

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

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 Purpose Vision 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. We will keep you informed of progress via Newsletters and invite you to attend socials.
- **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 receive Newsletters, be invited to all meetings, working groups, workshops and socials meetings. Once you have attended and contributed to meetings, working groups or workshops, you will be given access to the membership section of MICO website.
- **Full Member:** Full membership is designed for those who are fully committed to helping the project progress and intend to live within the community. To be eligible for full membership, it is generally considered that you should have attended and contributed to at least three general meetings, and one working group over a period or around 6 months. However different forms of contribution aside from attendance may be taken into account if individuals are not able to regularly attend meetings.

Full membership allows you to vote on decisions being made and to take an active role in the development of MICO.

1.4 Household Membership. Every adult aged over 18 who intends to live in the cohousing community must in time become a Full Member. Partners of Full Members, if they intend to live with them, should be aware that they need to become active Full Members prior to moving on site, and to go through the membership process prior to moving in, assuming it is within their capabilities. All adult Full Members should participate in a working group and in the functioning of the cohousing scheme when it is built.

1.5 Temporary Household members. Members may sometimes have people living with them temporarily for a variety of reasons e.g. adult children returning. Temporary residents are encouraged to participate in cohousing activities within their capabilities and interests.

1.6 Visitors. It is incumbent on members to make sure their visitors behave responsibly.

2. Fees

2.1 Membership fees are only required when you become a Full Member. These can be paid yearly or monthly via standing order. There will be a standard fee, but if members are unable to meet this, there is provision to pay what you can afford.

2.2. Anyone who has neglected to pay their fees will be sent reminders and, if they don't pay after a reasonable length of time, it will be assumed that they have resigned their full membership.

3. Process for joining

3.1. In order to be considered for membership you should complete the expression of interest form on the MICO website with a short description of your interest in cohousing and stating which level of membership you are interested in, Supporter or Prospective. Full membership is available only to Prospective Members.

3.2. For those interested in joining as a Prospective or Supporter member 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 the work of MICO will be discussed and any questions can be answered. Following this, and assuming there are no concerns, the person can be invited to apply as a Prospective or Supporter member via an online form. If there are concerns, these will be discussed initially by the Membership Team. If there remain concerns, these should be taken to the Full Members at the next General Meeting to agree on what the response should be to the applicant.

3.3. If you wish to move from Prospective to Full Membership, you can request this initially to the Membership Team. The Membership Team will consult with the convenors/members of the working group in which they've participated, and with the rest of the full membership to determine if there are any objections to you becoming a full member. If they and other Full Members at General Meeting, following consensus decision making, are satisfied that all the relevant criteria have been met, you will be asked to apply to be a Full Member using the online application form. This will be sent to you by the Membership Group. Once the form has been received, and validated by the Membership Group, your details will be entered on the Full Membership Register, held by the Membership Working Group.

3.5. If objections to an application for Full Membership are raised, the objector or objectors (if more than one) will have to put in writing why they wish to oppose the application, referring to MICO's Purpose, Vision and Values.

3.6 The objector(s) will then meet with two members of the Membership Group to discuss their opposition.

3.7 If after discussion the objector(s) still wishes to oppose the application, then where possible a meeting will be arranged with the objector(s), the applicant and two members from MICO membership team.

3.8 If the issue is not resolved, then it will be taken a meeting of Full Members.

3.9 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:

- The applicant will have met the conditions of membership set out in this policy and accepted the Purpose Vision and Values.

- 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.
- Whether the applicant has demonstrated a sufficient understanding of cohousing and what it represents, and a willingness to learn more.
- A decision will be made following MICO's consensus decision making approach.

3.10. If you wish to progress from Supporter to Prospective Member, you will need to contact the Membership Group and they will give you further information about the different working groups, to enable you to decide how you could best support MICO. You will also need to complete the application form again.

4. Rights and responsibilities of members

4.1 Decision Making: Full Members have the right and are encouraged to take part in decision making processes impacting on MICO and its members. Prospective Members may be invited to some decision-making sessions, where they will participate as observers.

4.2 Allocation of units: Members are advised 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.

4.3 In regard to the responsibilities of members and the expected participation:

4.4 Prospective and Full members will be expected to become involved in Working Groups or contribute in other ways that help move MICO forward. This participation is expected to be ongoing throughout the any scheme development period and - during occupation phase - will lead into involvement with the management of the community.

4.5 All levels of Member will be expected to behave in accordance with the Purpose Vision and Values.

4.6 The more time contributed in total by all members leads to greater progress on the MICO's work and as such all are encouraged to contribute whatever they can.

4.7 Prospective and Full Members will be required to sign the Code of Conduct¹.

4.8. Full Members are expected to attend at least 50% of General Meetings unless there are extenuating circumstances; and they give apologies if they cannot attend.

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 If there is conflict between two or more members and a member wishes to complain/object to another member's behaviour, the complainant/objector would have to put in writing what they wish to complain/object about, referring to MICO's 'Purpose Vision and Values'.

5.3 The complainant/objector would then meet with two members of the Membership Group to discuss their opposition.

¹ This has within it, the Purpose, Vision and Values.

5.4 If after discussion the complainant/objector still wishes to continue with the complaint/objection, then where possible a meeting will be arranged with both parties and two members from MICO membership team.

5.6 If the issue is not resolved, then it will be taken to a meeting of all members who will make a decision using consensus decision making.

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 Allocation and Social Justice policies, once agreed.

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 .

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 as yet is to be defined

6. Resigning membership.

6.1 Anyone wishing to leave MICO should resign in writing.

7.Review Log

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

Version	Date approved	Summary of changes
1.0	May 2021	Initial Agreed Version
2.0		Draft
3.0	14 January 2023	Agreed Version
4.0	31 June, 2025	Various incl; 50% attendance