



## **2023/24 Business Plan**

## CHAIR'S FOREWORD

### Welcome to our 2023/24 Business Plan

Throughout my time as interim Chair, it has been readily apparent just how much our skilled advisers and team do to provide leaseholders and park home owners with the advice and support they need. Our customers face significant complexity in their home ownership arrangements and experience a power imbalance over their homes.

The free service provided by LEASE is vital in addressing this.

Small organisations like LEASE can struggle to reach a wide audience so I'm particularly pleased that this year 1,129,889 people used our web-site, we spoke to 10,718 telephone customers and replied to 8,564 letters and emails

As I look ahead to 2023-24, I am excited about the possibilities emanating from the work that our sponsor department, DLUHC, and LEASE have commissioned to identify improvements to maximise the impact of LEASE services.

This is vital work, and will build on previous user research with our customers which highlighted the value of the LEASE service and the commitment of our staff. In light of the level of potential change in due course, this year's business plan prepares for a transitional year while we explore how best to move forwards.

Given DLUHC has launched the recruitment for a permanent Chair of LEASE, implementation will fall to them in due course and I look forward to handing the baton on to them to continue LEASE's important mission. Overall, chairing a small organisation can be a rewarding experience, but it requires creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. With the right approach and such a dedicated team, I'm sure the new Chair will overcome the challenges and help the organisation thrive.



Wanda Goldwag  
**Chair**

## INTRODUCTION

**Who we are:** LEASE was established in 1994, and is a non-statutory company limited by guarantee. We are an Executive non-Departmental Public Body (or 'Arm's Length Body') sponsored, by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

**What we do:** We exist because leasehold and park home ownership are complex tenures where consumer issues can arise. LEASE aims to address this by:

- improving general knowledge and understanding of the practical implications of being a leaseholder or park home owner,
- increasing awareness and understanding of government actions and reforms on leasehold, commonhold, building safety and park homes
- enabling leaseholders and park home owners to make informed decisions on next steps as they embark on their journey towards an outcome
- supporting leaseholders and park home owners, who are facing an issue, to help them engage with confidence with freeholders, managing agents, park home owners and others and maximise their chances of achieving satisfactory resolutions.

### **How we currently deliver these**

- Website – visited by 1,129,889 last year.
- Comprehensive online resources – advice guides and FAQs which were accessed/downloaded 625,790 times last year
- Bespoke advice – currently delivered through 15 minute phone calls or emails, with 19,282 customers helped through 28,424 enquiries and outreach events last year
- E-learning – 1,239 new users last year

## OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

**Our vision** is for LEASE to be an excellent, trusted and well-known source for high-quality leasehold and park home advice and information.

**Our mission** is to provide the information, advice and support that leaseholders and park home owners need to resolve their issues and to secure good outcomes wherever possible when in dispute with third parties.

### **Our values**

To achieve our mission and objectives, we need to be customer focused and an organisation that embraces learning, development and change. This way of working is embedded in our values:

- **ambition** - we always strive for more and believe in better.
- **quality** - we offer a professional service to our customers and with high standards.
- **diversity** - we value everybody as an individual.
- **learning** - we can always do better and share what we know.

## OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR

Our key priority in the year ahead is to continue to provide effective information and advice to our customers and in so doing help them to improve their situations and experiences of their tenures. Whilst our front-line service continues, in the background we will be working hard to scope and set up wide-ranging changes and improvements to our services to deliver on Minister's ambitions for a *"more impactful, customer friendly and cost-effective service"*. These will build on our success in providing customers with bespoke advice for their specific situation and look beyond this at what more we can do for them.

A key area of focus will be our website and online offer, which is well-used, but which we believe could be improved to make it easier for customers to quickly find and benefit from content and resources to help them

understand their options and take informed decisions on next steps. In many cases, that next step may be an interaction with a LEASE adviser, and although we do receive positive feedback on this aspect of the service, we know there is more we can do to optimise this and meet our customers' needs. Equally, we want to do as much as possible to lighten our customers loads and can see scope to provide more resources to help them take forward recommended actions.

All of this will be explored thoroughly in the year ahead before wider implementation and consideration will also be given to how we measure our performance and impact. Here, changes are intended to provide a robust foundation against which to measure our determined efforts to improve the service we offer.

As well as these changes to our existing service, LEASE will also be taking forward work to deliver on Minister's ambition for it to use its position and voice to highlight the issues leaseholders and park homeowners face. This is an exciting opportunity in a space where LEASE has the chance to add real value ,given its unique access to leaseholders and park home owners, which enables us to get to grips with and even quantify their difficulties. But of course, there are many others who also have great insight into what is needed and we look forward to working with them on this

All of this will hinge on our hard working and talented staff who will continue to deliver services remotely, and conducting activities, such as training, online. Nevertheless, we recognise that we benefit from opportunities to come together as a team, including socially.

We will continue to assist staff on their journey to achieving and enhancing professional qualifications as we did last year. This includes supporting advisers with our comprehensive internal training and regular clinics; and we will continue to seek feedback from all our staff through our annual survey and use the results to inform and address key themes for them.

## **HOW OUR IMPACT AND PERFORMANCE IS ASSESSED**

### **Performance metrics**

<b>#</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Metrics</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Raise the profile of LEASE so that as many leaseholders/park home owners as possible can receive the information and advice they need</b>	A- Undertake 10 outreach events with leaseholders or park home owners throughout England.
<b>2</b>	<b>Deliver high quality and effective advice to leaseholders and park home owners in England and Wales , including on building safety.</b>	<p>A - Achieve an average of 90% in post enquiry customer satisfaction surveys</p> <p>B – Address enquiries to the following timescales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75% of written enquiries responded to within 10 working days</li> <li>• 90% of telephone appointments held within two working days of a customer requesting a telephone session.</li> </ul> <p>C - Achieve an average of 70% of customers, who take further action, report that LEASE's advice was important/very important to helping them securing a satisfactory outcome.</p>
<b>3</b>	<b>Provide a flexible service which allows more customers to have their needs met as quickly as possible, either through our online resources or case specific advice where needed</b>	<p>A - Complete more than 28,700 enquiries from leaseholders and park home owners including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more than 28,000 from individuals residing in England</li> <li>• 550 from individuals residing in Wales</li> </ul>

		<p>B – Achieve the following number of enquiries on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leasehold - 27,000</li> <li>• Park homes - 1,120</li> <li>• Building Safety - 2,100</li> </ul> <p>C – Achieve the following level of engagement with LEASE’s online resources, :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.31 million unique visitors to the LEASE website and 2 million hits;</li> <li>• 875,000 advice guide downloads</li> <li>• 2,360 e-learning registrations</li> </ul>
4	<b>Use LEASE’s position to identify priority issues for leaseholders and highlight these to DLUHC and the sector to inform policy development, implementation and other action.</b>	A - Publish four sets of data in 2023/24
5	<b>Continue to develop LEASE as an organisation so that it helps staff to thrive and develop their careers</b>	A - By 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024, results of the 2023 Staff Survey should see a 5% improvement in sentiment in those areas where there is a negative trend or where there was no change from the 2022 Staff Survey results.

## HOW WE USE OUR RESOURCES

LEASE is funded by grant-in-aid provided by DLUHC and the Welsh Government. We recognise the need to show value for money and we are keen to ensure that the approach to the management of resources and assets is linked to achieving our business plan objectives.

In 2023/24 LEASE will receive a flat cash budget settlement of £1.922 million, this means doing more with less and is a driver for us to become even more efficient and leverage our resources through partnership working.

The table below provides our indicative budget for the year, however, as always we will operate flexibly and respond to emerging needs.

	<b>2023/24 ('000)</b>
<b>Income</b>	
DLUHC	1,922
WG	52
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,974</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Pay	1,337
Operating costs	298
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1,635</b>

## Personnel

LEASE currently employs 25 staff (23.5 FTE) made up principally of legally qualified advisers. The Annex to this plan sets out the intended organisational structure in 2023/24.

LEASE is committed to fair and open competition and selection on merit. We promote equality of opportunity for all staff irrespective of their race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion. We also seek to provide effective and appropriate learning and development opportunities to help all staff fulfil their individual and team potential.

We recognise that LEASE is an attractive platform for those who are beginning their careers. As such we expect and help them to come and develop excellent specialist knowledge and skills, and in that way we can help to propel our staff to the next phase of their careers.

## Equality and diversity

We cannot achieve our mission unless we continue to have a workforce that represents and draws on all of the skills of the society we live in, and we are proud to be an equal opportunities employer. We want to be an organisation where people feel not only comfortable, sharing their true selves, but valued for the experience and diversity they bring to work.

## RISK AND GOVERNANCE

### Governance

LEASE is accountable to DLUHC for the use of resources and performance. The relationship is set out in a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum, that operate as framework documents, and through bi-monthly meetings attended by LEASE and DLUHC officials are held to review performance, risks and the use of financial and other resources.

LEASE's Board provides leadership and strategic direction and supervises the overall management of LEASE's activities. The Board has two sub-committees:

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee which reviews the completeness, reliability and integrity of the assurance framework and advises the LEASE CEO as Accounting Officer for LEASE and the Board; and
- Remuneration Committee which determines pay and related matters, reviews performance appraisal frameworks and assists in the recruitment of senior staff.

### Operational and delivery risk

As a government body, we are subject to a high level of public scrutiny and accountability. Our reputation and credibility are critical to our success. To effectively manage potential reputational and conduct risks, our risk management framework is designed to provide a disciplined and structured approach to identifying, assessing and managing risk.

Our activities are supported by governance arrangements that include:

- Framework documents with DLUHC and the Welsh Government;
- LEASE's Board and DLUHC review performance against our Business Plan and its KPIs; and our Audit and Risk Assurance and Remuneration committees support the Board with oversight of matters within their scope.
- Risk management is overseen by the Board and we submit our risk register to DLUHC;
- Business continuity and planning is revised and updated annually; and

- Information governance policies are implemented to ensure safe data handling by staff training regularly.

LEASE remains a wholly remote service after pivoting operations that way during the pandemic across 2020-22. However, we recognise that in-person meetings and working together as a team remains important and the ability to do this will be part of the flexibility of our operations.

ANNEX

