

DATA LABEL: OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE



PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

WLAM PROGRAMME 2017/20 – REVIEW PANEL UPDATE

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides a summary of the outcomes from the Review Panels that have taken place in 2020/21 (to date).

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. Notes the outcomes from the Panels held from October 2020 to date;
2. Notes the remaining outstanding Review Panels scheduled to take place in 2020/21;
3. Considers the services that may be asked to report to the Committee, based on the reported outcomes.

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, working with other organisations.
II.	Policy and Legal	None
III.	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV.	Impact on performance and performance indicators	The council adopted an EFQM-based approach to performance management. This is reflected in the type of indicators used and the management of performance.
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 and outcomes.
VI.	Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None
VII.	Consideration at PDSP/Executive Committee required	None

VIII. Details of consultations

The Review Panel outcomes for individual services and progress updates on the council-wide (excluding schools) programme are provided to Performance Committee as part of internal scrutiny arrangements.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

Self-assessment is an important part of the council's Improvement Strategy 2018/23, encouraging innovation from within and positively engaging employees in service planning and improvement.

All council services complete a self-assessment during the council's three-year West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) programme.

On 16 November 2020, the Committee received a report with a summary of the WLAM activity in 2019/20 against the schedule and the scores of services that self-assessed during this period. The report also identified four services that had yet to complete the Panel process, delayed by the Coronavirus pandemic, and advised that these Panels were to take place in 2020/21.

This report provides an update to the Committee on the Review Panel activity in 2020/21 to date. This also includes an update on the Panels that have taken place for those services on annual cycle.

D.2 Review Panel Outcomes

All services complete a WLAM and attend an officer-led scrutiny panel at least once during a three-year improvement cycle. At the end of the assessment process each WLAM unit attends a Review Panel to determine the level of scrutiny that the service will be subject to throughout the cycle – based on WLAM scores and performance results.

A total of 34 WLAM assessments were undertaken during the programme, with an average score of 532 out of 1,000 for council services. A total of 35 WLAM units attended the Review Panel – including Housing Strategy and Development, which did not complete a WLAM assessment in the cycle but did attend the Review Panel

The Review Panel in the WLAM programme 2017/20 has three possible outcomes. Table 1 provides the updated summary position for all services:

Table 1: Review Panel Outcomes 2014/17		
Cycle		No. of Services
1	Return to the panel within three years	24
2	Return a report to the Panel within 12 months, who will determine if the service is to move to Cycle 1 or 3	7
3	Return to the Review Panel no later than one year (12 months) from the date of the last report	4

D.3 Review Panel Outcomes (re-scheduled Panels)

There were four services unable to attend the Review Panel on conclusion of their self-assessment in quartile 4 of 2019/20 due to the impact of COVID 19. The Panels were re-scheduled for October and November 2020. Those services were:

- Housing Operations*
- Performance and Change*
- Customer and Communities Services
- Planning Services

Table 2 provides the updated summary outcome position for those services that have now attended the Panel:

Table 2: Remaining WLAM Units still to attend Review Panel			
Service	Score	Rank	Cycle
Housing Operations*	530	20	2
Performance and Change*	510	29	1
Customer and Communities Services	549	8	1
Planning Services	537	13	1

*Previous combined WLAM unit

- Planning Services, Customer and Communities Services and Performance and Change – were all assessed as low risk for performance by the Panel and each received a Cycle 1 outcome. A set of recommendations for future improvement were also provided to each service and they will be required to provide a progress update against those recommendations at the next Panel (within 3 years).
- Housing Operations – the Panel placed the service on Cycle 2 and determined that there should be greater focus on improving the management of performance in the next year. The service will return a report to the Panel within the next 12 months.

D.4 Review Panel Outcomes (Annual cycle)

Panels for services on an annual cycle (cycles 2 and 3) also re-convened from October 2020 onwards. The intention is to complete these Review Panels within 2020/21.

Table 3 provides the schedule for those services that are on Cycles 2 and 3 and due to attend the Panel in 2020/21 and outcomes to date:

Table 3: Annual Cycle Services – Dates and Outcomes (to date)			
Service	Date of Panel	Cycle pre-Panel	Cycle post-Panel
Passenger Transport	Oct-20	3	2
Housing Strategy	Nov-20	3	3
Housing Need	Jan-21	3	2
IT Services	Jan-21	3	1
Building Services	Feb-21	2	TBD
Recycling and Waste Services	Feb-21	2	TBD
Learning Policy and Performance	Feb-21	2	TBD
Legal Services	Feb-21	3	TBD
CSC	Feb-21	3	TBD
CPU	Mar-21	3	TBD
Nets, Land and Countryside	Mar-21	2	TBD

- Passenger Transport – the Panel recognised a marked improvement in employee results, but wish to continue the monitoring and support that is in place for a further 12 months to ensure the service maintain this improved position.
- Housing Strategy – the Panel recommended a review of the approach to performance management and building of a better performance culture in this newly constituted WLAM unit. Also, key areas of performance were identified that are to be reviewed by the Panel in 12 months.
- Housing Need – the service was able to demonstrate improvement in a number of key indicators of performance and had made good progress with past recommendations from the Panel. However, the Panel also recognised the challenge and external pressures facing the service in the next year and wish to receive an update on progress and performance in 12 months.

D.5 WLAM Programme 2020/23

It has not been possible to start the new programme of assessment in 2020/21, as would have been planned, due to the pressures facing frontline services and also the ongoing work to adapt this process to a virtual format.

An update to the council's Executive Management Team on the next programme will be the next course of action. This will outline timescales for the programme and how the process will adapt to the current constraints.

In lieu of the new programme, the Committee is asked to consider any service performance reports that may be brought forth based on the information provided in this report.

E. CONCLUSION

Self-assessment is an important part of the council's Improvement Strategy, encouraging innovation from within and positively engaging employees in service planning and improvement.

All WLAM units attend the Review Panel as part of this process and the council's internal scrutiny arrangements. To date, most services have been assessed as performing at the expected levels and/or improving performance.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

[Improvement Strategy 2018/23](#)

Appendices/Attachments: 0

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