

MANAGEMENT COMMENTARY

All council services complete a self-assessment during the council's three-year WLAM programme. As part of the internal scrutiny arrangements, services will report the outcome from their self-assessment process to an officer-led scrutiny Review Panel. The council uses the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) improvement tool to benchmark with leading organisations across all sectors, especially those that are focused on improvement and delivering sustainable value. Effective application of the model will help council services be fit for the future, as it encourages services to manage two challenges in parallel – the effective management of change and, at the same time, managing today's operations.

The current three-year programme of self-assessment started in 2022/23, with 25 council services completing the process since the new cycle began. The corporate process has undergone a significant review, and has a flexible and updated approach to improvement taking account of data, global shifts and new language.

On completion of the WLAM process, services will typically attend the Performance Committee to advise members on outcomes from the process and provide an overview of current service performance for scrutiny. The results of the VSE are reported to the Education (Quality Assurance) Committee. The papers and agendas for these committees are available on the council's COINS system on the following link:

[West Lothian Council Committee Information Pages](#)

External scrutiny is also used to improve service performance and challenge practice against the best in class in the public, private and third sectors. The council retained Customer Service Excellence (CSE) following external assessment in 2023/24, with the council having held the standard for 25 consecutive years.

A range of performance information is published on all council services, this includes:

- **Customer satisfaction with the service:**

We consult with customers on the quality of services that they receive from the council and this information is used to identify ways to improve our services. Seven consistent indicators of customer satisfaction are measured by every service and analysed and compared to demonstrate that the council is providing high quality customer-focused services to customers. Our consultation approaches and customer results are also validated and improved through assessment processes such as; the self-assessment programmes, EFQM and Customer Service Excellence assessment.

- **How we perform against service standards:**

Service standards are the promises that the council makes to our customers about the quality of the service that we will deliver. The standards set out what customers accessing our services can expect regarding customer service, timeliness and overall quality. We monitor our performance against the standards with customer satisfaction results and the measurable aspects of service provision, such as time taken to deliver services and the number of complaints received or upheld. Telling people how our services are performing is important. It helps the council to demonstrate that we are open and honest with the public and that we are working to improve the value and impact of our services for the people living, working and learning in West Lothian.

- **The efficiency of the service:**

The council has a responsibility to achieve value for money and report our performance to the public, explaining how efficiently we deliver services and how this compares to others. Efficiency indicators are in place to help measure the value of our services and these will generally focus on how efficiently services and processes are delivered. This can be calculated by what goes into a process (e.g. inputs such as cost, staff and other resources) and the output of that process, including any waste or repeat work, amount of resources (time, cost, people, etc.). For comparative purposes, there are also indicators tracking the unit cost of services and processes or the total cost of the service based on population or users.

There are long and short term measures of performance that indicate how services and processes contribute to council priorities. These are aligned with the council's key corporate strategies and plans and ensure that the key services and processes of the council are measured, monitored, reported and improved.

Benchmarking is an improvement process that allows West Lothian Council to compare our performance with other organisations, such as other Scottish local authorities. Benchmarking is used to identify how we are doing and what we can learn from the high performance and good practice of others. Performance management is the way that West Lothian Council measures achievement in key activities and processes. It enables the council to track the progress made in achieving outcomes and priorities and to demonstrate that services are delivered efficiently and effectively.

- **The impact of the service:**

The council has set challenging outcomes and priorities for West Lothian with our Community Planning Partners. Services' contribution to achieving those outcomes and the corporate priorities is determined through measurement of the key activities and processes that they deliver. The outcomes a service achieves are assessed through a set of measures developed in line with the council's performance framework. Service performance measures demonstrate performance across a range of areas including customer satisfaction, quality of services, efficiency of services and effectiveness of key processes.