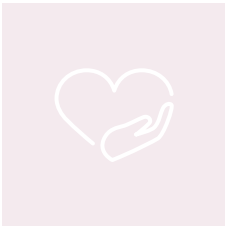
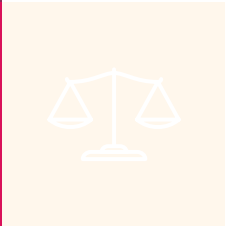
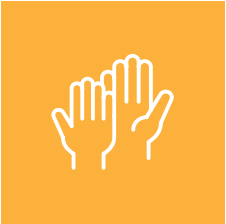
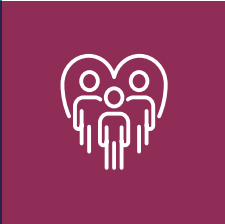




WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL
CORPORATE PLAN
2023 to 2028



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SUMMARY

Welcome to the Corporate plan for West Lothian Council 2023/24 to 2027/28. This sets our strategic direction and identifies our priorities for the next five years (2023/24 to 2027/28).

For over 25 years, the council has been working with our community and partners to make West Lothian a great place to live, work, learn and do business – a place where local people and communities can grow and thrive.

In that time, the population of West Lothian has continued to increase, with a great many families choosing to make a home here because it offers so many of the attributes of urban living – easy access to services, shops, transport and major cities – but with all of the benefits of living in great towns and villages with a strong community spirit and a beautiful natural environment in which to play, exercise and explore.

We recognise that these next five years will bring both challenges and opportunities for the council and West Lothian citizens, and we will continue to prioritise adapt and protect, where possible, essential council services that contribute and strengthen the fabric of local communities and the quality of life in West Lothian.

Ongoing budget and financial pressures are expected to continue and difficult decisions will also have to be made by the council in order to prioritise the services that meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community, such as children, older people, vulnerable adults and families living in poverty.

We will deliver services that enhance the local infrastructure and protect the natural environment, but a large proportion of council resources will continue to be dedicated to helping people, especially those in our community who are most in need of our support.

This plan sets out how we will strive to harness our collective strengths and passion to help create a thriving West Lothian. We have identified five clear priorities for 2023/24 to 2027/28 from our consultation with the public in 2022. These priorities represent the most challenging and important issues for people in the community and we will work to achieve improvement in each one for the benefit of our customers and for all of West Lothian.



**Lawrence Fitzpatrick,
Leader of the Council**



**Graham Hope,
Chief Executive**

As a provider of essential public services to a growing community, we are working to build and sustain a thriving West Lothian for all who live, learn and work here.

We are active partners with our community and other public service providers in delivering fundamental change to the area and supporting better outcomes for local people. The collective impact of our services on our customers' lives can be significant, with the council a familiar presence in the day-to-day lives of people in West Lothian. Every person who lives, works, learns or even travels in the area will experience the services provided by the council.

From universal services that underpin the infrastructure of the local area, to highly specialised and personalised support services for some of the most vulnerable in society, we support better outcomes in education, employment, health and community safety and contribute to wider equality in society and the sustainability of the local environment.

A Thriving West Lothian

Our Vision puts people at the heart of everything we do. For the last 25 years, the council has worked with communities, staff, partners and stakeholders to design and deliver public services that are helping West Lothian – and local people – to thrive. A thriving West Lothian means vibrant, strong and inclusive communities where people have access to the services that they need.

The Corporate Plan captures the priorities that we believe will increase opportunities for all, such as:

- Providing high quality education and learning for our young people, helping them to fulfil their potential in life and contribute to society in a meaningful way
- Strengthening care and support services that will help older and vulnerable people to live better, more independently and longer lives
- Investing in jobs and skills to improve employability and create a strong and sustainable local economy
- Helping to build strong communities that are well-designed and well looked after and empowered;
- Increasing access to affordable housing and mitigating poverty and exclusion in our community to create a fairer society

In the next five years, we will require to be agile in our approach and will continue to focus on delivering essential public services that improve the quality of life here in West Lothian and build towards a better future.

Our ambition for West Lothian and helping the people who live here is what motivates every council employee. It drives our actions, decisions and influences our Purpose and our Vision for the future:

Our purpose



Improving lives and making West Lothian a great place to live, work, learn and do business

Our Vision



A thriving West Lothian

**OUR VISION
PUTS PEOPLE AT THE
HEART OF EVERYTHING
WE DO.**

OUR WLC TRANSFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE



The past decade has been a challenging period overall for local government in Scotland. Councils have faced understandable growing demand from within their communities for innovative, responsive and bespoke public services, delivered against a backdrop of major societal change and the long-term, UK-wide spending restraint in the public sector.

Looking ahead, 2023/24 to 2027/28 (the period of this Corporate Plan) is expected to bring fundamental change to council services as we seek to transform council services to continue to meet customer needs, take advantage of opportunities, such as new technology, and bridge a funding gap of £47.6 million.

As part of our approach to transformation, the council will develop and utilise the following key capabilities:

- 1 Increasing Our Customer Focus**
- 2 Financial Sustainability**
- 3 Community Empowerment**
- 4 Working in Partnership**

to support change and increase operational efficiency.



OUR WLC TRANSFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE



1

Increasing Our Customer Focus

The council is a high performing organisation that holds the importance of the customer at the core of everything we do. That customer focus influences the decision making and actions of leaders and employees on a daily basis and has driven change in the organisation since the council was established, with customer needs prioritised in the design and delivery of services and processes.

This approach has been evident in our regular and wide-reaching consultations with the community. This Corporate Plan, the associated priorities and the Council's Financial Strategy were all shaped by two major public consultations held in 2022 to review and set the strategic direction of the organisation and consult on budget proposals with service users and the wider community. Combined, the two consultations in 2022 received over 7,000 responses.

Moving forward, we want to make sure that our relationship with our customers remains strong and is built on collaboration, understanding and compassion. We recognise that we need good co-operation with our customers to achieve this and will continue to look for new ways to engage and include customers in shaping services and plans for West Lothian. We will also continue to look for new ways to engage and listen to customers views and changes services and plans for West Lothian.

Effective engagement is a priority for the council as understanding exactly what people need and want from our services can only improve our operational efficiency. To achieve this type of positive engagement with customers on a council-wide basis, we will continue to develop a customer-focused culture and new approaches to customer engagement and consultation in the next five years.

Our values



**CARING &
COMPASSIONATE**



**OPEN, HONEST &
ACCOUNTABLE**



**COLLABORATIVE,
INCLUSIVE & ADAPTIVE**

These Values will be at the heart of a culture and behaviours that the council will encourage at every level of the organisation. For example, through new customer service training and re-development of our staff development processes, the council will continue to foster a "West Lothian Way" across every council service. This will encompass all of these Values and will ensure that our customers have the best possible experience when interacting with council staff and services.

OUR WLC TRANSFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE

Our Commitments – Improving Council Performance

We will work collaboratively with customers, staff and partners to make our services better and reduce our operating costs to address the funding gap. Our principles for making these changes will be based on three commitments:

 <p>CONNECT</p> <p>We promise to engage with our community on the things that really matter and help them connect to the services that they need.</p>	 <p>EMPOWER</p> <p>We promise to empower our people (staff) and communities to make decisions and take action that will improve public services for all.</p>	 <p>DELIVER</p> <p>We promise to continue to prioritise the delivery of efficient and effective value adding public services to West Lothian,</p>
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Actions we will take in 2023/24 to 2027/28 aligned to these commitments include:

- Creating a better model for Customer Engagement and Customer Participation;
- Mapping processes and customer journeys to better understand how we can improve the experience of the service user;
- Establishing better governance and monitoring arrangements for tracking customer engagement and experience within the council
- Collecting data that offers better customer insight for target groups;
- Identifying the best measures of the customer experience (linked to the services provided) and updating the corporate performance management framework;
- Improving the systems for feedback and consultation and increasing the value delivered to the customer;
- Highlighting good practice and learning from other organisations and sectors.

OUR WLC TRANSFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE



Financial Sustainability

The council has a robust approach to financial planning that has delivered over £150 million of savings since 2007. Early identification of savings and effective engagement with our customers, partners and stakeholders in the decisions about savings has helped the council ensure that our available resources are directed to services that have the greatest impact in the priority outcomes for West Lothian.

Over the next five years the council again faces a budget gap because the funding that the council receives will not be enough to meet the rising costs of delivering our services.

Delivering a sustainable Financial Strategy for the council in 2023/28 will be a challenging but critical task to protect the most vital services to the community. We will continue to constructively engage our customers, partners and stakeholders on proposed changes to council services that will address a funding gap of £47.6 million.

We will also continue to identify opportunities and innovations that will increase operational efficiency and reduce costs. Our aim of delivering a Digital Council for the future will also support this strategy, as well as increasing choice and access to services for customers.



Community Empowerment

We want to support community empowerment by increasing participation in local democracy, increase community involvement and increasing confidence and skills among local people. This will be undertaken by a range of capacity building activity.

We will support the local community to have a say in decision making through the Community Choices programme to help determine local spend in their areas where appropriate. Locality plans will continue to have

a focus on local areas of deprivation and ensuring local communities have a role in address key challenges.

In 2023/24, the Council will develop an approach to Community Wealth building that will focus on changing our approach to service delivery to ensure the maximum benefits to West Lothian residents, businesses and local communities. This approach will be reflected through Corporate strategies over the five-year period.



Working in Partnership

Local authorities plan and work collaboratively with other public and voluntary sector organisations through a partnership arrangement called a Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The purpose of the CPP is to bring together key service providers to jointly address strategic priorities for the local area.

The council is an active partner in the CPP and there is a strong link between the strategic priorities of the CPP and the Corporate Plan priorities. The council can demonstrate our contribution to the strategic priorities and through effective performance management, we ensure outcomes are achieved and resources prioritised to deliver sustainable, positive change in West Lothian.

OUR IMPACT



During the period of our last Corporate Plan (2021/22), the council made progress in our key outcomes for West Lothian in relation to education, health, housing and care. A summary of some of the impact that the council has made includes:



Improved **numeracy, reading** and **literacy** levels in our primary school pupils



Improved **attainment** results for school leavers



Continued to support adults with physical and learning disabilities, with high levels of satisfaction recorded for these services



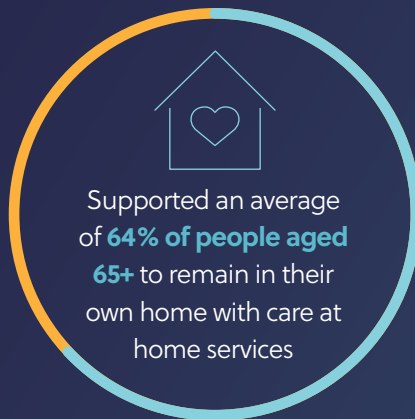
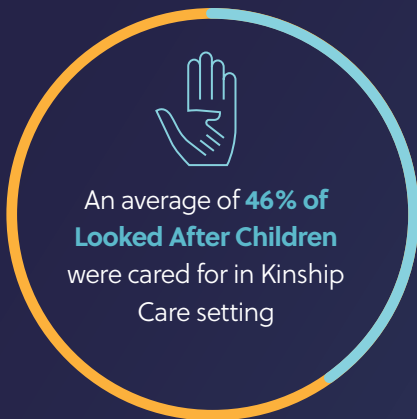
Increased the percentage of school leavers entering a **positive destination** (further education or work)



Helped businesses to create on average **440+ jobs** per year



Supported an average of **770 small and medium sized businesses** per year



Received on average over **400,000 enquiries** to our contact centre per year and over **45,000 enquiries** in our local offices



Provided financial assistance to an average of 9,600 people per year through the Scottish Welfare Fund



Reduced the time it takes to **process benefits** for Housing and Council Tax



Increased the **supply of council houses** through our new build and acquisition programmes



Welcomed an average of **1.8million visitors** per year to our country parks

OUR PRIORITIES

The council has five priorities for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28. These reflect the areas that are the most important for the community and improving the quality of life for all living, working and visiting West Lothian.

The priorities have been set through consultation with our community, staff and partner agencies and identify and address the most pronounced, collective needs of the local area. They will also provide a focus for decision making and resource prioritisation in the next five years,

ensuring that we target our efforts towards the issues that matter most to the community.

In the next five years, the council will focus on achieving outcomes in each priority.



Measuring success in each priority

The council has robust performance management arrangements that provide an in-depth view of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery and our impact on the community.

A performance scorecard, with measures of success for each priority, will provide information on the levels of performance throughout the lifetime of the Corporate Plan. This information will be used across the next five years to challenge and scrutinise performance in the priority and to provide transparent reporting of performance to the public.

Management of risk

Risk may be defined as those threats, opportunities or unexpected events that may affect the council's ability to achieve its corporate objectives. Risk management is therefore a key component of the council's corporate governance arrangements.

The council will continue to ensure that there are effective risk management arrangements in place which will enable corporate, service and project risks to be properly identified, assessed and managed.

RAISING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



The council remains strongly committed to helping West Lothian's young people to make the most of their opportunities, so that they can go on to achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Raising educational attainment increases personal, social, cultural and economic opportunities and helps our young people to fulfil their potential.

Increasing attainment and achievement for all learners in West Lothian has been a key priority for the council in the last ten years and the council has invested in our schools and provided additional, specialist support to improve the quality of teaching. West Lothian has a strong track record of delivering positive outcomes for young people and we want to build on this outstanding record and continue to develop a culture of aspiration for all our young people.

In 2023/28, we will continue to strive to improve attainment and positive destinations, with particular focus on addressing the attainment gap for the most deprived young people in our communities.

We will focus on:

- Improving Health and Wellbeing for all children and young people ensuring that learning promotes confidence, resilience and positive attitudes and dispositions. This includes ensuring the highest possible attendance levels for all learners, leading to increased engagement, participation and achievement.
- Ensuring that children and young people are at the heart of educational decisions, self-evaluation and school improvement.
- Providing high quality multi-agency approaches, to enable all young people to achieve success.
- Ensuring effective tracking and monitoring of health and wellbeing including for specific targeted groups and/or individuals, and that timeous interventions are agreed with learners, and having a positive impact.
- Improving the quality of learning and teaching to ensure all learners experience motivating, engaging, well-planned and inclusive learning opportunities that maximise attainment and achievement.
- Creating a culture of high ambition and aspiration through a curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of all learners, with engaging and motivating pathways into, and through, the Senior Phase.
- Enhancing partnerships with Developing Young Workforce teams, other education providers and employers to increase the range of choices available to young people at all levels.
- Embedding the engagement of parents and carers as partners in their child's learning through family learning programmes and support.

TRACKING PROGRESS:

We will measure our success in this priority through; school exam results, positive destinations for pupils and pupil and parental satisfaction with schools.

STRENGTHENING CARE AND SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN, ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE



The council aims to deliver high quality services that ensure that people in need of care and support in West Lothian are supported to live well

We are committed to working with key partners to ensure:

- That vulnerable children and young people have the best start in life and are supported to realise their potential
- That vulnerable adults and older people have access to services that improve the quality of their lives and enable them to live as independently as possible within their own communities

Through the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council work together to meet the health and social care needs of people in West Lothian. The HSCP will continue to work to develop and deliver services that are high quality, person centred, accessible and integrated.

Health and social care services in West Lothian operate within a challenging environment with:

- Increased demand for support due to an increasing elderly population
- Increased complexity of assessed need,
- A range of demographic pressures,
- Workforce challenges and
- Financial constraints faced by all public sector services in Scotland.

In order to meet these challenges, the HSCP will work to create a culture of cooperation, co-production and co-ordination across all partners. By working with people who use our services, their families and the wider community, the partnership will aim to create effective and sustainable solutions and achieve the best outcomes for people in West Lothian.

In 2023/28, we will work with our partners to deliver joined up services across health, education, and social care for vulnerable children, adults and older people.

We will focus on:

- Developing services targeted at those most in need with a 'Home First' approach. We will maximise the use of technology enabled care where appropriate to reduce and prevent hospital admissions and facilitate speedier hospital discharge.
- Improving our approach to integrated models for mental health services for children, young people and adults recognising the importance of mental health and wellbeing on people achieving positive outcomes.
- Improving support for young carers and unpaid carers over the next five years through improved identification of unpaid carers, assessment, information and advice, health and well-being, carer support, participation and partnership.
- increase the range of available support to enable people to achieve better outcomes by choosing and directing their own support
- Providing support for vulnerable children and young people to achieve sustainable positive outcomes and destinations in line with priorities in the West Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan.
- Providing support for care experienced children and young people to help achieve positive outcomes.
- Protecting those in our community who are most at risk by providing effective interventions across the four main strands of public protection; Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, Gender Based Violence and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

TRACKING PROGRESS:

We will measure our success in this priority through; measures on the quality of care, percentage of self-directed support and technology-enabled care and service user/carer satisfaction with our services.

INVESTING IN SKILLS AND JOBS



The council aims to support the growth of a vibrant business sector, built around a highly motivated and skilled workforce.

Improving the employment position will positively impact on the quality of life and the overall wellbeing of citizens in West Lothian. Our community needs a strong local economy to flourish as it supports the success of other priorities, particularly in improving attainment and health outcomes, and addressing poverty.

The council will continue to focus on maximising employment opportunities with a particular focus on helping young people enter the job market.

In 2023/28 we will continue to support local businesses to start-up and grow and encourage investment in West Lothian through collaboration with national partners we will focus on:

- Targeting regeneration interventions on communities with the greatest need including areas suffering disadvantage, rural areas and isolated communities, whilst attracting investment and promoting sustainable growth in those areas.
- Promoting access to employment by ensuring young people have an opportunity to aspire and understand the opportunities available in new industries on leaving school.
- Through Investinwestlothian we will continue to Support investment ensuring collaboration with national and local agencies and other partners.
- Supporting businesses through building an entrepreneurial culture, supporting business start-ups and early stage company growth to increase the overall stock of businesses.
- Collaboration through partnership working to maximise job opportunities and minimise skills gaps
- Maximising the potential of West Lothian's town centres and visitor attractions through targeted investment and partnership working to increase the range of employment opportunities available.

TRACKING PROGRESS:

We will measure our success in this priority through; employment, successful outcomes from employability programmes, town retail occupancy and business and jobs supported through council interventions/support.

HELPING TO CREATE STRONG AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



The council aims to support the development of a strong, inclusive and sustainable West Lothian. We want to support empowered communities through services that are well designed and protect the built and natural environment for current citizens and future generations.

We will continue to focus on building an infrastructure that will support a growing and thriving West Lothian, ensuring that there is access to council services, schools, housing, roads and transportation networks that will allow people, families and businesses to succeed.

This will include services that contribute to our local culture and heritage, and services that help build resilient and inclusive communities.

The council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019, and is committed to taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

In 2023/28, we will focus on ensuring that we have the infrastructure to succeed – that there is access to council services, schools, housing, roads and transportation networks for people, families and business to continue to grow and achieve.

We will focus on:

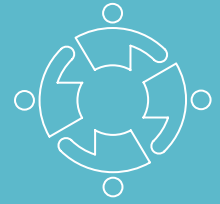
- Supporting the sustainable residential and commercial development of the local area.

- Providing affordable housing where people are supported to live sustainably
- Supporting community inclusion and empowerment.
- Ensuring that West Lothian has a transport and roads network to support and sustain economic and population growth in the local area.
- Providing high quality customer, community and heritage services and a range of culture and leisure facilities that will enhance the quality of life for local people.
- Protecting the environment through a range of regulatory and enforcement activities that will protect the health, wellbeing and safety of local people.
- Improving waste recycling rates in West Lothian and introducing low carbon and renewable energy solutions.
- Promoting active and sustainable travel options, working in partnership to improve passenger transport options, reducing emissions and achieving the Council's carbon reduction targets.

TRACKING PROGRESS:

We will measure our success in this priority through; housing and local development progress, outcomes in relation to recycling, the environment and improvements in the local infrastructure (roads and land) and measures of the quality and responsiveness of customer and community services.

TACKLING HOMELESSNESS, POVERTY AND INEQUALITY



The council aims to help people living in poverty and deprivation as they have significantly worse life outcomes than those in average households, and this is often determined at a very early age by family circumstances.

Individuals who do less well at school, are more likely to be unemployed or in poorly paid jobs and will generally have poorer health and shorter lives. The financial cost is significant also, with people having a greater reliance on public services throughout their lives.

We have been working together with partners to mitigate the human costs of poverty through a range of supports and targeted activities in our communities. This includes helping people to manage their household finances, debts and benefits but also, by investing in increasing the supply of council housing – through the provision of new build council houses and acquisition of former council houses – to create new homes for lower income families

In 2023/28, we will aim to address some of the serious issues that have affected our communities, and through education and multi-agency support we will focus on:

- Increasing the supply of affordable homes for rent across West Lothian through our council house new build and acquisition programmes and our partnership with social and private landlords.
- Helping people to access housing appropriate to their needs and support to sustain their accommodation.
- Ongoing implementation and development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy and action plan for West Lothian to address the causes of poverty and mitigate the impact of poverty.
- Providing holistic benefit, debt, housing and energy support and advice services to local people to maximise their income and mitigate the impact of the cost of living rises.
- Providing a route out of poverty through work and continuing to support those further from the labour market to progress towards work through training and volunteering.
- Providing clothing grants, free school meals, and education maintenance allowance to parents and carers who qualify.
- Increasing the efficient processing of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payments, Blue Badge and National Entitlement Cards.
- Ensure that the Scottish Welfare Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments are utilised to support our most vulnerable citizens.
- Working with our Community Planning Partners, Third Sector and the Scottish Government to embed the West Lothian Food Network and food poverty action plan into local support mechanisms to further support low income households.

TRACKING PROGRESS:

We will measure our success in this priority through; council house new build and acquisition progress, measure of impact/quality of financial support and advisory services, council house tenancy sustainment.



CORPORATE PLAN

2023 to 2028

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westlothian.gov.uk

