

## **Manchester Intergenerational Cohousing (MICO): Membership Policy (during 'Planning' Phase)**

Agreed by the MICO Development Group: 25 May 2021

**Purpose of this policy:** To outline the various levels of membership available within MICO during the 'Planning' phase of the project, to describe a transparent process by which people become Members, and to outline the expectations of membership and the level of participation required.

*NB. all policies are reviewed periodically by Members, and can be amended in response to changes in circumstances as the project evolves. Separate policies (or iterations of this policy) will be drafted to outline Membership arrangements during the future 'Development' and 'Occupation' phases of the project.*

### **1. Levels of membership available**

1.1 MICO welcomes applications from anyone over 18 who supports our work irrespective of sex, age, background, education, gender identity, sexuality, ability, race, ethnicity or belief.

1.2 MICO very much welcomes those who support our Guiding Principles and Values to become involved in our project, and to actively contribute their skills to help the project progress. In order to enable as many individuals and households as possible to engage with MICO's activities on a basis which suits their level of commitment to the project at each stage, we offer three levels of membership.

1.3 The three levels of membership are described below:

- **Supporter:** Being a Supporter of the group means that you want to help the scheme to progress without necessarily wanting to live there. We will keep Supporters informed of progress with the project and invite you to attend the social meetings and take part in any Working Groups you are interested in.
- **Prospective Member:** For those interested in living in the community, as an initial step you will be asked to become a Prospective Member. With this membership, you will be asked if you would like to attend social meetings, as well as having the opportunity to become involved with a Working Group or other forum.
- **Full member:** Full membership is designed for those who are fully committed to helping the project progress and intending to live within the community. To be considered for full membership, it is generally considered that you should have attended and contributed to at least 4 group meetings - either Working Groups or Development Group meetings.

However different forms of contribution aside from attendance may be taken into account if individuals are not able to attend meetings.

*NB all levels of membership will be invited to join our Working Groups to work on the details of various areas of the development, where they feel they have skills to offer or particular interests. Expressions of interest can be made to [MICOmembership@gmail.com](mailto:MICOmembership@gmail.com).*

## 2. Fees

Membership level	Joining fee	Ongoing fees
Supporter	Suggested donation £5	These fees are initially considered as a one-off joining fee. However the requirements for 'top up' annual fees will be considered on an ongoing basis, based on project needs.
Prospective member	£20	
Full member	£50 (less any previous payments)	

2.1 The initial joining fees are set on an 'able to pay' basis, with the figures being suggested donations. Please contact our Membership Working Group if you would like to join but feel you are not able to pay the full amount.

## 3. Process for joining

3.1 In order to be considered for any of these membership types, those interested should in the first instance contact the Membership Working Group on [wearemico@gmail.com](mailto:wearemico@gmail.com), stating which level they are interested in.

3.2 For those **interested in Prospective Membership**, the first step will be a short meeting (in person if possible, virtually if not possible) with a member of the Membership Working Group, where they will explain the project and its current status and answer any questions. Following this and continued interest, the person will be invited to apply as a Prospective Member via an online form. Providing that all criteria set out in this policy are met, this person will be invited to pay the appropriate fee and become a Prospective Member, and will be asked to select a preferred Working Group to participate in.

3.3 In order to progress **from Prospective to Full Membership**, an individual should again fill in the online membership form (once they are satisfied they fulfil the criteria set out in this policy). This will be reviewed by the Membership Working Group. If the Membership Working Group are satisfied that all the relevant criteria have been met, they will recommend approval as a Full Member in e-mail form to all existing Full Members, who will be invited to submit any objections within 7 days. These objections must be limited *only* to instances where existing Members believe the prospective Member is not acting in line with the values set out in this policy. Provided there are no objections, the individual will be approved as a Full Member and entered on the Membership Register, kept by the Membership Working Group.

3.4. If objections are raised, these will be worked through with the objector and applicant separately, in order to try to resolve any concerns in the first instance. In any case where the issue cannot be resolved, membership ultimately may be refused and the decision will lie with the Membership Working Group.

3.5 In applications for all levels of membership, Applicants will be required to review and accept the Guiding Principles and Values of MICO, which are stated below:

Values:

- To contribute and share responsibility for the development of the project.
- To maintain a structure without hierarchy.
- To accept and respect the diversity of others.
- To offer mutual support to each other whilst respecting privacy.
- To participate in sustaining constructive and harmonious relationships with stakeholders and the wider community.
- To respect and care for the environment and the buildings.

Members commit to:

- The Cohousing type of collaborative and sustainable living that combines the benefits of people owning or renting residences with the advantages of shared resources, along with the ability to compromise and accept the 'give and take' of living in a community.
- Giving time and taking on roles and responsibilities within MICO to ensure the success of the development and creation and ongoing maintenance of a positive community environment.
- Shaping a scheme that allows residents to live in a mutually supportive way which enables residents to thrive and promotes wellbeing to help sustain an independent life.
- Creating a balance between interdependence as a community and independence for individuals, ensuring the design of personal and community space reflects this.
- Treating all people equally and with respect, irrespective of sex, age, background, education, gender identity, sexuality, ability, race, ethnicity or belief
- Conduct, behaviour, communication and actions which reflects an ethos that is non-judgemental, respectful, appreciative of different perspectives, compassionate and caring.

3.6 Decisions on membership will be rooted in respect for Equality and Diversity. The criteria on which decisions on Membership will be based are limited to the following:

1. Whether the applicant has met the conditions of membership set out in this Policy eg. accepting the Guiding Principles and Values, any requirements for the number of meetings to have attended and payment of associated fee. Objections to approval must be based solely on the extent to which these values have been demonstrated, and must not be based on personal preference.
2. Whether the applicant has demonstrated a sufficient understanding of cohousing and what it represents, and a willingness to learn more.

3.7 The process for becoming a Full Member is illustrated in diagrammatic form at the foot of this policy.

#### **4. Rights and responsibilities of members**

4.1 In regard to the *rights* of members:

- **Decision Making:** Full Members have the right and are encouraged to take part in decision making processes impacting on the project and its members. Prospective Members may be invited to some decision making sessions, where they will participate as observers.
- **Allocation of units:** Members are warned that acceptance into Membership of MICO (at any level) does not guarantee being allocated a home. Becoming a Full Member during the early stages of development is likely to increase the chances of being allocated a unit in the development at a later date, however this is to be defined within the Allocations Policy.

4.2 In regard to the *responsibilities* of members and the expected participation:

- All levels of members have the opportunity to become involved in either the Development Group or as part of Working Groups, and are very much encouraged to offer any skills or time they have available to help move the project forward. This participation is expected to be ongoing throughout the development period and - during occupation phase - will lead into involvement with the management of the community.
- Full Members will be expected to actively participate in the activities of the group and to join at least one Working Group. The group will recognise that there are a number of

forms this contribution can be made, and that members in different circumstances will be able to contribute in different ways.

- All levels of Member will be expected to behave in accordance with the Guiding Principles and Values set out in this policy.
- The more time contributed in total by all members leads to greater progress on the project, and as such all are encouraged to contribute whatever they can.

## **5. Processes for revoking membership**

5.1 While members and Directors of MICO will seek at all times to avoid the revocation of Membership, if it is raised that a Full Member is not acting in accordance with the Guiding Principles and Values, or if their participation in the project does not meet expectations, MICO does retain the right to revoke membership.

5.2 In such circumstances, the initial step will be an informal conversation with a member of the Membership Working Group. Only if issues cannot be resolved, the final decision on revocation will lie with the Directors of MICO.

## **6. Restrictions on numbers of members**

6.1 At this stage of the project, there will be no limit set on the number of potential residents accepted for membership, provided they meet the Membership criteria set out in this policy. However in future stages, there may be circumstances in which a waiting list may be created, or where membership will be “frozen” for a time. Membership and allocation policies will align with MICO’s social justice policy.

6.2 MICO will at all times seek to be open and transparent with interested parties over whether the group is over-subscribed and the realistic likelihood of property allocation at the time in question.

6.3 At this stage, only one person per household is expected to become a Member. Other members of that household are encouraged to become Members if they wish to, but are not obliged to and are welcome to join social events etc. Please note that the policy on this during the occupation phase may differ and is yet to be defined.

## Review Log

As the project evolves, this policy may have to be updated periodically. This Review Log will keep track of where and when changes were made:

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date approved</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>
1.0	25 May 2021	Initial version