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**ONGO COMMUNITIES COMMON BOARD**

**COMPRISING OF: ONGO COMMUNITIES LTD (Company Number 08619739)**

**ONGO RECRUITMENT LTD (Company Number 04750128)**

**CROSBY BROKERAGE LTD (07307333)**

**Held at 2.30pm on Tuesday 8 October 2024**

**Board Room, 1st Floor, Ongo House, High Street, Scunthorpe DN15 6AT**

**and by MS Teams**

# MINUTES

**Present:**

**Common Board:** Natalie Cresswell (Chair), Jan Williams, Karen Locking, Debbie Clegg

**Officers:** Bev Lewis (Minutes), Kerry Copson, Carl Willerton, Kevin Hornsby (Teams), Erica Sanderson, Fiona Ruddick, Jo Sugden, Ashley Harrison (Teams)

**Apologies:** Kacper Merta

**Absence:** None

**Observers:**

The meeting was confirmed as quorate – three members are required as per standing orders item I5 and the specific resolutions agreed by the entities in November 2022.

**Declarations of Interest:** Natalie Cresswell declared she is a member of Ongo Homes Board and Jan Williams is employed by Ongo.

**Time meeting opened:** 2.34pm

1. **Agenda item 3 – Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 July 2024 and 5 September 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2. **Agenda item 4 – Action List**

The Action List was noted. Fiona Ruddick explained for Action 5/24 the information had been received the day before the meeting and needed interpreting before sharing with the Board. The Chair asked for it to be emailed when available. Maps had been created for Action 2/24 and sent to the Governance Team. Unfortunately these had been omitted from the meeting pack. They were emailed to the Board during the meeting for their information.

3. **Agenda item 5 – Management Accounts**

*Summary: This report presents the management accounts including financial golden rules of Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage for August 2024.*

Discussion points/questions:

* It was explained these accounts included a re-forecast of the budgets.

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| **Agreed Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage:** approved the management accounts of Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage for August 2024. |

5. **Agenda item 6 - Business Performance Report**

*Summary: This paper provides performance management information on progress against the targets and highlights the year-to-date results on projects and business activities.*

Discussion points/questions:

* The Arc has been shortlisted for a national urbanism Great Place award and the onsite assessment went really well. Representatives were welcomed into The Arc and also taken around the surrounding areas with them commenting that Ongo was a unique bid. The finals will be held in London on 13 November 2024.
* The plan to engage customers remotely is starting to improve. There are new processes in place to mitigate customers being given laptops or tablets then not attending or engaging. They must now be actively engaging before being given equipment.
* Efforts are being made to reach the target for clients accessing our services remotely with Tenant Services providing specific pockets to focus on.
* Applications for funding are ongoing. No response has been received from the bid for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund despite regular requests for information.
* Proud To Care aims to be self-funding by 2025 and plans and targets are in place with 6 months to achieve. The plan is to have 2 consultants which requires 600 hours per week to be sustainable. A Member asked if those hours were not sustainable, if it could be managed with one. Carl Willerton explained that would be possible and less hours would be required.
* The tracker system is live however there are some problems that are being worked on with IT with significant progress made in the last few weeks. A Board member asked if there were plans to apply for a compensatory payment from the suppliers. Carl Willerton explained this has already been raised with the developers. Before implementation these issues had not been identified. Carl Willerton explained the supplier is working with us to get to where we want to be and it will be worthwhile in the long run.
* The Ashby area of Scunthorpe was put forward as the next area of need after Crosby and Town areas. There are already a lot of community groups operating in those areas. The areas had been identified from information from colleagues in the Landlord side of Ongo Homes who had identified hot spots for anti-social behaviour and other issues.
* A Member felt the team should be making a move outside of North Lincolnshire to increase the name and reputation of Ongo in other areas.
* The Board asked staff to re-visit the proposed areas and come back with a piece of work outlining what impact could be made in other areas. This should consider multiple areas such as Ashby, Grimsby and Doncaster and for each one to explain the work that could be done and anticipated impact. It was requested this be fed back to Board before the next meeting in January 2025. **Action 8/24**

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| **Agreed Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage:**   * considered the content of the report and discussed and debated any performance issues. * agreed that the report demonstrates sufficient progress against targets and outcomes, and that risks are understood and managed appropriately. * considered the areas highlighted for community development and requested further work as per discussions above. |

6. **Agenda item 8 – Post Office Deep Dive**

*Summary: This paper provides a history, and detailed information on the post office, located within the Arc and delivered by Ongo Communities. It explains how the post office is funded, gives an overview of how income is generated, as well as the current financial situation.*

*The paper also highlights how the post office supports the wider Arc objectives to meet the needs of our tenants and the communities that we support.*

Discussion points/questions:

* The Post Office was not expected to make a profit and Board were comfortable with the loss with the overarching benefit to the community being at the forefront.
* As an organisation, Ongo supports the social value the Post Office brings. A Member commented the case studies brought to life the work the staff in there do.
* Ashley Harrison explained there is no debt to the Post Office and it was always known it would not generate a profit. It is currently forecast to make a loss this year of approximately £3,000 more than budgeted for. Increases to staff costs have been a contributory factor.
* In terms of staffing costs, Ongo salaries are agreed by negotiation with recognised trade unions. Before these are negotiated the rent settlement from the Government for Ongo Homes should be clear.
* Taking this information into account, Board agreed the acceptable level of loss for the Post Office would be reviewed annually before the budget is agreed.
* Post Office workforce and succession planning was added to the Communities Strategic Risk Register as discussed by the Board in their earlier risk planning session.

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| **Agreed Ongo Communities:**  Using the information provided Board decided:   * they are willing to continue to accept a loss. * they would agree the level of acceptable loss when approving the budget annually * considered the content of the report and discussed and debated any issues. * agreed the report demonstrates a clear description of the post office and that risks are understood and managed appropriately. |

8. **Agenda item 8 - Charity Commission Annual Return**

*Summary: Annually the Charity Commission require charities to submit an annual return within ten months of the end of their financial year. This return is completed online and provides detail on a charity’s annual income and expenditure. It is in addition to the statutory accounts which are submitted along with this annual return. The annual return needs to be brought to the Board’s attention for consideration prior to approval.*

Discussion points/questions:

* Fiona Ruddick explained information had been populated with support of Nigel Saxby from the Finance Team.
* The annual return was noted and Board had no questions.

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| **Agreed Ongo Communities:** considered and approved the proposed submission to the Charity Commission for Ongo Communities’ annual return. |

9. **Agenda item 9 – Ongo Communities Investment Policy**

*Summary: It is a requirement of the Articles of Association for Ongo Communities that its investment policy is reviewed at least once a year.*

Discussion points/questions:

* Fiona Ruddick explained to Board there had been some wording changes based on guidance issued by the Charity Commission. Board accepted these.

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| **Agreed Ongo Communities:** approved the revised Ongo Communities Investment Policy. |

7. **Agenda item 9 – Health and Safety**

*Summary: This report covers updates between 28th June 2024 – 23rd September 2024. Incidents detailed are since the last reported incidents detailed in the last Board update.*

*There has been 1 incident reported since the last reported incidents.*

*There has been 0 RIDDOR reportable incidents within this reporting period.*

Discussion points/questions:

* Jo Sugden took the report as read and the Board were satisfied that the one incident in the report was dealt with accordingly.

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| **Agreed Ongo Communities Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage:** confirmed they are satisfied with the management of Health, Safety and Environment arrangements set out in the report. |

13. **Agenda Item 11 – Ongo Communities Strategic Risk Register**

*Summary: Prior to the meeting the Board had held a session specifically to discuss risk. The summary of these discussions was reported to the meeting for recording in the minutes.*

Discussion points/questions:

* Erica Sanderson explained the Strategic Risks had been examined to consider whether they were still relevant and whether there were any risks to be added to the register. At the conclusion of the session some changes and additions were made to the risk register.
* The updated proposed Strategic Risk Register would be presented to Board at the next meeting in January 2025.

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| **Agreed: Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage**: noted the update provided by Erica Sanderson summarising the earlier discussions on risk. |

15. **Agenda item 14 – Time for Reflection**

The Chair thanked the Board for their attendance and input at the meeting and earlier risk session. Jo Sugden advised the Board this was Fiona Ruddick’s last meeting. She was thanked for her support and wished well for the future.

With no further business the meeting closed at 3.40pm

Signed by Chair: ................................................ Date: ........................................

As a true and correct record of the Ongo Communities Common Board meeting held on 8 October 2024