



**YOUR BEST MOVE
2019 - 2024**

**The Elim Housing Group Business Plan
'YOUR BEST MOVE' comprises of the
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For further information about Elim Housing, please contact Alistair Allender, Group Chief Executive, Lisa Martin, Finance Director or Rachel Pinchin, Director of Operations and Business Development.

Executive Summary

Covering the period 2019 – 2024 our plan, Your Best Move, reaffirms our Group vision for the five years ahead, and provides an update on the process we are going through to transform into an efficient, modern and forward-looking business.

Over the life of this business plan we will continue to challenge ourselves to meet and build on these standards; to work more effectively, improve our use of technology for the benefit of residents and staff, and to liaise with new and existing partners and stakeholders to make sure that our organisational infrastructure and financial capacity is best placed to support the growth that we aspire to achieve.

Our business will continue to grow over the next five years. Our development pipeline will deliver new homes to individuals and families and the expansion of our accommodation and community-based support services, reflects our firm commitment to the provision of homelessness prevention services.

Our delivery model, Your Best Move, reflects the aims we hold for all our customers and will lead to genuine change through the provision of integrated support services and housing of all tenures. We will continue to improve the links between our build programme and our customers' aspirations, ensuring that we are developing homes that align with our customers' plans for the future.

Our commercial subsidiary, Lime Property Ventures, will play an increasingly important role through the development of homes for sale, generating profit for reinvestment in the work of the Group and the achievement of its social aims.

This five-year strategic plan is supported by annual plans which set out the priorities across the different parts of our business.

What will Elim look like in 2024?

- All customers living in an Elim home will be connected to Your Best Move, and we will use our housing management approach to ensure that their Elim home facilitates progress towards their aspirations. We will build on our current 84% customer satisfaction score across all parts of the business, and we will deliver quantitative value for money improvements in our operating cost per unit.
- Our Support Services will grow in order to deliver more accommodation and support to address homelessness and meet the housing-related needs of vulnerable people facing recovery, ill- health or social exclusion. We are targeting the achievement of three new homelessness prevention contracts by 2024, in addition to the retention of our existing services.
- Our Gypsy and Traveller services will become a third larger, and we will become a leading provider in our core operating areas and for neighbouring Local Authorities where we can help to meet strategic need for this specialist client group.
- We will increase the size of Elim Housing's rented and shared ownership property portfolio by 7% over the life of this plan. Our commercial subsidiary, Lime Property Ventures, will deliver a further 46 units for market sale. We remain open to opportunities to take on lease or management arrangements that enable us to provide additional homes or services that fall outside of our identified development pipeline.

The Elim Group

Our vision is to meet housing need and deliver homes that change people's lives.

Our business comprises Elim Housing, a well-recognised and respected provider of housing and support services in the West of England and Gloucestershire, and Lime Property Ventures, a commercial subsidiary which generates profit for reinvestment in the work of the Group and the achievement of our vision. The Group already owns or manages over 800 properties and delivers services to over 1000 individuals or families annually; we plan to increase this further over the next five years.

Across our whole area of operation, the number of people looking for a home is increasing. Demand for new housing across all tenures remains extremely high, and there is a particular shortage of affordable homes for families or individuals who are seeking good quality, secure housing in the areas where they hope to build their lives. For people with experience of homelessness, recovery, ill-health or social exclusion, the availability of suitable housing is often further restricted.

Elim has three main business principles. We are:

Aspirational:

We hold ambitions for our business, staff and customers. Our services encourage people to achieve their potential and improve their housing situation in different ways; this can positively impact individuals, communities and address key strategic priorities in the Local Authorities we work with.

Flexible:

We respond quickly and proactively to new opportunities. We make investment decisions that enable us to maximise the impact of our resources and take on complex or unusual projects that are less attractive to other providers.

Diverse:

We provide an unusual breadth of services relation to our size but are uncompromising in ensuring that we deliver quality across all aspects of our work. Our specialisms allow us to take on niche opportunities that meet different social aims, at varying scales

Our Values:

Starting from our three business principles above, we will work with our teams over the first year of this plan to capture and translate the other aspects of our culture into behaviours and values that can be owned and championed by our staff across every part of our business. Elim is continuing its business transformation, and we are excited to put staff at the centre of this change.

OUR DELIVERY MODEL:

Elim makes a real difference to the lives of individuals or families through; the supply of new homes, support services and cost-effective housing management, the effective use and allocation of the assets we already own or manage. **Your Best Move** – our model of service delivery, underpins the way in which we use our homes and services to ensure people have the skills and networks around them to manage their homes, achieve their aspirations and live successful, independent lives.

We prioritise a performance focussed approach which is reflected at operational, leadership and Board level. We measure and benchmark our performance through our Key Performance Indicators, the achievement of progress against our strategic aims and measures of satisfaction from our customers and stakeholders.

Your Best Move

As we work towards achieving our vision, we want all our customers to understand that Elim is here to facilitate *Your Best Move*, from an individual or families' first move into an Elim property, through to the decisions they make relating to employment or financial security, and the achievement of their longer-term housing aims, particularly move-on into new tenures.

We recognise that not all of our customers will be in position or have the aspiration to move-on from their Elim home. This is why Your Best Move equally applies to the interventions we put in place to support households to meet their responsibilities as Elim residents and to live secure, fulfilling lives in their homes.

Launched in 2018, Your Best Move is the delivery model for all our housing and support services. Your Best Move focusses on using our relationship with residents, from the point of allocation onwards, to understand their housing and career aspirations, and to establish practical actions we will take to facilitate individuals and families to overcome obstacles to financial and social independence so that they can meet these aspirations. This helps to ensure that an Elim home becomes a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

We have clear expectations of how our customers will work with us to manage their homes, and Your Best Move enables our team to provide low-level support, assurance and sign-posting, and to tackle tenancy issues proactively, and with insight.

Our 2018 Customer Insight Survey revealed that our resident's biggest obstacles to the achievement of their housing aspirations were financial, often having insufficient money for a deposit either for a mortgage or a private rented home. Over the life of this business plan, we will tackle this head-on by:

- Supplying genuinely affordable housing, and providing existing Elim customers with priority over properties of all tenures
- Providing affordable accommodation for young people and adults in training, education or employment which nurture aspiration in shared housing environments
- Developing an Elim training and employment resource to help customers develop careers and earning potential, including the delivery of support services which focus on education and employment as integral part of wellbeing and homelessness-prevention, beyond the basic need for shelter and support
- Building on our network of partner agencies so that we can effectively sign-post and fast track progress for residents with specific aspirations around home-ownership or move-on from supported housing

During 2018 –2019 **10 residents were able to move from our own Supported Housing into secure rented accommodation within our own housing stock**, with the in-house resources in place through Your Best Move to support this transition.

Facilitated by our staff, two shared owners also moved onto outright home ownership. There is great potential to build on this over the year ahead, and to communicate the real difference Elim is making to people's lives.

Our Customer Offer

The start of 2019 has been marked with significant political and economic uncertainty. Within our own sector, there is a heightened focus on how effectively social housing providers are in meeting both their social purpose and the high standards of governance, value for money and customer service expected of us by the people who live in our homes, and by our Regulator.

We take our responsibilities as a social housing provider extremely seriously, and have taken on board the learning achieved from the consultation around A New Deal for Social Housing, the findings of The Social Housing Commission and the National Housing Federation's work on Together with Tenants, which supports our own aims for the reciprocal relationship we aspire to with Elim's residents.

The Elim Group has a wide range of customers, including families and single people living in our properties for rent, vulnerable people in receipt of our support services and those buying homes that we have developed. We have the same aim for all these relationships; to ensure that the housing and services Elim provides serve as a platform for growth, facilitating all our customers to achieve their aspirations and independence through Your Best Move.

As a foundation to achieve this, we will provide:

Safe, affordable and well-managed homes

- Deliver services that put our staff and resident's safety first; prioritising transparency in the way we work and compliance with regulatory requirements. *We will continue to exercise a zero tolerance approach to Health or Safety breaches at any Elim property.*
- Incorporate a robust approach to asset management with a focus on health and safety improvements and responsive repairs that minimise void times.
- Prepare for a heightened focus on consumer regulation as an outcome of the Green Paper, ensuring that we deliver improvements in service and value for money. *100 % of our homes will meet the new Homes Standard.*
- Seek improvements in the design of our homes and in the procurement of energy and other communal services that enable homes to become more affordable and energy efficient for our residents. *We are targeting 5% savings in communal utilities costs over the duration of this plan.*

Services that engage, involve & empower

- Launch our revised Resident Engagement & Empowerment approach in April 2019. *We will establish a minimum cohort of 25 actively participating customers through our new E-Forum.*
- Improve the management of positive feedback and complaints, using new methods of communicating the outcome of both to our customers and staff
- Improve the way we collate customer Insight data, so that housing and employment aspiration data is collected alongside critical financial and welfare information. *We aim to hold insight data for 75% of our customers, in line with GDPR considerations.*
- Use technology that improves the connection between staff and customers, increases the quality and focus of our communication, and facilitates self-service transactions, including the delivery of a customer portal. *We aim for at least 50% of our customers to self-register on the portal within 18 months of launch.*

Growth through Delivery

Between 2019 and 2024 we will manage a sustainable programme of growth which will focus on the development of new homes, and the expansion of commissioned services across our core areas. We have identified opportunities to deliver 67 new homes through Elim Housing and 46 homes through Lime Property Ventures over the life of this business plan. This is a significant step towards our longer-term target of 1,000 homes.

We will carry out a review of our key strategic plans in 2019, including our Financing Strategy and Asset Management & Investment Strategies in order to ensure coherence with our business plan and growth objectives. Supporting this process, we are utilising HousingBrixx financial modelling tools to ensure our development targets can flex and adapt in response to changes in the regional and national housing market and our own business margins

Growth, under Elim or Lime Property Ventures, will be focussed in the four core operating areas of Bristol, North Somerset, Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire. However, the expansion of the specialist services we offer, such as the provision and management of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation or specific support services, may extend across a wider geographical area where we can demonstrate a clear financial and logistic rationale and real benefit to the customers of these services.

With a continuing focus on homelessness prevention, the growth of our Support Services will capitalise on Elim's existing property assets and our planned future investment in property for our supported client groups. This is an advantage which sets us apart from many other support providers in our sector and contributes to the viability of the services we offer.

Why Growth?

The growth of our business is fundamental to the achievement of our vision, enabling us to invest in our infrastructure and supply more homes and services that meet housing need. However, we will never prioritise future growth at the expense of the continuous improvement of our existing services.

Our growth plans do not work in isolation and we will make a clear link with Your Best Move, ensuring that the mix of homes we deliver for rent, shared-ownership and market sale are genuinely aligned with our customers housing needs and aspirations. We have analysed the strengths of our services and have a clear view on the growth opportunities we are best placed to respond to across our core areas. This analysis has directly informed the table below.

Over the life of the business plan, we will achieve:

67

New homes delivered by Elim Housing; these will comprise homes for affordable and social rent and shared ownership properties

23

Homes for sale by Lime Property Ventures, which focusses on the transformation of small sites into high quality homes for the outright sale market.

2

Intra-group developments between Elim Housing and Lime Property Ventures to deliver mixed tenure schemes that add value to local communities.

3

New support services, achieved through new or expanded accommodation or community-based support contracts commissioned by Local Authorities or through the health or social justice sectors

75

Gypsy and Travellers pitches that we will build, lease or manage on behalf of new Local Authorities.

3

New development, management or support service contracts, facilitated through joint working or formal collaboration with new or existing partners

Growth through Partnership

Effective partnership working will continue to drive the successful delivery of our business plan; we recognise that our stakeholders, commissioners and funders are also customers, and seek to ensure their satisfaction with the services we deliver. We will continue to build relationships with our existing and new strategic partners in order to create joint arrangements based on complementary values and ambitions to grow.

We are particularly focussed on:

Partnerships that support Your Best Move, and add value to our customer offer

- We will share the aims of Your Best Move externally, linking with other house- builders and Housing Associations to expand the opportunities available to residents ready to move on from rented properties to shared or full ownership options, and to facilitate the move.
- Improved links with employment / training and financial advice organisations, including formal buy-in to our strategic aims from local colleges, businesses, apprentice-schemes to build a stronger foundation for the promotion of education and employment across all our services. This is a stepping stone towards the development of internal expertise.

Relationships with commissioners and other support providers which enable us to retain and expand the support services we offer

- Clear channels of communication with our commissioning partners and stakeholders, so we can share our Homelessness Prevention expertise and identify where Elim is best placed to relieve strategic pressures for Local Authorities and organisations with differing resources or expertise to our own
- Sector understanding which enables us to take advantage of opportunities in the market place provided by the shift of supplier / buyer priorities
- New links with complementary sectors such as health or justice where there are opportunities to work together to procure or deliver services that help meet our shared goals

Joint Ventures and other formal arrangements in the housing and property sector which contribute to our financial growth, development programme and the acquisition of new homes

- Development partnerships that will allow us to pool our expertise, resources and funding to share risk on projects and deliver more homes
- Long-term lease or housing management opportunities with Local Authorities or other delivery partners
- Relationships with new and existing Local Authorities in relation to the growth of current or prospective Gypsy & Traveller provision
- Intra-group joint ventures between Elim Housing Association and Lime Property Ventures
- Delivery of finance, housing management or other corporate services to smaller housing associations or other organisations who could benefit from formal arrangements or acquisition by the Elim Group

Our People

Elim is a performance driven organisation. The enthusiasm, skill and resilience of our staff underpins the achievement of our vision and we recognise that they are our greatest asset in facilitating positive change for the people who live in our homes.

We want the people who work with us to be our greatest champions for Your Best Move, and for our staff, stakeholders and partners to think of their choice to work for, or with, Elim as 'their best move' as well. In order to achieve this, we will listen to our teams, and provide an organisational infrastructure and culture that supports them to realise their personal aspirations.

During the first year of this plan, every member of Elim staff will have the opportunity to feed into the development of a new set of values that complement our *Aspirational, Flexible* and *Diverse* business principles, and reflect the ongoing transformation of our business.

Supported by our new 2019 - 2023 Organisational Development Strategy, we will focus on building our organisation culture, and work with staff to make progress across five strategic areas.

CULTURE

Elim's vision, values and way of working is embedded in everything we do, driving the way we manage our services, partnerships and relationships with staff, customers and stakeholders. Our Board, leadership team and staff work together to find new ways of working, ensuring that we are all role models for our business.

Leadership

Elim's Board, leadership team and management have the skills and capability to deliver our plan, inspire our teams and effectively lead the organisation.

They are clear of their roles, delegate effectively and take corporate responsibility for delivering performance, compliance and organisational success

Organisational Design

Elim's organisation structure, roles, infrastructure, systems and processes are demonstrably improved. Our policies and procedures are aligned with our vision and support us to promote our way of working and deliver the required outcomes.

Our digital infrastructure provides staff with the technical resources they require to carry out their roles and access the necessary information.

Engagement

Staff are engaged with Elim, feel empowered and motivated to carry out their roles and feel valued. They are able to participate, share opinions and decision making is devolved where possible. Internal communication is two way and staff are able to access information and resources to carry out their roles.

Skills & Talent

Elim has the organisational capability and attracts, recruits, develops and retains staff and board members with the skills and talent to deliver the Business Plan. We provide opportunities for all our staff to discover their potential, and training and development is prioritised and valued.

Investing in Change

Our Board Members and Lime Property Ventures' Directors are accountable for the robust governance and success of the Group; they drive the aspirations we hold for the business and ensure we are applying commercial thinking to the achievement of our social aims and financial investment decisions.

In 2018 we made a step forward towards the transformation our business into an efficient, modern and forward-looking organisation. A year later, following the announcement of a review of the Social Housing sector's regulatory regime, and in the midst of a competitive but unpredictable housing market and economic environment, it is more important than ever that Elim is functioning efficiently and effectively, with the right tools for governance and service delivery. Over the last year we have:

- Challenged and tested our processes to ensure that our decision making is robust, information-based and effective.
- Developed a new risk management and compliance framework, and established measures to provides assurance of these frameworks through new Internal Audit scrutiny
- Commenced organisation-wide preparation for a trial In-Depth Assessment
- Revised and embedded a new Internal Financial Framework

Over the life of this plan we will continue to develop new arrangements that support the continuous improvements of our governance structure. There is also a customer service challenge for smaller Housing Associations to meet customer service expectations around digitisation and automated service, but with fewer resources.

We will focus our investment in Elim's governance structure, systems and resources in two different areas. Our priorities under each area are set out below, with longer term milestones captured in our future roadmap.

Upfront investment in new processes and systems that will drive smart decision-making, business efficiency, support staff to do their jobs and reduce our operating costs

- Investment in BRIXX financial modelling tool and asset management software
- Future-proofing the Group's telecoms and IT hardware requirements
- Systems-mapping process, leading to formal investment plan in software and other tools to drive improvements in data accuracy and the surfacing of key performance data
- Formalise Group approach to project management and decision making across every level of business.

Smarter use of digital technology, not as an end in itself, but as a means to achieving improved customer service and internal operating efficiencies

- Launch of a customer self-service portal for tenants and residents which will move at least 25% of current transactions online.
- An online Jobs Portal that creates efficiencies through the recruitment process for the benefit of staff and prospective employees.
- Utilisation of communication and marketing channels that will enhance our ability to engage with customers, staff and stakeholders
- Roll-out of Office 365 and mobile working platforms complete.

Finance and Risk

Opening position

- Funding in place for £23.5m, with new arrangements with Triodos Bank and Lloyds, of which £16.9m is currently utilised.
- LPV continues to manage its own £1m loan facility, with an additional on-lending facility to £2m from EHA.
- A new approach to managing financial performance and budgets was embedded in 2018/2019, led by a change in the Group Finance Director post and the introduction of a new internal financing framework
- It is critical that we maintain sufficient financial strength to achieve our plans for growth, whilst absorbing the effects of Universal Credit and potential increases in inflation and costs.
- 2019/2020 will be the final year of the 1% rent decreases and from April 2020 rent increases will be at CPI + 1%.

	Year to 31 March 2020 £'000	Year to 31 March 2021 £'000	Year to 31 March 2022 £'000	Year to 31 March 2023 £'000	Year to 31 March 2024 £'000
Turnover	6,165	6,432	6,897	6,787	6,809
Operating Surplus	1,242	1,406	1,673	1,378	1,260
Operating Margin (%)	20	22	24	20	19
EBITDA MRI £	1,524	1,703	1,997	1,716	1,610
Gearing (%)	39.8	43.6	41.8	35.6	34.1
Interest Cover (%)	206.4	204.9	242.2	226.3	230.6
Units owned	+17	+3	+24	+14	+9

Value for money

- We will continue to meet the RoSH revised Value for Money (VfM) regulatory standard, building on the suite of metrics we reported against in 2018 with an additional five metrics that better reflect our geographical spread and breadth of service.
- 2019/20 will see the introduction of social value measures into our VfM reporting to demonstrate the broader financial impact of our services and support future commissioning processes

Finance and Risk

Our financial plan

- An ongoing commitment to a minimum liquidity requirement and interest cover covenant within forecasting for new developments.
- Potential to achieve up to £5m additional borrowing on unsecured properties in our portfolio over the business plan. However, the ability to utilise this fully within development would be limited by interest cover ratios, and as such would be spread across our business plan upon increasing generated surpluses.
- There is appetite to access new funding both through conventional borrowing and off balance sheet alternative finance. LPV will also be well-placed to pursue development finance options.
- We continue to report on our full financial position alongside robust forecasting quarterly to the Board, with a detailed review of key risks to achieving our business plan to ensure these can be mitigated as early as possible.

Risk Management

Following a full review of our management of strategic and operational risk, Elim has an updated risk framework in place which is closely managed by the Group Board, Risk and Audit committee and the senior leadership team.

Associated with the new risk framework, we continue to measure our performance using the new suite of KPIs, developed in 2018, which are used to measure and monitor this business plan. Within this process we have represented the different risk profiles of Elim and LPV, demonstrating that appropriate measures are in place between the parent and subsidiary.

Principal risks:

The table overleaf shows a number of the principal risks and uncertainties facing the Elim Housing Group and the processes by which we aim to manage them.

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Elim Housing Group

Units 3 and 4 Pinkers Court, Briarlands Office Park
Gloucester Road, Rudgey
BS35 3QH

01454 411172
info@elimhousing.co.uk
www.elimhousing.co.uk