

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

4.3 The council has had a Corporate Transformation Team in place since 2018. It sits apart from service areas. It provides all services with expertise and support in taking forward the ongoing digital and other transformation of council services and delivery of budget reduction measures. It will continue to play a significant role in delivering on budget savings, transformation projects, and supporting delivery on the Corporate Plan's priorities and objectives. The Team's outputs were reported at full council in November 2023. Its work supports outcomes set out in the Performance and Transformation Strategy approved in February 2024. Work is underway to develop Digital Transformation Principles to support delivery of the Corporate Plan.

4.4 Internal cross-service working amongst officers is enabled by a network of boards and working groups. They have defined remits and membership from appropriate service areas and staff grades across the council. Some have representation from partner organisations, such as NHS Lothian and Police Scotland. The structure, remits and membership of the boards and working groups were reviewed in 2023/24. Changes were made with effect from June 2024 to ensure their alignment with and effective support for the outcomes and priorities in the new Corporate Plan. The structure and remits will be kept under annual review. The main officer group dealing with the council's risk, control and governance arrangements has been the Governance & Risk Board. With effect from May 2024 it has become the Corporate Governance Board with an updated remit tied to the Corporate Governance Strategy.

## 5. Decision-making and scrutiny arrangements

5.1 The council has a long-established framework of committees and working groups set out in its Scheme of Administration. The committee structure is supported by the statutory Scheme of Delegations to Officers. That sets out the authority and responsibilities which officers may exercise without recourse to elected members. That is updated every three months to reflect new and changed delegations agreed by council and its committees. More significant changes are reported separately where required, for example, in April 2024, arising from recent new legislation on the Local Development Plan and the creation of a new statutory officer role of Chief Planning Officer.

5.2 There are two main policy and decision-making committees, Council Executive and Education Executive. Proposed policy decisions are considered before committee decision-making at one of the seven PDSPs. There is one local area committee (LAC) for each ward to help focus ward issues and provide a link from local areas and concerns to the decision-making function at the corporate centre. Scrutiny is carried out through Audit Committee, Governance & Risk Committee, Performance Committee, Education (Quality Assurance) Committee, and West Lothian Leisure Advisory Committee. The seven PDSPs receive quarterly performance reports for the services in their remits focusing on service performance indicators and financial performance. Full council meets every 8 weeks to deal with reserved matters and political debate and scrutiny. Council established two less formal cross-party working groups in 2022 and 2023, sitting outside the formal arrangements recorded in the Scheme of Administration. One was established to consider and make recommendations to committee or council about the barriers to participation as elected members related to the Equality Act's protected characteristics, and equality aspects of the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and associated guidance. The other looked into potential solutions to homelessness problems through the use of modular housing units. Recommendations on the first of those three areas of work were accepted by Council Executive and work continues on the other two.

## DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE

