



COMMUNITY VOICE
Meeting Minutes - 16th September 2024

Present:

CV Members: Jill Milner (Acting Chair), Dawn Johnson (Treasurer), Tracey Bain (Acting Secretary), Keith Lumbers, Tami Reeve, Tima Omari (Teams) Stewart Pearson, Judith Tomlinson, Paul Pearson, Eddie Stringer, Rhiannon Jeans, Dawne Reed, Jim Newcombe, Heather Gregory, Eric Gosling (Teams), Jake Stockwell (Teams, observer)

Ongo Staff: Wendy Wolfe, Karen Cowan, Emma Patrick, Kevin Hornsby (Teams), Jo Sugden, Steve Ellard (Teams), Mo Mathieson (observer), Maryanne Fitzgerald.

1. Welcome, Apologies & Housekeeping

Brief introductions were given from everyone for the benefit of the new members in the room.

Apologies received from Rachel Cook and Lee Coulson.

Jill mentioned keeping to agenda times and that there was no planned fire drill.

Speakers were requested to stand to help those with hearing impairments.

Jill reminded CV that the general enquiries log is for chasing anything that has already been reported.

2. Minutes & Actions of Previous Meeting

Dawn and Keith proposed and seconded that the minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting held in August.

Not all members had read the Self-Assessment of the Customer Charters as presented last time and so Karen had added additional evidence to these as agreed previously, with the revised information being sent out to the group a few weeks ago. Karen asked if anyone

had any feedback on the revised document as she hadn't received anything via email. Members stated they were happy with the revisions and so approved the document.

The Planning and Development Team will be invited to a future meeting. This will be booked in around the policies that are due for review.

3. Treasurers Report

Dawn asked if everyone was happy with the report sent out. The group confirmed they were. Dawn informed the group that they have had £5,000 deposited into the account.

4. Board Observers

Meetings taking place via the Board Room at Ongo House or Microsoft Teams:

- Ongo Communities Board on 8th October at 2.30pm
- Ongo Homes Board on 27th November at 2pm.

Three CV members can attend either of, or both meetings. Those interested to inform the Customer Engagement Team.

Discussion Items

5. Social Value Strategy – Maryanne Fitzgerald

Ongo has updated the Social Value Framework to get the best added value from our Contractors and Suppliers. Maryanne explained that Ongo must comply with the Social Value Act alongside the Housing Act.

Examples of social value within Ongo: JPT provided a Kitchen to the Viking Centre and Matthew & Tanner are fitting the kitchen. Ideal Boilers donate money for each boiler installed, this has then been used to put back into the Community Fund pot and used to support local organisations. The recently procured Occupational Health Supplier put in their tender that they will offer free dental checks to children. A member raised that there is currently work going on in the Broughton area with gas drilling. The company provides funding to charitable organisations and could be a funding pot that Ongo can investigate.

Maryanne would like to know what the customers feel is a priority. Social Value can come from training, courses or providing apprenticeship and training opportunities as well as material items. It is looking to get the whole supply chain to work together.

Maryanne explained that sometimes the cost of the Social Value work will be passed on in the price of the tender. The updated framework will look to ensure the social value benefits tenants in our local communities.

Action: Social Value Framework to be sent to CV members and CV members asked to provide feedback by 23.09.24 via the Customer Engagement Team.

6. Executive update – Kevin Hornsby

Last week launched the change to operating hours in the customer centre. The customer centre are operating an emergency only line from 9am to 10am for customers to report emergency repairs. The lines will then open at 10am for all calls. This has so far been working well for the team and the customers. Kevin thanked the group for the feedback that led to this.

There is currently ongoing tenant consultation regarding what tenants want in terms of Landlord Services. A customer survey has been agreed and over the next few weeks a door knocking exercise will be carried out; all to get feedback from tenants. This feedback will be added to the work already done by the residents scrutiny panel and then all of it will be fed back to Community Voice.

The Ongo Staff Conference was held last week at the Baths Hall and was well received by staff. **Action: Kevin asked that the videos be shared with CV.**

The Improving Lives Project is going well in terms of the number of customers taking part. Two case studies have been put together for the board to look at and assess the viability of the project. The case studies will be shared with the group in the minutes. A member asked if the improving lives project will be expanded to over-35's. Kevin explained that for the pilot the main focus is still under-35's but as proposed by CV there is discretion to offer this to over 35's. The pilot is running until March 25. Kevin is working with Jan to look at how things are put in place going forward and how this can become the 'normal way of working' considering budget restraints. A member asked about the plan going forward in terms of working with the carpet suppliers to provide the carpet at cost etc. Kevin explained that it will be an opportunity to link into Social Value and look at whether contractors and suppliers will be able to provide support regarding the funding. Kevin explained that they are intending to run the project for at least another year and then do a review of the impact which will be fed back to CV. A member asked if there is a time limit attached for when the carpet becomes the property of the tenant, or whether they could move and take the carpet with them. Kevin explained that is not something that has been looked into at this stage as the carpet has been gifted to the tenant. Karen explained that when such projects have run before this has not been an issue they have run into. A member asked what will happen at the end of the project in March and Kevin explained that they are planning to find the money from different pots, but this is something that he will be discussing with the Executive Team. They are planning to keep the decorator in employment and will be able to cover these costs from existing budgets.

7. Key Performance & Customer Satisfaction – Karen Cowan

A performance workshop was held where it was decided what information the group wanted further details on. The data collected is separated into transactional surveys and satisfaction surveys. The tenant satisfaction measures (TSM's) are used to benchmark against the other housing providers.

100% of complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 were handled within timescale, highlighting the effectiveness of the processes in place within the Customer Resolution Team. Only 1 complaint was escalated to the Ombudsman and is awaiting an outcome.

Customer Engagement Team's target for engagement with tenants under 30 years old has increased to 9% in line with the current tenant demographic, and this is being met month on month. This reflects the work the team are doing to engage customers in different ways as it has been proven that not all younger people want to come to formal meetings.

Contact Centre change of hours pilot has started. A member asked why there are no monthly targets for Customer Service. Kevin explained they should have targets **ACTION: Add the targets in.**

Customers have noted that the MyHome app. requires further development for Leaseholders to use and also for the ability for tenants to report urgent repairs. Kevin reiterated that this was also raised at board level. **ACTION: Kevin to chase progress with Mat.**

Repairs – The performance of the Empty Homes teams is above target and exceeding internal expectations. The Repairs service isn't working as efficiently as Empty Homes but this is being addressed by Steve Ellard. **ACTION: Karen to do a thank you to the voids team, backed up by Community Voice, via the Intranet.** A member raised that a repairs operative who, whilst attending a job, commented that his skills are not being utilised. Steve noted this and explained he is aware that staff and their skills are not being used as efficiently as they could be and this is something they are looking at within the team.

H&S/Compliance - The percentage of Asbestos checks completed are not at target and this is believed to be due to the properties acquired from Guinness as they didn't all come over with an individual asbestos survey. Steve will look at this for the next meeting. The figures showed that not all properties are at Decent Homes Standard. Karen noted that some homes in conservation areas may not be able to comply with the decent home's standards. Steve explained that we have a robust procedure for tracking the condition of our stock and recording when work is undertaken. Steve is committed to ensuring 100% of properties are at the decent homes standard. Karen queried if targets should be at 100% and it was confirmed they should be. **Action: Steve to influence the targets of 100% to be added for all those missing under H&S and Compliance section.**

Neighbourhood services – 51% satisfaction for Neighbourhood Services Operatives and Contractors, and 70% satisfaction for cleaning. **ACTION: Kevin to look at targets for the satisfaction measures, and to look at the sector to see how we compare.**

Out Of Hours repairs – 97% achieved in timescale, 7 day repairs – 53% achieved in timescale, 4 week repairs - 67% achieved in timescale, 12 week repairs - 87% achieved in timescale.

Steve explained that the figures are not where he wants them to be and this is a reflection of sending the wrong person to a job who

lacks the necessary skills. This is a focus for the department going forward and will increase the numbers of jobs being completed at first contact. **ACTION: Steve will bring this to the property services panel to look at.** Steve explained that he doesn't believe the figures on the report to be an accurate reflection on performance and will look into this further.

Action: Steve to make sure there is a key on the report for the acronyms used.

Number of new ASB cases this month 127 which is higher than May and June, Kevin noted this will likely be a seasonal increase. A member noted a lack of targets in the report. **ACTION: Steve to get the targets added.**

New tenancy management incidents have spiked to 209 in July, likely because people are at home during School holidays. 119 customers have received support from the sustainment coaches in July. Tenant satisfaction measures for those who have been a tenant for 12 months. They are all quite consistent. **Action: Karen to look at the arrows to make sure they are showing in the correct direction.**

TP09 (approach to complaint handling) has seen a big fluctuation. Kevin explained this was discussed at board last week as it is an issue sector wide due to it being a perception-based survey and customers may not have logged a formal complaint. **ACTION: Look at the satisfaction rates across the sector for comparison.**

The chair noted that the performance discussion had been very informative but asked that members read the figures beforehand and note questions prior to the meeting to enable meaningful discussion. Jill also passed on praise to Karen for the detail provided in her report due to the time constraints.

8. Dispelling Myths – Karen Cowan

Due to the recent increase in media coverage regarding migrants and the housing crisis, Karen read key points from an article she shared with the group. The group were grateful for the information being shared and agreed they felt more informed and better able to tackle incorrect information.

Information Items

9. Customer Engagement Activity update (verbal) – tenant reps

Call Handling workshop – The workshop was well attended with good discussions held. The feedback from the group led to a change in operating hours within the contact centre which is currently being trialled. This included ringfencing the first hour of call taking for emergency repairs only. It was noted that the majority of customers attending the workshop had not read the paperwork put together by Becky which meant the discussion was not as meaningful as it could have been.

Lettable standards workshop - Positive workshop with lots of discussion focused on what tenants want vs the need, along with value for money. Examples given such as not being a requirement that all cupboards match if they function correctly. It also looked at changing the wording within the standard to provide more clarity for Ongo and customers.

Leaseholder Forum – A change of staffing in the Home Ownership Team meant that it was a good time to re-start the Leaseholder Forum. It was evident that leaseholders weren't aware of the Customer Engagement opportunities, so they have been given information on this to consider. Communication was highlighted as an issue for them which has fed into the action plan. **Action: Ollie will look at leaseholder specific information for future issues of Key News.**

Tenant Inspectors – Continuing to see an improvement on the inspections carried out. It is very rare to have any red outcomes on the inspections. The group were informed we currently have 14 inspectors who are all getting involved and committed to carry out inspections. A member asked about inspections of the acquired Guinness stock and were informed there is one down for this month. Karen noted there had been a decrease in mystery shopping exercises completed over the last year but these are usually driven by service areas. Steve was invited to attend the next TI meeting. **Action: Emma to invite Steve to the November TI meeting.**

Resident Scrutiny Panel – The draft report has been produced and feedback will be given to the Customer Engagement Team. Once this has gone through the usual process then the report will come to CV. Dawn, on behalf of the panel, passed on her thanks to Karen, Wendy and Emma for their assistance in the research and collating the report and the work it entailed. Jo explained that the reports will be read by the Executive Team and will be monitored by Board to ensure the recommendations are being followed through. Karen informed the group that one to one research training can be provided for any members who need it and assured the group that the Customer Engagement Officers make that clear when promoting opportunities to prospective members.

10. Customer Engagement Updates (August – Wendy Wolfe)

Wendy read through the activity report as provided in the paperwork pack. She reminded members that if they are unable to attend a meeting, they can still contribute by sending in their questions which can then be addressed at the meeting.

11. Any Other Business/Reflection on meeting

Four tenants are involved in the recruitment process for the new Head of Maintenance.

Ongo is looking to hold a workshop around tenant permissions in the near future.

Following the governance review it was recommended that Ongo should look to establish an Operations Committee so the Board could be assured that they are hearing the customer voice. The Community Voice AGM will be put on hold until the practicalities of the Operations Committee are investigated further.

A CV member has recently been co-opted to the Board, there is a new tenant trainee board member, plus an existing current tenant board member - so there is currently very good tenant representation on the Board.

CV away day planned for November.

December CV meeting will be moved to a morning meeting with lunch being held after the meeting. Venue to be confirmed.

Action: Tracey to look at venues and food options

Wendy forewarned the group about the agenda and paperwork for the next meeting as there are several policy items.

12. Date and Time of next meeting

Wednesday 16th October at the Arc 1.30pm to 4pm.