board discussed the report and confirmed they are satisfied with the management of health and safety arrangements as set out in the report.



14. Agenda Item 16: Governance Update

Summary: An update on regulatory issues within the sector was presented along with a self-assessment of compliance against the Governance & Financial Viability Standard.

Discussion points/questions:

- Officers self-assessed the Governance & Financial Viability standard and found Ongo Homes to be fully compliant with the standard.
- An overview of regulatory issues within the sector was presented. The RSH continues to regrade organisation's viability ratings with a further 30 regraded from V1 to V2 as a result of a stability check or reactive engagement. The common themes continue to be financially based as reported last time.

Ongo Partnership and Ongo Homes Agreed:

- Received the in-depth self-assessment for the governance and financial viability standard and noted officers find Ongo Homes to be compliant.
- Noted the sector update on regulatory findings by the Regulator of Social Housing particularly noting the number of organisations regraded for viability in recent weeks and the number of regulatory judgements the RSH are publishing.

15. Agenda Item 17

Discussions recorded in confidential minutes.

16. Agenda Item 18: Approvals Taken via Convene in Advance

Summary: Two items were circulated on Convene with a request for Members to consider them in advance and the approval decisions to be ratified at the meeting.

Discussion points/questions:

- Fiona Ruddick confirmed the treasury management and growth merger policies, along with the board expenses procedure had been approved by the majority of Members via Convene and were therefore considered approved with immediate effect.

Ongo Partnership and Ongo Homes Agreed: It was confirmed the following policies and procedure, having been circulated in advance by Convene were approved with immediate effect:

- Treasury Management Policy
- Board Expenses Procedure
- Growth Merger Policy

17. Agenda Item 19: Other Board & Committee Updates:

17.1 Agenda Items 19.1: Minutes from all meetings within the group

17.2 Agenda item 19.2: Assurance Update from Board and Committee Chairs

Minutes from all other Board and Committee meetings are available for Members to view within the Document Library in Convene. The updates provided by the subsidiary Chairs were shared in the meeting pack and all noted.



18. Agenda item 20: Attendance List

The attendance list was noted.

19. Agenda item 21: Time for Reflection

The Chair explained that for future meetings, he would like half an hour on each agenda that would be available for Members to bring up any pre-planned or sector related items they would like to discuss. This would be scheduled on the agenda for after the Chief Executive's update and would be led by the Board.

With no further business the meeting closed at 4.01pm.

Signed by Chair: Date:

As a true and correct record of the Group Common Board meeting held on 24 January 2023

