

ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

BUSINESS STRATEGY 2022-25



Who we are

We are Almond Housing Association, a community based Housing Association servicing Livingston and wider West Lothian. We own and manage over 2,500 properties.

We're making a huge difference to the lives of our customers and want to do more. Starting with revolutionising the way we work – moving from a good business to a great one, delivering a consistently great service for our customers and recognised as an organisation people want to work with and for.

With over 2,500 properties we're a landlord of size and scale with the necessary resources to have real impact whilst at the same time retaining the advantages of being local, community based and small enough to truly care about our customers and colleagues.

Mission Statement

Homes, people and communities to be proud of.

Vision Statement

Striving to improve life experiences and opportunities.



ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Our Priorities



Delivering Excellent Customer Service

Our customers will be able to access our services with minimal effort. We'll use knowledge of our customers to enable service delivery to be pro-active and to be tailored to individual need. We'll identify any barriers to effective service delivery for specific customer groups.



Homes and Places to be Proud Of

We'll provide high quality, safe, affordable homes and surrounding environments that meet customer expectations and needs. Reducing the carbon footprint of our homes and our business is important to us. We'll be exploring new technologies which will help us achieve this and which will benefit both our customers and our planet.

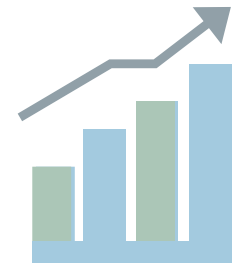
Employer of Choice

We'll create a workplace which supports the principle of work being something you do, not somewhere you go. We'll develop a culture which aligns fully with our values and which provides a flexible, supported and trusted environment in which colleagues can grow and develop.



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Supporting Strategies



Sustainability

Climate change is a significant threat to the planet and we are committed to ensuring that we incorporate sustainability into everything we do. Our Sustainability Strategy focuses on three areas that we know we can have a positive impact upon; our properties, our organisation and our communities. As the threat from climate change increases we have to play our part and take action. As a social housing provider, we have a responsibility to our customers and our communities to take a lead in reducing carbon emissions and the introduction of more sustainable practices. Finally, the impact of rising energy costs means we must seek ways to improve the efficiency of our properties so they can continue to be a place people are happy to call home.

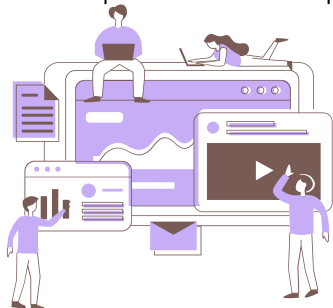
Development/Growth

Over the life of the Business Strategy we'll continue to explore opportunities to extend the homes and services provided by Almond to new customers and in doing so build on our ability to meet housing need. Our Development Strategy outlines our approach for the next three years and aims to achieve the balance between investing in our existing homes and the provision of new homes. Traditionally based solely in West Lothian, we now recognise the opportunity to expand beyond these borders and are actively considering opportunities which will extend our operating footprint.



Delivering Digitally

We'll implement new technology which will enable customers to access services online with minimal effort, and which will support colleagues to work from anywhere. This will allow us to provide more efficient, high value services...making it easy for all to access Almond and allowing us to spend increased time with those customers who require additional support.



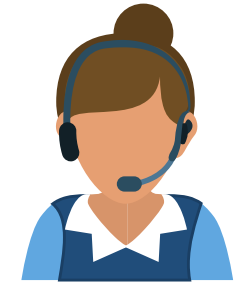
Community Impact

As a local community based service we're acutely aware of the positive impact we can have on the lives of our customers and the wider community. Much has been achieved over recent years with regard to local projects either delivered directly by Almond or by partners with our support. We believe that we are uniquely placed to extend our work in this area and over the life of our Business Strategy will be exploring opportunities for impacting positively on areas such as training and employability.



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Delivering Excellent Customer Service



Why?

- We need to know our customers views and aspirations in order to meet their expectations. As a customer focused social housing provider, we want to deliver the best service for the best value, not just in the sector but nationwide. We can't do this if we don't know our customers.



- We want our customers to access our services with minimal effort, it should be easy for them to contact us in whatever method they prefer, whether it be by phone, in person or digitally.

How?

- We'll introduce feedback methods integrated with our new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to help improve customer experiences.



- We'll look to implement features within the new CRM system to enable direct surveying to enhance services provided.

- We'll work with a third party accreditation provider to ensure we meet best practice and to reassure customers we're open to challenge.

- We'll implement an integrated phone system into our new CRM software and new customer portal which is to be launched during the plan period.

Action taken

- Review the ICT market to ensure system meets needs. Implement the CRM System understanding wants, needs and software capabilities.

- Implement a customer care programme to ensure profiling data and information is up to date and relevant.

- Customer Service Accreditation process underway by year three of the strategy.

- Installation and operation of a customer relationship management system by the end of the strategy.

- Map out key services with colleagues and customers to ensure that they are easy to access and use.



Financial impact

- A new customer aspiration survey will require a further £15K over the life of the strategy.

- Gaining customer care accreditation will require a small financial investment (around £3k) along with feedback from our customers, stakeholders and colleagues.

- A customer relationship management system will require around £113k of investment in order to deliver the best tools for our customers, colleagues and other stakeholders.

Success measures

- ✓ A fully operating customer relationship management system in place.
- ✓ Reduced customer effort tracked and scored.
- ✓ A customer aspiration survey approved and ready to launch.

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Homes and Places to be Proud Of



Why?

- We want to provide high quality, energy efficient and affordable homes. This will be delivered through our new build programme and investment in our existing stock.
- We want to work with our customers to develop an Almond Standard which will go beyond the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.
- Safety will remain the priority for us. Compliance checks, replacing ageing components and adapting properties to meet the needs of the resident remain our core function. We aim to continue to improve our stock data and utilise digital technology to ensure we're always getting it right.



How?

- We'll look at options for removing the reliance on fossil fuels but only when we're confident this will not result in higher energy costs.
- We'll utilise a specialist Architect to advise what works are required to bring our stock up to the EESSH 2032 standard and organise some pilot projects.
- We'll talk to our customers around about planned works and ask what the Almond standard should look like.
- We'll look to develop via our remote working application to enable colleagues to undertake survey work within properties.
- We'll develop a model to allow us to assess our stock to ensure we're delivering the best value for our customers and for us as a business.

Action taken

- Development of dynamic reports to identify investment needs by property.
- We're working with a number of developers on projects that we hope will result in new homes subject to planning permission and grant funding.
- Create reports on output of the remote working application for assessment of requirements.
- Implement the Planned Maintenance module of our core IT system, including integration of remote working application for future stock survey information.

Financial impact

- The cost of works required to improve the energy efficiency is not yet known but we know it is likely to be significant.
- We plan to spend £12.935m over the next 5 years on planned works and safety checks.



Success measures

- ✓ Meaningful consultation with customers re programmed works and Almond Standard with defined outcome that meets customers aspirations.
- ✓ Improved energy efficiency ratings of our stock with continuous progress towards target mapped.
- ✓ The 30 year investment plan has been fully reviewed and presented to Board prior to the next cycle of budget preparation.

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Employer of Choice



Why?



- We want to engage with colleagues in ways which are relevant and meaningful, supporting them to become invested in the work that they do, driving them to deliver the very best to our customers and our communities.
- Creating the capacity for future success is key to achieving our ambitions. And so we'll be investing in learning and development, and ultimately service improvement, by delivering an effective learning plan which ensures all of our colleagues have the right skills to deliver the right results.
- Hand in hand with these initiatives will be an overarching emphasis on colleague wellbeing, ensuring that there is a positive work environment in place which allows colleagues to thrive.

How?



- Through the development of our engagement platform, we'll improve our performance management framework and resources available to colleagues.
- We'll ensure our people are equipped with the confidence and competence to deliver in their roles by providing ICT training and support, as well as several days of key learning experiences throughout the year.
- We'll invest in colleagues wellbeing through the provision of a number of campaigns, activities, and resources aimed at providing a positive work environment.

Action taken

- We'll develop dynamic reports on performance to measure the impact of our initiatives, using colleague feedback and monitoring KPIs, making adjustments and improvements as they are needed.
- We'll be looking at the ways colleagues are motivated and engaged in the overall direction of Almond HA, ensuring that alongside key tools colleagues are also provided with opportunities to learn new skills and expand their knowledge base.
- And we'll be highlighting the importance of staying safe and healthy by exploring initiatives designed to provide a working environment that promotes wellbeing.

Financial impact

- Investment of more than £50k in ensuring our people have the right skills and tools to deliver in their roles, and to provide a range of learning experiences to help them develop further.
- Investment in new and existing wellbeing initiatives to ensure the work environment is a positive one for all.

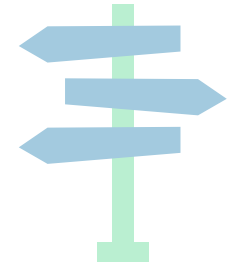


Success measures

- ✓ Happier colleagues who understand their role within Almond and their contribution to achieving personal and organisational objectives evidenced through 80%+ customer satisfaction in key service delivery areas.
- ✓ Colleagues well equipped for the roles and tasks they undertake evidenced by reduction in numbers of complaints received, and complaints upheld.
- ✓ Opportunities for personal growth and career development evidenced by the number of learning experiences undertaken, expected to be 3.5 days per colleague annually.

ALMOND HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Our Values and Behaviours



Almond - be kind, show respect, work together

Work Together

be helpful, provide support, encourage each other

Open to Change

reflective, innovative, willing to try/find new ways of doing things

Respect

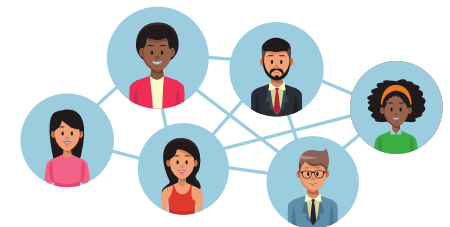
treat each other the way you want to be treated - don't do to others what you wouldn't want done to you/treat others with respect and civility/safe space/environment

Kindness

listen, show empathy, have patience

Social

being friendly and upbeat translates to a positive work environment where customers enjoy better service and communities can get involved



Almond Works

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Our Culture



We're a Housing Association with a passion for excellent customer service. Right now we're on an exciting change journey focussed on developing our approach to innovation in service delivery in an environment that's exciting to work in. Our aim is to create a place where people can thrive and develop. We see this as central to achieving our vision and business strategy ambitions.

We employ people to do a job and trust them to get it done. Our approach is agile and flexible, this gives our people the freedom to choose how and where they work, enabling them to deliver great results in a way which works for them and for our customers.

Working at Almond Housing shouldn't feel like work. We know that people work better when they have fun and enjoy what they do. We work together as One Team where everyone's voice is important regardless of job title and we encourage and support our people to be innovative and ambitious.

Our focus is on how we do things as much as what we do. We take personal responsibility for our decisions, our actions and our performance, and get things done by working collaboratively.

We care about results but we also care about people and we ensure that our interactions and behaviours are guided by our values.

At the core of our culture is our shared passion for providing great homes and services which support improved life chances. We're driven by what we contribute to society. Delivering this in an increasingly sustainable way and ensuring value for money in all that we do is also central to our approach with our plans based on increasing efficiency as well as effectiveness. Equally we are determined to address discrimination in all its forms and to be pro-active in developing an organisation which celebrates our uniqueness and differences.

