DATA LABEL: OFFICIAL

West Lothian Council

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND WLAM OUTCOME REPORT – CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides Performance Committee with an overview of a service assessment from the West Lothian Assessment Model process (2017/20).

It also provides a summary of recommendations from the officer-led scrutiny panel that have been identified for action and are to be delivered by the service management team.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Performance Committee:

1. Note the outcome from the WLAM and Review Panel process;

2. Note the recommendations for improvement;

3. Agree any other recommendations that may improve the performance of the service.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I.	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunity; developing employees; making best use of our resources and working with other organisations
II.	Policy and Legal	The West Lothian Assessment Model programme is a key part of the council's Best Value Framework, ensuring that there is robust internal scrutiny and support for continuous improvement of services.
III.	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV.	Impact on performance and performance indicators	The report provides a summary of performance indicators from a council service to support effective elected member scrutiny.
V.	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The council has adopted an EFQM-based approach to performance management. This is reflected in the

		type of indicators used, including council indicators in the SOA.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	From existing budget.
VII.	Consideration at PDSP/Executive Committee required	Service performance is considered at the appropriate PDSP on an ongoing, scheduled basis.
VIII.	Details of consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

Self-assessment is an important part of the council's Best Value Framework, ensuring that there is rigorous challenge of performance and continuous improvement is embedded at all levels of the organisation. Regular, programmed self-assessment is also an integral part of improvement planning and preparation for external inspection.

This report provides the outcome from the self-assessment of Corporate Communications and the agreed recommendations for improvement for the service, as well as a summary overview of performance.

The WLAM applies an evidence-based, rigorous assessment model – the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) framework. This requires employees to consider the long-term impact of the service in the stated strategic objectives. In detail, the service must consider the effectiveness of leadership, strategies, policies, processes and procedures and also, how effectively the service manages relationships with employees, partners and customers.

D.2 Service Overview

Head of Service: Julie Whitelaw, Head of Corporate Services
Service Manager: Garry Heron, Corporate Communications Manager

Corporate Communications aims to enhance and protect the council's reputation through providing integrate corporate communications. The team is responsible for developing and delivering a wide range of communications, designed to promote the council and its service to communities and the wider public. The team works closely with the council's community planning partners to provide communications advice and support.

Corporate Communications has developed both the council's Branding Guidelines and the West Lothian Way Communications Guidelines to ensure a consistent approach is taken to all forms of communications. The team also play a leading role in supporting the delivery of online services via the council's website and intranet.

The main activities of the service are:

- Provision of a 24/7 media support service for the council
- Enhance the council's online communications channels
- Provision of a corporate design function for both online and print publications and ensure a consistent approach to the council's branding
- Provision of internal communications support to services

- Provision of a fully functional and enabling web platform

A summary of the service activities and resources is contained within Appendix 1.

D.3   Service Contribution to Corporate Priorities

Corporate Communications is part of Corporate Services which provides a range of key enabling services that help the council to operate efficiently, effectively and in compliance with legal requirements and council policy.

The service enables delivery of the council's eight corporate priorities and makes a critical contribution to the delivery of the council's Transformation Programme.

D.4   West Lothian Assessment Model

The service went through the West Lothian Assessment Model process in January 2019, with a representative group of employees from the service critically evaluating the service effectiveness in the nine criterion parts of the assessment model.

The service scored a total of 538 (out of 1,000).

This was an improvement on the service score in the last programme (2014/17) and below the current council average. To date, a total of 27 services have been assessed in the council's rolling three-year programme.

An overview of the service's scores in the last four cycles in set out in table 1. The trend column is based on a comparison between the base position (2008/10) and the current WLAM score.

Table 1: WLAM Scores (2008/10 to 2017/20)					
WLAM Criteria	2008/10	2011/13	2014/17	2017/20	Trend
1 Leadership	60	-	70	67	⬆
2 Strategy	47	-	55	63	⬆
3 People	50	-	52	69	⬆
4 Partnerships and Resources	51	-	54	70	⬆
5 Services and Processes	82	-	45	64	⬇
6 Customer Results	58	-	47	63	⬆
7 People Results	8	-	30	40	⬆
8 Society Results**	6	-	40	50	⬆
9 Business Results	53	-	47	53	⬆
Total score	**415**	**-**	**440**	**538**	⬆
WLC average total score	385	411	468	529*	

* WLC Average to date (based on 27 assessments)
** Criterion is scored corporately and uses validated scores from external EFQM assessments.

The scores show that the service has improved in all parts of the Model during the period (2008/10 to 2017/20), excluding services and processes.

The service has scored below the current council average for the Strategy and Business Results criterion and above the council average in all other criteria in the Model. The total WLAM score is an increase when compared to the previous year and above the current

council average.

To increase the WLAM score further, the service would need to assess and refine leadership and refine approach to service planning.

The service may also consider increasing the scope, relevance and trend information for Customer, People and Business Results. Results will also be improved through the use of benchmarking data with relevant comparators.

D.5 Review Panel Outcome

The Review Panel in the WLAM Programme 2017/20 has three possible outcomes that will identify the progress and risk level of service performance and subsequently, the level of scrutiny that will be applied to the service during the period of the WLAM programme (three years).

The Review Panel outcome is determined by a Panel of three senior officers and is chaired by the Chief Executive.

Table 2: Review Panel Outcome		
Review Panel Cycle		
Cycle 1	The service will return to the panel within three years	✓
Cycle 2	The service will return a report to the Panel within 12 months, who will determine if the service are to move to Cycle 1 or 3	
Cycle 3	The service must return to the Review Panel no later than one year (12 months) from the date of the last report.9	

The service was placed on **Cycle 1** by the Review Panel in June 2019 and will return to the Panel in the next cycle (2020/23).

This service achieved this outcome as it was able to demonstrate strong performance to the Panel and evidence a robust approach to performance management.

Performance management
Performance management standards have been established to help the Panel consistently identify good or poor practice in relation to performance management and to help services address any deficiencies in their performance or management approaches. The following table sets out the evaluation for the service:

Table 3: Evaluation of Performance Management in the service	
Management standard	**Service evaluation**
Scope and relevance of performance data	The service has identified performance indicators to monitor progress in most of the key activities and outcomes/ priorities.
Compliance with corporate requirements	The performance framework of the service exceeds the basic corporate requirements.
Approach	The service approach to managing performance is good and should be considered good practice in the council.
Management of data	Most managers and team leaders engage with the performance culture and take responsibility for managing performance.

Management of information	Performance is reported and communicated effectively to Elected Members, senior officers, employees and the public.
Performance trends	The key performance indicators show sustained good performance and the Panel has confidence that this will continue to be sustained by the service.
Targets and thresholds	Targets and thresholds have a clear rationale for most performance indicators and support performance management and improvement.
Benchmarking	The service has limited comparative data for the key performance indicators (in relation to the priorities /key activities).
WLAM score	The service achieved a score of over 500 in the WLAM process

The service will also continue to report key performance publicly and through agreed committee performance reporting arrangements.

D.6   Recommendations for Improvement

A number of recommendations have been set out for action by the service to improve performance.

The Review Panel recommendations for the service are:

1. The Panel recognised the positive performance in key result areas, specifically, improved performance in the employee results.

2. The Panel encouraged the service to review the performance indicators collected and reported, ensuring the relevancy and sufficiency of performance information.

3. The service should review the scope of performance indicators; introducing measures to capture all priority activities, including social media performance and outcomes from the democracy reporter.

4. The Panel encouraged the service to continue to identify ways to promote services to young people and understand the information this group wants to see online and through social media.

5. The Panel noted the increase in the response rate to internal customer surveys and encouraged the service to continue to focus on enhancing the response to engagement activities.

6. The Panel encouraged the service to pursue benchmarking opportunities in order to identify good practice and improve performance.

7. The service should continue to engage with council services to ensure web, social media and communication channels help improve customer engagement.

8. The Panel recognised the robust approach to performance management in the service and the clear commitment to driving improvement.

Progress in these actions will be reviewed at the next Review Panel.

D.7   Service Performance

The service has a total of **39** performance indicators on the council's performance management system (Pentana). At present, the status of the indicators is as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
✅ Green	30
⚠️ Amber	6
🔴 Red	1
❓ Unknown	2

An overview of the performance indicators categorised as Public or High Level for the service is included in Appendix 2.

D.8 Service Benchmarking

The Local Government Benchmarking Framework does not contain any indicators that allow for comparison across the 32 local authorities of communications services.

However, the service has used the LGBF family group to collate information in relation to key areas of performance for Corporate Communications. The council's family group comparator authorities for support services are; Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, Midlothian, Clackmannanshire, Angus, South Lanarkshire and Inverclyde.

The information sought focussed on social media, media relations and website visits and the results of the benchmarking data collection is contained within the tables below. Firstly, the service contacted comparator authorities to compare performance in a number of key indicators.

Communications Performance Indicators			
	2018/19 performance		
Council	% of new social media followers per year	Number of press releases issued annually	Number of website visits
Angus	*No response*	*No response*	*No response*
Clackmannanshire	4%	48 proactive only	207,448 visits to homepage (WLC equivalent is 1,265,1670)
East Renfrewshire	6%	140 proactive	3,197,661 unique visits (WLC equivalent is 5,509,181)
Inverclyde	*No response*	*No response*	*No response*
Midlothian	*No response*	*No response*	*No response*
South Lanarkshire	Don't measure	500 (approx.)	3,151,058
Renfrewshire	*No response*	*No response*	*No response*
West Lothian	5.7%	759 total / 408 proactive releases	2,454,040

Whilst not all councils used the same measures of performance, or did not respond to the request, the data collected gives an indication of the comparative levels of activity of the WLC Corporate Communications team and how the website traffic supports a shift towards digital services for West Lothian residents.

The team also did research on current (October 2019) social media engagement rates in comparisons between these same family group authorities.

Social Media Engagement Rates				
Council	October 2019/20 performance			Population*
	Number of Facebook followers	Number of Twitter followers	% of population who follow their council on Facebook	
Angus	14,000	14,800	12%	116,040
Clackmannanshire	9,101	11,302	18%	51,540
East Renfrewshire	12,500	24,000	13%	95,170
Inverclyde	8,700	15,300	11%	78,150
Midlothian	15,000	15,200	16%	91,340
South Lanarkshire	12,463	42,000	4%	318,870
Renfrewshire	20,467	24,600	11%	177,790
West Lothian	45,800	18,070	25%	182,140

* based on 2018 National Record of Scotland data

This information shows the success of the team in engaging the public through different platforms, in particular engagement rates for Facebook.

E.   CONCLUSION

Corporate Communications completed the WLAM process as part of the council's corporate programme of self-assessment. This is a critical part of the council's internal scrutiny arrangements and helps to ensure that excellent practice and performance is supported and that the principle of continuous improvement is adopted in all council services.

The service achieved a total score of 538 and was placed on Cycle 1 by the Review Panel and will return to the Review Panel within three years.

BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018/23

Appendices/Attachments: 2
Appendix 1_Corporate Services Management Plan Extract
Appendix 2_Performance Indicator Report

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