ONGO COMMUNITIES COMMON BOARD

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

Held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 1 April 2026
Board Room, 2nd Floor, Ongo House, Scunthorpe
DN15 6AT

MINUTES

Present:
Common Board: Natalie Cresswell (Chair), Jan Williams, Karen Locking
Officers: Gemma Willey, Kevin Hornsby, Steve Hepworth (Teams), Erica Sanderson, Kerry Copson, Bev Lewis (minutes), Karamjit Kaila
Apologies: Kacper Merta
Absence: None
Observers: Stewart Atkinson, David Bishop

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

Time meeting opened:

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

The minutes from the meeting held 2 December 2025 were approved
The minutes from the meeting held 2 March 2026 (Budget) were approved.

2. **Agenda item 4 – Action List**

The action list was noted with no actions overdue and two outstanding to be updated at a future meeting. Jan Williams gave a verbal update on Action 5/25-creating a social value bank to cover the gaps in the HACT version showed to be a specialist piece of work and would be too costly. Alternatives include a free online social value bank called Measureup. It draws from the same wellbeing resources that HACT uses but does not integrate with it so would need to be used alongside it. Anchor's social value calculator was another option, but it is not directly aligned with our specific services. In conclusion, there is no feasible way to cover the gaps with the current available resources.

3. **<u>Agenda item 5 – Management Accounts</u>**

Summary: The following report presents the financial performance of Ongo Communities, Ongo Recruitment and Crosby Brokerage for the ten-month period April 2025 to January 2026.

Karamjit Kaila presented the accounts which were taken as read.

Discussion points/questions:

- A Board member reported difficulty understanding the narrative/figures in the opening section of the finance report (specifically the source of a cash figure) and noted they had to write figures down and cross-check against the accounts to reconcile totals. It was noted that the figures were correct; the issue related to the presentation/narration. The balance sheet had simplified (hidden) lines, showing only “total cash”, without the breakdown that supports the narrative explanation.

ACTION 1/26 Strengthen the narrative in future reports to clearly explain where key figures originate and how totals reconcile. Including a visual (e.g., screenshot/chart of the relevant balance sheet section) to support readers when referring to the narrative-MP/AJH

Agreed: Board
- approves the management accounts of the entities for January 2026 and noted the contents of this report and associated information.

4. **<u>Agenda item 6 – Board Feedback on Communities Investment</u>**

Summary: Kevin Hornsby gave an update on Communities Investment as requested at the previous meeting.

Discussion points/questions:

- Kevin provided a verbal update following presentation of the annual Communities investment report to Ongo Homes Board (covering the £1m+ annual contribution from Homes to fund community priorities). The report was well received, with no significant change to strategic direction; priorities remain aligned to the Corporate Plan and customer-focused strategy. Board supported the use of reserves for agreed projects (including Improvement of Lives and Ongo Talk); however, Homes Board requested clearer rationale and impact evidence for mental health activity/Ongo Talk and other reserve-funded projects.
- The Board noted feedback that future reports should be informed by customer and client consultation on community priorities, alongside existing service data, to evidence need and ensure services reflect customer priorities. It was agreed that the Board will schedule dedicated time (outside the routine performance report) to discuss strategic direction, including alignment to the corporate plan, potential areas to change, stop or reprioritise,

opportunities for new funding, and an assessment of the organisational and service impacts if specific activities were reduced or ended (e.g., mental health support).

- It was noted that Homes Board has limited time/visibility of Communities work; a clearer narrative and evidence of impact is needed on Ongo Talk/mental health (including links to tenancy sustainment) to support future funding decisions. Options to increase Board understanding included a short customer-story videos and invitations to showcase events/visits. A strategy session will be arranged to agree future priorities and use of reserves.

Agreed: Board

- Discussed and debated the main points of the update and agreed to arrange a Strategy Day to discuss how to better highlight services.

5. Agenda item 7 – Business Performance Report.

Summary: Update on how Ongo Communities is performing against its targets and funding commitments, and any issues affecting delivery.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Board noted the performance report and updates, including: 19 community grants awarded (£25k total); strong room-hire/income performance (regular bookings at Viking Centre/ARC)
- The pre-apprenticeship target will be revised as demand has reduced
- News of Ongo Talk shortlisting at the Northern Lincolnshire Business Awards was welcomed.
- Staffing/resourcing across Recruitment/Care was discussed (no manager appointed yet; short-term cover and potential LA grant noted), alongside recruitment-market risks and options to respond (e.g., additional consultant if required).
- Wider updates were provided on recent sports-partnership launches, sector engagement activity and the Communities office launch.
- An update was provided on recent partnership engagement, including attendance at a biannual partners event. Members noted the successful Communities office housewarming/launch and positive stakeholder engagement.
- Cole Street disposal was discussed: an offer at asking price has been received, subject to the buyer securing required permissions/finance; the agent will meet the buyer and confirm credibility before progressing.

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.

6. Agenda item 8 – Health & Safety

Summary: This report covers updates between 2nd December 2025 – 12th March 2026. Incidents detailed are since the last reported incidents detailed in the last Board update. There have been 6 incidents reported since the last reported incidents. There has been 0 RIDDOR reportable incidents within this reporting period.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Health & Safety report was received and taken as read. Six incidents were noted; members clarified the barrier-matting incident related to a pre-existing condition and was not as serious as first interpreted.
- Members discussed the Health & Safety incidents and received assurance there were no ongoing concerns; incidents related to different individuals. It was noted incidents are reviewed via monthly managers' meetings prior to reporting.

Agreed: Board

- confirmed satisfaction with the management of Health and Safety arrangements set out in the report.

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

Summary: Risk is the possibility of an event and the consequences it has on the achievement of objectives, both at a strategic and operational level. Robust risk management is an essential element of effective Governance and a strong internal control environment.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Board considered the proposal to remove "Compliance" from the strategic risk register. Members noted key compliance areas are primarily managed via external assurance (Post Office controls, food hygiene controls reported through Audit & Risk, and funder compliance for externally funded projects). However, members raised concern about the Post Office element and potential reputational impact should issues arise. It was agreed to defer removal pending review of the Trials report/recommendations and to consider reframing the risk (e.g., Post Office-specific and/or reputational).
- Members noted that core funding (c.£1m+) provides a stable baseline for Communities delivery; however, external funding is significantly reduced compared to previous years and is increasingly uncertain and project-by-project. The approach is to remain agile and target funding aligned to landlord priorities (e.g., sustainment).
- Members highlighted the need to strengthen regional relationships/partnership working (including with the Mayoral Authority) to remain a partner of choice and improve visibility of Communities delivery and outcomes. It was agreed that future reporting should include a forward look/horizon scan of emerging external risks (funding/economic climate) and opportunities.

ACTION 2/26 undertake further work on proposal 4.3.3 (CSR6 Compliance): review the Trials report and bring back a recommendation on whether to remove or reframe the risk (e.g., Post Office/reputational)-ES

ACTION 3/26 Include a horizon scan on external funding in future reports-ES

Agreed: Board

- confirmed they have considered the Ongo Communities strategic risk register and that they are satisfied with the management of the risks presented in this report and associated appendix.
- considered and came to a decision on the proposal at 4.3.3 to remove risk CSR6: *Compliance* from the risk register

8. **Agenda item 10 – 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. The policy was revised and brought to the last Communities meeting but due to not being able to reach a quorum, the policy approval was deferred to the next quorate meeting, being this meeting.

Discussion points/ questions:

- The revised Communities Investment Policy was presented for approval. Minor updates were noted to reflect updated Charity Commission guidance (previous guidance withdrawn).

Agreed: Board

- approved the updated policy and noted trustees should familiarise themselves with the guidance.

9. **Agenda Item 11 – Time for Reflection**

New members' reflections were received. A query was raised about Crosby Brokerage and whether it manages DWP/local authority lump-sum back payments; it was confirmed Brokerage manages agreed budgets on behalf of individuals via care plans and pays invoices directly (customers do not receive cash), and that wider benefit back payments sit outside the service. Members noted the need to strengthen partnerships and adapt communications/reporting to a changing external climate while maintaining focus on tenant/neighbourhood priorities. Members also noted the value of discussion and clarity during meetings and suggested inviting relevant colleagues to attend periodically.

With no further business the meeting closed at

Signed by Chair: .... Date: 1 April 2026

As a true and correct record of the Ongo Communities Common Board meeting held on 1 April 2026.