



LISTER HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

# Business Plan 2023-24

## 1. SUMMARY INFORMATION

### 1.1 Introduction and Summary

This Business Plan, together with the Risk Register at Appendix A, sets out the key strategy information to assist Lister Housing Co-operative Ltd ('Lister') in moving forward. The Business Plan is supported by the Annual Priorities, and also relevant actions from Lister's Annual Assurance Statement Areas for Improvement Plan. Lister continues to prosper through the careful management of its property by its Management Committee, staff and members (tenants).

### 1.2 Summary of the Strategy and Development Funding Bid to Edinburgh Council

We propose making the usual £1,000 bid for adaptation money this year, although this will be adjusted should more funds be needed for particular adaptations received during the year.

## 2. LISTER HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE

### 2.1 The History and Role of the Co-operative

Lister was formed in 1976 and is registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator (HAC 150). It is also registered as a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 with the Financial Services Authority, 1876 R(S).

### 2.2 Lister's aims and objectives

Lister has the following aims and objectives:

- (a) To provide housing in central Edinburgh for its members, and for people in housing need including those homeless and those in medical need. The housing to have a range of flat sizes and types including mainstream, amenity and wheelchair flats and shared flats for single persons.
- (b) This housing to be at affordable rents, of good quality and maintained to a high standard, with an accessible, responsive and caring housing service.
- (c) The Co-operative is to be under its members' control and be democratically run without any discrimination.
- (d) To promote the development of the community at Lister and with its neighbours.
- (e) To support a strong and capable Management Committee and staff team.
- (f) To promote strong financial management and with maintenance investment for the long term.
- (g) To invest in energy conservation and associated work to keep our housing energy efficient and based on good ethical and ecological principles.

### 3. HOUSING NEEDS, THE HOUSING MARKET AND LISTER'S ALLOCATIONS ACTIVITY

#### 3.1 The Housing Market

Previous business plans have detailed the state of the housing market in central Edinburgh. Little has changed and there remains very high demand for affordable, secure tenancies such as Lister provides.

#### 3.2 Housing needs - Lister's vacancy rates

Lister has enormous demand for its accommodation due to its size, location, affordability, security and quality. We also generally have a very low turnover and vacancy rate.

#### 3.3 Housing needs - Lister's housing lists and allocations activity

Lister currently holds 2 key types of housing lists, as follows:

- a. Mainstream, amenity and wheelchair general needs list for external applicants - allocated using EdIndex - choice-based lettings.
- b. Transfer list for Lister tenants wishing a move within Lister.

Lister uses choice-based lettings in EdIndex, although Lister is not a member of EdIndex for transfers within Lister stock. Lister is part of a Mutual Exchange system for exchanges within Edinburgh, based on a website program.

### 4. RENT POLICIES

#### 4.1 Rent levels

The rents are reviewed annually on 1 April following tenant consultation on the proposals. The average rents per week at Lister at 1 April 2022 (including service charges) are:

Bedsit	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed	5+bed	Average
67.41	75.52	83.93	91.19	112.02	131.05	86.93

### 5. THE ORGANISATION OF LISTER

#### 5.1 Structure and skills

Lister is democratically controlled by its members through the AGM and Management Committee. All staff are on the full EVH system. Lister's staffing is as follows:

CEO	John Rankin	Full time
Housing Officer	Mark Stolarek	Full time
Housing Assistant	Fiona Dodds	Full time
Office Assistant	Elaine Coutts	Part-time
Gardener/Handyperson	Sam McGillivray	Part-time

#### 5.2 Control of Consultants, Contractors and Agency Services

Certain aspects of work are arranged through consultancy and agency relationships.

##### A: Agency Services

Financial services	Finance reports and advice, preparation of quarterly, annual accounts and budgets	Harbour Homes
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Maintenance services	Assist in drawing up specifications and tender lists, procurement and the supervision of certain contracts	Harbour Homes Manor Estates Associates Ltd
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**B: Consultancy Services**

For smaller contracts Lister occasionally uses consultants we have used previously.

**C: Auditors and Lawyers**

Auditors	Chiene + Tait	61 Dublin St, Edinburgh EH3 6NL
Solicitors	T C Young	69a George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2JG
Internal Auditors	Quinn Internal Audit & Business Support Services, Livingston	
Data Protection Officer services	RGDP LLP, Edinburgh Quay, EH3 9QG	

**D: Contractors**

Lister has a list of key contractors which is monitored and reviewed regularly. Lister does not employ any repairs workers directly.

**E: Key affiliations/memberships**

Lister is a long-standing member of the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and of Employers in Voluntary Housing (full-member). Lister is a member of the ARCHIE alliance, and a member of the Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership. Lister is also a member of Positive Action in Housing and the Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council.

**6. LISTER’S TRACK RECORD**

**6.1 Development**

Lister does not have any plans to develop further at this time.

**6.2 Housing Management**

Lister aims for a high standard of management and service to people.

**6.3 Maintenance**

Lister keeps close control on its maintenance activities and has a planned maintenance programme to follow.

**6.4 Other performance areas**

Lister always aims to provide a good service and improve on it where possible. Last year we:

- a. Continued with delivery of our Main Site kitchen programme.
- b. Continued to embed the use of the new HomeMaster proprietary Housing Management software.
- c. Reviewed our Health and Safety Management system.
- d. Continued with the induction of our CEO, following the retirement of his longstanding predecessor in post.

**7. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**7.1** Information on Lister’s financial performance can be obtained from our accounts, which are available on our website and on request, as well as our budget which is available on request.

## 8. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

### 8.1 SWOT analysis and comments

Our Strengths/ Weaknesses/ Opportunities/ Threats analysis has been reviewed and updated for 2023-24, as set out below:

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tenant Committee good knowledge of stock, tenants and Locality.</li> <li>2. Good reputation in HA world and community.</li> <li>3. Good performance in Audit.</li> <li>4. Dedicated, stable staff team.</li> <li>5. Control all stock so able to take the long view and maintain all property.</li> <li>6. Good financial position.</li> <li>7. Committed and engaged Committee, able to respond quickly to local issues.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Challenges encouraging tenants to participate. Neighbour/children problems can impact relations between some tenants.</li> <li>2. Pressure of work on staff.</li> <li>3. Little time to do community work.</li> </ol>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opportunity for more community development work if volunteers can be found / staff time permits.</li> <li>2. Good standing with local community if we wish to initiate new projects.</li> <li>3. Work within the staff team to 'cross skill' wherever possible to mitigate absence/ turnover risks.</li> <li>4. Work with specialist partners (eg Changeworks) to consider what further energy conservation offering we can provide for our tenants.</li> </ol>	<p><i>External</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local environment changes- eg impact of cost of living crisis.</li> <li>2. Changes to housing benefit/welfare system.</li> <li>3. Other external changes-govt policy, regulation, particularly re energy efficiency.</li> </ol> <p><i>Internal</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Illness, accident, or turnover of key staff members, leading to skills/ knowledge gaps.</li> <li>5. Computer virus affect systems.</li> <li>6. Disruption to office due to fire, flood etc.</li> </ol> <p>7. Dispute within staff or Committee.</p>

#### *Comment on the SWOT analysis*

Lister will continue to closely monitor any potential regulatory or policy changes, through continued membership of bodies such as the ARCHIE Group, SFHA and EVH. Membership of these groups also supports with maintaining skills and knowledge, and ensuring that any gaps are filled.

In terms of the internal threats, we have in place systems concerning computer usage and virus risks, which are closely monitored by our third party ICT support providers. They have supported Lister to obtain and maintain 'Cyber Essentials' certification, which evidences that monitoring and security systems are in place, and this is further underpinned by Lister's Cyber Liability Insurance.

Staff and Committee relations remain positive and any changes in this area would be monitored closely. There are policies and procedures which operate when staff are off on leave, and these would be used in the event of long-term illness or accident. There is also work within the staff team to 'cross skill' wherever possible to mitigate absence/ turnover risks.

A Business Continuity Plan is in place, which is regularly reviewed and updated. As a small organisation there are risks associated with any problems with staff or premises, however this is counterbalanced by an agile and responsive staff team, which can respond flexibly to changes or events, to ensure service is maintained.

Further information on how Lister addresses the risks associated with the points raised in the SWOT analysis is set out in the Risk Register at Appendix A to this Business Plan.

## 9. STRATEGY, DIRECTION AND KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

9.1 Two of the bigger issues facing Lister are linked - continuing to work towards the EESSH target for energy efficiency, and the new EESSH2 target and aspiration. Although historic housing can allow some exemptions and/or abeyances, many types of renewable energy would be very difficult to retrofit at Lister. In 2022 we started working with Changeworks to conduct some baselining work in relation to our properties, with a view to establishing the most effective way forward in relation in particular to EESSH2, and we will progress this work during 2023-24.

9.2 It will continue to be important to keep abreast of developments in energy efficiency and renewable energy, especially in relation to their reliability and applicability to historic housing.

9.3 Lister participates in welfare rights and debt advice services for our tenants. These have been organised in conjunction with some other ARCHIE members. In 2023-24 we are also planning to work with ARCHIE partners to set up an energy advice service for our tenants.

9.4 At this time Lister is not proposing implementing new service provision such as care services, sheltered housing, different rent tenures, etc. Thus, the focus is on the housing service and the properties, especially in relation to energy issues.

### 9.5 Strategy and direction of the Co-operative for the next 3 years

a. To continue our steady investment in our properties, with the conclusion of the Main Site kitchen programme, delivery of the window upgrade programme planned for 16-18 Heriot Place, EICRs for New Site properties, planning for future cyclical maintenance work, and also more generally in relation to considering further energy conservation across all Lister properties.

## 9.6 Key strategic priorities

### A. AS AN ORGANISATION

1. To continue to invest in and develop our Management Committee, through the delivery of effective training, networking opportunities, and annual reviews;
2. To take forward the development of our housing management software;
3. To continue with our DPO action plan in relation to data storage, retention, and online security/ email management;
4. To continue with the implementation of actions arising from the review of our Health and Safety Management System;
5. To conduct EESSH2 baselining in Lister, with a view to developing and progressing our plan in this area;
6. To ensure effective and value for money services for our tenants through ongoing review of key contracts; and
7. To review relevant policies and procedures, to take into account policy/ process changes.

### B. AS A LANDLORD

1. To implement future maintenance carefully. To act promptly on any requests for aids and adaptations, subject to funding availability.

This Business Plan will be supported by Annual Objectives, which will amplify the themes set out above, in relation to key areas such as Maintenance, Housing Management, Committee Development, Staffing and Management, and Finance and Risk Management.

This Business Plan will also be supported, as relevant, by the actions arising from Lister's Annual Assurance Statement Areas for Improvement Plan.

*Reviewed and approved March 2023*