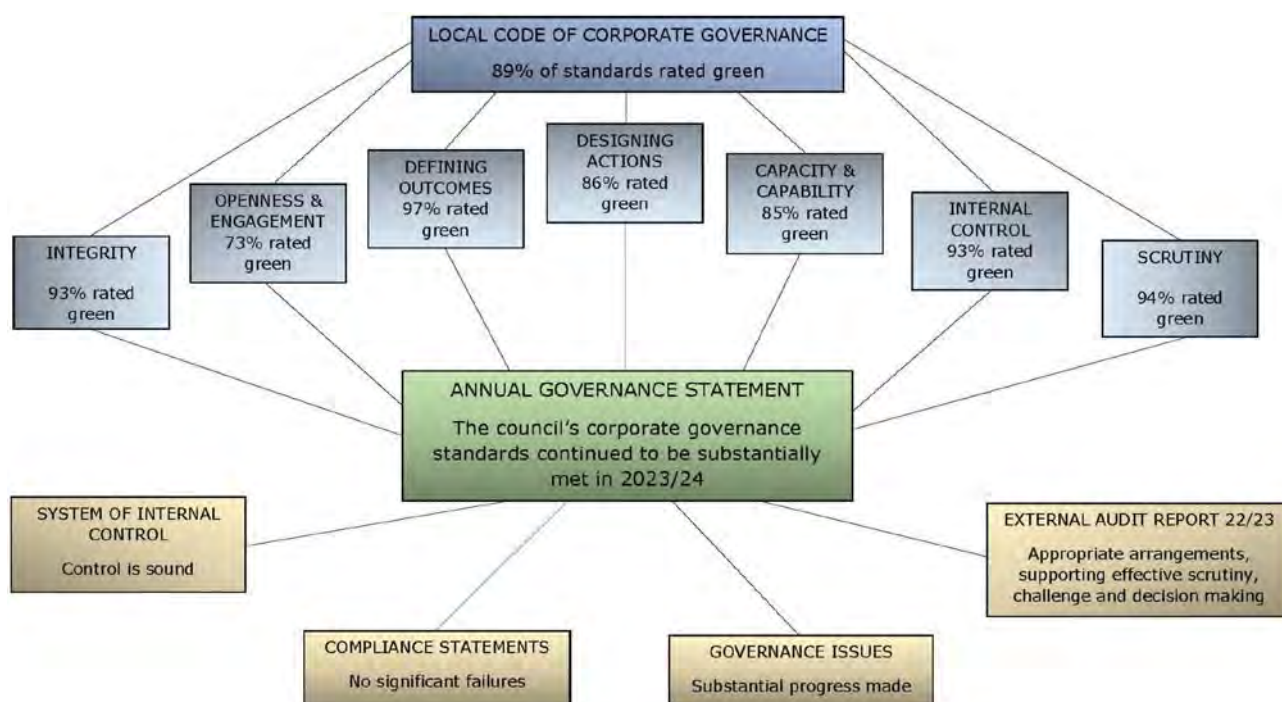


**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT****STATEMENT 2**

2.2 Information and conclusions from those sources are summarised in the illustration below.



2.3 In a large and complex organisation, especially under significant funding and financial pressures, there are inevitably issues on which future work is required. However, based on the sources and evidence described in this statement, the council and the West Lothian community can be assured that the council's corporate governance standards continue to have been substantially met in 2023/24. That assurance was reported to and accepted by Governance & Risk Committee in June 2024 when this statement was approved. The statement was included in the council's unaudited accounts and financial statements when they are published at the end of June 2024 for inspection and objection.

### 3. Political structure and administration

3.1 West Lothian Council has nine electoral wards and thirty-three councillors. At the end of the reporting year there were fifteen SNP members, twelve Labour members, four Conservative members, one Liberal Democrat member, and two Independent members. One of the Independent members passed away in May 2024. A by election was held in August 2024. A minority Labour administration remains in place. Political leadership positions were filled in May and June 2022 after the local government elections. The committee structure in place before the elections continued in place, but with changes to political composition and a reduction in numbers and realignment of the remits of Executive Councillors and their Policy Development & Scrutiny Panels (PDSPs). There has been a high degree of consistency in decision-making arrangements for many years. That helps an understanding of governance and decision-making processes. It promotes consistency of approach. Both have positive impacts on scrutiny and performance

3.2 The political leadership positions comprised the Provost (and Depute), the Council Leader (and Depute), six Executive Councillors (portfolio holders in relation to council services) and chairs and vice-chairs of other committees. Senior councillor payments were agreed in June 2022 and have been renewed each year. Since November 2023, one elected member in receipt of a senior councillor payment has had leave of absence due to ill-health. That leave, and the consequent acting-up arrangements and payment, were approved unanimously at committee through the Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members adopted in June 2023. The statutory annual report for 2023/24 on elected members' remuneration, allowances, expenses and training was presented to Council Executive in May 2023. Arrangements for elected members' training and development were singled out as an example of good practice in the Accounts Commission's "Local Government in Scotland Overview 2023".