



LISTER HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LTD

Business Plan 2024-25

1. SUMMARY INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction and Summary

This Business Plan sets out the key strategy information to assist Lister Housing Co-operative Ltd ('Lister') in moving forward. The Business Plan is supported by the Risk Register, 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. There remains very high demand for affordable, secure tenancies such as Lister provides, as evidenced by the current homelessness crisis within the City of Edinburgh.

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 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 2023 (including service charges) are:

Bedsit	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+bed		Average
71.20	78.70	87.31	94.81	120.76		90.50

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
Maintenance services	Assist in drawing up specifications and tender lists, procurement and the supervision of certain contracts	Harbour Homes Manor Estates Associates Ltd

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.

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 deliver high quality reactive, major and cyclical repairs services.
- c. Supported our tenants in relation to the ongoing effects of the cost of living crisis by accessing direct financial support for all Lister households via SFHA/ Scottish Government funding.
- d. Worked with ARCHIE peer organisations to create 2 new shared Energy Advice Officer posts, to further benefit our tenants, alongside our Welfare Rights and Debt advice services.

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 2024-25, as set out below:

<p>Strengths</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p>
<p>1. Tenant Committee good knowledge of stock, tenants and Locality. 2. Good reputation in HA world and community. 3. Good performance in Audit. 4. Dedicated, stable staff team. 5. Control all stock so able to take the long view and maintain all property. 6. Good financial position. 7. Committed and engaged Committee, able to respond quickly to local issues.</p>	<p>1. Challenges encouraging participation. Neighbour/children problems can impact relations between some tenants. 2. Pressure of resource due to small staff team can mean challenges taking forward non-core initiatives. 3. Related to the above, little time to do community work.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>Threats</p>
<p>1. Good standing with local community if we wish to initiate new projects. 2. Work within the staff team to ‘cross skill’ wherever possible to mitigate absence/ turnover risks. 3. Work with specialist partners (eg Changeworks) to develop further energy conservation offering to our tenants. 4. Given city centre location potential for partnering with others in relation to possibly accessing local heat networks</p>	<p><i>External</i> 1. Local environment changes- eg impact of cost of living crisis. 2. Changes to housing benefit/welfare system. 3. Other external changes-govt policy, regulation, particularly re energy efficiency. <i>Internal</i> 4. Illness, accident, or turnover of key staff members, leading to skills/ knowledge gaps. 5. Computer virus affect systems. 6. Disruption to office due to fire, flood etc. 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.

Lister faces challenges in relation to working towards compliance with upcoming Scottish Housing Net Zero Standards (following the conclusion of the current consultation) as well as requirements to install net-zero central heating systems in order to meet Scottish Government Net-zero targets. However these should also be seen as opportunities to develop and enhance our housing stock on behalf of our tenants. Further our ongoing work with Changeworks to understand our stock's requirements puts us in a good position to plan and deliver the best measures to meet these aims.

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, events or opportunities, 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 An important area for development in Lister relates to our work towards the Scottish Housing Net Zero Standard for social housing (the SHNZS), once the outcome of the recent consultation by the Scottish Government is known. The SHNZS will replace EESSH2.

In 2023-4 we continued to work with Changeworks to conduct baselining work in relation to our properties, with a view to establishing the most effective way forward in relation both to EESSH2 and the SHNZS. We are also working with Changeworks in relation to how best we can deliver net-zero heating systems for our tenants within the relevant Scottish Government set timescales, and we will continue to progress this work during 2024-25.

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 such as ours.

9.3 Lister participates in welfare rights, and debt advice services, and also since 2023-24 a new energy advice service for our tenants. These have been organised in conjunction with some other ARCHIE members.

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 (which has recently been successfully tendered), commencement of a programme of external painting, planning for future cyclical maintenance work, and also 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 continue with our Data Protection action plan;
3. To consider how we can take forward the development of our housing management software;
4. To continue with the implementation of actions arising from the review of our Health and Safety Management System;
5. To consider the implications of EESSH2/ SHNZS baselining in Lister, in order to develop and progress 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 Priorities 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 2024