

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE – IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY 2018/23

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report provides a review of the Improvement Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel, including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date. The review covers the period 2020/21.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes;
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions;
3. Agrees any recommendations for improvement.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	A performance scorecard has been developed to support the delivery of the strategy outcomes. This will be used to track and monitor performance of key indicators throughout the period of the strategy and reported publicly.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Effective planning and prioritisation of resources is essential to support the delivery of outcomes.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The strategy was developed through consultation with the key stakeholders, CMT and the relevant PDSP. The strategy was approved at Council Executive in June 2018.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The council has a clear mission, values and strategic outcomes. These influence every part of the way that we operate but also, how we evaluate our success as an organisation. The council has also developed a set of integrated corporate strategies for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 that will help to improve the quality and value of our services and drive a culture of performance and transformation at all levels of the organisation.

There are two features that allow tracking of progress in the strategy outcomes and measurable achievement:

- Performance indicators that are linked to the strategy outcomes and key activities
- Action plans comprising actions with defined outcomes, timescales and responsible officers

In line with monitoring and reporting requirements for corporate strategies, this report provides an update for 2018/19 on the performance in strategy outcomes and progress in the action plan.

D.2 Strategy Outcomes

The Improvement Strategy 2018/23 is designed to support effective governance, the efficient management of resources and development of a resilient culture that will help deliver effective, valued services to the local community.

The council has a strong record of providing high performing services and the strategy sets out the ways and means that the council will drive continuous improvement in services and ensure delivery of key priorities and outcomes.

The strategy outcomes are:

1. West Lothian Council is high performing and achieving
2. The council effectively controls and utilises data assets
3. Services are self aware and improving

D.3 COVID-19 Pandemic Implications

The Covid-19 pandemic has been the most significant public health emergency that the UK has faced in generations. The lockdown restrictions first put in place by the UK and Scottish Government on 23 March 2020 placed significant restrictions on the ability of people to meet, travel and attend work and has had a huge impact nationally and locally on businesses, communities and residents.

The restrictions put in place to contain and control the spread of the virus have presented unprecedented challenges for the council. In order to comply with the lockdown restrictions, set out in the Scottish Government's Covid-19 Strategic Framework, the council has had to temporarily withdraw or reduce some services to comply with lockdown rules, however, the

majority of the council's essential services have continued to operate over the last year, with staff finding new ways to work, communicate, and support our communities.

As well as the challenge of delivering existing service provision to our communities, throughout 2020, and continuing into 2021, the council has had to respond to providing additional supports to families, local communities and businesses.





D.4 Performance Indicators

The strategy scorecard is a reporting tool that is used to monitor progress in the performance indicators in each strategy outcome. Achievement in the key activities can be tracked and it also allows the council to identify areas for improvement.

The scorecard provides a snapshot of performance to date across the whole strategy and is included in Appendix 1.

The scorecard will report the last recorded performance in the event that any data for 2020/21 are not available for the period or reporting has been delayed (for example due to external validation processes). This will include the performance updates for any council activities that were ceased/suspended during 2020/21 due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

A total of 13 performance indicators are contained in the scorecard and this is managed using the council's performance management system (Pentana). At present, the status of those indicators are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Green	8
 Amber	1
 Red	3
 Unknown	1

**Note: the Unknown status occurs when a service does not record performance during the period, for example, if the service did not receive any complaints to process*

A number of scrutiny activities were suspended in 2020/21 as the council shifted resources from internal process to support frontline, priority activities. For example, this included the self-evaluation processes in council services and schools being suspended and a reduction in corporate review of public performance reporting. This resulted in the high number of indicators in the scorecard triggering a non-status or unknown status as there was no performance recorded within the year. These activities will recommence in 2021/22.

In evidence of the positive performance in the strategy, the council has:

- Maintained strong performance in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, with the majority of indicators placing in quartiles 1 and 2.
- Continues to focus on improving the standards of information management and handling in the council, with a significant amount of work undertaken by all council services in 2020/21 in support of the council's Public Records Scotland Act compliance and information management.

A commentary on the performance and the corrective action that will be taken to address the performance indicators that were triggering as red is outlined below:

Outcome 1: The Council is high performing and achieving

● Percentage of Corporate Plan priority indicators achieving target performance			
Performance 2020/21	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23
52.5%	70%	75%	80%

There is habitually a lag in the reporting for key indicators in the Corporate Plan. This is due to external validation processes (e.g. SQA and other external regulators), which is why the current performance shown is for 2019/20. There are still 3 out of the 48 indicators in the scorecard which do not contain 2019/20 performance, therefore the value shown is not the final position for that year.

The council continues to demonstrate strong performance across the eight priorities, with focused improvement required in a number of the key outcomes, in order to reach the target levels of performance.

● Percentage of council services on the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) Review Panel annual cycle			
Performance 2019/20	Target 2019/20	Target 2020/21	Target 2022/23
23%	9%	8%	6%

In 2019/20, a total of 13 services undertook an assessment with 3 being placed on an annual cycle.

The WLAM programme of self-assessment was suspended in 2020/21 to allow services to focus on frontline service delivery and efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. The new programme will resume in 2021/22, once operations have returned to a more normal footing throughout the council.

Outcome 2: The Council effectively controls and utilises data assets






● Percentage of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days			
Performance 2020/21	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23
81%	92%	92%	92%

During 2020/21 the council received a total of 980 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. A total of 793 were responded to within the target timescale of 20 days but there was a decline in this indicator from previous years, with 187 responded to outwith the timescale. The rate of FOIs received in this year dropped by just over 20 percent so that meant that services were still responding to a relatively high rate of requests in addition to the extra pressures and constraints of this last year.

Handling performance of FOIs is reviewed on a quarterly basis by the council's Information Management Working Group (IMWG), chaired by the Head of Corporate Services. A return to an improved position is targeted for 2021/22 and this will be carefully monitored by this group in the year ahead.

D.5 Strategy Actions

There are eight actions to support the delivery of the Improvement Strategy outcomes. Actions 1 and 2 were combined as they both relate to improvements to performance reporting. At present, the status of those actions are as follows:

Summary of Performance Indicator status (RAG)	
Status (against target)	Number of PIs
 Completed	3
 Not Started; In Progress, Assigned	0
 Unassigned; Check Progress	0
 Overdue	2
 Cancelled	2

A commentary is provided below for any actions that have in 2020/21 significantly progressed, closed and/or been delayed.

In evidence of the positive progress being made in the strategy, the council has:

- Improved compliance in the Customer Service Excellence Standard, with strong practice evidenced in a number of key areas relating to high quality customer services.
- Undertaken a significant cleanse of the council's performance management system to improve the relevance of information contained in the corporate system and improve operating performance.
- Continued to work on the development of a new corporate self-assessment approach, that can be implemented in 2021, subject to the pace of service remobilisation in the next year.

The update for each action is included in Appendix 2.

E. CONCLUSION

The Improvement Strategy 2018/23 sets out how the council will raise the quality and value of service provision and achieve outcomes efficiently.

In 2020/21 the council maintained progress in the outcomes and actions but was impacted by the cessation of certain activities in the year to ensure that council services were able to focus on priority frontline provision.

The council will continue to use its response to the Covid-19 pandemic to positively challenge service delivery, in order that the council can maximise opportunities to make West Lothian a smarter, healthier, wealthier, fairer and greener place to live and work in.

Actions have been developed to deliver improvement in 2021/22 in any area that is below target.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Corporate Plan 2018/23
West Lothian Council Improvement Strategy 2018/23

Appendices/Attachments: 2

Appendix 1 – Improvement Strategy Scorecard Report

Appendix 2 – Improvement Strategy Action Plan

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APPENDIX 1

Improvement Strategy 2018-23

Improvement Strategy Scorecard






(a) Outcome 1 - The Council is high performing and achieving

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:PIS101_9b.1a Percentage of Corporate Plan priority indicators achieving target performance	2019/20	52.5%	70%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS201_9b.2a Percentage of council services on the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) Review Panel annual cycle	2019/20 ¹	23%	9%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS212_9b.1c Percentage of performance reporting meeting the corporate standards	2019/20 ²	92%	89%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS223_9b.1a Average ranking of West Lothian Council in the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)	2018/19	1	1	Head of Corporate Services





¹ 2020/21 performance was not available for this indicator as the West Lothian Assessment Model self-assessment programme was suspended in 2020/21 due to the Coronavirus pandemic

² 2020/21 performance was not available for this indicator as the performance compliance evaluation activity was suspended in 2020/21 due to performance staff being allocated to frontline activities to support the council's response to the pandemic.

(b) Outcome 2 - The council effectively controls and utilises data assets

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:corw014_8b.4 Percentage of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 days	2020/21	81%	92%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:corw015_6b.6 Percentage of referrals to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) that are upheld/part upheld	2020/21	N/A	56%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:corw016_8b.5 Percentage of Subject Access requests responded to within 40 days	2020/21	100%	84%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:ITS054_7b.3 Percentage of staff with an email account who have completed the council's mandatory training courses	2020/21	96.3%	100%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS560_9b.1c Percentage of corporate staff actively using the Electronic Content Management (ECM) system by year.	2020/21	88.69%	85%	Head of Corporate Services

(c) Outcome 3 - Council services are self-aware and improving

Status	Performance Indicator	Last Update	Current Value	Current Target	Lead officer(s)
	P:EDQIT025_9b.1c Percentage of Primary, Secondary, and Additional Support Needs establishments evaluated as good or better for Leadership of change	2019/20 ³	78%	90%	Head of Education (Curriculum, Quality Improvement and Performance); Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources)
	P:PIS111_9b.1c Percentage of business improvement recommendations completed	2020/21	100%	80%	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS202_9b.1a Average West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) score of Council services	2019/20 ⁴	531	535	Head of Corporate Services
	P:PIS205_9b.1c Percentage of council services scoring 500 or more in the West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM)	2019/20 ⁵	100%	100%	Head of Corporate Services






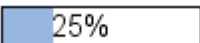
³ 2020/21 performance was not available for this indicator as the programme of assessment in schools was suspended in 2020/21 due to the Coronavirus pandemic





⁴ 2020/21 performance was not available for this indicator as the West Lothian Assessment Model self-assessment programme was suspended in 2020/21 due to the Coronavirus pandemic

⁵ 2020/21 performance was not available for this indicator as the West Lothian Assessment Model self-assessment programme was suspended in 2020/21 due to the Coronavirus pandemic

APPENDIX 2

Improvement Strategy Action Plan

Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Performance information to committees and PDSPs	IMP18001/2	Rebecca Kelly		28-Mar-2018 The review of the quality and range of performance information that is provided to committees and PDSPs is complete. This has evaluated a range of aspects in relation to the sufficiency and effectiveness of performance reporting in past two years (2016/17 and 2017/18) and sets out key findings and recommendations.
	Corporate performance reporting	IMP18003	Rebecca Kelly		<p>13-May-2021 An independent review of the performance management system was commissioned by officers for 2020/21 to consider the sufficiency of the overall approach, in line with the purpose and strategy of the council and within a context of transformative change in services. The review had to be postponed in 2020/21 due to the pandemic and the subsequent impact on council services. A new date for this review is to be confirmed.</p> <p>The Improvement Service has been engaged to undertake the review and the council hopes to benefit from the collective knowledge and experience of an organisation that works to support improvement in all local authorities in Scotland.</p> <p>Internally, the council is undertaking a significant review of public performance information and is in the process of redesigning the web content to improve the information that is available to the public. There is also work nearing completion to establish a new performance reporting regime of high value indicators to the Executive and Corporate Management Teams. This will improve the sufficiency and quality of performance information that is reported to Chief Officers. This will be in place for 2021/22, starting in quarter 1.</p>
	EFQM assessment	IMP18004	Rebecca Kelly		<p>13-May-2021 Work continues to transition the council to the new EFQM 2020 Model. This will include development of a new programme of self-assessment for 2020-23 (delayed by the pandemic).</p> <p>A report is to be brought to the Corporate Management Team on the new proposals for a new self-assessment programme in 2020-23.</p> <p>Further information is now being collated, as it becomes available from EFQM, on the arrangements for external assessment/recognition and how this may change from the past arrangements.</p>

Status	Action Title	Code	Assigned To	Progress Bar	Latest Update
	Customer Service Excellence assessment	IMP18007	Rebecca Kelly		<p>13-May-2021 The council has retained the CSE standard following inspection activity in 2020 and improved our overall compliance with the standard.</p> <p>A new programme of assessment is in development, likely to commence in October 2021. This will take the form of a three-year rolling programme of assessment and will cover all council services.</p> <p>The council continues to work on improvement recommendations highlighted in the last assessment in relation to; staff training and support and customer engagement.</p>
	Review of information policies and procedures.	IMP18008	Joe Murray		<p>13-May-2021 The Information Governance Policy is now in place and replaced five policies relating to information and data management. The revised policy ensures that the council is creating, managing, using and disposing of information efficiently, appropriately and lawfully.</p> <p>It standardised accountability and responsibilities and brings harmony to the council's approach to information governance based on recent Legislative requirements and good practice. New guidance has been developed to facilitate compliance and consistency of approach across council services. All council Services participated in the development of the new policy.</p> <p>Key indicators have also been developed to monitor performance against policy objectives.</p>