

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**STATEMENT 2**

11.3 Performance Committee is established to consider the performance of service units against the council's performance appraisal system, the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM). Services are divided into WLAM units which report on an agreed cycle to a panel chaired by the Chief Executive. It considers the evidence presented and allocates a score. The service unit then reports to the Performance Committee on its appraisal. The WLAM programme was reviewed in 2021/22 and a new approach implemented across the council in 2022/23. Reports on progress on the updated programme was presented to Performance Committee in May 2023 and 2024. The committee's Chair is from outwith the ruling administration group. It receives written reports presented at public committee meetings by senior service managers and can question them and make recommendations to them about improvement actions. The committee also scrutinises quarterly and annual reports on the council's complaints handling policy and performance. It considers Factfile (the main vehicle for external performance reporting) each year prior to publication. It considers the results of the local authority benchmarking review carried out annually in conjunction with the Improvement Service. In addition to performance reporting to members, management teams routinely monitor their performance through Ideagen. That system contains the high-level performance indicators and service standards which are reported publicly as well as lower level management performance indicators.

11.4 The Education (Quality Assurance) Committee carries out a scrutiny role solely in relation to internal and external assessment and inspection reports of educational establishments. Its Chair is from outwith the ruling administration group. The committee includes non-councillor members appointed by the council in relation to its education functions. Representatives from the relevant school's Parent Council are invited to attend and take part in the committee's meetings, as is the establishment's Head Teacher. It provides a dedicated and specialised forum for scrutiny of performance in education establishments.

11.5 Leisure and culture services are delivered almost entirely through an arms' length external organisation (ALEO) called West Lothian Leisure Ltd (WLL). The council is its sole shareholder. There is a dedicated advisory committee called the West Lothian Leisure Advisory Committee, attended by senior officers of both council and West Lothian Leisure. It deals with scrutiny of service delivery and financial performance. A review is ongoing of the relationship between the council and WLL, a best practice requirement reflected in the council's Scheme of Administration. Completion of the review is overdue. Its conclusion was expected to be reported in 2023/24. It is highlighted again in this statement as a governance issue of concern.

12. Significant officer roles

12.1 The council is required by law to appoint an officer to be its Head of Paid Service. The statutory duties of the post are to co-ordinate the discharge of the council's functions, to determine the number and grades of staff required, and to appoint, manage and organise its staff. The Head of Paid Service has both a power and a duty to make a statutory report to full council where considered appropriate. The law does not require specific qualifications but they are expected to have appropriate standing, leadership, communication and interpersonal skills, and qualities of integrity and impartiality in order to deliver the objectives of the post. The statutory responsibilities and duties of the post point to the post-holder being at the highest level of senior management. The Chief Executive holds this position. The statutory role description in the Scheme of Delegations was revised and approved in an amended form in February 2023.

12.2 Legislation requires the council to appoint a Chief Financial Officer. That role is to be performed in accordance with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016) and in the CIPFA Financial Management Code (2019). They set out the non-statutory requirement for the Chief Financial Officer to be professionally qualified and the criteria for qualification. The council's Interim Head of Finance & Property Services is the council's Chief Financial Officer. He operates in accordance with the council's Financial Regulations, Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Plan. He reports regularly to members on economic, financial and funding pressures as well as revenue and capital budgetary performance and compliance. The role is undertaken in accordance with the relevant statutory rules, guidance and standards. Treasury Management reports and capital asset management strategy reports are made to full Council twice each year. The statutory role description in the Scheme of Delegations was revised and approved in an amended form in February 2023.

12.3 The council is legally required to appoint a Monitoring Officer. The statutory function of the Monitoring Officer is to take action where it appears that a decision may give rise to a contravention of legislation or other rule of law, or maladministration, or other injustice. The law does not require the Monitoring Officer to hold any specific qualifications but they are expected to have appropriate seniority, standing, leadership, communication and interpersonal skills, and qualities of integrity and impartiality in order to fulfil the post's statutory responsibilities. They have a specific role in relation to ethical standards and the Councillors' Code of Conduct. The statutory role description in the Scheme of Delegations was revised and approved in an amended form in February 2023. The Governance Manager holds this position. The council's Chief Solicitor is the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

12.4 As required by statute, the council has appointed a Chief Social Work Officer who has statutory professional responsibility for the oversight of specified social work functions. The Scheme of Delegations states that in relation to those statutory functions the Chief Social Work Officer's decisions are not subject to change by more senior officers, but are, subject to council or committee decisions, final and binding on the council. An annual report is made to members through full council and to the Scottish Government. The statutory role description in the Scheme of Delegations was revised and approved in an amended form in February 2023. The Head of Social Policy holds the position.