

# 2019/20 Annual Report



Truly vibrant communities

“

Looking back, the last 12 months have certainly been a time of change, learning and positives for me.



Steve enjoying the Ongo Carnival

# A look back on the year

Looking back, the last 12 months have certainly been a time of change, learning and positives for me. You'll be able to read about everything in this report, but a few highlights and areas to point out are:

We've continued to work through our governance review, working closely with the Regulator of Social Housing on our voluntary undertaking. One of the main changes as a result of this review was for us to set up a new Board structure, which came into action in January 2020. We welcomed a new Board and went from having 10 Boards and three committees to four Boards and two committees. This is a highlight for us as it means we can be more streamlined and run more efficiently.

134 new homes being built was another positive this year, including our first rent to buy homes, a major redevelopment project of the former Albert Marson Court site to provide much needed family homes in the area, further developments on the £9million Westcliff regeneration project and the completion of our first build for sale site in Blyton.

We ended 2019/20 in a really positive position in terms of our rent arrears, which were at £755,533 which was (just above our £750,000 target). However this was a false position due to the timing of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit payments. At the 6 April 2020 our current tenant arrears was £616,321 which is our lowest position since 2013 and a great effort from the team.

Towards the end of the financial year, something I don't think anything could have predicted hit us, and the rest of the world; coronavirus. It didn't impact on our end of year performance with it happening towards the end of March, however it is something at the forefront of our minds and planning looking ahead.

Finally. The thing that has made me really proud this year is the way we've involved staff and customers across the business in developing our plans for the future. Involving our people in decision making makes better decisions for our tenants and communities.

**Steve Hepworth** Chief Exec



The annual Dine and Dance event always goes down well



Free fun at Onzo Carnival

# Our performance – an overview



91%

of 1,800 tenants surveyed  
satisfied with overall  
landlord services



92.4%

of 1,800 tenants surveyed  
satisfied their rent offers  
value for money

During 2019/20 we took steps into our new Corporate Plan, which focuses on three main objectives:

- **Be a great landlord**
- **Offer quality homes**
- **Create opportunities**

We have performance targets and aims under each of these objectives so we can monitor how we're doing in terms of the service we give our tenants, and to keep track on how close we are to achieving our aims.



Events throughout the year link into our three main objectives

## Being a great landlord – at a glance

Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Target	19/20 Benchmark Top Quartile
% of tenants satisfied with overall landlord services	93.80%	94%	91%	90%	90.7%
% of tenants satisfied views are listened to and acted upon	88.70%	90.40%	85.80%	78.9%	80.6%
% of tenants satisfied their rent offers value for money	94.10%	95.90%	92.40%	91.6%	91.15%
% of tenants satisfied with our repairs service	88.30%	87.20%	81.50%	86.3%	81.5%
Average current tenant arrears as % of debit (excl. housing benefit)	2.13%	1.83%	1.79%	1.70%	1.81%
% of rent loss from lettable empty homes	1.33%	1.31%	1.21%	1.17%	0.64%

All percentages are taken from the 1,800 tenants we survey each year



91.6%

of 1,800 tenants surveyed satisfied with the quality of their homes



134

Number of new build homes delivered



721

Number of people accessing employment support via Ongo Journey to Work

## Offering quality homes – at a glance

Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Target	19/20 Benchmark Top Quartile
% of tenants satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	89.70%	88.80%	84.20%	90%	85.98%
% of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home	93.50%	94.20%	91.60%	89.1%	88.58%
% of tenants likely to recommend Ongo to family or friends	66.30%	63.60%	63.80%	45.40%	53.48%
Investment into existing housing stock	£5,003k	£5,358k	£4,809k	£83m over 10yrs	
Number of new build homes delivered	103	130	134	225	

## Creating opportunities – at a glance

Indicator	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Target
Number of people accessing employment support via Ongo Journey to Work	659	832	721	700
Number of people gaining sustainable employment	147	180	181	180
Number of young people engaged in one-to-one mentoring	87	93	128	100
Number of new apprenticeships	30	48	50	36
Total £ invested into community/creating opportunities projects	£672k	£886k	£1m	£1m



## Our new Board

**January 2020 saw our new Board and structure in place. We have four Boards and two committees, to help us run more efficiently and effectively.**

Our Boards and committees are: Group Common Board, Ongo Communities Common Board, Ongo Commercial Common Board, Ongo Developments Common Board, Audit & Risk committee and Governance and Remuneration committee.



**91%**

complete in our  
voluntary undertaking

These Boards are made up of people from various backgrounds, and they bring a wealth of knowledge.

These changes have strengthened our Boards to ensure we have the skills and expertise to lead the organisation and embed good governance throughout.

At the end of this year we had made positive progress in our voluntary undertaking, with us being 91% complete with it. This involved accepting and implementing all the recommendations from an external governance review, closing down the existing Board structures and launching our new structure with a completely new focus and terms of reference, reviewing our constitutional documents and progressing these through the legal approval routes.

# Thoughts from Janine, our Chair of Community Voice

“Janine Garner is one of our tenants, and is the Chair of our tenant group, Community Voice. This group make operational business decisions and help us improve how we work.

There has been so much great work over the last 12 months and when I was asked what my proudest moment was during this time, I really struggled to answer. I decided that getting back onto our feet and dealing with the governance review so well was mine. Not just because of all the progress we’ve made, but because us tenants were able to help and support with something so business critical. This to me really proves how valued tenants are.

Our new board structure, in my opinion, is fantastic too. I feel it was needed for us to grow and progress as a business. It’s in this time I also feel tenant involvement has grown stronger, more structured and productive. Tenants having 55% voting rights is not something we take lightly and we know how important this is.

Something I’ve fought for from the very start of my involvement has been to make sure that any tenant could be involved in groups and decision making. This has grown massively and we’re always actively encouraging more people to join through every channel possible.

Another thing I’d like to highlight is the millions of pounds spent each year to regenerate our communities

and build new homes. This not only provides much needed modern, safe places to live, but we go further and give better prospects to the younger generation, tackle anti-social behaviour, create a place people are proud to live in and do exactly what we say we’re going to in our three strategies.

These new strategies (Be a great landlord, offer quality homes, create opportunities) are a welcome change for us tenants and are something we can all stand behind. They go back to the basics and are the foundations of what makes a great landlord. They shine a light on what’s truly important.

One last thing I’d like to mention is how from the very start of the covid-19 outbreak in March we stepped up. Our initial reaction, like a lot of businesses, wasn’t about our own income but people living in our communities and how we could support those most vulnerable. For me that just totally sums up Ongo.”



Janine Garner, Chair  
of Community Voice

# Focus on – being a great landlord

Being a great landlord means providing excellent services, learning from the times we don't get it right and listening to feedback.

We've listened to the things important to you and included some in this section.

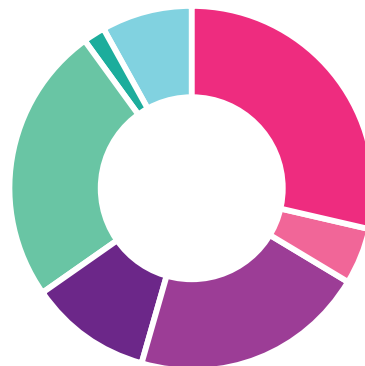
## Keeping you safe

Making sure you are safe in your home and communities is a priority for us, which is why we're so pleased to report on the following safety measures over the last year:

- **Gas safety checks: 100% of all homes**
- **Asbestos surveys completed: 100% of homes with asbestos in (built before 2000)**
- **Fire alarm tests in high rise flats and communal areas: 100%**
- **Legionella tests completed: 100% (High rise, sheltered/retirement schemes, offices and any requests)**



## How rent is set and spent



- Staffing, office and general running costs **29%**
- Service charges **5%**
- Maintenance and upkeep of homes **21%**
- Investment in existing homes **11%**
- New homes **25%**
- Communities projects **2%**
- Interest, unrealisable charges & other charges **8%**





## Our homes

Our Lettings and Maintenance teams have worked together to reduce our number of empty homes. In 2019/20 we had 121 empty homes which is slightly less than the 125 the year before. The number of days taken to prepare homes to be rented out has also reduced from 51 days last year to 44 days this year. The total amount of rent lost through empty homes was significantly lower, at £539,345 in comparison to the £620,996 in 2018/19.

**Total number of homes: 9,958**

**Number of homes let: 964**

**Number of homes sold through Right to Buy or Right to Acquire: 44**

**Number of mutual exchanges: 22**

## Listening and learning

We received 325 compliments, with our Repairs, Housing and Neighbourhood Services teams receiving the most. This is encouraging as our Neighbourhood Services team were a new team the previous year, put in place following feedback that more focus needed to be put on our neighbourhoods. We're pleased this has been so positively received.

We received 474 complaints, with 153 (32%) being upheld. Whilst this is an increase by 33 complaints compared to last year, there has been a 1% decrease in the number of upheld complaints. This year, 64% of people were satisfied with the way their complaint was dealt with which is 8% higher than last year.

## Tenancy management

We had 1,626 new anti-social behaviour cases reported, which is 92 more than last year. 1,463 of these were successfully resolved during the year which meets our target, and a 5% improvement on last year.

1,447 tenants were satisfied that they were kept up to date throughout their case, a 10% improvement on the year before and exceeding the 85% target set. 1,366 tenants were satisfied with the way their case was handled, a 2% increase on last year but still 5% off our target.

## Our homelessness support service

We provide homes to homeless people in the Doncaster area over the age of 18. Last year the team supported 100 clients who were homeless or at risk of losing their home:

- **42 engaged in College or training courses**
- **19 gained employment**
- **5 engaged in volunteering**

Our relationship with the Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council continued as we worked with them on their Rapid Rehousing Pathway initiative, to provide homes and support for homeless people in Doncaster.

The average occupancy was 95% with turnaround of empty homes taking less than five working days. 49 of our clients who left the service did so in a planned and positive way with 17 moving into secure social housing, 15 going into private rented accommodation and 17 returning to live with friends or family.

## Online support

- **My Home registered users increased from 3,405 to 4,384**
- **Payments via My Home at an all-time high, on average £282k per month**
- **Introduction of digital rent statements saw a 40% reduction in costs, saving £13,600 per year**
- **15 tenants signed up to be 'tenant testers' to help improve our digital services**

# Focus on – offering quality homes



£4.8m

Spend on planned and major repairs (new kitchens, bathrooms etc)

**To us, offering quality homes is both building new much needed affordable housing, and looking after our existing homes. It means providing the types of homes that people need, and want to live in.**

## Repairs and maintenance

Our Maintenance team carried out 26,295 jobs in 2019/20 with around 5,900 of those being emergency or urgent repairs.

Tenants satisfied that their repair was done right first time was at 84% and satisfaction with the quality of work with repairs was 95%, which is 2% away from our target of 97%.

## Improvement work

The satisfaction of tenants having planned improvement work carried out in their homes has increased slightly compared to last year, from 92% to 94%. Our target is 96% so we'll be aiming to improve again over the next 12 months.

Our Asset team also carried out various improvement projects including removing an outdated heating system at Victoria House in Barton, and replaced with modern pipework, along with the installation of heat exchangers and a heat metering system so our tenants can better control their energy costs. It's still in the early stages of monitoring the savings to tenants, but we're confident it will have a positive impact on the energy costs to our tenants.

## New homes

We've built 119 new homes during the year and started on site to build 101 more.

These included affordable rented, shared ownership, rent to buy, accessible and outright sale homes, meaning there is a type of home to suit the needs of many people.

Homes were built in North Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire and West Lindsey, expanding our geographical reach.

We completed our first ever outright sale development in Blyton, completed our first rent to buy homes which support people to get on the property ladder, and built an impressive apartment block in Gainsborough for people over the age of 55.

“  
**95%**  
of tenants were  
satisfied with  
the quality of  
repairs work



## Repairs & maintenance spend

	2018/19 actual spend	2018/19 budget	2019/20 actual spend	2019/20 budget
Spend on day to day repairs & maintenance	£4.967m	£4.905m	£5.569m	£5.307m
Spend on planned and major repairs (new kitchens, bathrooms etc)	£3.491m	£3.728m	£4.809m	£5.200m
<b>Total repairs spend</b>	<b>£8.458m</b>	<b>£8.633m</b>	<b>£10.378m</b>	<b>£10.507m</b>

# Focus on – creating opportunities



£1m

Invested in programmes and projects to improve our communities



721

People given employment support

**We invested £1million in programmes and projects to improve our communities, and for every £1 we spent, we saw £13.82 of value in return. This is a slight increase from previous years.**

## Creating opportunities for our tenants and clients

An additional £447,723 of external grant funding was secured for employment support and wellbeing activities. This extra funding meant we could support 1,259 people.

Ongo Talk launched aiming to support people with low level mental health issues, and we supported 117 people throughout 2019/20. This was slightly less than our 150 people target, but we're confident we'll achieve this and more next year.

## Supporting young people

Our target was to support 100 young people, to help them realise their potential and set out on a positive journey in life. We worked with 128 young people and delivered 15 sessions in local schools.


We also employed 14 apprentices at Ongo in departments including Maintenance, HR, PR and Customer Services. Our recruitment agency placed 50 apprentices in businesses across the region, which is 14 more than the target of 36 for the year.

## Employment support

721 people were supported through our Ongo Journey to Work in 2019/20, which offers of support to help people become work ready; regardless of how ready they currently are. This includes CV writing, coaching and mentoring, interview prep and even supporting people to progress in their career.



The Arc in Westcliff is a one stop shop for the whole community



We work to raise aspirations of young people within our communities

“  
**£447,723**  
external funding  
secured for  
employment support  
and wellbeing  
activities.



£282k

The average payments  
via My Home per month



40%

Reduction in costs due  
to introduction of digital  
rent statement saving  
£13,600 per year



4,384

My Home  
registered users

**We've continued to  
involve our tenants in  
our business decisions,  
with some really positive  
outcomes achieved.**

We love to have open conversations  
and hear ideas from our tenant

# Involving our tenants

A group of tenants were involved in the procurement of a new kitchen supplier. The group evaluated tender responses, visited kitchen suppliers, attended sessions to look at new kitchen units, and completed online surveys on their preferred kitchen designs. 489 tenants were involved, and we're pleased to be able to supply kitchens that our tenants have had a say in.

We also involved tenants in the redesign of our rent statements. Two focus groups were held where existing rent statements were analysed and new designs shared for feedback. This consultation resulted in a new design being implemented.

## Digital involvement

Sessions were held with tenants about the Ongo website and how we make it more user friendly. This set a plan in place to make sure the website is fully accessible, simple to use and has an improved look and feel. This work is continuing into 2020/21.

My Home also saw improvements, including the 'report a repair' function. We worked with our digital tenant testers to make it simpler to report a repair, see less failed attempts and an increase in self-service repairs being made.

## Age restrictions removed

In July 2019, our Community Voice tenant group approved the removal of age restrictions in our high rise flats, bungalows and low rise blocks. This was following wider consultation with almost 1,700 people who gave their views on this subject, and going with the majority who were in favour of these being removed.

## Equality, diversity & inclusion involvement

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) group of staff and tenants made a big difference to the culture of our organisation over the last 12 months by influencing the roll out of 'Happy, Healthy Workplace' Training. The group were also shortlisted for EDI Steering Group of the Year and Inspirational Individual of the Year at the National Centre for Diversity's Annual Awards and we were entered into their top 100 company's leader board.

Supporting prospective tenants with additional needs, or where English isn't their first language is another example of our commitment to EDI. We used translator services, had documents printed in other languages, and for people with learning difficulties we have a pictorial tenancy agreement.

Our browse aloud facility on our website caters for different customer choice requirements to change font colour and size, translate articles for all.

# Ongo in numbers

## Value for money

**We achieved savings of £1,528,490. Our target was £750,000, so we beat our target by £778,490 (more than double)**

Most savings came from large projects including a £461,500 on our insurance premiums and insurance brokerage services. This will be a saving of nearly £1.4m over our three year agreement.

Others include £250,000 saving on gas servicing and compliance, £180,000 through sourcing a new kitchen supplier (thank you to our tenant group for

helping us make this saving) and a £52,000 on utility gas supplies.

We select similar organisations to compare ourselves against in terms of our value for money achievements each year.

The Regulator of Social Housing introduced seven value for money metrics in 2018 to compare against, and overall we compare positively to similar organisations. To find out more detail, take a look at our Value for Money statement which is published on our website. You can find it here: [ongoco.uk/valueformoney](https://ongoco.uk/valueformoney)

## Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 March 2020

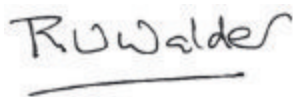
	Note	2020 £'000	2019 £'000
<b>Turnover</b>	3	<b>45,840</b>	45,044
Cost of sales	3	<b>(140)</b>	(147)
Operating costs	3	<b>(36,033)</b>	(33,879)
Surplus on sale of fixed asset housing properties	3, 10	<b>1,608</b>	1,044
<b>Operating surplus</b>	3, 6	<b>11,275</b>	12,062
Other interest receivable and similar income	11	<b>206</b>	137
Interest payable and similar charges	12	<b>(3,217)</b>	(3,160)
Other finance costs	12	<b>(262)</b>	(185)
Movement in fair value of investment properties	16	<b>(260)</b>	593
<b>Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation</b>		<b>7,742</b>	9,447
Taxation on surplus on ordinary activities	13	<b>(34)</b>	(10)
<b>Surplus for the financial year</b>		<b>7,708</b>	9,437
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension scheme	26	<b>7,087</b>	(2,547)
<b>Total comprehensive income for year</b>		<b>14,795</b>	6,890



## Statement of financial position at 31 March 2020

	Note	2020 £'000	2019 £'000
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Tangible fixed assets – housing properties	14	<b>194,291</b>	182,080
Tangible fixed assets – other	15	<b>3,136</b>	3,319
Investment properties	16	<b>1,530</b>	1,790
Investments – other	17	<b>30</b>	30
Investments – subsidiaries	17	<b>100</b>	100
		<b>199,087</b>	187,319
<b>Current assets</b>			
Stock	18	<b>214</b>	–
Debtors – receivable within one year	19	<b>3,699</b>	1,581
Debtors – receivable after one year	19	<b>1,700</b>	2,250
Cash and cash equivalents		<b>13,859</b>	15,840
		<b>19,472</b>	19,671
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	20	<b>(9,056)</b>	(8,157)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>10,416</b>	11,514
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<b>209,503</b>	198,833
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	21	<b>(107,769)</b>	(105,187)
Net assets excluding pension liability		<b>101,734</b>	93,646
Pension liability	26	<b>(4,100)</b>	(10,807)
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>97,634</b>	82,839
<b>Capital and reserves</b>			
Income and expenditure reserve		<b>97,634</b>	82,839
		<b>97,634</b>	82,839

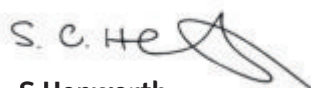
The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors and authorised for issue on 27 August 2020.



**R Walder**  
Director



**M Kenya**  
Director



**S Hepworth**  
Chief Executive



**J Sugden**  
Company secretary

The tables included are an extract from our financial statements and their explanatory notes.



Steve Hepworth and Bob Walder

**“  
We’ve got a  
brilliant team  
who I know  
will work hard.”**

# The year ahead

“Our main aims for the next 12 months will focus on our Corporate Plan and the launch of our four strategies, which are:

- **Be a great landlord**
- **Offer quality homes**
- **Create opportunities**
- **One Ongo**

The ways in which we intend to grow and diversify over the next 12 months are taken from our four strategies which have been developed to support our Corporate Plan.

We will of course continue working with the Regulator of Social Housing and in the short term aim to return to a G2 compliant rating, and our longer term aim is to return to a G1 rating which is the highest rating for governance within the social housing sector.

This year will also see us continue to work through the impact of coronavirus, with teams working hard to get through backlogs and get all our services back up and running. It will be a tough time, but we’ve got a brilliant team who I know will work hard to get all our services back up and running for our tenants and customers.”

**Bob Walder** Chair of the Board

## Awards & accreditations

**External accreditation is used to measure our performance and effectiveness, especially in front-facing services such as tenant engagement or customer services. In the last 12 months we have received the following external recognition:**

- We were shortlisted in two awards at the National Centre for Diversity national awards – ‘Steering group of the year’ for our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion group, and ‘Employee of the year’ for Erica Sanderson and her approach to diversity
- Hales & Coultas became MCS accredited which means we are an approved installer for air source heat pumps
- We received the Secured by Design Gold Award – for our approach to safety with our Albert Marson development
- We were placed in the Best Companies top 100
- We were recognised in the Local Authority Building Control awards – winning ‘Best Community Building’ for The Arc, and shortlisted for both ‘Best New Housing Development’ for our Grange Lane South and Henderson Avenue developments
- We won the North Lincolnshire Business Award – Excellence in Community award for our Westcliff and The Arc project
- Accreditations retained in the following areas: Tpas (resident involvement), Customer Service Excellence, Leaders in Diversity (position 38), Advice Quality Standard, Investors in People and Matrix Standard

# Thank you

We'd like to say a big thank you to all our staff, tenants and partners for making 2019/20 another great year.

