

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28**

#### **REPORT BY LEAD OFFICER FOR THE PANEL**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides the Panel with an update on the council's medium term financial plan and summarises a number of potential saving options relevant to the remit of this Panel to address the council's budget gap over the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26, including responses from the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Phase 2 consultation.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the outcome of the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Phase 2 consultation and comments, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2;
2. Notes the updated revenue budget gap of £47.6 million, demonstrating the hugely challenging financial position facing the council over the next five years;
3. Notes work undertaken to date by officers in developing the five year revenue financial plan for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28;
4. Notes officer saving options, relevant to the remit of the Panel, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report;
5. Notes the Integrated Relevance Assessments for all proposed savings options and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) where the options are assessed as having a potential impact on a protected group or characteristic, as set out in Appendix 5;
6. Notes that following conclusion of the PDSPs to consider potential saving options, the Head of Finance and Property Services will present a report to full Council on 21 February 2023 containing a five year revenue financial plan and a three year detailed revenue budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Being honest, open and accountable, making the best use of resources, focusing on our customers' needs and working in partnership.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	The council is required to approve a balanced revenue budget for each financial year. Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland and Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice guidance recommends medium term financial plans are prepared for at least five years in duration, with detailed budgets prepared for at least three years. This best practice is a requirement of the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice, which the council has complied with from 1 April 2021.
	Delivery of adults and older peoples' social work services, and associated decisions, is delegated to the West Lothian Joint Integration Board under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014.

<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	No implications at this stage.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	Ongoing restraint in relation to government grant funding inevitably has implications for the council's budget and performance.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	The revenue budget provides resources necessary to help deliver the Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP), Corporate Plan and council activities. Effective prioritisation of resources is essential to achieving key outcomes.
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	<p>Scottish Government grant funding has not been sufficient since 2007/08 to meet the increasing costs and demands for services.</p> <p>Based on current central planning scenarios, it is forecast that West Lothian Council may have a budget gap of £47.6 million over the five year period 2023/24 to 2027/28 and £35.8 million over the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.</p>
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	This report forms part of the ongoing process of briefing elected members on the council's financial position and budget strategy.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	The council received 7,605 responses and over 36,000 comments from the first two phases of the Your Council, Your Say 2028 consultation, which included saving options related to non-IJB functions. The West Lothian Integration Joint Board undertook a consultation on officer proposals for relevant social care services in parallel with the council's consultation. The Corporate Management Team has been consulted on this report.

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

Since 2007/08 the council has had to deliver considerable savings to balance the budget whilst funding has been constrained. It is within this context of delivering over £150 million of savings from 2007/08 to 2022/23 that the council looks ahead to another financially challenging five year period.

The following financial planning principles were agreed by Council Executive in June 2018. In addition it was agreed that PDSPs should be scheduled, in advance of the revenue plan for future years being reported to full Council, to consider the substance of budget saving options.

- The council should continue to have a five year financial plan, aligned with political administrations, and three year detailed revenue budgets.
- Estimated budget gaps for at least three years should be reported to elected members before local elections.
- The Corporate Plan and revenue, capital and treasury plans should continue to be considered and agreed at the same Council meeting.
- Future five year financial plans should be subject to public consultation.
- Public consultations on the five year plan should cover priorities, taxation and saving options.

In October 2021, Partnership and Resources PDSP and Council Executive considered an initial update on the revenue financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28. This included an initial estimate of budget scenarios and budget gaps. Council Executive agreed that officers should continue to implement the process to develop a new five year financial plan.

Council in February 2022 and Council Executive in June 2022 considered updated budget scenarios following the publication of the 2022 Scottish Spending Review. On 6 December 2022, Council Executive noted a revised central scenario gap of £57.7 million for 2023/24 to 2027/28 with considerable risks around the high level assumptions used to calculate the gap. It was agreed that officers should continue to implement the process to develop a revenue financial plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 established the framework for integration of health and social care. The West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) assumed direct control of integrated services from 1 April 2016, with the delegation of relevant functions and resources by the council and NHS Lothian. The IJB is responsible for the strategic planning and delivery of adult social care services. As adults and older peoples' services are designed, commissioned and delivered under statutory functions delegated to the IJB, the council must comply with directions from the IJB on how to deliver services, including potential budget saving options. On that basis, the IJB will consider potential saving options related to the delivery of delegated functions and therefore this report only considers council savings in relation to non-IJB functions.

## D.2 WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Consultation

On 24 June 2022, the Council Executive approved a three stage West Lothian (WL) 2028 Your Council, Your Say public consultation approach. Phase 1 of the consultation commenced on 24 June 2022 and closed on 31 July 2022 and Phase 2 commenced on 7 October 2022 and closed on 20 November 2022.

In addition to the WL2028 Your Council, Your Say consultation the IJB undertook a separate consultation exercise recognising that it is expected that the IJB will have to make substantial savings as funding available will be insufficient to meet the increasing cost of service delivery. A range of officer proposals were included for relevant social care services and the results of the consultation will be considered by the IJB.

The council received 2,560 responses to Phase 2 from a wide range of stakeholders, with the majority of responses being received via the online survey. From those responses over 22,000 individual comments were received. A summary of the results from Phase 1 was presented to Council Executive 4 October 2022, with an overall summary from Phase 2 considered by Council Executive on 20 December 2022.

Of the 22,000 comments received, 4,212 comments (18.42% of all comments) across four measures, including council tax questions, have been allocated to service areas which report to this PDSP. The allocation of the comments and measures is set out below in table 1.

*Table 1: Phase 2 Consultation Comments Relevant to PDSP Remit*

Phase 2 Ref	Phase 2 Proposal	Number of Comments	% of Comments
1A	Service redesign, integration & modernisation	1,336	5.84%
1C	Digital transformation	1,208	5.28%
1G	Review of services for children	960	4.20%
1H	Review of commissioned services	708	3.10%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,212</b>	<b>18.42%</b>

A summarised version of the comments received in relation to the saving options being considered by this Panel is provided in Appendix 1 for consideration.

Officers have reviewed all of the individual comments, considering the merits of the measure and suggested a response from the following options:

1. The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal.
2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal.
3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make, or posed a question of the measure.
4. The council is already doing this.
- 5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work.
- 5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit, or requires additional expenditure.
- 5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities.
- 5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed.
6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.
7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.
8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisations.
9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question.

A summary of the categorised responses is set out below in table 2.

*Table 2: Phase 2 Comment Categorisation*

<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Number of Comments</b>	<b>% of Total Comments</b>
1. The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal.	1,784	7.80%
2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal.	1,314	5.75%
3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make, or posed a question of the measure.	527	2.30%
4. The council is already doing this.	169	0.74%
5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work.	6	0.03%
5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit, or requires additional expenditure.	8	0.03%
5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities.	6	0.03%
5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed.	1	0.00%
6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.	159	0.70%
7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.	79	0.35%
8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisations.	11	0.05%
9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question.	148	0.65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,212</b>	<b>18.42%</b>

An analysis of all of the comments allocated to the Social Work and Health PDSP is set out in Appendix 2. The Phase 2 consultation document is provided in Appendix 3 for reference. Full details of the officer response to each comment is available to view online on the council's website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/wl2028](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/wl2028).

### D.3 Updated Revenue Budget Position 2023/24 to 2027/28

Following the report to Council Executive on 6 December 2022, which highlighted the adverse movements in the projected budget position since the commencement of phase 2 of the public consultation and agreed actions required to ensure the continued financial sustainability of the council, the council has received the local government finance settlement (LGFS) for 2023/24. A report on the outcome of the LGFS and the council's updated financial planning position for the five years 2023/24 to 2027/28 was reported to Council Executive on 17 January 2023.

The table below summarises the main elements of the budget model for each of the five years, with the revised budget gap for 2023/24 to 2027/28 estimated to be £47.6 million. The assumptions for council tax are currently under review by officers, with a report on scenarios presented to Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP on 26 January 2023.

*Table 3: Budget Model Summary 2023/24 to 2027/28*

<b>Incremental Movements</b>	<b>23/24 £'m</b>	<b>24/25 £'m</b>	<b>25/26 £'m</b>	<b>Three Year Total £'m</b>	<b>26/27 £'m</b>	<b>27/28 £'m</b>	<b>Five Year Total £'m</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Staffing Costs	14.5	6.3	6.6	<b>27.4</b>	6.7	6.8	<b>40.9</b>
Demographics & Demand Pressures	3.7	3.3	2.9	<b>9.9</b>	3.1	3.4	<b>16.4</b>
Revenue Consequences of Capital	2.3	1.0	0.9	<b>4.2</b>	1.3	0.5	<b>6.0</b>
SG Funded Developments	1.9	0.0	0.0	<b>1.9</b>	0.0	0.0	<b>1.9</b>
Service Pressures & Developments	5.4	0.1	0.2	<b>5.7</b>	0.2	0.4	<b>6.3</b>
Inflation & Indexation	15.0	8.5	5.1	<b>28.6</b>	5.3	5.7	<b>39.6</b>
<b>Gross Expenditure Increases</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>77.7</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>111.1</b>
<b>Income</b>							
Council Tax (4.5% assumption)	(5.4)	(5.5)	(5.8)	(16.7)	(6.1)	(6.4)	(29.2)
Fees & Charges (4.5% assumption)	(0.4)	(0.5)	(0.5)	(1.4)	(0.5)	(0.6)	(2.5)
Ringfenced SG Grant Funding	(9.4)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(14.4)	(2.5)	(2.5)	(19.4)
Core SG Grant Funding	(9.4)	0.0	0.0	(9.4)	(3.0)	0.0	(12.4)
<b>Income Movements</b>	<b>(24.6)</b>	<b>(8.5)</b>	<b>(8.8)</b>	<b>(41.9)</b>	<b>(12.1)</b>	<b>(9.5)</b>	<b>(63.5)</b>
<b>Forecast Budget Gap</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>35.8</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>47.6</b>

The forecast budget gap reflects the outcome of the 2023/24 local government finance settlement and latest budget model assumptions. Officers continually keep the assumptions in the budget model under review to ensure, as far as possible, they reflect current circumstances and information. The nature of long term forecasting means it is challenging to identify expenditure pressures and income for future years. There are always risks and uncertainties associated with long term financial planning and assumptions. The ongoing cost of living crisis and the remaining effects of the pandemic and the UK leaving the EU continue to provide considerable uncertainty. In addition, the outcome of the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill commencing its journey through the Scottish Parliament and resulting changes to service delivery models will have an impact on local government services, funding and financial and planning assumptions. There are significant risks and uncertainties associated with the long term financial assumptions underlying the budget model, including:

- Although the Scottish Government has intimated flat cash funding for local government, with a minor increase in 2026/27, the outlook for public sector funding remains uncertain.

- Continuation of high inflation resulting in substantial real terms reduction in the value of council funding.
- Policy changes by the UK or Scottish governments which restrict the council's flexibility to decide how to deliver services locally.
- Funding not being provided to fully cover the costs of introducing new legislation and commitments.
- Ring fencing of grant funding, or service delivery commitments, constraining the ability of local authorities to allocate resources to deliver local priorities.
- Economic uncertainty, where economic growth is not in line with the Office for Budget Responsibility and Scottish Fiscal Commission forecasts.
- Reform of local governance being pursued, providing uncertainty for service provision and funding.
- House building assumptions of 900 houses per year not being realised resulting in changes to council tax and school demographic assumptions.
- The level of future pay awards, which could be in excess of the council's planning assumptions.
- Increase in costs associated with demand led services.
- Actual pupil numbers not reflecting the school pupil forecasts.

#### D.4 Approach to Financial Planning

Audit Scotland and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have both identified the need for public bodies to focus on their medium to long term financial sustainability. They have advised that public bodies should develop strategies that are based on defined priorities, providing a clear road map for service delivery within constrained budgets.

The Accounts Commission has emphasised in several local government overview reports that evidence shows that councils are finding financial pressures increasingly difficult to manage and that effective leadership and robust planning are essential to help meet the challenges ahead. In addition, the Accounts Commission believe that all councils should have a long term financial strategy covering a minimum of five years and that these long term strategies should be supported by detailed plans covering a minimum of three years. The current financial headwinds facing local government, means that councils are required to take urgent and sustainable actions to ensure ongoing financial sustainability.

As agreed by Council Executive in October 2021 officers have continued the current approach to financial planning. The main elements of the financial planning process are:

- **Activity prioritisation** – priority analysis of services against council priorities and enabler themes to inform decisions about whether the service should continue or if changes should be made to service delivery. Scores provide a starting point from which to review proposed future service delivery.
- **Modernisation & efficiency savings** – whilst considering prioritisation savings, officers will also think about how activities can continue to be delivered within available resources. This will include identifying more efficient ways of delivery. This means that services need to focus on delivering statutory services at minimum cost and potentially removing or substantially reducing non statutory services.
- **Corporate projects** – identification and development of corporate saving options covering areas such as income generation, digital transformation, shared services and climate change.

To ensure the council is operating on a sustainable financial footing, fundamental changes will be required to some services, subject to the results from the consultation exercise. This is consistent with the findings of the Accounts Commission which believes that all options for change need to be investigated, with councils rigorously challenging existing service models and identifying alternative approaches to service delivery. The council's approach to financial and corporate planning:

- Provides a medium term view which is essential when implementing effective service and workforce planning, allowing workforce changes to be made in a proactive way.
- Provides as much certainty as possible for council employees and trade unions on the plans and actions to deliver budget savings and service changes.
- Provides officers with sufficient time to implement what, in many cases, will be fundamental changes to service delivery which require a significant lead in time, and may be dependent on or linked to other saving options.
- Helps officers and elected members to consider the long term implications of policy decisions and changes to service delivery.
- Creates greater certainty surrounding detailed financial plans, especially for the first three years of the five year financial strategy.
- Provides services and customers with advance notice of changes.
- Helps to integrate services and planning with community planning partners, especially where outcomes are longer term (e.g. health and social care, preventative spend).

## D.5 Budget Saving Options Relevant to Social Work and Health PDSP

Building on the process outlined above, officers have developed budget saving options. Information is provided in Appendix 4 on officer proposed budget reduction options for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26 providing a comprehensive list of savings at a service level. Where a saving measure is agreed and implemented in the first three years of the new five year strategy but there is continued associated savings in years four and five, this is noted in the appendix.

A description of the saving options, the value (including any full year effect for years 4 and 5) and anticipated full time equivalent (FTE) reduction is provided, in addition to whether it is a prioritisation or efficiency saving. Any staffing reductions will be achieved through the council's organisational change procedure. Information on further consultation, reporting or delegation to officers and potential impact on service performance and quality is also provided consistent with the annual revenue budget report. Links to the consultation help demonstrate how options have been developed following the consultation.

The council's budget model, as summarised in section D.3 of this report, provides indexation for budgets on the basis of the anticipated net budget after application of saving options. Should West Lothian Council not agree to implement the budget saving options identified by officers, the budget gap will further increase as the council will have to provide additional budget to cover increased indexation.

In summary, the budget saving options relevant to the Social Work and Health PDSP for non-IJB related functions for the three years 2023/24 to 2025/26 are as follows:

### Social Policy Non-IJB

Phase 2 Ref	Phase 2 Proposal	Ref	Saving Option	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total 3 Years £'000
1C	Digital transformation	S1a	Revised SWIFT replacement support & maintenance arrangements	0	44	0	44
1C	Digital transformation	S1b	SWIFT replacement review of support	0	0	20	20
1C	Digital transformation	S1c	Withdraw from Interagency Information Exchange (IIE) web portal	47	0	0	47
1G	Review services for children	S2a	Creation of a Children & Families access team	0	30	0	30

Phase 2 Ref	Phase 2 Proposal	Ref	Saving Option	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total 3 Years £'000
1A	Service redesign, integration & modernisation	S2b	Review of social policy business support	22	0	0	22
1A	Service redesign, integration & modernisation	S2c	Review of social policy administrative support	0	51	38	89
1H	Review of commissioned services	S3a	Review of existing contracts for commissioned care within Children & Families service	181	160	192	533
1G	Review services for children	S4a	Alternative approach to the delivery of active & achieving	30	0	0	30
1G	Review services for children	S4b	Development of a West Lothian adoption service	50	50	100	200
1G	Review services for children	S4c	Development of intensive fostering service	0	290	300	590
<b>Total</b>				<b>330</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>650</b>	<b>1,605</b>

Equality relevance assessments (ERAs) have been completed for all saving options in line with the council's established approach to equality. Where it has been assessed that a measure is relevant to equality, human rights and/or socioeconomic disadvantage, a full integrated impact assessment (IIA) has been completed. All ERAs and IIAs for options being considered by this PDSP are included in Appendix 5. Equality assessments enable the council to identify impacts and to consider and develop mitigation measures. They are intended to inform the decision making process by making all relevant information available to members. They are not intended to prevent decisions being taken and implemented.

At this stage the estimated budget gap over the five years 2023/24 to 2027/28 is £47.6 million and there are total officer savings options across all PDSPs of £47.5 million, leaving a small outstanding budget gap. As agreed by Council Executive on 6 December 2022, officers will develop additional savings to address any remaining gaps. Ensuring the council has a sustainable financial plan over the medium and longer term will be an ongoing process, with the council using one-off resources in the first years of the new five year programme to provide time to identify and implement recurring budget saving options. This is a departure from the council's previous approach to financial planning but is a necessity due to the financial crisis facing local government. Following approval of the new five year revenue financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 officers will identify further savings options in early 2023 for incorporation into Phase 3 of the public consultation, which will cover further savings options for 2024/25 to 2027/28.

## E. CONCLUSION

This report provides the Social Work and Health PDSP with information on potential saving options in council services included within the remit of the PDSP to enable further scrutiny and consideration before the new five year revenue financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 is presented to Council for approval.



## F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Review of Elected Member Involvement in Financial Planning – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 12 June 2018

Future Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Financial Context and Proposed Approach – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 26 October 2021

Revenue Budget 2022/23 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 15 February 2022

Scottish Spending Review 2022 and Future Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 Update – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 21 June 2022

Public Consultation Approach 2022 – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 21 June 2022

WL2028 Your Council Your Say – Public Consultation – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 4 October 2022

Autumn Statement and Scottish Budget Announcements 2022 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 6 December 2022

WL2028 Your Council Your Say – Public Consultation – Report by Depute Chief Executive to Council Executive on 20 December 2022

Scottish Budget and Local Government Finance Settlement 2023/24 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 17 January 2023

West Lothian Integration Scheme ([INTEGRATION SCHEME \(westlothian.gov.uk\)](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/integration-scheme))

### Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Summary of WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Consultation Responses for Social Work and Health PDSP

Appendix 2 – Phase 2 Consultation Response – Comment Categorisation on measures within the remit of the Panel

Appendix 3 – WL2028 Your Council, Your Say – Phase 2 Consultation Document

Appendix 4 – Potential Budget Saving Options for services within the remit of the Panel

Appendix 5 – Equality Relevance Assessments (ERAs) and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)

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**Alison White**  
**Depute Chief Executive**  
**30 January 2023**

**Summary of WL2028 Your Council, Your Say Consultation Responses for Social Work and Health PDSP**

Phase 2 Ref	Phase 2 Proposal	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments	Summary of Comments
1A	Service redesign, integration & modernisation	1,336	5.84%	<p>Support for the modernisation of council functions/services and taking advantage of technology and systems to achieve efficiencies.</p> <p>Support for the consolidation of council services and a review of the structure.</p> <p>Concern about the impact upon staff of reductions on frontline council employees and that it might result in poorer quality services for customers and declining performance.</p> <p>Suggestions that the hybrid working pilot should offer opportunities for the council to reduce the property portfolio and associated costs and that it would also support increased levels of staff productivity/efficiency.</p>
1C	Digital transformation	1,208	5.28%	<p>There is support for digital services and processes though it was suggested that the council needs to increase investment in the right technologies and systems and developing staff knowledge and skills in order to optimise efficiencies in this area.</p> <p>Concern that some older and vulnerable people and those from households with lower incomes may be disadvantaged or excluded by digital council services and a view that in-person and telephone contact needs to be maintained.</p> <p>It was suggested by some respondents that digital or automated services have limitations and there must be escalation points that allow customers to speak with a "person".</p> <p>Some respondents feel that the council website needs improvement to support greater digitalisation and improved access to services and information.</p>

Phase 2 Ref	Phase 2 Proposal	Number of Comments	Percentage of Total Comments	Summary of Comments
1G	Review of services for children	960	4.20%	<p>Respondents have highlighted the vulnerability of the group in receipt of these services/supports and suggest that the council need to proceed in the development of this proposal with due consideration for their needs.</p> <p>Some respondents were seeking assurance about the quality of care that young people would receive following the changes.</p> <p>There was support for the proposal as respondents felt that keeping young people local, and in their own communities is in line with council and educational values.</p> <p>Concern that children who are at risk, but not the highest level of risk, may miss out on vital support as a result of this change.</p> <p>Suggested that there is benefit in greater integration and alignment of resources between the teams that provide services/support in this area.</p>
1H	Review of commissioned services	708	3.10%	<p>Some respondents feel that any reduction in funding for services for children with complex and additional needs will be a barrier to early intervention and will not save money in the long-term.</p> <p>Some commented that this proposal will leave young people who require additional input from external agencies in a vulnerable position.</p> <p>Some respondents welcome the review of commissioned services and suggest that there are opportunities to identify efficiencies and improve upon the current level of service provided in partnership with third parties.</p> <p>There was some support to reduce the number of commissioned services and suggested better partnership working with other councils in its place.</p> <p>It was suggested by some respondents that they required more information on the role of third parties and the commissioned services before they could comment.</p>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4,212</b>	<b>18.42%</b>	

**Appendix 2****Phase 2 Consultation Response – Comment Summary on measures within the remit of the Panel**

<b>Phase 2 Proposal</b>	<b>1. The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal</b>	<b>2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal</b>	<b>3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make, or posed a question of the measure</b>	<b>4. The council is already doing this.</b>	<b>5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work</b>	<b>5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit, or requires additional expenditure</b>	<b>5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities</b>	<b>5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed</b>	<b>6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.</b>	<b>7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.</b>	<b>8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisation</b>	<b>9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question</b>	<b>Total</b>
1A Service redesign, integration & modernisation	551	318	168	81	5	3	3	-	87	19	7	94	1,336
1C Digital transformation	680	334	72	14	-	5	1	-	61	24	1	16	1,208
1G Review of services for children	302	469	105	50	1	-	1	1	5	16	1	9	960
1H Review of commissioned services	251	193	182	24	-	-	1	-	6	20	2	29	708
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,784</b>	<b>1,314</b>	<b>527</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>4,212</b>

**Appendix 3**

**WL2028 Your Council, Your Say – Phase 2 Consultation Document**

# Your Council Your Say 2028

## A message from the Chief Executive

**The council is committed to meeting the needs of local people and high performance across all areas of service delivery.**

Like other local authorities in Scotland, West Lothian Council faces constrained funding and substantial cost increases in the next five years.

This means that the council, along with the West Lothian community, will have to make difficult decisions about local services. Reductions in local government public spending have impacted council services for over 15 years and the council has made over £150 million worth of savings since 2007/08.

We also understand that local people and businesses are also experiencing difficulties from the Cost of Living increases and the next five years are also expected to be extremely challenging for the council as it will also face many of the same pressures from the Costing of Living crisis.

In preparation for the challenges ahead, we want to work with you – our community and partners – in shaping the future of council services in West Lothian. This consultation is the second in a series of planned engagements.

**Your feedback** will be used to help us become more sustainable, address the funding gap and meet the challenges ahead.

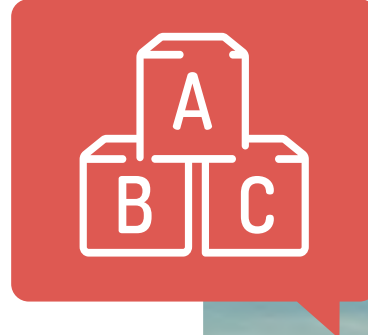
Phase 1 of the Council's consultation approach commenced in June 2022.

Following further developments in the Cost of Living crisis and related cost pressures on energy costs the budget gap has increased to £47.1million over the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28, with a budget gap of £36.5million over the three-year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The consultation on the officer savings proposals will only take around 5-10 minutes to complete but it is vital that you take the time to tell us what your views are on the officer budget proposals contained within this document; and what your views are on Council tax, which is used to help fund local services.

Your views are important and I would encourage every person who lives and/or works in West Lothian, local organisations and business to get involved

**Graham Hope,**  
Chief Executive



## Consultation Roadmap to 2028

The council is undertaking a three-stage consultation with the people, business and customers of West Lothian in order to form the Council's Priorities and Budget Strategy for 2023/24 to 2027/28, and also consult on the future direction of the Council.

### PHASE 1 | CONSULTATION - COMPLETE

### PHASE 2 | CONSULTATION

Autumn 2022 Budget savings 2023/24 to 2025/26

### BUDGET SETTING

5-year financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

3-year detailed revenue budget 2023/24 to 2025/26

Agreement on taxation levels for 2023/24 to 2027/28

### PHASE 3 | CONSULTATION

Summer 2023 - Budget savings 2026/27 to 2027/28

## Phase 2 | Our Budget

Local voices matter and, in the second phase of our consultation, we want you to help us:

1

Consider the officer proposals that are set out in the consultation to address the funding gap of £47.1 million



2

Provide feedback on the proposals



3

Suggest any other ways that we may help to reduce council expenditure and/or changes to council services to make them more efficient



4

Have your say on Council Tax in West Lothian



**How to take part in the survey:**



### Online

Respondents are encouraged to complete the form online by going to [www.westlothian.gov.uk/WL2028](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/WL2028) or by scanning the QR code with your mobile device.

### Paper copy

You can complete this form, Please read the proposals from pages 10 to 12 and share your views on pages 13 and 14. Post your completed form to:

**West Lothian Council**  
**Freepost BULLETIN SURVEY**  
**Livingston**  
**EH54 6FF**

### Hand survey in

**Alternatively hand your completed survey into any partnership centre or Customer Information services (CIS) office.**

**Have your say by 20 November. The consultation is now open and closes on 20 November.**



It is expected that West Lothian Council will have to make significant savings over the next five years due to insufficient funding and rising costs.

This means that the council, along with the West Lothian community, will have to make difficult decisions about local services.

We are consulting on officer proposals, from the senior leadership team, to save £36.5 million over the next three years – from 2023/24 to 2025/26. The council must balance its budget – something we are legally required to do. Because we have insufficient budget, we are forced to reduce expenditure on local services. We want to ensure that the funding we do have is spent on services that matter most to our communities.



## What you need to know

### Background

Reductions in local government public spending have impacted council services for over 15 years and the council has made over £150 million worth of savings since 2007

Like other councils in Scotland, West Lothian Council faces further constrained funding and substantial costs over the next five years

The Scottish Government has advised that councils face a cash freeze in funding for 2023/24 to 2025/26. These funding constraints are combined with rising costs

which include growing number of pupils, an increasing number of older people with care needs, higher energy costs and meeting pay awards.

This means that the council, along with the West Lothian community, will have to make difficult decisions about local services.

It's clear that the council need to make changes to the way services are delivered in future

### Are we consulting on proposed changes?

Yes, the council is consulting on the future direction of council services

At this stage, council officers have published a number of budget proposals which represent reductions and changes in services. Decisions on what will change will not be made by elected members (councillors) until after the consultation is complete

### What might the future look like for local services?

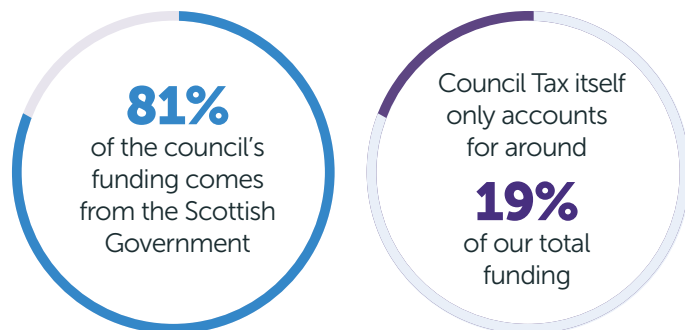
The council has a legal duty to provide certain services and this will continue. The council will also continue to prioritise our resources and ensure we have the right people, partners and assets to deliver positive

outcomes for West Lothian

In future, the council will not deliver all of the services it currently provides – we simply do not have the resources to do so. Some services currently delivered will have to be delivered by partners, communities and other organisations

If all of these officer proposals (pages 10 to 12) are agreed, the council will be able to balance its budget – something we are legally required to do. If some of these proposals are not agreed, other ways to deliver a balance budget via additional savings proposals will have to be identified.

## How is the council funded?



In 2022/23 our revenue budget (day to day running costs) amounts to:

**£490 million**

## How do we spend that budget?

**£10.5 million** on public transport (including school transport) and bus subsidies for privately owned bus providers

**£15.8 million** on facilities management, including school meals, cleaning council buildings, janitorial staff and street crossing patrol guides



**£5.8 million** on the council's fleet of vehicles



**£29.2 million** is spent on social work services for children and families

**£36.6 million** on services for vulnerable adults



**£26.7 million** on Early Learning and Childcare



**£9.3 million** on footpaths, street lighting, roads, winter maintenance, structures and flood prevention



**£53.8 million** on services for older people

**£3.6 million** on culture and sports services



**£4.2 million** on homelessness services and community safety



**£19.5 million** on support for children with additional needs



**£70.5 million** on Primary School education

**£60.5 million** on Secondary School education



**£4 million** on planning, regeneration, economic development, trading standards and environmental health

**£2.9 million** on neighbourhood services, including libraries, registration services, community centres, and customer information services



**£14.9 million** on the council's property portfolio



**£6.4 million** on country parks/ open spaces, play areas, street cleaning and cemeteries



**£13.3 million** on waste management & recycling services

# Phase 1 | Consultation | Our Future

## Local Voices matter and the first stage – Phase 1, aimed to:

- 1 Understand the services that local people want and need in the future
- 2 Identify priorities that will help West Lothian be a better place to live, work, learn and visit
- 3 Identify some principles for change that help us to transform the way that the Council works
- 4 Understand how you think we should address the funding gap.
- 5 Understand how you want the council to engage with communities and customers

## A summary of the outcome from the Phase 1 consultation is set out below:

### Your Community

#### ? We asked

What are the best parts of living in West Lothian?

#### ≡ You said

- Access to open spaces, parks and green spaces
- Access to shops and services
- The Transport links

What parts of your community need to be improved?

- Better community facilities
- Availability and reliability of public transport
- Access to open spaces

What are the most important issues for your community?

- Access to health care
- Economy and the cost of living
- Crime and community safety

What are the most important issues for you?

- Access to health care
- My mental health and wellbeing
- My physical health

#### What we will do

- The council will continue to protect and maintain the local environment through a range of council services.
- The council will continue to support the local economy through support for business and employability programmes.
- The council will develop a re-prioritised and demand led Public Transport Strategy (see proposal 4b).
- The council will offer communities the opportunity to access community facilities in partnership with other organisations.
- The council will pass comments about access to health services to our partners NHS Lothian and will continue to work with them to increase the quality and responsiveness of local health services.
- The council will pass comments about crime to our partners in Police Scotland and will continue to work with them to improve community safety in West Lothian

### Engaging with the Council

#### ? We asked

What is your preferred way of engaging with the council on the future of council services

#### ≡ You said

- By far the most popular option was through online surveys
- Some support for social media
- Only limited support for in-person public meetings, focus groups and road shows
- Only limited support for paper surveys

#### What we will do

- The council will continue to engage with people who live and/or work in West Lothian, local organisations and business through a range of methods, forums, and channels.

### Council Commitments and Priorities

#### ? We asked

Connect, Empower and Deliver as commitments for the Council?

#### ≡ You said

- These are good commitments
- The council must put them into action
- The council must demonstrate achievement

#### What we will do

- The council will put these commitments into action, including; re-developing the council values, appraisal process and performance management system to ensure they are embedded in the delivery of our services and actions of all of our staff.
- Opportunities to connect and empower the community and our staff will also be advanced, such as under proposals 1a, 1c, and 3a.

#### ? We asked

Are the Eight Priorities for West Lothian still the right ones?

#### ≡ You said

- Yes, they still matter
- Consider adding Housing & Homelessness
- The council must demonstrate achievement in the priorities

#### What we will do

- The council will realign our priorities using feedback from the community. This will be used as the basis for our Corporate Plan for the period 2023 to 2028 and will guide our decision making and resource prioritisation in the years ahead.
- The council will ensure that measurable progress and achievement in each of the priorities is reported to the community on a regular scheduled basis.

### Reducing Council Costs

#### ? We asked

To reduce costs, the council should?

#### ≡ You said

- Sell some Council properties and assets
- Close some buildings that have low usage
- Empower local groups and communities to deliver some services

#### What we will do

- The council will continue to modernise and rationalise all properties across the estate.
- As the number of buildings required to deliver council services reduces, community groups will have the opportunity to request ownership of properties through the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, see proposal 3a.

#### ? We asked

The approach to Digital Council service provision should be?

#### ≡ You said

- Continue to invest in the council website
- Increase the number of services that are accessible online via the council website
- Continue to provide telephone and face-to-face access to services for those who do not or cannot access digital services

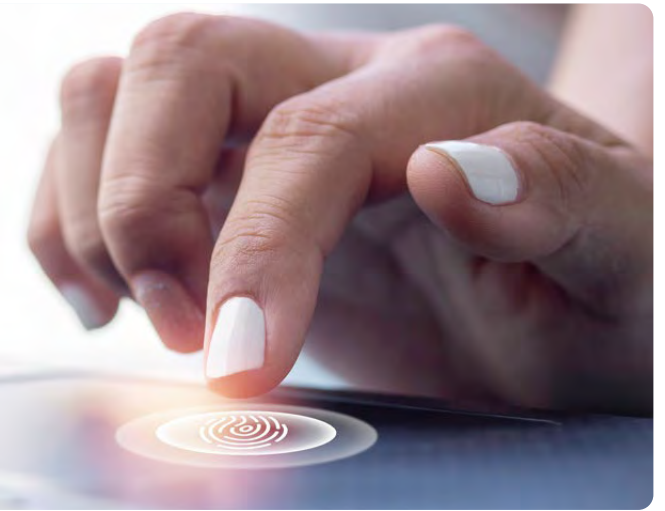
#### What we will do

- The council will pursue opportunities to digitalise processes where there is a clear benefit to customers/efficiency, see proposals 1a and 1c.
- The council is committed to the partnership model that increases access and connectivity of council services for the public. We will also continue to provide a comprehensive customer service that is demand-responsive and preserves face-to-face and telephone contact as well as digital contacts.



# 1 Modernising the council

Measures totalling £21.3 million over the next three years have been identified, which would make the council more agile and cost effective. There are opportunities – due to new technologies, planned service changes and new ways of working – to increase the efficiency of council operations. This will mean changes and/or reductions to some of the services that we deliver and the council will also make changes to structures, resourcing and management arrangements in some services in order to achieve efficiencies.



## 1A Service Redesign, Integration and Modernisation

**Estimated saving: £1.2 million**

The internal business and financial support functions that are provided to council services to support statutory (legal) requirements would change through redesign, integration and greater use of technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness. This would include consolidating services, reducing staff numbers and the number of systems we use within the internal business and financial support functions that are provided to council services. There will be an impact on customers but we will seek to minimise the impact through redesigning services, integration of teams and further use of technology. The council will also review a small number of externally contracted services, with a view to achieving cost reductions.

## 1B Review of Management arrangements / Management efficiencies

**Estimated saving: £500,000**

Some management arrangements will be reviewed in conjunction with changes to services and resource re-alignment, where it is appropriate. The council will ensure that the management structure continues to support effective delivery of council services and statutory duties, whilst also seeking to make council governance and decision-making more efficient.

## 1C Digital Transformation

**Estimated saving: £502,000**

The council must continue to match provision with the way that customers access services, which increasingly requires investment in digital solutions to meet demand. The council will adopt technologies that will deliver automated processes and a reduction in staff costs and will also deliver multi-media customer services that will increase customer choice and accessibility. This would allow the council to continue to provide support whilst delivering a more efficient service at low cost.

## 1D Allocation of School Resources

**Estimated saving: £5 million**

It is proposed that the model for determining devolved school resources is revised further to identify opportunities for more efficient service delivery. This may include utilising resources provided to deliver additional support in schools for core staffing requirements, greater use of technology to deliver the curriculum, and changes to administrative and pupil support staffing arrangements.

The council proposes that changes made in the allocation of resources to schools, through a revised Devolved School Management funding model and through a review of provision by third party providers, will enable the council to continue service provision.

## 1E Realignment of free provision in schools to match Scottish Government commitments and funding, and maintain school clothing grants at current levels

**Estimated saving: £890,000**

The council would propose to align free school meal, breakfast club and instrumental music provision with Scottish Government funding levels. The council would continue to deliver these vital services for our children and young people. The council would also maintain school clothing grants, which are above the amounts paid by many councils, at existing levels.

## 1F Restructuring the School Day

**Estimated saving: £2.4 million**

West Lothian has developed an agile learning culture and approach and delivered improved school attainment results and improved learning experiences for pupils. Teacher contact time is currently 22.5 hours per week and there is an opportunity to re-align the primary school day to match this time. This could provide continuity for children and offer the opportunity to provide alternative learning experiences for the remainder of the time. This would result in teacher/pupil contact time being reduced but with no change to the length of the overall school day. This proposal would also lead to a review of the secondary school week by reducing the school week by 50mins, but again with no change to the start time and end time of the school day, and would bring the secondary school week in line with other local authorities.

## 1G Care for Children

**Estimated saving: £1.2 million**

The proposal includes a review of all children's services to achieve further efficiency by redesigning and aligning teams more closely to deliver more streamlined teams and reduced staffing. The service will maintain its focus on supporting children most at risk and providing earlier intervention services in line with statutory (legal) requirements.

There will also be a strengthening of the range of fostering options available locally to support children stay in West Lothian. This will support good outcomes and prevent children having to leave their home community of West Lothian to be cared for.

This proposal includes developing intensive foster care to support the most traumatised children, investing in

increasing the existing group of fostering families and also increasing the numbers of foster carers able to care for children with a disability.

## 1H Commissioned Services

**Estimated saving: £533,000**

This proposal includes a review of all commissioning arrangements with third parties in place for children's services ensuring that they are aligned with the services current priorities and taking account of all new developments and approaches in place. This review will lead to cost reductions and the delivery of commissioned services targeted at the highest areas of priority.

## 1I Revised facilities management in schools

**Estimated saving: £1.1 million**

It is proposed that the facilities management service will be reviewed to seek better scheduling of activities and revised cover arrangements and opening hours in schools.

## 1J Technical Financial Savings

**Estimated saving: £1 million**

The council has strong financial planning and management arrangements in place and the effectiveness of those arrangements are recognised by our Audit and Regulators. The council intends to make efficiencies in the administration of our financial processes, with resources re-aligned to match the demand for support for customers and changes to processes such as, Universal Credit.

## 1K Review funding models in partnership with West Lothian Leisure

**Estimated saving: £750,000**

Reflecting the council's reduced income, the funding provided to West Lothian Leisure will be removed and it will become fully self-funded. The council would continue to engage and support West Lothian Leisure in reviewing its business model and service delivery for communities.

## 1L General balance of savings to be identified

**Estimated saving: £6.2 million**

Officer proposals amount to savings of £30.3 million for the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26 against a budget gap of £36.5 million over this period, resulting in a general balance of savings of £6.2 million that has still to be identified. Given that the majority of the council's budget is staffing costs, it is highly likely that the balance will be met by changes to service delivery and staffing levels across the council's workforce.



## 2 Modernising Social Care

The **West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB)** has responsibility for planning for most of the health and social care services for adults in West Lothian.

The IJB role is to set the strategic direction for functions delegated to it and deliver the priorities set out in its **Strategic Plan** ([insert link](#)). The functions of the IJB include: Primary Care, Adult Social Care, Mental Health Services, Learning Disability Services, Physical Disability Services, Community Health Services, Community Pharmacy Services, Health Improvement, Unscheduled Care for Adults, Housing Support/Aids and Adaptations.

The IJB receives funding allocations from West

Lothian Council and NHS Lothian to enable delivery of local priorities for health and social care for adults. The Board gives directions to the council and health board as to how they must carry out their business to secure delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Over the three-year period, from 2023/24 to 2025/26, it is expected the IJB will have to make substantial savings as funding available will be insufficient to meet the increasing cost of service

delivery. The ongoing financial pressures and the increasing levels of demand mean that the IJB will need to change the way it delivers services. A range of officer proposals totalling £5.45 million over the next three years have been identified for relevant social care services and the IJB will consult with people in West Lothian to seek their views on these proposals and associated changes to service delivery. The IJB's consultation can be accessed **INSERT LINK**.

## 3 Community Empowerment and Partnership

Through community empowerment the council is seeking to support people to working together with others in their community to increase control over their lives and the services they use. Measures totalling £3.8 million over the next three years have been identified which would enable the council to deliver more effective, flexible and affordable services.

### 3A Empowering communities and reducing the number of council facilities

**Estimated saving: £1.1 million**

Over the years the council has significantly reduced the number and cost of buildings and the council will continue to modernise and rationalise all properties across the estate.

As the number of buildings required to deliver council services reduces, community groups have the opportunity to request ownership of community centres and other council properties through the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. As the council has moved to the partnership model, there is an opportunity to consolidate the number of

community centres and village halls. It is therefore proposed to rationalise the provision of council facilities and community centres across West Lothian and support community access through council or partner facilities within each community.

### 3B Redesign of Early Learning and Childcare

**Estimated saving: £2.3 million**

The council will make sure that all resources available for early learning and childcare are fully utilised to support high quality service delivery. The council will realign provision and staffing in nurseries to match parental choice for nursery placements, and deliver an option for parents/carers to purchase additional hours of early learning and childcare in council settings.

### 3C Service Re-structure of Youth Services

**Estimated saving: £500,000**

A review of youth services has shown that the service makes its greatest impact through More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) – a programme that aims to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

The focus will be on MCMC, with other initiatives and work supported through closer working between schools and community learning partners.

Scan to Complete the survey online





## 4 Environment, Climate Change and reducing energy use

Measures totalling £4.8 million over the next three years have been identified that would change the services we provide to improve the local environment and infrastructure, and ensure that the council continues to have efficient and effectively managed assets to support service delivery. This will include new standards and delivery models that will ensure we continue to protect the built and natural environment in West Lothian more effectively.

### 4A Revised Service Standards and Delivery Models – Waste Services Estimated saving: £336,000

There is a requirement to review service provision at the Community Recycling Centres to make sure that the service is delivered in an effective and efficient way whilst meeting council priorities.

### 4B Reprioritised Passenger Transport Strategy Estimated saving: £2.2 million

The council currently subsidises around 20% of bus routes as well as providing a number of other services, such as school transport and concessionary transport schemes.

Many of the subsidised services are underutilised, and a public transport review is proposed to focus on connecting communities and businesses in a way that is affordable and effective. This will include ceasing some services and exploring alternative transport models. An updated transport strategy would focus on use of concessionary bus, Handicabs and Dial-a-Ride schemes, and removal of all subsidies for bus routes that are not commercially viable. The council would also propose to remove concessionary rail schemes with are in additional to existing national schemes.

### 4C Reprioritised School Transport Strategy Estimated saving: £1.4 million

The council currently provides school transport to pupils who live less than the statutory (legal) distance of 2 miles for Primary School pupils and 3 miles for Secondary School pupils. An updated school transport strategy would apply the statutory (legal) minimum limits for school transport and the use of the Young Persons national entitlement scheme for free travel on commercial bus routes.

### 4C Revised Country Parks Service Estimated saving: £95,000

It is proposed that animal attraction at Beecraigs Country Park is closed, with the animals being relocated to alternative animal attraction venue(s) out with council operations. This attraction currently operates at a net loss and closure is expected to have minimal impact on future visitor numbers.

### 4D Revised Service Standards and Delivery Models – Roads and Transport Estimated saving: £246,000

There is a requirement to review service provision and standards to make sure that the service is delivered in an effective and efficient way whilst meeting council priorities. Service delivery, including winter

maintenance, will be changed to focus on statutory (legal) requirements with an updated approach to asset management. This will mean some services, such as festive lighting, will no longer be provided by the council.

### 4E Efficiencies from improved use and management of council properties Estimated saving: £279,000

The council has a ten-year programme for investing in its assets to support service delivery. This approach reduces the need for reactive maintenance work, improving how the council invests in property assets.

### 4F Reducing carbon emissions and improving efficiency Estimated saving: £245,000

Following the success of previous energy efficiency initiatives, the council will continue to reduce energy consumption and related costs through new energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. processes, with resources re-aligned to match the demand for support for customers and changes to processes such as, Universal Credit.

## 5 Reviewing income, concessions and other contributions

The council has one of the lowest levels of income through sales, fees and charges per head of population in Scotland. The council established an approach to income and concessions in 2015 where all discretionary charges are benchmarked with Scottish averages or other local providers. Measures totalling £1.1 million over the next three years have been identified, which would raise additional income.

It is proposed that all opportunities for discretionary charging will be reviewed and benchmarked in addition to a standard indexation increase being applied in line with existing practice.

### Areas where the council could investigate opportunities for additional sources of income include:

- Introduction of charges for household garden waste collections
- Review of fees for planning advisory services and to maximise developer contributions
- Lease facilities to a commercial operator, social enterprise or franchise
- Review of rents and fees for the council's commercial properties



Scan to Complete  
the survey online

Following analysis of the feedback received, the results of the Phase 2 consultation will be reported to a meeting of the Council Executive Committee on 20 December 2022, and thereafter a series of special Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels will take place in January 2023. This will provide a platform for elected members and community organisation representatives to discuss the findings of the consultation and put questions to council officers relating to the consultation.

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this consultation document.**



**Alternatively hand your completed survey into any partnership centre or Customer Information services (CIS) office.**

**Provide your comments here (please include the budget measure reference, for example: 1a)**

**F** ☐ Prefer not to say

**Potential Budget Saving Options for services within the remit of the Panel****Consultation Questions Key:**

Ref	Consultation Question
1A	Service redesign, integration & modernisation
1C	Digital transformation
1G	Review of services for children
1H	Review of commissioned services

**Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board – Digital Transformation**

Saving Ref	Consultation Ref	Measure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000	Years 4 & 5 £'000	Estimated Staffing Reduction (FTE)	Prioritisation/ Efficiency	Full IIA?	Further Consultation/ Reporting or Delegation to Officers <sup>1</sup>	Impact on Service Performance and Quality
S1a	1C	Revised SWIFT replacement support and maintenance arrangements	0	44	0	44	0	0.0	Efficiency	No	Officers to deliver as an operational measure.	No adverse impact on service performance and quality anticipated.
S1b	1C	Swift replacement review of support	0	0	20	20	0	0.5	Efficiency	Yes	Officers to deliver as operational measure, following consultation with staff & trade unions.	No adverse impact on service performance and quality anticipated.
S1c	1C	Withdraw from Interagency Information Exchange (IIE) web portal	47	0	0	47	0	0.0	Efficiency	No	Officers to deliver as an operational measure, including engagement with partners.	Portal is currently not utilised, therefore this will have no adverse impact on service performance and quality.
<b>Total</b>			<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.5</b>				

<sup>1</sup> Further Consultation/Reporting or Delegation is subject to the measure being approved by Council at the budget setting meeting.

**Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board – Service Redesign, Integration & Modernisation**

Saving Ref	Consultation Ref	Measure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000	Years 4 & 5 £'000	Estimated Staffing Reduction (FTE)	Prioritisation/ Efficiency	Full IIA?	Further Consultation/ Reporting or Delegation to Officers	Impact on Service Performance and Quality
S2a	1G	Creation of a Children & Families access team	0	30	0	30	0	0.0	Efficiency	Yes	Officers to deliver as an operational measure following consultation with staff and trade unions.	No adverse impact on service performance and quality anticipated. By improving the first response to contacts for service this should lead to less crisis interventions and a more responsive service. The council will continue to meet statutory duties.
S2b	1A	Review of social policy business support	22	0	0	22	0	0.5	Efficiency	Yes	Officers to deliver as an operational measure following consultation with staff and trade unions.	No impact on service delivery. Posts will be matched to support the services continuing to be provided.
S2c	1A	Review of social policy administrative support	0	51	38	89	129	8.6	Efficiency	Yes	Officers to deliver as an operational measure following consultation with staff and trade unions.	As part of the review, impact on performance will be fully assessed. Posts will be matched to support the services continuing to be provided.
<b>Total</b>			<b>22</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>16.3</b>				

**Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board – Review of Commissioned Services**

Saving Ref	Consultation Ref	Measure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000	Years 4 & 5 £'000	Estimated Staffing Reduction (FTE)	Prioritisation/ Efficiency	Full IIA?	Further Consultation/ Reporting or Delegation to Officers	Impact on Service Performance and Quality
S3a	1H	Review of existing contracts for commissioned care within Children & Families service	181	160	192	533	265	0.0	Efficiency	Yes	Officers to deliver as an operational measure, including engagement with third sector partners.	As part of the review, impact on service performance will be fully assessed. Reductions will be targeted towards non-essential services to minimise impact on priorities. The council will continue to meet statutory duties.
<b>Total</b>			<b>181</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>0.0</b>				

**Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board – Children & Families – Family & Parenting Support**

Saving Ref	Consultation Ref	Measure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000	Years 4 & 5 £'000	Estimated Staffing Reduction (FTE)	Prioritisation/ Efficiency	Full IIA?	Further Consultation/ Reporting or Delegation to Officers	Impact on Service Performance and Quality
S4a	1G	Alternative approach to the delivery of active and achieving	30	0	0	30	0	0.0	Efficiency	Yes	Officers to deliver as an operational measure.	No adverse impact on service performance and quality anticipated.
S4b	1G	Development of a West Lothian adoption service	50	50	100	200	0	0.0	Efficiency	Yes	Findings of the review and revision to adoption policy to be considered by Social Work and Health PDSP and Council Executive.	This will improve performance in sourcing placements, will reduce risk of adoption breakdown and will improve outcomes for children.



Saving Ref	Consultation Ref	Measure	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	Total £'000	Years 4 & 5 £'000	Estimated Staffing Reduction (FTE)	Prioritisation/ Efficiency	Full IIA?	Further Consultation/ Reporting or Delegation to Officers	Impact on Service Performance and Quality
S4c	1G	Development of Intensive Fostering Service	0	290	300	<b>590</b>	600	0.0	Efficiency	Yes	Findings of the review and revision to adoption policy to be considered by Social Work and Health PDSP and Council Executive.	This will improve placement performance with improved outcomes and experiences for children. It should reduce the risk of placement breakdowns and provide more opportunities for foster caring in West Lothian for West Lothian's children.
<b>Total</b>			<b>80</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>0.0</b>				

**Equality Relevance Assessments (ERAs) and Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs)****Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S1a – Revised SWIFT replacement support and maintenance
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children and Justice
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children Services Senior Manager Older People Senior Manager Adults
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<p><b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	X
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

There is no requirement for a full IIA for this proposed option. A new social care case management system has been provisioned to replace the existing SWIFT system. The new system will be fully implemented from April 2024. The current SWIFT system support and maintenance contract expires in April 2024. The new system will be fully functional at that point with a maintenance contract included as part of the system package commissioned. There will be no impact therefore on employees or service users. The replacement social care case management system will improve and modernise processes and the maintenance for it has been commissioned making the SWIFT maintenance agreement obsolete.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

<b>1. Details of proposal</b>	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S1b – SWIFT replacement review of support (This measure is linked to S2c and S2b)
<b>Service Area</b>	Social Policy Non-Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Senior Manager (Social Policy)
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b>	Senior Managers
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

<b>2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?</b>			
YES	✓	NO	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
Age – older people, young people and children	✓
Disability – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
Gender reassignment – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
Marriage or civil partnership – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
Pregnancy and maternity – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
Race – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
Religion or belief – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
Sex – Male, female and intersex	
Sexual Orientation – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

YES	✓	NO	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S1c – Withdraw from Interagency Information Exchange (IIE) web portal
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children and Justice
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children Services
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>		<b>NO</b>	X
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

There is no requirement for a full IIA for this proposed option. The council has access to other systems with information sharing capacity therefore the removal of this portal will not impact on employee's ability to fulfil the responsibilities of their individual job roles and will not change or impact service users access to support from the service. This portal in its current state does not have full functionality and its removal will have no impact.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S2a - Creation of a children & families access team
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children's Services
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children & Justice Services
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	X
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	X
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	



**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form**

<b>1. Details of proposal</b>	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S2a – Creation of a Children & Families Access Team
<b>Details of Others Involved</b>	Senior Managers, Group Managers
<b>Date Assessment Conducted</b>	30/11/2022

<b>2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed</b> (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes including the context within which it will operate)
<p>The Duty and Child Protection Team was established in 2018 to provide an initial point of contact for Children and Families duty referrals, enquiries and Child Protection referrals. Duty referrals are dealt with by a social worker who signposts to other services or agencies, makes referrals for other services, provides information or guidance and undertakes assessments. Child protection referrals are responded to by team managers and social workers, often requiring immediate intervention to assess and plan. Currently referrals are received by the Duty and Child Protection Team via telephone and this requires a range of administrative actions to ensure the team screen referrals appropriately and to time.</p> <p>This proposal relates to the creation of a Children and Families Access Team which will comprise of four family support workers to screen all referrals received to the service. This will allow the statutory duties of child protection to be prioritised and to more efficiently deal with other referrals, including diverting at the earliest stage. The referrals that do not require a social worker to be involved will be dealt with by the family support workers at the point of contact.</p> <p>The family support workers will be managed within the existing management structure of the Duty and Child Protection team. The proposal will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide an improved experience for the public and professionals making referrals who will receive a timely response when making an initial contact with children and families statutory services.</li> <li>• will build capacity in the duty and child protection team freeing up Social Workers allowing them to focus their skills on social work assessments and intervention for children most at risk.</li> <li>• will potentially allow for the increased use of the Near Me video conference platform for some lower level assessment consultations to be undertaken using this platform, which will remove the requirement for face to face visits and create capacity within the service as a result of a reduction in the number of visits required for level assessment as this will increase staff availability for face to face conversations due to reduced travel time around the county.</li> </ul>

<b>3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (people with protected characteristics) may have in relation to this policy</b>	
Age	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There will be a positive difference for families and professionals making a referral or seeking information or advice from the Duty and Child Protection team as there will be staff dedicated to receive their call. This will improve customer satisfaction as referrers will not be required to wait for a call back.</p> <p>Families and professionals will have a quicker outcome to their referral.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> Staff in Health and Education services have reported frustrations in being required to leave a message and some delays in being called back.</p>
Disability	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> As above.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> As above</p>

Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Race	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Religion or Belief	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sex	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.

**4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy.**

Vulnerable groups may include the following:

- Unemployed
- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People on benefits
- Those involved in the criminal justice system
- People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)
- People who live in rural areas
- Pensioners
- Looked After Children
- Carers including young carers
- People misusing services
- Others e.g. veterans, students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness
- Homeless people
- People with low literacy/ numeracy
- People with lower educational qualifications
- People in low paid work
- People with one or more protected characteristics

**What effect/difference will the policy have on people?**

Creating a Children and Families Access Team should have a positive impact on equality by making the referral process more straightforward and quicker.

Referrers will have the opportunity to speak directly to staff during their initial contact to discuss their needs or concerns and will not be required to be available to receive a call back. There will also be the opportunity to engage digitally as part of the new service.

The team will comprise of existing family support workers and it is proposed that new family support worker posts will be created by converting two social worker posts to family support worker posts.

**How do you know that?**

This is an objective of the policy.

**5. Action Plan**

What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion?

**Actioner Name:** Head of Social Policy

**Action Date:** April 2024

**What is the issue?**

A Children and Families Access Team will be created

**What action will be taken?**

- Work to be undertaken around current demand, referral and enquiry data, and service provision to assist in considering future demands.
- Benchmarking with access processes in other areas may be required.
- Process mapping to be undertaken to ensure effective new processes created.
- Develop guidance for the new roles in managing referrals.
- Communication to internal and external services of new team.
- Recruitment of staff to the new team after completing extensive review of current setup and structures. This will be done in accordance with the council's workforce policy.

**Progress against action**

Ongoing

**6. Details of consultation and involvement**

Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process?

- a) State which service users and groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- b) Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- c) Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.

A review of the Duty and Child Protection Team was undertaken and concluded in March 2021. This included a review of the work undertaken and consultations with staff.

A West Lothian Council wide consultation was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and closed on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The results from this consultation will be considered and all those residents living and working in West Lothian have been encouraged to take part.

## 7. Data and Information

What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

- a) What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?
- b) What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (describe the information and conclusions, and state where the information can be found)
  - i. Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical analysis)
  - ii. Qualitative (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)
- c) Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.
- d) Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.

The following research and evidence have been used to inform the project:

- Internal service review
- The model in place in Adult Services that screens referrals for service, diverts and signposts and passes on to the duty system where duty responses are required
- Benchmarking for awareness of access processes in other local authorities
- Children's Services Plan 2020-23
- GIRFEC Policy refresh 2022
- National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021
- Edinburgh and Lothians Child Protection Procedures

## 8. Mitigating Actions

If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you MUST identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.

- a) How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.
- b) How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.
- c) Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- d) If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- e) Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.

This should have a positive impact on equality. Changing the way staff engage with the service will improve the length of time taken between initial referral and the appropriate support or staff member being allocated to the case. This will speed up the process and improve the overall experience for the referrer and the referee.

A detailed equality impact assessment will be used throughout the process of the review. Recommendations from a review will impact on staff and potentially service users.

**9. Monitoring and Review**

- a) How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?
- b) What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
- c) How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?
- d) When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- e) Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? Please detail below

The new model will require the development of a system to review performance.  
Once the model is in place, there will be ongoing review.

**10. Recommendation and Reasoning**

Implement proposal.

**Reason for Recommendation**

The development of the access team is aimed to have a positive impact on children, young people and their families in West Lothian.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S2b - Review of Social Policy business support (This measure is linked to S1b and S2c)
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children's Services
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children & Justice Senior Manager Older People Senior Manager Adults
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	X
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	X
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	X
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	X
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	X
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	X

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023



**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S2c - Review of Social Policy administrative support (This measure is linked to S2b and S1b)
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children's Services
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children & Justice Services Senior Manager Older People Senior Manager Adults
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	X
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	X
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	X
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	X
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	X
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	X

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

## Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S1b – SWIFT replacement review of support S2b – Review of Social Policy business support S2c - Review of social policy administrative support
<b>Details of Others Involved</b>	Senior Managers
<b>Date Assessment Conducted</b>	30/11/2022

2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes including the context within which it will operate)
<p>The requirement of the council to deliver a balanced budget along with modernising processes and services delivered, has resulted in an identified proposed staffing efficiency within the Social Policy administrative team and Business support team. This will require a review of functions, staffing requirements and structures within both teams.</p> <p>There will be a full review of service provision. The saving will be achieved through analysis and review of all vacant posts across the team, the realignment of resources to ensure adequate cover to support the service as part of a full restructure. This will therefore impact on staff roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>There will be a savings proposal in relation to administration, business and Swift support services presented to West Lothian IJB in relation to IJB delegated services.</p>

3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (people with protected characteristics) may have in relation to this policy	
Age	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the teams do not highlight any considerations required.
Disability	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the unit do not highlight any considerations required.
Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the unit do not highlight any considerations required.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the unit do not highlight any considerations required.
Pregnancy and Maternity	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the unit do not highlight any considerations required.
Race	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the unit do not highlight any considerations required.

Religion or Belief	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the unit do not highlight any considerations required.
Sex	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> The information obtained to date indicates that women currently occupy the majority of posts within the Business Support Service Admin Teams.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Payroll data indicates that the majority of roles that would be impacted by this change are occupied by female workers.
Sexual Orientation	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> There are no indications that there may be an impact on this protected characteristic.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Analysis and understanding of the unit do not highlight any considerations required.

#### 4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy.

Vulnerable groups may include the following:

- Unemployed
- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People on benefits
- Those involved in the criminal justice system
- People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)
- People who live in rural areas
- Pensioners
- Looked After Children
- Carers including young carers
- People misusing services
- Others e.g. veterans, students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness
- Homeless people
- People with low literacy/ numeracy
- People with lower educational qualifications
- People in low paid work
- People with one or more protected characteristics

#### **What effect/difference will the policy have on people?**

The proposal is likely to result in changes to the number of roles within the Business Support and Administrative Teams. These changes will be managed through Council workforce management policy and procedures.

#### **How do you know that?**

All change processes are managed through the existing Council workforce management policy and procedures.

#### 5. Action Plan

What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion?

**Actioner Name:** Sharon Houston – Head of Strategic Planning and Performance (Interim)

**Action Date:** March 2023

#### **What is the issue?**

Review of roles and responsibilities, including removal of vacant posts. Follow workforce management procedure.

#### **What action will be taken?**

Following the removal of the vacant posts and approval to deliver the efficiency saving, the council's workforce management will be followed. This will mean that the demands and responsibilities of the relevant roles will be assessed including resources realignment to ensure adequate cover across the service.

#### **Progress against action**

Compliance will be monitored in line with the timescales of the workforce management policies and procedures.

## 6. Details of consultation and involvement

Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process?

- a) State which service users and groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- b) Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- c) Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.

Staff and Trade Unions will be involved in the standard consultation process in line with the workforce management policy and procedures. The outcome of the consultation process will be reviewed and where appropriate incorporated into the new structures within the team for implementation.

The responsibility for the consultation and engagement will be with the Senior Manager through consultation meetings, circulation of documentation and email correspondence where appropriate and relevant face to face meetings will also be held.

## 7. Data and Information

What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

- a) What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?
- b) What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (describe the information and conclusions, and state where the information can be found)
  - i. Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical analysis)
  - ii. Qualitative (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)
- c) Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.
- d) Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.

Analysis of staff has demonstrated the following demographic and income related information which has supported the potential impact analysis outlined above:

The demographic profile of the Business Support Service and the Business Support Service Admin Team show that:

- Business Support Service Admin Team – 93% of the roles within the team are undertaken by females and 92% of the posts are graded between Grades 2 and 3 (£21,679 - £25,246)
- Business Support Service – 70% of the roles within the team are undertaken by females and 33% of the posts are graded at band 5 (£30,070 - £32,622).

## 8. Mitigating Actions

If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you **MUST** identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.

- How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.
- How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.
- Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.

The council has a requirement to deliver best value, achieve performance standard and deliver this within a balanced budget. Therefore, the implementation of a restructure, focusing objectives on service delivery targets will support delivery of a balanced budget.

Therefore, to mitigate any potential negative impacts on staff the council's workforce management policy will be followed as well as considering the allocation of work across the teams to mitigate any potential negative impact on staff.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

- How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?
- What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
- How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?
- When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? Please detail below

Following the implementation of the changes to the structure the impact of the changes will be monitored as part of the council's performance management processes (PDPR) to ensure the role(s) are being fulfilled to meet the council's requirements as well as ensuring that the staff are appropriately supported to deliver their roles.

## 10. Recommendation and Reasoning

Implement proposal, following the council's workforce management policy and procedures, as well as following up via PDPR on implementation.

### Reason for Recommendation

By implementing the proposal, the council will achieve anticipated savings towards delivering a balanced budget through the removal of existing vacancies and team restructure. The changes will follow the council's approved approach to workforce management.

### Signed by Lead Officer

#### Designation

Head of Social Policy

#### Date

16/01/2023

### Counter Signature (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)

Depute Chief Executive

#### Date

16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S3a - Review of existing contracts for commissioned care within children and families service
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children's Services
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children & Justice Services
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	X
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	X
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	X
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	X
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	X
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	X

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023



## Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S3a Review of existing contracts for commissioned care within children and families service
<b>Details of Others Involved</b>	Senior Managers, Group Managers
<b>Date Assessment Conducted</b>	30/11/2022

2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes including the context within which it will operate)
<p>The proposal relates to a review of all third party grants and fixed payments for children's services to ensure alignment with the strategic plan, service priorities and that the services provided are meeting the needs of children and families in West Lothian.</p> <p>The review will identify any contracts that are not delivering against service priorities of prevention and early intervention, supporting mental health and well-being, intensive family support, supporting children with a disability and supported accommodation for care experienced young people.</p> <p>The review will ensure we are delivering necessary services with clearly defined outcomes linked to all commissioned services. This will provide a greater level of understanding, scrutiny and ensure third sector providers have clear outcomes to meet that can be assessed and monitored.</p> <p>The review may also provide the third sector providers with security of contract rather than yearly renewals of funding.</p>

3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (people with protected characteristics) may have in relation to this policy	
Age	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> Commissioned services will be targeted to support children and their families most in need of earlier effective intervention and services and also where more intensive support is needed. There will be a positive impact on children, young people and their families as the services provided will be tailored to meet their needs. Analysis will be required to ensure any changes to commissioned contracts does not result in unmanageable pressures on internal teams.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> The review will ensure contracted services are aligned to the children's services plan and therefore delivering on priority areas.</p>
Disability	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> As above.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> As above</p>
Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.</p>

	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Race	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Religion or Belief	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sex	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.

#### 4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy.

Vulnerable groups may include the following:

- Unemployed
- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People on benefits
- Those involved in the criminal justice system
- People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)
- People who live in rural areas
- Pensioners
- Looked After Children
- Carers including young carers
- People misusing services
- Others e.g. veterans, students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness
- Homeless people
- People with low literacy/ numeracy
- People with lower educational qualifications
- People in low paid work
- People with one or more protected characteristics

#### What effect/difference will the policy have on people?

The aim of reviewing existing contracts for commissioned services in children and families is to ensure necessary services are available for vulnerable children and families that will meet their assessed needs.

Therefore, the policy should have a positive impact.

#### How do you know that?

The review will ensure all services are captured and that there is no duplication or cross over in provision that would potentially result in the under use of commissioned services. This review will also ensure that all services being commissioned are ones that will benefit children and families, will address current unmet needs in line with service strategic priorities.

#### 5. Action Plan

What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion?

**Actioner Name:** Head of Social Policy

**Action Date:** Beginning April 2023

#### What is the issue?

There will be a review of all existing contracts for commissioned care within the children and families service.

**What action will be taken?**

- A review will be undertaken of all third party grants to ensure the provision is meeting the needs of children and families
- Review the service provision required from commissioned services in line with priorities of the children's services plan.
- Assess the impact of any changes being made to these grants to ensure there will not be a negative impact on other parts of the system
- A detailed equality impact assessment will be used throughout the process of the review.
- Determined outcomes and expectations required from future contracts
- Communication with commissioned services at the appropriate time.
- Communication with West Lothian Council staff on any changes.

**Progress against action**

Ongoing

**6. Details of consultation and involvement**

Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process?

- a) State which service users and groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- b) Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- c) Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.

A West Lothian Council wide consultation was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and closed on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The results from this consultation will be considered and all those residents living and working in West Lothian have been encouraged to take part.

**7. Data and Information**

What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

- a) What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?
- b) What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (describe the information and conclusions, and state where the information can be found)
  - i. Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical analysis)
  - ii. Qualitative (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)
- c) Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.
- d) Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.

The following research and evidence have been used to inform the project:

- Provisional internal consideration of some commissioned services indicates further review will inform a requirement for change.
- GIRFEC policy refresh 2022
- Children's Services Plan 2020-23
- Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Promise Scotland

## 8. Mitigating Actions

If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you MUST identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.

- a) How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.
- b) How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.
- c) Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- d) If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- e) Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.

The review should have a positive impact on equality as the aim will be to focus on needs at the earliest opportunity and provide children and their families with services that will make a difference.

A detailed equality impact assessment will be used throughout the process of the review.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

- a) How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?
- b) What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
- c) How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?
- d) When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- e) Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? Please detail below

There will be clarity for commissioned services on expected outcomes from service provision and this will allow monitoring and review.

Performance indicators will be reviewed to ensure they capture delivery of commissioned services.

## 10. Recommendation and Reasoning

Implement proposal.

### Reason for Recommendation

The review of existing contracts for commissioned care is aimed to have a positive impact on children, young people and their families in West Lothian.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S4a – Alternative approach to the delivery of active and achieving.
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children and Justice
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children Services
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	X
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	X
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	X
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	X
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	X
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	X
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	X

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

## Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S4a – Alternative approach to the delivery of Active and Achieving
<b>Details of Others Involved</b>	Senior and Group Managers
<b>Date Assessment Conducted</b>	14/11/2022

2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes including the context within which it will operate)
<p>The Active and Achieving Fund was developed in 2013 in response to an identified need to provide support to looked after young people and those in kinship care in West Lothian to enable them to access activities to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. It also supported an annual achievement awards process. Applications were made by allocated social workers or family support workers.</p> <p>Since the development of this fund there have been several other initiatives which have widened access to financial and practical support for looked after, care experienced people and vulnerable children and young people to access various activities. There also continues to be a multi -agency annual achievements award ceremony. These new initiatives continue to be based on identified needs but they are available through a wider group of professionals and for a wider group of young people. This improves access and reduces inequalities and should ensure less disadvantage supporting all children.</p> <p>The current approach to the dissemination of this fund is no longer efficient and due to the other developments, it is now a duplication of support and should be replaced with alternative approaches which improve access.</p> <p>The aim will be to provide more equality and ensure the needs of all vulnerable groups are considered.</p>

3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (people with protected characteristics) may have in relation to this policy	
Age	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> This fund is targeted at children and young people who are looked after or are entitled to after care support but it presently does not include other vulnerable young people. This age group will continue to have access to support for activities. This will be available via the new initiatives. Provision will be extended to different vulnerable groups in the same age categories. This is an improvement on the current arrangements.</p> <p>This existing fund should therefore cease to exist with alternative approaches being adopted with the voice of young people at the heart of these.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> The criteria is clear and many referrals are rejected on the basis they do not meet the criteria. An analysis of referrals has shown that most referrals come from allocated social workers and family support workers.</p>
Disability	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> As above</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> As above.</p>
Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time</p>

	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Race	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Religion or Belief	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sex	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.

#### 4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy.

Vulnerable groups may include the following:

- Unemployed
- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People on benefits
- Those involved in the criminal justice system
- People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)
- People who live in rural areas
- Pensioners
- Looked After Children
- Carers including young carers
- People misusing services
- Others e.g. veterans, students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness
- Homeless people
- People with low literacy/ numeracy
- People with lower educational qualifications
- People in low paid work
- People with one or more protected characteristics

#### What effect/difference will the policy have on people?

This development should have a positive impact on a wider cohort of vulnerable children and young people which will include looked after and care experienced young people. It should enable better access to supports for a wider group of people with a more sustainable multi agency approach.

#### How do you know that?

These are the key aims of the development. There is evidence of positive outcomes based on a number of initiatives being in place this and last year, such as the summer activity programme, self-directed support options via the children and young people mental health funding and the whole family wellbeing fund.

#### 5. Action Plan

What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion?

**Actioner Name:** Head of Social Policy

**Action Date:** Beginning April 2023



**What is the issue?**

Alternative approach to the delivery of funds to support children and young people in activities that support them to be active and raise attainment.

**What action will be taken?**

- Continued multi agency planning to develop a yearly summer activity programme for vulnerable children and young people in the West Lothian area
- Continued development of self-directed support options for young people affected by mental health issues and disability
- Continued provision of disability specific holiday activity programmes
- Monitor and review use of whole family wellbeing funding direct financial support.
- Continued development of an annual multi agency annual achievement awards ceremony.
- A communication action plan will be put in place to ensure that people are aware of referral processes.

**Progress against action**

Ongoing

**6. Details of consultation and involvement**

Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process?

- a) State which service users and groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- b) Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- c) Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.

A West Lothian Council wide consultation was launched on 7/10/22 which is ongoing and closes on 20/11/22. The results from this consultation will be taken into account and all those residents living in West Lothian and working in West Lothian have been encouraged to take part.

**7. Data and Information**

What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

- a) What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?
- b) What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (describe the information and conclusions, and state where the information can be found)
  - i. Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical analysis)
  - ii. Qualitative (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)
- c) Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.
- d) Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.

The following research and evidence have been used to inform the project:

- Research conducted by Loughborough University and funded by the Joseph Rowntree foundation indicates that due to the culmination of increases in costs according to the Loughborough University, the basic costs of a UK family with two children has increased by 13% due to food and fuel costs. Within West Lothian 21.1% of children experience poverty (information from West Lothian Council's anti-poverty service). The changes in this policy would reach more vulnerable children and young people.
- We have used the data on numbers of referrals received from the fund and there was a 28% reduction in use of the fund in 2021/22 (247) in comparison to 2019 (324). These two years have been chosen for comparison due to the likelihood of false information during the COVID pandemic restrictions (2020/21) when access to activities was reduced. This reduction is attributed to the use of the alternative funding options and activities available and was the first year for these initiatives being in place.
- This alternative approach supports early intervention and community inclusion which is in keeping with the following legislation: The Children (Scotland) Act 1995, The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and The Social Care (Self Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013.

- This has been informed by the work of The Promise Scotland
- Foundations of the promise - The Promise
- This takes account of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in particular the following articles:
  - Article 2
  - Article 3
  - Article 15
  - Article 23
  - Article 27
  - Article 31
  - [UNCRC summary-1 1.pdf \(unicef.org.uk\)](#)
- This also takes account of Scotland's national strategy Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) [Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

## 8. Mitigating Actions

If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you MUST identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.

- a) How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.
- b) How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.
- c) Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- d) If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- e) Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.

This should have a positive impact on equality and ensuring equitable access for the vulnerable children and young people of West Lothian in supporting them to access activities which are beneficial for their physical and mental wellbeing.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

- a) How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?
- b) What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
- c) How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?
- d) When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- e) Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? Please detail below

- Access to activities will be reviewed annually to ensure no detrimental impact to people with protected characteristics
- Outcomes will be measured for those young people that have been supported

10. Recommendation and Reasoning	
Implement proposal	
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>  <b>The development of this service is aimed at having a positive impact on children and young people within West Lothian Council.</b>	
<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S4b – Development of a West Lothian Adoption service (there is a linked proposal reference number S4c Development of a Fostering Service)
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children and Justice
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children Services
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	X
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

The impact should be a positive one. This will be a local service which will ensure the adoption process is as accessible as possible for potential adopters in West Lothian.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form**

<b>1. Details of proposal</b>	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S4b - Development of a West Lothian Adoption service (there is a linked proposal, reference number S4c Development of a Fostering Service))
<b>Details of Others Involved</b>	Senior and Group Managers
<b>Date Assessment Conducted</b>	14/11/2022

<p><b>2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed</b> (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes including the context within which it will operate)</p> <p>This is a regulated service and all local authorities have a duty to provide an adoption service for their area as well as support both domestic and foreign adoptions under the Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007. West Lothian Council is one of the few local authorities who do not have their own adoption service recruiting adopters. The existing adoption service is limited to assessing West Lothian foster carers who wish to convert to adoption.</p> <p>The aim of this development is to provide an internal West Lothian Council Adoption service which will recruit and assess prospective adopters. This will enable a better understanding of the strengths of adopters and therefore enable matches to children to be more robust. This local in-depth knowledge will also support enhancement to the introduction process for children and adopters and the move that follows for the child.</p> <p>The aim will be to reduce the need to purchase external adoption placements. This will bring more cost efficiency and improves performance in sourcing adoptive placements for West Lothian Children. In addition, it will allow the service to build on existing relationships with other local authorities to support identification of out of authority placements if this is required or alternatively provide placements to other local authorities at an agreed cost.</p> <p>Within the adoption service, a post adoption support service will be developed, enabling more robust ongoing local support for adoptive families. This will be critical in the prevention of adoption breakdowns and any subsequent requirements for external care provision. This new service will also increase and develop the knowledge, skills and experience of the workforce enabling the service to provide more robust support locally for birth families, adoptive families and young people who are going through adoption processes. It will enhance the services ability to support the identity and history of adoptees and provide better opportunity for work to be undertaken in respect of birth family relationships including brothers and sisters (where appropriate).</p> <p>This service will be developed within an appropriate legislative context and take into consideration legislation and all national guidance including: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/31">Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/11">Children (Scotland) Act 2020 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/1264">The Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/39">Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-social-care-standards/my-support-my-life/pages/introduction.aspx">Health and Social Care Standards: my support, my life - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/home-the-promise/pages/introduction.aspx">Home - The Promise</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.unicef.org/uk">UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-it-right-for-every-child/pages/introduction.aspx">Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a></li> </ul>
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<p><b>3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (people with protected characteristics) may have in relation to this policy</b></p>
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Age	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> The policy aims to support children who require to be looked after away from home permanently via the route of adoption. The proposal will enable the service undertake adoption recruitment campaigns to meet the specific needs of children and young people and improve adoption placement options. The development will support the identification of appropriate adoption placement matches and secure moves at an earlier stage.
	This proposal will increase equality and opportunities as we target campaigns to recruit adopters for the most vulnerable (for example, brother and sister groups, older children, children with a disability). As a consequence, the service will provide better outcomes and safeguard/ promote the child's welfare and development. The introduction of this new service will have a positive impact on children and young people specifically and those who have a disability or are part of a brother and sister group.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> Adoption is a lifelong process and affects adoptees at all ages. There is a significant body of research around the need to secure permanence as early as possible for young people. The Scottish Government have developed a programme to enable more young people to achieve permanence where that is needed.
	<u>Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) - Looked after children - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</u>  The service has full awareness of the needs of children and young people who need adoption and being able to undertake our own adoption recruitment activity allows us to develop campaigns to meet their needs and secure permanence without delay. This allows us to have a responsive, child centred adoption service.
Disability	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> See age section above
	<b>How do you know that?</b> As above.
Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Race	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> This policy could have a positive impact on this protected characteristic as it will improve placement options available within the local authority. It is known that black children wait longer for adoption than any other ethnic group for example.
	<b>How do you know that?</b> There is significant research undertaken in this area, please see link below to research published by Coram October 2020. <u>Black children wait longer for adoption than any other ethnic group   Coram</u>
Religion or Belief	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sex	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time

	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.

#### 4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy.

Vulnerable groups may include the following:

- Unemployed
- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People on benefits
- Those involved in the criminal justice system
- People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)
- People who live in rural areas
- Pensioners
- Looked After Children
- Carers including young carers
- People misusing services
- Others e.g. veterans, students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness
- Homeless people
- People with low literacy/ numeracy
- People with lower educational qualifications
- People in low paid work
- People with one or more protected characteristics

#### What effect/difference will the policy have on people?

This development should have a positive impact on children and young people who are looked after away from home in being able to achieve permanence via adoption earlier.

The new service will ensure that adopters have access quickly to local support services, a workforce that can meet their needs and who understand fully the early years of adoptees.

The workforce will increase their understanding, skills and knowledge of supporting birth families (including brother and sister relationships), adoptive families and adoptees leading to improved outcomes and better post adoption support. This will better support lifelong links and prevent adoption disruptions or breakdowns. This stability and support will ultimately improve outcomes for children and young people.

#### How do you know that?

These are the key aims of the development, and will be monitored and reviewed regularly with key performance indicators established to measure progress. The service will also be required to adhere to all legislative requirements and reporting as detailed in the [Adoption and Children \(Scotland\) Act 2007 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

#### 5. Action Plan

What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion?

**Actioner Name:** Head of Social Policy

**Action Date:** Beginning April 2023

#### What is the issue?

Development of a West Lothian internally managed adoption service.



**What action will be taken?**

- Recruitment of 1 team manager, 2 social workers and 1 family support worker (which may include internal move of existing staff).
- Change of registered manager to the new team manager with the Care Inspectorate
- Training to be identified to support the recruitment, assessment and approval of adopters
- Enhancement of our permanence panel to include the approval of adopters
- Targeted recruitment campaign to include online advertisement and information
- Development of policies, procedures and systems to support the work of the service
- Development of a post adoption support service
- Development of links and networks with other local authority adoption services
- Development of system to offer adoption placements to other local authority area
- Further analysis on the needs of our looked after children requiring adoption will be undertaken to inform recruitment and understand numbers of prospective adopters required.

**Progress against action**

Ongoing

**6. Details of consultation and involvement**

Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process?

- a) State which service users and groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- b) Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- c) Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.

- A West Lothian Council wide consultation was launched on 7/10/22 which is ongoing and closes on 20/11/22. The results from this consultation will be considered and all those residents living in West Lothian and working in West Lothian have been encouraged to take part.
- Further consultation will be required with the appropriate staffing group and service users and a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) will be created as this will be a new service

**7. Data and Information**

What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

- a) What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?
- b) What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (describe the information and conclusions, and state where the information can be found)
  - i. Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical analysis)
  - ii. Qualitative (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)
- c) Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.
- d) Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.

The following research and evidence have been used to inform the project:

- A review of spend has been undertaken on the cost of purchasing the services of an external adoption agency alongside the financial management unit. This has indicated there will be efficiencies created by the development of an inhouse adoption service.
- West Lothian council have been involved in the Permanence and Care Excellence Programme (PACE) which works to reduce timescales in securing a permanent home for babies, children and young people. The learning from this programme will inform this project
  - PACE - the Permanence and Care Excellence programme from CELCIS
- Research on the mapping of adoption support services in Scotland and what produces good outcomes
  - Mapping Adoption Support in Scotland | Adoption UK Charity
- This work has been informed by The Promise and in particular the 1000 voices team supporting sibling contact
  - Home - The Promise

- This work is informed by article 21 of the United Nations on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), I have the right to have the best care if I am adopted
  - UNCRC Article 21 - I have the right to have the best care if I am adopted - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (cypcs.org.uk)

## 8. Mitigating Actions

If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you MUST identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.

- How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.
- How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.
- Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.

This should have a positive impact on equality. A further staged review of IIA will be undertaken once options appraisal has been completed and tabled as part of any recommendations.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

- How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?
- What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
- How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?
- When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? Please detail below

- New performance indicators will be developed to enable monitoring of progress. This will be put in place by the new team manager
- The service will be reviewed regularly to ensure no detrimental impact to people with protected characteristics
- Policies, procedures and systems will be put in place in line with health and social care standards and in consultation with the Care Inspectorate to ensure best practice
- Benchmarking against other local authority adoption agencies will be undertaken

## 10. Recommendation and Reasoning

Implement proposal

### Reason for Recommendation

The development of this service is aimed at having a positive impact on children and young people within West Lothian who need adoption to secure their best interests throughout their lives.

**Signed by Lead Officer**

**Designation**

Head of Social Policy

**Date**

16/01/2023

**Counter Signature**

(Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)

Depute Chief Executive

**Date**

16/01/2023

**Integrated Relevance Assessment Form**

1. Details of proposal	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S4c – Development of intensive fostering service (there is a linked proposal reference number S4b Development of an Adoption Service)
<b>Service Area</b> (detail which service area and section this relates to)	Social Policy Non Integration Joint Board
<b>Lead Officer</b> (Name and job title)	Senior Manager Children and Justice
<b>Other Officers/Partners Involved</b> (list names, job titles and organisations if applicable)	Senior Manager Children Services
<b>Date relevance assessed</b>	13/07/2022

2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?			
<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	

<b>3. The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and</li> <li>• Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</li> </ul> <p>NB: In this section you must also consider the Human Rights Act and the key PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) principles of Human Rights</p> <p>Which groups of people do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? You should consider employees, clients, customers and service users (please tick below as appropriate).</p>	
<b>Age</b> – older people, young people and children	X
<b>Disability</b> – people with disabilities/long standing conditions	
<b>Gender reassignment</b> – trans/transgender identity – anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex assigned to them at birth	
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b> – people who are married or in a civil partnership	
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> – woman who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave	
<b>Race</b> – people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds	
<b>Religion or belief</b> – people with different religions and beliefs including those with no beliefs	
<b>Sex</b> – Male, female and intersex	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> – lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual/straight	

**4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will or may impact on socio-economic inequalities?**

Consideration must be given particularly to children and families

<b>Socio-economic Disadvantage</b>	<b>Impact (Please Tick as Appropriate)</b>
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	
Low and/or No Wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies	
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parents education, employment and income	

**5. Integrated impact assessment required?**

(Two ticks above = full assessment necessary)

<b>YES</b>	X	<b>NO</b>	
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**6. Decision rationale**

If you have ticked no above, use this section to evidence why a full IIA is not required

Any impact should be a positive one. This new service will be a local service which will increase placement options for young people, reducing the likelihood that they will have to be placed out with their local areas away from their families and communities.

<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023

**Full Integrated Impact Assessment Form**

<b>1. Details of proposal</b>	
<b>Policy Title</b> (include budget reference number if applicable)	S4c – Development of Intensive Fostering Service (this is linked to proposal S4b Development of a West Lothian Adoption Service)
<b>Details of Others Involved</b>	Senior and Group Managers
<b>Date Assessment Conducted</b>	21/11/2022

<p><b>2. Set out a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy being developed or reviewed</b> (what are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes including the context within which it will operate)</p> <p>West Lothian Council is a well-established fostering provider. The service assess and approves foster carers currently and has its own fostering panel. Through the use of data and analysis of placement requests a need has been identified to increase fostering placements that can support older children aged 12 years plus, brother and sister groups, children from BAME groups and children with a disability or specific health needs. A need has also been identified to develop more intensive fostering locally to prevent children being placed external to West Lothian in residential provisions.</p> <p>The aim of this development will be to reduce the need to purchase external placements from independent fostering or residential providers. By increasing our pool of foster carers locally we will enable young people to remain in their local area, with opportunities to spend time with their birth family and peers and remain connected and able to continue attending their existing school placement and continue with any activities they are involved in. This will assist in supporting them to maintain their most important relationships.</p> <p>Remaining in an area familiar to them will limit the number of changes and losses experienced if young people cannot remain within their family network at that particular time. It also maximises the opportunities to ensure young people return to live within their family networks as quickly as possible provided it is safe for this to happen. This development allows us to work in line with The Promise, the principles of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).</p> <p>Additional support financially and practically along with enhanced training and ensuring access to short breaks will be provided to ensure we are able to secure family-based care options for young people and children with the most complex needs.</p> <p>This will be developed within the appropriate legislative context and take into consideration all national guidance including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/31/contents">Children (Scotland) Act 1995 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/12/contents">Children (Scotland) Act 2020 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/1264/contents/made">The Looked After Children (Scotland) Regulations 2009 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/39/contents">Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 (legislation.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/health-and-social-care-standards/my-support-my-life/pages/introduction.aspx">Health and Social Care Standards: my support, my life - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.thepromise.scot/">Home - The Promise</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.unicef.org/uk/">UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNICEF UK</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/getting-it-right-for-every-child/pages/introduction.aspx">Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)</a></li> </ul>
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<b>3. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which equality groups (people with protected characteristics) may have in relation to this policy</b>	
Age	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  The policy aims to support children who require to be looked after away from home via fostering options. The service will undertake targeted recruitment campaigns <b>to increase</b> access to local foster carers able to provide care for older young people. This will enable them to remain in their local area able to spend time with those people that are important and familiar to them, maintaining relationships. This will include intensive fostering for some of the most traumatised children to prevent them being placed in residential care.</p> <p>We will increase equality and opportunities as we target campaigns to recruit foster carers for the most vulnerable (for example brother and sister groups, older children, children with a disability) We will be able to improve matching and provide better outcomes and safeguard/ promote the child's welfare and development.</p> <p>The introduction of this new service will have a positive impact on children and young people specifically and those who are aged over 12 years, have a disability or are part of a brother and sister group.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b>  The Promise tells us that young people want to remain with their families where this is possible, where it is not possible they must belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as they need. They must be able to live with their brothers and sisters as long as it is safe. <u>Home - The Promise</u></p>
Disability	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  As above</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b>  As above.</p>
Gender Reassignment – Trans/Transgender Identity	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  None identified at this time</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b>  No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Marriage or Civil Partnership	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  None identified at this time</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b>  No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  None identified at this time</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b>  No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Race	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  This policy could have a positive impact on this protected characteristic as it will improve placement options available within the local authority.</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b>  There is sufficient research to indicate that foster care agencies should work to increase the diversity of their pool of foster carers. Any targeted recruitment campaigns which focus on the unmet needs of young people should be beneficial.  <u>State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021   The Fostering Network</u></p>
Religion or Belief	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  None identified at this time</p> <p><b>How do you know that?</b>  No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Sex	<p><b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b>  None identified at this time</p>

	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	<b>What effect/difference will the policy have on people?</b> None identified at this time
	<b>How do you know that?</b> No relevant evidence has been found through research to suggest that there would be any disproportionate impact on this protected characteristic.

#### 4. Please outline any needs and/or barriers which may affect vulnerable groups falling into poverty and disadvantage in relation to this policy.

Vulnerable groups may include the following:

- Unemployed
- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People on benefits
- Those involved in the criminal justice system
- People in the most deprived communities (bottom 20 SIMD areas)
- People who live in rural areas
- Pensioners
- Looked After Children
- Carers including young carers
- People misusing services
- Others e.g. veterans, students
- Single adult households
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- Those leaving the care setting including children and young people and those with illness
- Homeless people
- People with low literacy/ numeracy
- People with lower educational qualifications
- People in low paid work
- People with one or more protected characteristics

#### What effect/difference will the policy have on people?

This development should have a positive impact on children and young people who are looked after away from home ensuring access to a wider pool of foster carers able to meet their specific needs.

It should support the service to meet legislative duties of keeping brothers and sisters together and enable young people to remain in their local area maintaining all of their important relationships.

This intensive service could provide more flexible support options to families ensuring that there are no delays in young people being able to return to live with their family networks as quickly as possible provided it is safe to do so.

The workforce will increase their understanding, skills and knowledge of the needs of our most complex young people and the aim is that the increased service will ultimately improve outcomes for children and young people.

#### How do you know that?

There is sufficient research to indicate that foster care agencies need to work to increase the diversity of their pool of foster carers. Any targeted recruitment campaigns which focus on the unmet needs of our young people should be beneficial.

#### State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021 | The Fostering Network

These are the key aims of the development, and will be monitored and reviewed regularly with key performance indicators established to measure progress.

The service will also continue to be required to adhere to all legislative requirements and reporting within its legislative duties.

#### 5. Action Plan

What action/s will be taken, by whom and what is the timescale for completion?

**Actioner Name:** Head of Social Policy

**Action Date:** Beginning April 2023

#### What is the issue?

Enhancement of the current West Lothian Fostering service and this will include the development of an intensive fostering service.



**What action will be taken?**

- Development of intensive fostering scheme with the associated policies, procedures and systems being produced to support the work of this new service provision.
- Consultation will be required with our existing staff group, foster carers, young people, families and panel members.
- A detailed training plan, short breaks policy, supervision guidelines, support mechanisms and allowance structure will have to be clearly identified and developed.
- Training to be developed to support the foster carers.
- Enhancement of the Fostering panel to include the approval of these foster carers.
- Targeted recruitment campaign to include online advertisement and information.
- Development of links and networks with other parts of the service including Families together and the Residential houses.
- Further analysis on the needs of West Lothian's looked after children (including the Having Your Say participation group) will be undertaken to inform recruitment and understand the supports that will be required.

**Progress against action**

Ongoing

**6. Details of consultation and involvement**

Who will be or has been involved in the consultation process?

- a) State which service users and groups are involved in this process and describe their involvement.
- b) Describe any planned involvement saying when this will take place and who is responsible for managing the involvement process.
- c) Describe the results of the involvement and how you have taken this into account.

- A West Lothian Council wide consultation was launched on 7/10/22 which closed on 20/11/22. The results from this consultation will be considered and all those residents living in West Lothian and working in West Lothian have been encouraged to take part.
- Further consultation will be required with the appropriate staffing group, young people (including the Having Your Say group), families. A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) will be created as this will require changes to internal processes and will offer an enhanced service

**7. Data and Information**

What equality data, poverty data, research, information or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?

- a) What information or other evidence has been used in the development of the policy?
- b) What does research, consultation and other data or information tell you about the impact of the policy? (describe the information and conclusions, and state where the information can be found)
  - i. Quantitative (numbers, percentages, statistical analysis)
  - ii. Qualitative (written/spoken words, opinions, surveys)
- c) Describe any gaps in the available information, and record within section five (Action Plan), action you are taking in relation to this (e.g. new research, further analysis) and when this is planned.
- d) Give details of any existing local or national evidence which has been used to inform the development of your policy.

- A review of spend has been undertaken on the cost of purchasing the services of an external fostering agency and external residential placements. This has indicated there will be expected efficiencies created by the development of an intensive fostering service, expanding the existing fostering resource and providing carers caring for children with a disability on a short-breaks or longer term basis.
- This work has been informed by our local data which has identified areas where needs currently outweighs available resources.
- This work has been informed by The Promise and where it is not possible for young people to live with their families, they should stay with their brothers and sisters where safe to do so and belong to a loving home, staying there for as long as needed. Home - The Promise
- This work has been informed by the report into unmet needs produced by The Fostering Network 21-21289 State of the Nation unmet needs FINAL.pdf (thefosteringnetwork.org.uk)

The following research and evidence have been used to inform the project:

- This work is informed by articles 20 and 25 of the United Nations on the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)  
Article 20 – I have the right to special protection and help If I cannot live with my own family  
Article 25 – If I am not living with my family, people should keep checking I am safe and happy.  
UNCRC Articles Archive - The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland ([cypcs.org.uk](http://cypcs.org.uk))

## 8. Mitigating Actions

If the policy has a negative/adverse impact on a particular group/s, but is still to be implemented, please provide justification for this.

Note: If the policy is unlawfully discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 and/or is having a negative impact on poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage under the Fairer Scotland Duty, you MUST identify, how the policy can be amended or justified so the Council acts lawfully.

- How could you modify the policy to eliminate discrimination or to reduce any identified negative impacts? If necessary, consider other ways in which you could meet the aims and objectives.
- How could you modify the policy to create or maximise the positive aspects of the proposals and to increase equality and reduce poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage.
- Describe any modifications which you can make without further delay (for example, easy, few resource implications).
- If you propose to make any of the modifications shown above, describe any potential new negative impacts on other groups in society or on the ability to achieve the aims and how you will minimise these.
- Please describe the resource implications of any proposed modifications taking into account financial, people and property issues.

This should have a positive impact on equality.

A further staged review of IIA will be undertaken once options appraisal has been completed and tabled as part of any recommendations.

## 9. Monitoring and Review

- How will the implementation and impact of the policy be monitored, including implementation of any amendments? For example, what type of monitoring will there be? How frequent?
- What are the practical arrangements for monitoring? For example, who will put this in place? When will it start?
- How will results of monitoring be used to develop future policies?
- When is the policy due to be reviewed?
- Who is responsible for ensuring this happens? Please detail below

- New performance indicators will be developed to enable monitoring of progress.
- The service will be reviewed regularly to ensure no detrimental impact to people with protected characteristics.
- Policies, procedures and systems will be put in place in line with health and social care standards and in consultation with the Care Inspectorate to ensure best practice.
- Benchmarking against other local authorities will be undertaken.
- The views and voices of the children, young people, families and carers will be gathered and analysed.

10. Recommendation and Reasoning	
Implement proposal	
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b> The development of this service is aimed to have a positive impact on children and young people within West Lothian Council and providing them with the best care options possible to minimise trauma and uncertainty.	
<b>Signed by Lead Officer</b>	
<b>Designation</b>	Head of Social Policy
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023
<b>Counter Signature</b> (Head of Service or Depute Chief Executive responsible for the policy)	Depute Chief Executive
<b>Date</b>	16/01/2023