

DATA LABEL: OFFICIAL



PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

WEST LoTHIAN ASSESSMENT MODEL PROGRAMME 2022/25

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report outlines a draft programme of assessment activity to be undertaken across council services in 2022 to 2025. This includes details of the new Corporate Assessment, timescales for assessment and the agreed WLAM Units for the period.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee notes the proposed timescales for the 2022/25 programme.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
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 in the SOA.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	From existing budget.
VII Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII Other consultations	None

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.

In October 2020, the Council's Executive Management Team (EMT) agreed to delay the next WLAM programme on account of the Coronavirus pandemic, with only Review Panels for high risk services continuing in 2020/21. A total of 10 services have attended these scrutiny panels in the past year, with 6 remaining on the annual cycle.

This report outlines the timescales for the next programme and how the process will adapt to the current constraints.

It has not been possible to start the new programme of assessment in 2020/21 or 2021/22, as would have been planned, due to the pressures facing frontline services and also the ongoing work to adapt the WLAM process to a virtual format. In advance of future assessment activity, the corporate team has undertaken a review of the process and have developed a new approach to self-assessment for the next programme of assessment.

D.2 Summary of Changes to WLAM Process

Following consultation with key stakeholders in the council on the WLAM process in 2020, a number of opportunities for improvement were identified, which have since been used by the corporate team to redesign the council's self-assessment approach.

The new WLAM process now starts with a corporate self-assessment that contains the collective strengths of the council against the new European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Model and opportunities for improvement to increase our strategic and operational effectiveness. This is a new step in the process and intended to improve collaboration across council services and increase staff focus on improvement activity.

The new WLAM process will be as follows:

1. Development of corporate assessment

Years of self-assessment and external assessment/inspection have driven council-wide improvement and established a strong body of corporate evidence in the EFQM Model. This organisational strength is to be utilised to reduce the length and complexity of the WLAM for staff/process users.

Accredited EFQM Assessors in the Performance and Improvement Service have developed a first draft of the corporate self-assessment against the EFQM Model 2020. This document identifies corporate evidence and eliminates the requirement for services to undertake pre-work in advance of the assessment day(s).

As well as a net reduction in staff time for services to complete the WLAM process, the new approach aims to focus staff on the strengths of the service (e.g. where they can supplement the corporate evidence with good practice approaches). As well as areas

that fall below the corporate standards and require more focused improvement, or even transformation activity.

A first draft of the corporate assessment has been developed as a basis for engagement with senior officers and responsible officers in the council, gathering more information and canvassing views on how the council can improve.

The current assessment and opportunities for improvement are centred on a number of sources, including:

- WLAM Assessment information (2017/20)
- Review Panel outcomes (2017/18 to 2020/21)
- External assessment feedback (CSE, Best Value Audit and EFQM Global Assessment)
- Current progress in our key performance results (operational and strategic)

2. A baseline corporate score

The corporate assessment will be scored by the Performance and Improvement Service, thus establishing a baseline corporate score for each criterion in the EFQM model and a total overall score. Services will self-assess against this baseline, using their own supplementary evidence and the views of staff about the implementation of corporate evidence to move beyond or below the baseline score.

The corporate application and score will both be reviewed each year to take account of council-wide improvements and changes. Service scores will also be recalibrated on this basis, addressing the imbalance that scheduling of assessments can sometime introduce in service scores – e.g. those early in the programme score lower typically than those at the end of the programme. This will also reduce the time taken in a self-assessment setting to score.

It is proposed that scoring follows the consultation on the draft corporate self-assessment document. This will help ensure that the overall score is based on accurate, complete and up to date information and a measured assessment of the council's operations.

3. Restructuring sessions

The bulk of staff time has been spent on completing pre-work under the old process. In the new process, there would be no pre-work and staff would work collaboratively in workshops to complete all activities – a version of this approach was piloted in early 2020 with Housing Strategy and Development.

Service contributions would now be fixed at three half-day assessment workshops, facilitated by a Quality Development Officer. Each session will be structured around the design of the new EFQM model, (1) Direction, (2) Execution and finally (3) an Improvement Planning Session. This approach would take the team from an introduction to the model and its themes, through to assessment and improvement planning.

The new EFQM model is focused on how organisations can create sustainable value for their stakeholders, it therefore encourages users to understand the ecosystem in which they operate and the megatrends that are and/or will influence the future. These facilitated sessions would allow time to discuss the themes in a group setting, in a structured way that will ensure improvements are future focused and value adding.

4. Employee involvement

Interactive self-assessment sessions with employees will enhance the level of engagement and involvement in service improvement, transformation and future thinking. Also, this will support employees' understanding of the model and the language used in the model.

5. Flexible delivery model

Based on the business needs of the service, the WLAM can be completed via a digital workshop using a video conferencing platform or the more traditional in-person meeting format. The service is investigating new tools and platforms that could be used to make digital workshops engaging for all users.

6. Review Panel format

The Review Panel format is to be adapted in consultation with the Chair of the Panel and senior users (the Council's Corporate Management Team).

D.3 West Lothian Assessment Model Programme 2022/25

It has not been possible to start the new programme of self-assessment in 2020/21 or 2021/22, as would have been planned, due to the pressures facing frontline services and also the ongoing work to adapt the WLAM process to a virtual format.

The programme for self-assessment has been developed that is intended to reset and refresh self-assessment activity in the council. The position of WLAM units in past programmes (years) has been disregarded, with an assessment of risk used instead to schedule WLAM units instead. The programme is contained in Appendix 1 for information.

Review Panel representation is also to be reset to give services new Panel members (excluding the Chair) and hopefully, different knowledge, experiences and recommendations for how they can improve.

D.4 Performance Committee

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. Generally, each WLAM unit will attend the Committee once every 3 years (in line with the WLAM Programme) and following their presentation to the Review Panel. The schedule for WLAM units reporting to Performance Committee is subject to agreement with the Committee members.

In the absence of new self-assessment and Review Panel activity in 2020/21 and 2021/22, the Performance Committee has instead scrutinised corporate performance and special performance reports from a select number of services.

When the WLAM programme re-starts, services will again begin reporting to the Performance Committee. It is anticipated that this will commence post-recess in 2022/23.

E. CONCLUSION

The report outlines a proposed programme of assessment activity for council services in 2022 to 2025.

Committee is asked to note the new programme, the timescales for assessment and the revisions to the process.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

[EFQM Model 2020](#)

Appendices/Attachments: 1
Appendix 1 – WLAM Programme 2022/25

Contact Person: rebecca.kelly@westlothian.gov.uk 01506 281891

Graeme Struthers
Depute Chief Executive

15 November 2021

APPENDIX 1

WLAM SCHEDULE 2022/25 (DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION)

The schedule for self-assessment activity in the council has been done on a risk basis (considering Review Panel cycles and recommendations and WLAM scores). WLAM units are currently ordered alphabetically within each year, until consultation with services on more detailed scheduling can take place.

Year	WLAM Unit
Year 1 (2022/23)	Building Services
	Community Care
	Corporate Procurement Unit
	CSC
	Housing Need
	Housing Operations
	Housing Strategy & Development
	Learning, Policy and Performance
	NETS, Land & Countryside
	Passenger Transport
Year 2 (2023/24)	Anti-Poverty Service
	ASN
	Children & Families
	Customer & Communities
	Environmental Health & Trading Standards
	IT Services
	Justice Services
	Legal Services
	Performance and Change
	Recycling, Waste and Fleet
	Revenues Unit
	Roads and Transportation
	Strategic Resources
Year 3 (2024/25)	Audit, Risk & Counter Fraud
	Corporate Communications
	Economic Development & Regeneration
	Education Psychology
	Facilities Management & Inprint
	Financial Management Unit
	Inclusion and Support Service
	HR and Support
	Performance and Improvement
	Planning Services
	Property Management
	Quality Improvement Team