ONGO COMMUNITIES COMMON BOARD

COMPRISING OF: ONGO COMMUNITIES LTD (Company Number 08619739)
ONGO RECRUITMENT LTD (Company Number 04750128)
CROSBY BROKERAGE LTD (07307333)

Held on Thursday 30 January 2025 at 2.00pm
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, Erica Sanderson, Jo Sugden, Ashley Harrison
Apologies:
Absence: Kacper Merta
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. Karen Locking declared an interest in Agenda item 9 due to links with Scunthorpe Rugby Club

Time meeting opened: 2.04pm

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

The minutes of the meetings held on 8 October 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2. **Agenda item 4 – Action List**

The Action List was noted.

3. **Agenda item 5 – Outcomes of Ongo Homes Investment in Ongo Communities**

Summary: This paper provides information on how the one million pounds plus uplift, (£1,107,988 in 2025/26) provided annually by Ongo Homes is being utilised and for Ongo Communities board *to approve to enable a a proposal to be taken to Ongo Homes Board to make a decision on awarding funds in line with the current Corporate plan.*

Discussion points/questions:

- Kevin Hornsby explained the report had been produced in line with the recommendation from DTP in the Mock Inspection report for Board to have sight of how grant money from Ongo Homes is spent and what targets have been achieved.
- The spend on Community projects has dropped from 21.27% last year to 15.92% this year and this is due to some roles being moved to Employment Support where the spend has risen.
- The Social Impact figures were interesting to the Board and they asked if these could be shown as a comparison i.e. potential vs outcomes.
- 5 years ago, Ongo Communities aimed to help at least 700 people at a time when more external grant funding was available. At present they are still helping as many people as before but with a lot less funding.
- The Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) calculator we use to work out social value figures has its own national values and Board asked for Jan Williams to give a presentation on how this works at the next meeting. **ACTION 1/25** An analysis will be undertaken on the social impact on other areas of the business. A Deep Dive report will be brought to the next meeting on Social Value and Impact.
- Board asked for an estimate of Social value be supplied alongside any future potential projects/schemes.
- Board agreed to continue with the Improving Lives and Ongo Talk for a further 12 months.

Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage Agreed:

- considered the content of the report.
- approved content of the proposal to be presented to Ongo Homes meeting in March 2025 and proposed funding and budget for 2025/26.

4. **<u>Agenda item 6 - Management Accounts</u>**

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

Discussion points/questions:

- Ongo Communities forecast is showing as £41k favourable to budget which could be due to a number of factors including, among other reasons, teams being asked to consider their spending in the latter part of the year.
- Ongo Recruitment shows as being approx. £1/4m down on budget. This is thought to be due to reduced income from agency work and less apprenticeships. Kevin Hornsby and Jan Williams will explore this and compile an action plan. **ACTION 2/25**

Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage Agreed:

- Board approved the management accounts of Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage for December 2024.

- Board noted that Ongo Communities free reserves are within the range of £450k - £600k set as the upper limit in the reserves policy and should therefore begin to consider if and how any excess reserves could be utilised.

5. **<u>Agenda item 7 – Budgets 2025-26</u>**

Summary: The budgets for the organisation must be considered and approved by the Board on an annual basis. These will form the basis for financial control and reporting during the financial year, and for our reporting on the financial position of the businesses. This report considers the annual budgets of the Ongo Communities businesses separately. Once approved, the budgets will then be included in the Group Budget submission for approval by Homes Board. The report also includes the Communities reserves policy which must be reviewed and approved each year, along with a request for approval to utilise some of the current reserves in the forthcoming financial year.

Discussion points/questions:

- With the future funding landscape looking bleak Ongo Communities may need to change the way they operate and look at affordability and investigate more sustainable projects over the next 12-18 months.
- Devolution also needs to be considered as well as potential local authority changes.

Ongo Communities Agreed:

- Board approved the revised Communities reserves policy.
- Board approved the initial draft of the budget and the assumptions upon which it is based
- Board approved the budgeted losses for The Arc, Arcafe and Post Office.
- Board approved the use of reserves to fund the proposed continuation of the Ongo Talk and Improving Lives projects.
- Board advised on any amendments to the budget to be considered prior to final approval.
- Board advised on any specific requirements and considerations in relation to the compilation of the longer-term business plan.
- Board confirmed that the sensitivities applied to performance are valid scenarios which can be used to support the assessment of going concern when signing off the 2024-25 statutory accounts.

Ongo Recruitment Agreed:

- approved the initial draft of the budget and the assumptions upon which it is based
- advised on any amendments to the budget to be considered prior to final approval.
- advised on any specific requirements and considerations in relation to the compilation of the longer-term business plan.
- confirmed that the sensitivities applied to performance are valid scenarios which can be used to support the assessment of going concern when signing off the 2024-25 statutory accounts.

Crosby Brokerage Agreed:

- approved the initial draft of the budget and the assumptions upon which it is based

- advised on any amendments to the budget to be considered prior to final approval.
- advised on any specific requirements and considerations in relation to the compilation of the longer-term business plan.
- confirmed that the sensitivities applied to performance are valid scenarios which can be used to support the assessment of going concern when signing off the 2024-25 statutory accounts.

6. **Agenda item 8 – 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:

- Kerry Copson explained a small change to her report regarding the fuelled funding-this was due to end in December 2024 but it has just been announced it will be extended so we hope to hear from them soon.
- A Member asked if we would hit the target for clients accessing our services remotely (all tenants) and Kerry Copson replied that if we did it would be only just but the teams is working hard to achieve it.
- There has been a re-structure of the Teams to increase Ongo Recruitment revenue and profit and reduce operational costs. The combining of two major roles raised questions from Board about managing the extra workload and added stress for the colleague.
- Plans are in place to be registered onto the national supplier framework by the translator desk but this will take time and the hope is that, if possible, GP's will still utilise us until this time.
- The Wellbeing Project has taken off with the smoking cessation scheme and work is continuing to engage more tenants and new customers. A Board member asked if vaping was being addressed as part of this and Kerry Copson replied they are led by Public Health but she would bring the topic up at their next monthly meeting.
- Apprenticeships, both internally and externally, are growing in number and work is continuing in this area.

Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage Agreed:

- considered the content of the report and discussed and debated any performance issues.
- that the report demonstrates sufficient progress against targets and outcomes, and that risks are understood and managed appropriately.

7. **Agenda item 9 – Deep Dive on Sport, Health and Housing**

Summary: This paper, and the presentation at Appendix 1, provides detailed information on the current progress and future plans to create and deliver partnerships with football, rugby and golf clubs in areas where we operate.

Discussion points/questions:

- Kevin Hornsby gave a slide presentation giving an overview of the new brand.
- We are in talks with the people at HACT to develop our own social value scoring system in line with this initiative to be able to provide analysis of our activities. The actual social

value and impact is based on how many people carry on being involved with sport from this programme. The hope is that at least 10% will do this.
- There was a question of what the scope is to extend this to more non-traditional sports although there would be considerations for this to happen.

Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage Agreed:
- considered the content of the report and discussed and debated any issues.
- agreed that the report and presentation demonstrates a clear description of the project, and that risks are understood and managed appropriately.

8. **Agenda item 10 – Health and Safety**

Summary: This report covers updates between 23rd September 2024 – 15th January 2025. Incidents detailed are since the last reported incidents detailed in the last Board update.
There has been 4 incidents reported since the last reported incidents.
There has been 0 RIDDOR reportable incidents within this reporting period.

Discussion points/questions:
- There was a discussion around the incident between two learners having an altercation at Cole Street during a course. Jan Williams explained the incident in more detail and it was acknowledged that this was an unusual situation and that we are still helping the parties albeit with the perpetrator being banned from the premises.
- Board was happy with the report and that incidents are being dealt with inline with policies and procedures.

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.

9. **Agenda Item 11 – Strategic Risk Register**

Summary: This report presents the proposed new strategic risk register for Ongo Communities. The risks have been identified through consultation with the Ongo Communities Board members and the Ongo Communities management team. The identified risks align to the overarching strategic risk register for Ongo Homes, the new Corporate Plan and the objectives within.
The risk register will be presented at each Ongo Communities Board meeting for consideration and discussion and any changes to the risks, scores or the registers itself will be highlighted. Board are asked to identify any specific risks they would like a deep dive into to be presented at the next meeting.

Discussion points/questions:
- The Board considered the report and the recommendations coming from the session held in October.
- The medium appetite of CSR1 Funding was questioned due to the funding landscape becoming more difficult. Kevin Hornsby explained that the previous high appetite was in relation to losing the funding from Ongo Homes. Following discussions around this the

decision was to leave the financial appetite as medium and create two sub-risks-internal and external funding to differentiate between them.

Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage Agreed:
- Board considered the new strategic risk register for Ongo Communities and approved the register and content within for immediate implementation.
- Board confirmed acceptance of the proposed risk appetite and scores within the strategic risk register with the change to CSR1 Appetite.
- Board agreed to own the risk register, ensuring appropriate and constructive challenge to ensure that appropriate controls and mitigation measures are in place to effectively manage the risks.

10. **Agenda item 12 – Trustee Rotation**

Summary: Article 11.5 of the Articles for Ongo Communities Ltd requires one third (or the number nearest one third) of the Trustees (Board Members) to retire every year effective from 4 March 2015. Those longest in office will retire first. The Articles of Association for Ongo Communities are due for a review. This clause does not add value to our governance processes. We follow the National Housing Federation Code of Governance which has a requirement for board members to step down after six years' service. This means the board refreshes regularly bringing new skills and independence.

Discussion points/questions:
- Board noted the re-appointments detailed in the report.

Ongo Communities Agreed:
- Acting for Ongo Communities Ltd noted the re-appointment of Kacper Merta and Jan Williams as Trustees to Ongo Communities Ltd in accordance with Article 11.5 of Ongo Communities' Articles of Association. Ongo Homes Ltd have confirmed this re-appointment as parent of Ongo Communities.

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

With no further business the meeting closed at 4.00pm

Signed by Chair: Natalie Cresswell Date: 30 January 2025

As a true and correct record of the Ongo Communities Common Board meeting held on 30 January 2025