ONGO COMMUNITIES COMMON BOARD

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

Held at 10:00am Wednesday 17 September 2025
At Eco-Power Stadium, Stadium Way, Doncaster, DN4 5JW

MINUTES

Present:
Common Board: Natalie Cresswell (Chair), Jan Williams, Karen Locking, Kacper Merta
Officers: Gemma Willey, Bev Lewis (Minutes), Kevin Hornsby, Steve Hepworth, Sam Archer, Louise Usher
Apologies: Debbie Clegg, Jo Sugden, Erica Sanderson
Absence: None
Observers: None

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 and Kacper Merta declared they are members of Ongo Homes Board and Jan Williams is employed by Ongo. Karen Locking declared an interest in agenda item 6

Time meeting opened: 10:10am

1. **Agenda item 3 – Minutes of Previous meetings and Matters Arising**

The minutes from the meeting held 30 January were approved and signed by the Chair.

2. **Agenda item 4 – Action List**

The action list was noted and there were no outstanding actions.

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 July 2025. Management accounts are *presented in appendix 1. These include an updated forecast for the year 2025-26 which the Board are asked to approve.*

Discussion points/questions:

- Golden rules all remain green. We remain within the reserves threshold. Ongo Recruitment has developed a new Sales Plan and expects revenue to improve from being £154k adverse to budget with its implementation.
- Ongo Recruitment is struggling to bring in new clients and with some areas of expertise which is why the new plan has been formulated. The Recruitment Manager has now left the business, and we are looking at how best to structure the team for future success. The budget has been re-forecasted to a more achievable figure. This takes the projected profit down from £57k to £47k.
- Board acknowledged that recruitment is seeing a general downward trend and asked what contingencies were in place if no improvement is seen in the coming months. The Care desk is working well with possible growth-this is included in the plan. The loss of the GP surgeries translation contract has hit hard leading to a reduction in budget. There is a campaign ongoing reaching out to other organisations offering our translation services er schools, lawyers. Reducing the staff on the care desk and utilising them on the general desk could be a way forward. For the moment, while we are making a steady profit, we are concentrating on getting the recovery plan in place and monitoring progress.

Agreed: Board

- approved the management accounts of Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage for July 2025.
- considered and approved the full year forecast for 2025-26.

4. **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:

- Board questioned the geographical areas the report concentrated on and asked what was being done to reach customers outside of the North Lincolnshire region. The introduction of the new Neighbourhood Model in October will be a great help in reaching in other areas and meetings with the dedicated teams in those areas will enable better engagement and focus. A report will be brought to each meeting to show progress on targets and different areas to show where services may be lacking. The number of tenants supported was below target. Once the new model is in place we will be approaching the Teams to spread word of our services to the new regions. A more detailed analysis of each area of service will be provided in the next report. **ACTION**
- Training sessions at the moment are face to face in Scunthorpe and the trainer is quite new to the role but we are looking at ways to make training more accessible to everyone. When the Communities teams move to Ongo House they will have a dedicated training room with all the equipment needed to include customers by Teams. A community/tenant attendance breakdown was asked for. **ACTION**

- The Teams have been fully engaged in formulating the new plan and are aware of the targets and what is expected of them and performance management is at the forefront of this.
- Sports Sponsorships are going well and Board wanted to know if there were any plans to expand this to other areas such as the Arts, Music etc. We are always open to new ideas, but these decisions will be resource/capacity dependent. Other activities could be included that are more gender neutral. Approaches could be made to local Arts or music projects to position ourselves to get involved and possibly look at grants to enable a partnership in the future. The team was tasked to investigate possible opportunities.
- Pre-apprenticeship support figures are down slightly, mainly due to not getting as many referrals as before. It is thought that the way colleges and schools approach apprenticeships has changed, and the support is not always needed now. There is also a lot of competition. Our "How to get into an Apprenticeship One Day Workshop" is being advertised and rolled out.

Agreed: Board

- 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.

5. **Agenda item 7 – Deep Dive report on Social Value and HACT**

Summary: This report describes the work on social value that is delivered by Ongo Communities, the Ongo Communities end of year HACT social value result and includes a video link to explain how to select which HACT outcomes best fit each project and how to capture and report on Social Value across Ongo.

Discussion points/questions:

- Jan Williams started by saying the Social Value Specialist is leaving the business and options are being investigated as to how to proceed with the role. In the meantime, another member of the Team will be attending meetings with new contractors.
- It was brought to attention that tenders are being submitted and when enquiries are made into the social value aspect of their tender, some do not have the capabilities, and several did not realise it would be policed. It was suggested that there could be some kind of penalty in place, either financial or otherwise, for not achieving these values. However, these should not be too harsh as we don't want to put people off submitting tenders. It was also pointed out that with some contracts it may not be possible to include social value.
- Marsh and Switch2, 2 of our contractors, have been shadowing our community teams out and about giving them a better understanding of what Ongo do and how they can continue to support us in the future. Matthews and Tannert recently held an apprentice day which resulted in 20 new apprentice positions. These successes should be highlighted on LinkedIn, social media etc to promote our work.
- The HACT Social Value Calculator is not performing as we would wish but it is the standard used across the social housing sector and the consistency is important to make

comparisons etc. We have fed this back to the Chief Executive of the design company but a more formal report to them will be sent. We have looked at others, but financial factors make them unfeasible, as is developing our own. More investigation needs to be done around this. It was suggested something internal, from the T & I team, could be set up to measure the areas that the calculator does not cover, possibly AI based. **ACTION**

Agreed: Board
- considered the content of the report and discussed and debated any issues.
- agreed that the report and presentation demonstrated a clear description of the project, and that risks are understood and managed appropriately.

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

Summary: This report covers updates between 16th January 2025 – 1st September 2025. Incidents detailed are since the last reported incidents detailed in the last Board update. There have been 7 incidents reported since the last reported incidents. There has been 0 RIDDOR reportable incidents within this reporting period.

Discussion points/questions:
- Lone-worker and workplace violence has reduced over the last year but it couldn't be attributed to anything in particular. The low number of incidents should be acknowledged, considering the numbers of customers using our services and passing through our doors.
- There was an incident involving a dog bite in our Cole Street office where staff were told it was an emotional support dog. Considering we have a no dogs policy it was felt that some clarification should be given about how to deal with support animals, for staff and customers. **ACTION**
- The incident at The Viking Centre concerning light bulbs smoking and burning was due to them being very old bulbs and have been replace with LED bulbs.

Agreed: Board
- confirmed they are satisfied with the management of Health, Safety and Environment arrangements set out in the report.

7. **Agenda item 9 – Strategic Risk Register**

Summary: Manager to identify the overarching themes that needed to be considered in the review of the strategic risk register for Ongo Communities. 6 overarching themes were identified by the Board. Following this session, the Business Assurance and Risk Manager worked with the Head of Ongo Communities and their Management team to identify what the risks are in relation to the overarching themes agreed by the Board.
The Communities Board approved the new strategic risk register for Ongo Communities at their meeting in January 2025.

Discussion points/questions:
- Louise Usher introduced the report saying how pleased she was with how risk had been a running theme through all the previous reports and discussions in the meeting.

- CSR1:Financial was an area that was flagged due to an area of funding coming to an end for Ongo Communities but a meeting has taken place with the Council and other funding may have been found to replace this.
- Funding changes will be coming into effect. We are aware of this and are ready to take a new approach.

Agreed: Board

- considered the Ongo Communities strategic risk register.
- confirmed they are satisfied with the management of the risks presented within this report.
- considered any of the risks detailed they would like to receive a deeper dive into at the next meeting.

8. **Agenda item 10 – Decisions between meetings**

Gemma Willey stated there have been no decisions between meetings for this Board. However, there has been a decision by Ongo Homes Board which relates. After a review of the standing orders, the decision was made to change Jan Williams from an independent member to an executive member, and changing the wording of the standing order giving opportunities to recruit should it be needed.

With no further business the meeting closed at 11.55am

Signed by Chair: Natalie Cresswell Date: 17 September 2025

As a true and correct record of the Ongo Communities Common Board meeting held on 17 September 2025