ONGO HOMES LTD
(FCA Mutuals Registration No 7639) (the Association)

Held at 2.00pm on Wednesday 28 January
Board Room, Ongo House, High Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6AT and via MS Teams

MINUTES

Present:
Board: Des Hudson (Chair), Steve Hepworth, Matt Sugden, Natalie Cresswell (Teams),Nicola Haywood-Cleverly, Tracy O'Neill, Judith Tomlinson, Gerraint Oakley (Teams), Rachel Cook, John Wright
Officers: Ashley Harrison, Jo Sugden, Kevin Hornsby, Steve Ellard, Louise Usher, Gemma Willey, Bev Lewis (Minutes)
Apologies: Paul Warburton, Mike Finister-Smith, Kacper Merta
Absence: None
Also Present: Charmaine Mande (Board Trainee)
Observers: Marianne Sonksen

Time meeting opened: 1.55pm

Quorum and attendance: It was reported that proper notice of the Meeting had been given in accordance with the Rules of Ongo Homes. A quorum being present, the Chair declared the meeting open.

Declarations of Interest: No declarations were made.

1. Agenda item 3: Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising
Minutes of the open meeting held on 26 November 2025 were agreed to be a true record.

2. Agenda item 4: Action List
Updates on the action list were noted as per information within the meeting pack. Board noted the updates and Steve Ellard reiterated the information on Action 21/25.1. Jo Sugden gave a verbal update on Action 21/25.2 advising sickness absence remains high, mainly due to non-work-related mental health, with some work-related cases. No seasonal pattern has been identified. Absence can increase during disciplinary or grievance investigations.
Ongo provides extensive mental health support, but complex cases are difficult to manage due to limited NHS capacity. A question was raised about whether colleagues involved in investigations make up a significant proportion of sickness absence and how these cases are being managed. Members discussed improving signposting to mental health support and ensuring managers have

clear guidance. Mental Health champions are already in place, but not all cases reach them. Management will lead this work and report back only if a significant issue emerges. The matter sits within the Health, Safety and Welfare framework.

3. Agenda item 5: Confidential Item 1
4. Agenda item 6: Confidential item 2
5. Agenda item 7: Confidential item 3
6. Agenda item 8: Confidential item 4

See Confidential minutes

7. Agenda item 9 – Other Board and Committee Updates
Including a discussion on Board and Committee member attendance as per Chair's email of 5 January 2026.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Chair introduced proposed changes to board operations. Members confirmed the preference for physical attendance, with virtual attendance only in exceptional cases, noting some individual sensitivities. The Chair emphasised adherence to the Acceptable Use Policy, including use of Ongo email and equipment for all Ongo business, citing cybersecurity responsibilities.
- Members raised concerns about using non-Ongo devices and email due to cybersecurity rules.
  Email prompts routed to non-Ongo devices may inadvertently breach policy and asked for this to be reviewed. A strategic approach to network access and authentication was encouraged. A further request was made for a practical solution allowing Board members to view meeting papers and join virtual meetings on separate devices, with calendar syncing to support PA scheduling.
- The Board emphasised the need to strengthen cybersecurity awareness for all staff and Board members, alongside maintaining strong security controls across systems and devices.
- No immediate changes will be made, but members should move toward consistent use of Ongo devices and email. The team will explore workable options and involve members in agreeing a solution.

ACTION 1/26 : Reporting on mental health and wellbeing trends to be included in quarterly/timely Health & Safety reports as management deem necessary based on emerging data.

ACTION 2/26: IT and Governance Team colleagues to jointly investigate the points raised by Board members regarding access to required platforms on a single device, and to develop coordinated proposals that balance efficient Board access with adherence to the organisation's security policies and protocols.

8. Agenda Item 10: Chief Executive's Update and Board Discussion
Summary: The CEO gave a sector update accompanied by slides.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Chief Executive reported a major sector announcement earlier in the day, with further detail to follow once understood. He noted the recent death of colleague Joanne and the strong engagement from the latest Facebook Live, which reached over 8,000 people. Works have begun at Ongo House with minimal disruption expected. He also advised, in confidence, that one of the commercial blocks has significant fire safety issues and is largely empty. A consultation with nearby residents will be undertaken before options and costs are brought back to the Board.
- Members also noted the update that credit approval has been received for the Affordable Homes Guarantee Loan Scheme, enabling progression of the £100m funding. The Chair acknowledged this as a significant and positive outcome.

Agreed: Board:

- Board noted the updates from the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team.

9. Agenda Item 11 - Operational Performance Report

Summary: This report provides Board with an update on operational performance across a suite of agreed key performance indicators, covering repairs and maintenance, assets & sustainability, building compliance, new development, customer experience, voids and lettings, tenancy service and communities.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Board received an update on repairs performance. Work in progress has reached its lowest recorded level, and the majority of emergency and non-emergency repairs are now being completed within target, supported by high satisfaction scores and positive perception survey results. December showed a slight slowdown, which was anticipated. Damp and mould performance remains strong overall, with delays mainly due to tenants restricting access over the Christmas period.
- Kevin reported that the first Service Improvement Forum had taken place, providing good evidence of changes being made in response to complaints and feedback. The Board welcomed the positive progress in repairs and noted strong assurance around the organisation's learning culture, with clear links between complaints, insight and service improvements. The Chair endorsed these comments and highlighted the value of this work for tenants.
- The Board noted that void relet times have been adversely off-target for several months and are unlikely to meet the year-end target due to resource being prioritised toward repairs. Although void turnaround has worsened recently, performance remains better than sector averages, and benefits from the new regional model are expected in time.
- In response to a query on tenant experience, the Board was assured that new-tenant satisfaction remains high (95–98% on quality of home and process). Properties are being well prepared, and communication with tenants remains strong.
- The Board noted that current operational focus is on reducing repairs work-in-progress, which has required deprioritising void turnaround temporarily. This approach is understood

to be short-term, with continued activity on empty homes and an expectation of improvement by Q1 next year.

Agreed: Board

- discussed the current position in terms of operational performance, noting exception reporting for indicators out of target (where appropriate)

10. <u>Agenda item 12 – Outcomes of Ongo Homes Investment in Ongo Communities</u>

Summary: This report outlines how the £1,126,932 investment from Ongo Homes for 2025/26 is being allocated and seeks approval from the Ongo Communities Board to progress a proposal for the Ongo Homes Board. The proposal aims to firm funding for 2026/27 and the report provided Board with an update on how Ongo Communities plans to use it's reserves to support two key projects: Improving Lives and Ongo Talk. It also provides details on current spending and recommendations for future funding.

Discussion points/questions:

- Kevin presented the annual Communities Report, confirming strong value-for-money from the £1m investment. The Board was asked to note outcomes, confirm existing priorities, and support the proposed £1.138m grant for 2026/27. Kevin advised that the Communities Board had already reviewed the detail and agreed use of reserves for key ongoing projects such as decorating, carpeting and mental-health support.
- Members praised the Communities work and confirmed it aligns strongly with Ongo's values and purpose. The Board noted the need to ensure funded services reflect tenant priorities across all areas, not just near existing hubs. Officers advised that further tenant consultation will take place under the new neighbourhood model to clarify priorities. The Board also discussed national promotion of Ongo's social value work, noting existing sector engagement and opportunities to increase visibility, including potential alignment with ESG-style reporting.
- A query was raised about underperformance in volunteer and work-placement numbers. Kevin explained this was due to fewer partner opportunities since COVID and the need to improve connections through the neighbourhood model. Work is planned to strengthen partnerships and increase placements next year.
- Members highlighted that some services may overlap with statutory service provision and asked for clearer assurance through metrics and case studies. Kevin Hornsby advised the Board that regular case studies are provided through the Communities Board and there were some links in Discretionary Reading that supports this report. Officers confirmed further tenant consultation and noted that mental-health work funded from reserves, to identify priorities, may return to a future Board for review.

ACTION: 7/26 Board advised they would like to see wider tenant feedback on the priorities Ongo Homes set for Ongo Communities and it was agreed a wider tenant consultation exercise would take place and the outcomes will be brought back to a future Board meeting

Agreed: Board

- Considered the funding proposal for 2026/27 to be presented at the January 2026 Ongo Homes meeting with a view to:
    - Endorsed the request for the overall 2026/27 budget including the grant of £1.138 million from the Ongo Group to Ongo Communities
    - Noted the Ongo Communities Board decision to utilise reserves (£98,818 of forecasted £519,801) for:
    - Ongo Talk: £57,884 to maintain free counselling for tenants and support continued growth of the Ongo Talk Business Service
    - Improving Lives: £40,934 to continue decorating and carpeting homes at cost-effective rate

11. <u>Agenda Item 13 - Financial Report</u>

Summary: The following report presents the financial performance of Ongo Homes and subsidiaries for the period April to November 2025. New build development and capital major works programmes are on course to end the year broadly in line with forecast. The volume of outstanding repairs continues to reduce, although demand is expected to increase and remain high during winter. Property costs remain in line with forecast and are expected to do so for the full year.
Overall, the forecast annual operating margin remains adverse to budget meaning the related financial golden rule remains red. Inflation remains higher than anticipated leading to the two cost inflation golden rules being red. The bad debt rate for the month is greater than budget and the indicator is amber, however this is expected to be temporary only.
Covenant compliance remains green, as do all other financial golden rules and stress test indicators.

Discussion points/queries

- The report to the end of November was taken as read. Overall performance is in line with expectations. Although results are below the budgeted position for the year, the reasons are understood and have been previously reported.
- A query was raised on major works spend and whether deferred costs were included in next year's programme. It was confirmed that all deferred works are incorporated into the proposed 2026/27 plan, and the intention is to carry out the work rather than treat it as a saving.

Agreed: Board

- approved the management accounts of Ongo Homes (entity and group) for November 2025 and noted the contents of this report and associated information.
- noted the red status of one financial golden rule, two business plan stress test indicators and one amber stress test indicator for Ongo Homes.

12. <u>Agenda Item 14 – Annual Rent Setting and Service Charges</u>

Summary: This report covers recommended increases for annual rent setting, and how we manage the Rent Standard/Legislative requirements in respect of all rent types within our stock. Proposals also include Service Charges for the coming. Tenants from our Community Voice Group have been supportive with and are supportive of the rent and service charge increases.

Discussion points/Questions:

- The Board received the rent-setting proposal. Social rents, based on September CPI of 3.8%, will increase by 4.8% from April. Rents will continue to be rebased to target levels at voids. Affordable rents will also be rebased to 80% of market rent (or formula rent if higher). These changes support service delivery, improvements and the development programme.
- A question was raised regarding the monetary impact of the rent increase. It was confirmed that the higher CPI rate equates to approximately £700k additional income for the year.
- The Board received an update on service charges, noting these are set to reflect the actual cost of delivering services. Around 5,500 tenants will see increases of under £1 (average 34p), with some higher adjustments. The Board discussed whether a cap should be applied. It was noted that the Community Voice workshop supported both the rent and service charge increases and not applying a cap and felt charges should reflect the true cost of services. Proactive support will continue where increases exceed £5.
- A query was raised about whether an administration fee is added to service charges. It was confirmed that no admin fee is currently applied and charges only reflect the direct cost of services. The Board noted that some organisations do apply an additional 10–15% fee, and agreed this could be considered in future, subject to affordability
- The Board received clarification that around 4,000 homes cannot be charged a separate service charge due to historic pre-2012 tenancy agreements, which included services within the rent. Service charges can only be applied when those tenancies end and new agreements are issued. A query regarding a past Guinness case was raised, and officers confirmed this has no impact on current figures, as all properties now follow Ongo's service-charge assessment process.
- It was noted that affordable rent service charges must sit within the 80% rent cap, which can make transparency difficult. The Board agreed this is not an immediate issue due to the current shift toward social rent delivery but should be kept under review if affordable rent development increases. The Board also noted that, even after the proposed increases, Ongo's rents remain significantly below market levels.

Agreed: Board

- agreed to increase rents in line with the 2025 Rent Standard requirement, and the Government Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 as follows:

  - All existing social rents and Affordable rents (including all Supported) are increased by the maximum uplift of 4.8% from the 2025/26 weekly rate.
  - All social rents continue to be assessed when the property becomes void and will be re-let at the permitted 2026 target rent + full tolerance as per 3.2 below.
  - All Affordable rents continue to be rebased when a property becomes void to 80% of Market rent or Formula rent, whichever is the greater, as directed in the Rent Standard.
  - All service charges are amended to reflect the range of changes highlighted in this report and to consider whether any caps should be applied to 2026/27 service charges.
  - To note the feedback from the Customer Voice rent and service charge setting workshop as part of the wider decisions on above.

1.2 Market rents (used to measure/calculate the % of Affordable Rent) for new build properties and re-based properties are increased by the differing levels proposed by our Valuers (Scotts LLP) as detailed in 4.3 below and Appendix 1.

1.3 If we decide to convert a weekly affordable rent to a monthly affordable rent on rebase, the weekly charge is multiplied by 52.18 and divided by 12 to allow for the capture of the 53rd rent collection date that occurs every five/six years as detailed in 4.4 below.

1.4 That rents for Rent to Buy properties continue to be increased each year on the renewal date of the fixed term tenancy. The rent applied will be 80% of Market Rent as detailed in 4.5 below.

1.5 That Shared Ownership unsold equity rents increase by the terms specified in each lease and in conjunction with the CFG (Capital Funding Guide) and Shared Ownership Rent Policy as detailed in 4.6 below

1.6 That Garage rents increase by 4.8% (cpi+1%) for 2026/27 as per 4.8 below.

1.7 That the Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy is updated as necessary to align with this report.

That the above increases take effect from the first Monday in April 2026.

13. <u>Agenda Item 15 – Draft Base Business Plan 2026-27</u>

Summary: The business plan and 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, will facilitate the Boards long term business planning, and provide the basis for reporting of long-term financial position of the group to external partners, in particular the regulator and our funders. This report considers the long-term business plan.

This report considers the current position of the base business plan being developed and some options for discussion around how that current plan position could be amended, taking into account the effects of such change on the financial position and the delivery of corporate objectives. Also included for discussion is information on sensitivity and stress testing of the plan, and mitigating actions relating to the scenarios that these sensitivities/ stresses will produce when modelled.

Following discussions and direction received from The Board in regard to the information provided here further work will be done to finalise a Base Business Plan and to apply sensitivity analysis, stress *tests and mitigating actions to that, as is required of all Registered providers. These results will be provided for consideration to the Board meeting of March 2026. Following those discussions the Business plan will be finalised taking into account final 2025/26 year-end financial positions and any other material matters that may arise – this final plan will be presented to the Board in May 2026 for approval and will then form the basis of regulatory submissions for 2026/27.*

Discussion points/questions:

- The draft Business Plan was introduced. Early-year assumptions align with the budget, with longer-term assumptions also set out. The plan is compliant with financial and regulatory requirements. Sensitivity testing, stress testing and mitigation planning will be completed ahead of the March meeting, with Board members invited to submit any further suggestions for inclusion.
- A query was raised about next year's bad-debt assumption being lower than current forecasts. It was confirmed this reflects the revised bad-debt policy, particularly for former tenant debt. Economic assumptions will be reviewed again before March. The Board also requested clearer implementation timings for mitigation actions, which will be updated.
- The Board requested that stress testing show the impact on covenants, liquidity and available security. Officers confirmed this will be included, alongside monetary headroom following regulator feedback. It was noted that some scenarios may show limited remaining security for future borrowing. The Board noted that the proposed mitigations are clear and specific. Members asked for indicative timings for when each action would take effect to strengthen assurance, and officers confirmed this detail will be added in the next iteration.
- A member queried whether mitigation options should include the potential sale of commercial business streams as well as housing assets. It was agreed this should be added to the list for consideration. The Board also noted the strong covenant headroom and overall financial capacity and commended the clarity and quality of the report.
- The Board noted the draft Business Plan and agreed that members should submit any further comments, suggested sensitivity tests or amendments to mitigation actions to the Governance Manager promptly. The final version will be refined in line with this feedback and presented for approval in March.

Agreed: Board

- discussed and considered the information within this report and advised on its required actions around the production of the plan to be presented to it in March.
- discussed and considered the presented possibilities for sensitivity tests against the business plan and advised on the suitability of these and of any additional or alternative tests that it requires to be made.
- discussed and considered the presented possibilities for combined stress tests against the business plan and advised on the suitability of these and of any additional or alternative tests that it requires to be made.
- discussed and considered the presented possibilities for mitigating actions that the business could take in the face of the sensitivity and stress scenarios and advised on the suitability of these and of any additional or alternative actions that it requires to be assessed, and agreed to undertake a process prior to the March 2026 meeting to prioritise the mitigating actions in respect of the order in which they will be applied to the business plan

ACTION: 3/26 Update all mitigation actions discussed during the meeting or subsequently received and circulate a proposed prioritisation (ranking) exercise to Board members for their input prior to finalisation of the Business Plan for March approval.

14. Agenda Item 16 – Budgets 2026-27

Summary: To present the budget for Ongo Homes and all other entities in the group, seeking direction for any required changes prior to presentation of subsidiary budgets to the relevant subsidiary board and final approval by Homes Board at the March 2026 meeting.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Chair summarised the budget workshop. The Board indicated support for the draft budget, including provision for pay adjustments and potential planned investment in repairs and maintenance IT, with spend subject to business cases. The Board did not support across-the-board cuts or an inflation-absorption target but asked for a longer-term efficiency approach. The Board also supported proposals to enable an additional 25 new homes per year over the next five years, subject to covenant compliance. The final budget will return for approval in March.
- The Board then discussed the commercial business and noted that a consultation with the Commercial Board will begin to shape its medium-term plan. It was agreed that clearer expectations are needed regarding the returns required from the commercial companies, covering social value, efficiencies for the core business and financial contribution. The Commercial Board will also consider appropriate growth levels. Updated proposals will return to the Board in March.
- A member cautioned against increasing development by 25 units per year if it became a numbers-driven exercise, stressing that growth must remain aligned to the Development Strategic Plan, local housing need, and product quality. It was confirmed that an uplift of this scale could be accommodated without compromising strategic fit, with all schemes still subject to scrutiny by the Developments Board. Members agreed that any increase in development must continue to meet strategic priorities, demand and financial capacity, with schemes assessed individually through existing governance.
- It was noted that margins appear higher next year due to additional rent from the two stock acquisitions and the 4.8% rent increase, both of which outpace general inflation. Further efficiencies have also been identified in the base budget. Once final decisions are made on these items, the margin in the Business Plan will reflect previous assumptions agreed by the Board.

Agreed: Board

- considered the initial draft of the Ongo Homes budget for 2026-27 and advised of any changes required to allow for finalisation and presentation to the Board for final approval at the March 2026 board meeting
- considered the initial drafts of the Ongo Communities businesses, Ongo Commercial businesses and Ongo Developments budgets for 2026-27 and provided any views, advice or required amendments to the subsidiary boards ahead of the individual board meetings

15. Agenda item 17 – VFM Self-Assessment

Summary: This report presents the Value for Money (VFM) Self-Assessment for the 2025/26 financial year. This VFM Self-Assessment is supplementary to Ongo's VFM Statement which was presented to and approved by Ongo Homes' Board in August 2025. The document serves to demonstrate how we are fulfilling the requirements of the VFM Regulatory Standard. An updated version of Ongo's VFM Self-Assessment is presented within Appendix 1.

Discussion points/queries:

- An interim VFM update was provided. External advisers confirmed compliance with regulatory standards, with some suggested improvements to be reviewed with Finance. As the full self-assessment must cover the whole financial year, it will be completed after year-end. Audit & Risk will carry out a detailed review and provide full assurance to the Board in the summer. A member suggested linking the year-end VFM assessment to the corporate strategy review so outcomes can be viewed in a strategic context, using the neighbourhood model as an example. This was agreed.
  ACTION 4/26: Link the year-end VFM assessment to the corporate strategy review so outcomes can be viewed in a strategic context using the neighbourhood model as an example

Agreed: Board

- read and considered the VFM Self-Assessment and approved the latest version for publication, circulation, and use across the business.

16. Agenda item 18 – Strategic Risk Register

Summary: The Board are asked to agree the Risk Appetite for Ongo Homes. Following discussions at the Board away day we have revised the risk descriptors from High, Medium and Low to Averse, Cautious, Mindful, Open and Bold. This provides a greater meaning to the risk appetite and provides a wider range to assess the risk against.

ELT have reviewed the strategic risk registers and have recommended a number of changes; the Board are asked to review and approve changes to the Strategic Risk Register. The new strategic risk titles are:

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Be a Great Landlord	Customer Focus	Sustainability & Growth
1. Health and Safety *2. Data quality and integrity* *3. Quality Homes*	*4. People* *5. Customer experience*	*6. Governance* *7. Financial resilience* *8. Access to new funding/Funding Agreements* *9. Cyber* *10. Subsidiary Performance* *11. Development* *12. Competing demands*

Discussion points/questions:

- The Board received the updated Strategic Risk Register. Approval was sought for a revised, more descriptive five-level risk-appetite scale and for new strategic risks developed following the September away day.
- The Board approved the revised reporting style. When reviewing the proposed risk-appetite statements, members requested clearer separation or explicit wording for landlord health and safety, noting that this area should reflect an adverse appetite, distinct from wider compliance themes. Officers will revise the framework accordingly.
- The Board agreed that the compliance risk category should be refined to reflect different tolerance levels, particularly where landlord health and safety requires zero tolerance. Officers will revise and circulate updated wording. Members also requested measurable thresholds for key risk indicators, which will be added. The revised Strategic Risk Register will return for approval once updated.

Agreed: Board

- discussed and agreed the Risk Appetite and statements for Ongo Homes.
- discussed and approved the changes to the Strategic Risk Register

The removal, replacement and change in description of the risks included in the report.

17. <u>Agenda item 19 – Strategic Asset Management Plan & Existing Homes Update</u>

Summary: Following a comprehensive consultation period with stakeholders and residents, the Strategic Asset Management is presented to members for approval, now aligning to the corporate plan and setting out our future asset management ambitions.
Furthermore, JLL are continuing with their stock survey commission and have found our underlying assumptions to be robust and in-line with industry expectations. These findings align with our own view and continued increase in stock survey coverage, now in excess of 95% collected in the last five years.
The 2026/27 investment programme has been developed using various sources of information, with an estimated £10.7m of component replacements, subject to approval of the 2026/27 budget.

Discussion points/queries:

- The Board received the Strategic Asset Management Plan, which sets out the approach to maintaining existing homes, including decency, quality and decarbonisation, following formal consultation. Approval was also sought for the 2026/27 investment programme, which will normally sit with the future Development and Investment Committee but was presented to Board pending final budget approval. The Board was further asked to approve the approach to gaining access to homes without a recent stock condition survey and to note the position on managing Category 2 HHSRS hazards.

- A member asked whether any retrofit grants or similar funding had been assumed in the budget. It was confirmed that no grant income has been included at this stage for prudence, but the organisation is well placed to access funding should it become available. The Board noted that significant grant funding has been secured in previous years and that opportunities will continue to be maximised.
- The Board considered the approach to managing Category 2 HHSRS hazards. It was noted that these are moderate risks identified through stock condition surveys, not failures of the Decent Homes Standard. The Board approved handling these through a planned and efficient programme rather than routing them through responsive repairs, as access is often an issue and the risks have already been assessed. This approach also allows for more strategic planning of remedial works.

Agreed: Board
- considered and approved the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP).
- Subject to formal approval of the 26/27 budget at March Board, Ongo Homes Board Members approved the proposed Investment Programme for the year of 26/27.
- noted the attached JLL report on Housing stock and data and discuss.
- approved the approach of gaining access to the remaining properties without a stock survey less than 5 years old.
- considered and approved the proposal of how Ongo manage reports of HHSRS category 2 cases.
- noted the progress of sustainability and decarbonisation through the net zero action plan.

18. Agenda item 20 – Governance Update

Summary: Gemma Willey introduced the report that outlined several policies/documents for approval.

20.1 Board Recruitment & Succession Planning

The Board considered the proposed 2026 recruitment campaign. While DTP was suggested due to their sector reach, members agreed the final decision should be deferred until the updated Board composition and skills gaps are confirmed. It was noted that internal candidates, including existing independent committee members, may also meet future requirements. The Board therefore approved the recruitment campaign in principle, with flexibility to determine whether external sector support (e.g. DTP) is needed once the skills assessment is complete.

Discussion points/questions:

- The Board noted the report. A member advised that the wording in section 8.75 should be amended to reflect the current Code, which allows terms of up to six years followed by annual review rather than a blanket nine-year term. It was also requested that a clearer Board composition statement be developed, covering skills, experience, and diversity.

Officers will produce this and bring it to Governance & Remuneration before returning it to the Board.

- The Board noted the succession planning updates. Proposed dates had been aligned with future strategy and Board meetings to allow effective recruitment, handover and induction before current members reach the end of their terms. It was agreed that references to the nine-year term would be updated to reflect the 2020 Code (six years plus annual review). Members also requested sight of a consolidated skills matrix to identify upcoming gaps, which officers confirmed was already in progress.

ACTION 5/26: Provide a consolidated skills matrix to identify upcoming gaps (officers advised was already in progress)

ACTION 6/26: Revise wording in Succession Planning Policy to reflect change to NHF Code of Governance 202, make it clearer regarding membership term and extensions

20.2 Controls Framework

Board had no comments on the paper and approved the recommendations.

20.3 Bad Debts & Write off Policy

Board had no comments on the paper and approved the recommendations.

20.4 Delegations Framework

Board had no comments on the paper and approved the recommendations.

19. Agenda item 21 – Death in Service Claim

Summary: Gemma Willey presented a Death in Service claim which will be circulated via Convene for final resolution. Gemma provided a verbal update which detailed a member of staff had sadly passed away after a short illness. They were a member of the Aviva pension scheme which included death in service benefit, the employee had completed an Expression of Wish form which confirmed their husband as the sole beneficiary, to the amount of £82569.

Discussion points/queries:

- Members noted due to the sensitive nature of the Claim; to expedite matters for the family, members agreed to vote in favour and follow up by resolution on Convene.
- The Governance Team recorded votes in favour via Convene for those in attendance at the meeting which represented a board majority.

Agreed:
• Board approved the Death in Service benefit claim.

20. Agenda item 22 – Time for Reflection

The Chair thanked members for their contributions and noted the significance of the items discussed. The meeting was then brought to a close.

With no further business the meeting closed at 4:55pm

Signed by Chair: Des Hudson .... Date: 28 January 2026 ....

As a true and correct record of the Ongo Homes Board meeting held on 28 January 2026