

Community Voice Terms of Reference

Ongo and its tenants working together to improve
the quality of life for all Ongo tenants and communities

1. NAME

- 1.1 The group is known as Community Voice

2. AREA OF BENEFIT

- 2.1 Tenants and residents living within the geographical areas where Ongo Homes operate.

3. ROLE

- 3.1 To be the main tenant body umbrella group for all customer engagement structures of involvement to feed into.
- 3.2 To represent the views, concerns and interests of Ongo tenants (the term tenants within these terms of reference refer to tenants, leaseholders and shared owners), on all matters relating to the planning and delivery of housing and related support services, and to feed through these views to the Ongo Homes Customer Focus Committee.
- 3.3 To provide an independent view of Ongo service delivery by carrying out scrutiny activities and recommending areas for improvement to the Customer Focus Committee.
- 3.4 For CV members to be involved in the recruitment process for Independent Tenant Committee Members for the Ongo Homes Customer Focus Committee and in the recruitment of Ongo Homes Leadership Team positions.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 To review, monitor and discuss service provision and other operational and customer facing issues, to identify and influence improvements to be made to Ongo's policy, housing and communities.
- 4.2 To represent the views on behalf of involved tenants through discussion and feedback on a range of community and environmental tenant-related housing issues.
- 4.3 To promote greater understanding of housing and community related issues to all residents within the Ongo areas of operation.

- 4.4 To forge links/networks locally and nationally with other tenant umbrella groups and lobby for change, where required.
- 4.5 To actively promote the role and work of Community Voice to all residents where Ongo operates.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 The majority of the membership will be Ongo tenants.
- 5.2 Membership will be open to accommodate the diverse needs of all Ongo Homes residents.
- 5.3 Membership shall be open to Ongo Tenants (including joint tenants), Leaseholders and Shared Owners (unless a breach of Ongo's volunteer's code of conduct applies).
- 5.4 If a family member residing in an Ongo tenanted home expresses an interest in attending, this can be considered (decision by Community Voice Chair based on the numbers of current membership).
- 5.5 The Chair of an Ongo recognised Resident Association or Community Group that is not living in an Ongo home, but does live within the geographical area of representation, can act as the group's representative and attend CV meetings.
- 5.6 Community Voice tenants, leaseholders and shared owners can apply to be an Ongo Tenant Shareholder.

6. COMMITTEE

- 6.1 All Community Voice (CV) members will be recognised as the Committee.
- 6.2 The composition of the Committee should consist of at least 70% tenants.
- 6.3 CV members will be required to participate in learning and development opportunities where appropriate.
- 6.4 CV shall have two Officer positions: a Chair and Vice Chair.
- 6.5 The CV Officers must be Ongo tenants.
- 6.6 The CV Officers will influence future agenda items and will meet regularly with Ongo to prepare for CV meetings.
- 6.7 The CV Chair will be an ex-officio committee member of the Customer Focus Committee for as long as they remain CV Chair.
- 6.8 The CV Officers cannot apply for membership of the Ongo Homes Board.
- 6.9 The CV Officers should not be a Chair or Vice Chair of any other Ongo customer engagement structure (excluding resident associations & community groups).

- 6.10 Each of the CV Officer positions will be elected annually. Anyone wishing to nominate themselves for an Officer role must be a CV member and have attended three CV meetings prior to the vacancy being advertised.
- 6.11 The CV Officers can serve for a maximum period of six years if they are re-elected annually during that time.
- 6.12 The CV Officers shall stand down annually and will be eligible for re-election unless they have served their full term of six years.
- 6.13 A self-nomination form will be provided to CV members annually, together with the person specification for the relevant Officer role. The closing date for submission of self-nomination forms will be provided.
- 6.14 Ongo will facilitate a selection and recruitment process to ensure that applicants meet the relevant person specification required. Applications that are successful at this stage shall be put to the next CV meeting for approval. If there is more than one applicant applying for an Officer position, the applicants will be asked to present their case to the next CV meeting where CV members can ask them questions. Following this exercise, CV members will be asked to provide a hidden vote on their preferred candidate.

7. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- 7.1 **THE CHAIR** or in his or her absence, the Vice Chair (or another committee member) shall conduct CV meetings. The Chair should influence the agenda items and the scope of CV meetings. The Chair will make sure that all members can contribute to meetings and that those in attendance adhere to the Ongo's Volunteers Code of Conduct. In addition, the Chair will attend other meetings and events in their capacity as the lead representative of CV. The Chair will also be an ex-officio member of the Ongo Homes Customer Focus Committee.

In the event of the Chair position becoming vacant during the term of office, if the Vice Chair is willing and able to attend as an ex-officio member of the Customer Focus Committee, then the Vice Chair will automatically take over this role until the next annual election. Should the Vice Chair be unable to take this on, then a new CV Chair will be sought from the wider CV membership via an application, selection and recruitment process (as per 6.13 above).

- 7.2 **THE VICE CHAIR**, in the absence of the Chair, shall conduct CV meetings and attend other meetings and events as a representative of CV wherever possible. The Vice Chair will be involved with influencing agenda items and the information for CV meetings. The Vice Chair will support the Chair in ensuring that all members can contribute to meetings and that those in attendance adhere to Ongo's Volunteers Code of Conduct.

In the event of the Vice Chair position becoming vacant during the term of office, then a new Vice Chair will be sought from the wider CV membership via an application, selection and recruitment process (as per 6.13 above).

7.3 CV OFFICERS - Miscellaneous

The CV Officers may be required to undertake training in relation to their specific role. They will also be responsible for researching good practice ideas and influencing future training for CV members.

As and when the need arises, CV Officers may be required to take decisions on behalf of CV. They will discuss and agree on a specific issue at their CV Officers' meeting with Ongo and will give feedback to the next CV meeting.

8. SUB/WORKING GROUPS

8.1 At various times it will be necessary to convene CV working groups for a particular purpose. The majority of these will be one off, or of a short-term task and finish nature. The method used for holding these meetings will be agreed on a case-by-case basis, e.g., face to face, virtual or blended.

8.2 CV working groups can either include invitations to members only, or can be a combination of CV members, tenants from other customer engagement structures or tenants from the wider customer base. This will be dependent on the purpose of the group and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

8.3 On behalf of CV, each working group will have delegated decision-making powers (if this is within the terms of reference for the group or specific project).

8.4 A representative from each working group will give feedback to CV for information purposes periodically or when considered necessary.

9. MEETINGS

9.1 Meetings will be held on a regular basis but no less than six times per year.

9.2 Meetings will last for no more than three hours unless prior agreement has been made.

9.3 CV meetings will only be deemed to be quorate if at least ten members are present (including the CV officers). The majority of those present must be tenants of Ongo.

9.4 Ongo will take minutes or notes of all meetings and make these available to Ongo staff and CV members.

9.5 Invited guests may attend meetings in an advisory capacity or as observers. Ongo and CV Officers will agree on invited guests.

9.6 Approved CV minutes will be published on the Ongo website.

9.7 Ongo will contact CV members who have not attended three consecutive CV meetings to identify their future commitment. Should it be unlikely that attendance will be improved, Ongo in agreement with the CV Officers, can remove an individual's CV membership.

10. VOTING RIGHTS

- 10.1 The committee will take decisions by consensus.
- 10.2 Usually, the vote will be by a show of hands, or in very exceptional circumstances a hidden or open ballot may be requested. The minutes will include details of the votes for, against and abstains (unless in relation to the election of an individual person/s).
- 10.3 Each member will have one vote (including the Chair).
- 10.4 In the case of a tied vote, the Chair will have an additional casting vote.
- 10.5 On tenant issues, only tenants can vote.

11. CODE OF CONDUCT

- 11.1 All members shall sign up to and conduct themselves in accordance with Ongo's Volunteer's Code of Conduct. Members must adhere to the Code both inside and outside of meetings. In addition, all members will work to relevant Ongo Homes policies where appropriate.
- 11.2 CV membership may be withdrawn by Ongo to individuals that breach Ongo's Volunteers Code of Conduct.

12. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- 12.1 The group recognises the value of diversity in its membership.
- 12.2 The group will actively encourage membership from all diverse sections of the community to ensure that its make-up is reflective of the neighbourhoods that it serves.
- 12.3 Membership shall be open, irrespective of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage/civil partnership, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, and pregnancy/maternity.
- 12.4 An annual audit will be carried out to ensure that the composition of the group reflects the diverse nature of the Ongo Homes resident base. Where any areas of under-representation are identified, actions will be put in place to encourage membership take up in those areas.
- 12.5 Members of the group will demonstrate commitment to creating an environment that is free from harassment and other discrimination.
- 12.6 All CV Officers and members will agree to undertake mandatory annual equality, diversity and inclusion training.

13. CHANGES TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 13.1 Any proposed amendments to these terms of reference will be discussed and agreed on by Ongo and CV Officers before being put to a CV meeting for

consideration or will be discussed at a specific CV Terms of Reference Review Workshop.

13.2 Any amendments require the approval of a majority of members present and voting at a CV meeting.

13.3 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

14. DISSOLUTION

14.1 If CV members decide there are grounds to dissolve CV, they will propose this to Ongo.

14.2 Ongo should be able to take or propose action to remedy the situation and can choose to continue the group, either in the same manner or in any other format/structure which is appropriate to meet the needs of the organisation.