



# Operational Services Service Improvement Plan

2023/26

## Message from the Head of Operational Services



Jim Jack  
Head of Service

Operational Services provide a wide range of frontline services to all those who reside, visit and work within West Lothian. Each service is designed to efficiently contribute to positive outcomes in the council’s corporate priorities through effective service management, planning and delivery.

Operational Services will maintain a clear focus on securing Best Value in the delivery of our services. We will also preserve our strong connection with customers and work with them to ensure that they continue to receive the services they need.

This improvement plan sets out how resources will be used within the service to deliver positive outcomes for West Lothian. It is the result of a detailed planning process to ensure that council services continue to be well planned and managed.

I hope that it will help our employees, customers and partners to understand how we will transform our services and continue to deliver for West Lothian.

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## I. Our Service

### What we do

Operational Services play a key role in the management and maintenance of assets and the delivery of frontline services in areas such as; Waste, Roads, Facilities Management, Passenger Transport and NETs, Land and Countryside.

### Our Customers

Our services reach everyone who lives in, works in, or travels through West Lothian. We deliver crucial frontline services to the community that enhance the local area and contribute to the quality of life in West Lothian

We will continue to ensure that these services are delivered as efficiently as possible and we will also review the range of services that we provide to ensure that we continue to protect and manage our natural environment and transport infrastructure and address the most important needs of the local community

### Our Way of Working

We will continue to engage with and support our customers and deliver sustainable public services that meet the needs of customers and stakeholders.

### Our Purpose

*Operational Services manages its assets and delivers services to ensure West Lothian is a thriving community whilst enhancing and protecting the local environment.*

*We will design and deliver efficient and effective services that align with the needs of our customers and adapt to changes within our operating environment.*



## 2. Operational Services Overview

### Our Services:

#### Facilities Management and Support Services

Budget: £18.547 million  
Staff resource: 564.05 FTE

The service is the council's integrated catering, cleaning, facilities management and school crossing patrol service. Delivering services in nursery, primary, secondary and additional support needs schools as well as offices, partnership centres, community centres and libraries - in total approximately 161 buildings. The service also provides internal support services.

#### NETs, Land and Countryside Services

Budget: £6.416 million  
Staff resource: 229.34 FTE

The service is responsible for the development, management, maintenance and cleanliness of West Lothian's local environment. This includes three country parks, a further 2,600 hectares of open space and countryside land, 1,000 hectares of woodland, and 39 churchyards and cemeteries.

#### Passenger Transport Services

Budget: £10.749 million  
Staff resource: 60.64 FTE

The service is responsible for the provision of council public transport services within West Lothian and to neighbouring areas. It is also responsible for the provision of free and fare paying school transport services for pupils, including bespoke services for additional support pupils. In addition, the service provides support for partner services, by transporting service users with varying needs.

#### Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services

Budget: £20.060 million  
Staff resource: 211.08 FTE

The service is responsible for the collection and environmentally responsible management of all household waste in line with the government's Zero Waste Plan. This includes a weekly uplift to households, bulky uplifts and provision of community recycling centres. Fleet Services are responsible the management and maintenance of a diverse range of fleet and mechanical equipment, comprising in excess of 1,150 items including refuse collection vehicles, winter maintenance vehicles alongside plant and pool cars.

#### Roads and Transportation Services

Budget: £11.191 million  
Staff resource: 142.12 FTE

The service provides an integrated service to construct, manage and maintain the road, footpath and transportation network in West Lothian in the safest way possible. This includes public roads, cycleways and footways, street lights, traffic lights, signage, bridges and all other roads infrastructure.

### 3. Operating Context

Operational Services operates within a large ecosystem and there are a number of factors that the service must consider when planning for the future, to maximise opportunities and manage any risks or threats to our services. Key factors that will shape our services in the next three years are set out in detail below.

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#### Corporate Priorities

The council has identified 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.



Operational Services contribute to a number of the key outcomes, but our largest contribution is to **Helping to create strong and sustainable communities**. Our [Key Objectives](#) explain in greater detail how we will support the council to achieve success in each priority area.

#### Legislation and Regulation

As public service providers, the council must ensure that we plan and deliver our services appropriately to meet current and new statutory duties to comply with the relevant regulatory frameworks.

Operational Services will:

- Continue to influence the development of policy and legislation through participation with national working groups and professional bodies.
- Review, and where required, change our approach to service delivery to take cognisance of future policies and legislation.

## Climate Change and Sustainability

The council is committed to supporting the transition to net zero emissions in Scotland and the decarbonisation of the public sector – for the benefit of the environment, people and our economy. There is also a need for the council to adapt and build resilience to manage the impact of climate change alongside any actions to reduce emissions.

Operational Services will:

- Improve ecology, bio-diversity and natural habitats through the work of our Ecology and Biodiversity Officers
- Deliver carbon reductions through fleet changes
- Support the improvement of health and well-being within communities by promoting active travel
- Maximise recycling to reduce landfill by working to reduce contamination in waste

## Demographic Diversity

The population of West Lothian is both increasing and changing in profile. The council recognises that this will alter the requirements and needs of our customers and how some of our services are delivered.

Operational Services will:

- Align services to the changing demographic profile, such as the increase in homes that require waste collection services and the increase in children requiring school transport.
- Review strategies in areas such as School Transport and Waste, and align service priorities with the changing needs of our customers.
- Ensure inclusivity across all asset categories and service delivery.

## Technology

The importance of technology to the function of the council has never been greater. It is imperative that the council maximises the use of technology, creating choice for customers in the way that they access and receive services and also increasing efficiency.

Operational Services will:

- Support continued modernisation of service delivery through the use of new technology.
- Improve customer accessibility and interactions with services through the use of new technology.

## 4. Key Objectives

**Operational Services will manage assets and deliver services to everyone who lives in, works in, or travels through West Lothian.**

The service can be organised around three topical clusters, or objectives, that we will work to advance in the next three years.

Operational Services will monitor our success in each objective with appropriate performance indicators and targets set to encourage performance improvement.

### Objective 1

**Support strong and sustainable communities through the delivery of frontline services**

Operational Services will provide:

- ▼ Facilities Management Services
  - Meal service delivering around 2.6 million meals in schools, nurseries, adult day care and housing with care units
  - School crossing patrol service at 84 school crossing patrol points
- ▼ NETs, Land and Countryside Services
  - Grounds Maintenance service
  - Street Cleansing service for 2,100 km of street and footpath surface
  - Garden Maintenance to 2,048 residential gardens for the elderly
  - Environmental Enforcement Officers to address environmental crime
  - Access to 11 cemeteries
  - Access to 280 children's play areas and 113 parks and open spaces
- ▼ Passenger Transport Services
  - Public Transport service support through subsidising 20% of the local bus network
  - Sufficient public transport infrastructure through siting, erecting and maintaining approximately 500 bus stops and 500 bus shelters
- ▼ Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services
  - Domestic waste collection to over 80,000 households
  - Community Recycling Centres
  - Work with communities to maximise recycling rates
- ▼ Roads and Transportation Services
  - Public road, footway and cycleway maintenance and improvement service
  - Street lighting maintenance service including road signs and bollards
  - Road safety casualty reduction and traffic management

- Maintenance of bridges, culverts, underpasses and retaining walls
- Management and adoption of new road and footway infrastructure in newly constructed developments
- Management and co-ordination of all road works on the road network including public utility co-ordination
- Winter maintenance service
- Flood risk management service

Performance will be monitored in this objective through:

Key Output	Key Indicator	Target
FM Services are successfully delivered	FMS007_6a.7 - Services provided in schools-rating on overall services provided as good or excellent	72%
NETs, Land and Countryside Services are successfully delivered	NLCS007_6a.7 - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of the Service provided by NETs, Land & Countryside Services as adequate, good or excellent	60%
Passenger Transport Services are successfully delivered	PTS014_6a.7 - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of the Service provided by Public Transport positively	76%
Recycling, Waste and Fleet are successfully delivered	WM007_6a.7 - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of the service provided by Waste Services positively	95%
	WMI02.6a.2 - Percentage of customers who rated the quality of service provided by the Fleet service as good or excellent	86%
Roads and Transportation Services are successfully delivered	RTS007_6a.7 - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of service provided by Roads and Transportation Services as positive	55%

## Objective 2

**To manage and maintain key council assets in line with resources, legislation and national guidance and/or the business needs of the council**

Operational Services will develop and maintain:

- ▾ NETs, Land and Countryside Services
  - Open Space Asset Management plan and Grassland Management plan to provide a structured process that seeks to ensure best value, continuous performance



improvement, achievement of our corporate priorities and improve quality of life for our residents.

- Tree and Woodland Management plan to ensure a consistent and efficient approach the management of West Lothian Council’s trees and woodland areas.
- Litter plan to reduce litter as part of our aim to achieve a high quality environment for our residents.
- 2,048 residential gardens for the elderly, 2,100 km of street and footpath surfaces, 100 hectares of woodland, 280 children’s play areas, 113 parks and open spaces, 33 cemeteries and churchyards and 18 war memorials.

▼ Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services

- Fleet Asset Management plan to provide, maintain and appropriately utilise fleet assets to help ensure excellent service delivery.
- Operator’s Licence to ensure we maintain the legal authority to operate goods vehicles.
- Fleet assets whilst working towards the decarbonisation of our fleet.

▼ Roads and Transportation Services

- Roads Asset Management plan for the management of the council’s carriageways, footways, structures, street lighting, traffic signals, street furniture and water related assets.
- Over 1,060 km of public roadway, 1,390 km of public footway, 48,176 street lights, 171 traffic signal junctions and crossing, 2,524 grit bins, 11,376 signs and bollards, 631 bridges, culverts and underpasses and 136 retaining walls

Performance will be monitored in this objective through:

Output	Indicator	Target
Open Space assets are well maintained	NLCS104_9b.2a - Quality assessment score on Open Spaces in West Lothian	108 <i>(out of a maximum 108)</i>
Street and footpath surfaces are well maintained	NLCS102_9b.2a - Local Environment Management System (LEAMS) of Street Cleanliness - Percentage of West Lothian Streets at an acceptable standard	94%
Grounds areas are well maintained	NLCS103_9b.2a - Land Audit Management System (LAMS) result	55 <i>(out of a maximum 67)</i>
Fleet assets are well maintained	WMI62_9b.1c - Percentage of Heavy Goods vehicles passing their MOT test first time	100%

Roads infrastructure is well maintained	RTS100_9b.2a - Percentage of the overall Road Network which should be considered for maintenance treatment	30.6%
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### Objective 3

**Providing support functions that will enable the delivery of other frontline council services to assist them to meet their corporate priorities, including raising educational attainment and strengthening care and support for children, adults and older people**

Operational Services will continue to support partner services in the council by providing:

- ▼ Facilities Management Services
  - Cleaning service in 161 buildings throughout the council covering secondary, primary, nursery and additional support needs schools plus partnership buildings, council offices, community centres, housing with care units and libraries
  - Security, maintenance and janitorial service to 67 secondary, primary, nursery and additional support needs schools
- ▼ Passenger Transport Services
  - School transport service for approximately 6,000 pupils across West Lothian
  - Community Transport service to various locations throughout West Lothian
- ▼ Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services
  - Fleet maintenance service to over 1,150 assets

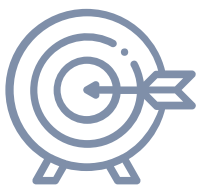
Performance will be monitored in this objective through:

Output	Indicator	Target
Facilities Management Services are efficiently delivered	FMS031_6b.5 - Percentage of maintenance jobs completed by Janitorial Staff within 2 days of being reported	100%
Passenger Transport Services are efficiently delivered	PTS073_9a.1c - Cost per mainstream pupil offered free transport	£800
	PTS097_9b.1c - Percentage of Community Transport bus runs which are completed	100%
Fleet Services are efficiently delivered	WMI42.9a.1a - Average annual maintenance cost per vehicle - All Cars (Pool)	£600

## 5. Delivering Our Services

Operational Services always aim to provide the highest possible quality of service to our customers. We have used the principles of Connect – Empower – Deliver to develop clear commitments to our customers about the way we will work with them and for them:

### Connect



- We will deliver the business of the council by working collaboratively with our colleagues and connecting with our customers
- We will build productive relationships with our customers and partners through regular two-way engagement
- We will communicate with clarity, providing concise information to our customers in a way that they will understand

### Empower



- We will empower our customers by ensuring they are well informed and offering self-service solutions where possible
- We will encourage teamwork and collaborative working across Operational Services to add value for our customers and partners
- We will empower our people and customers to make the right decisions by providing them with the information necessary to help them identify and manage opportunities and risks
- We will seek feedback and engage with our customers and adapt service delivery where appropriate

### Deliver








- We will continue to prioritise the delivery of services that meet the needs of our customers
- We will strive to continuously improve the quality of our services by learning from best practice
- We will encourage and support our customers and our colleagues to achieve their goals
- We will ensure our employees are equipped to deliver outstanding customer service
- We will tailor our services to provide effective outcomes for our customers


## 6. Risk Management

**The council aims to mitigate risks to its objectives by implementing robust risk management procedures which enable managers to effectively manage their risks.**

Significant risks to Operational Services’ objectives are set out in the council’s corporate risk register. These risks are regularly monitored by managers and are reviewed on a monthly basis by the service management team to ensure that appropriate and effective control measures are in place.

Operational Services is currently not managing any risks considered to be high, however does manage and aim to mitigate risks. The six highest risks are:

Risk Title	Risk Description	Current Risk Score	Traffic Light Icon
OPSHQ005 Loss of operator licence for all vehicles over 3.5 Tonnes GVW	Failure to comply with the terms, conditions and undertakings of the Goods Vehicle Licensing of Operators act 1995 resulting in regulatory action including the revocation, suspension or curtailment of operators’ licence(s). Regulatory action would prevent the operation of vehicles over 3500kg GVW which would have a serious impact on services reliant on these types of vehicles.	10	
NLCS004 Unsafe tree resulting in death or injury to a member of the public	Failure of tree inspection programme, or failure of health and safety processes, leading to an unsafe tree falling on a member of the public, and resulting in death or injury.	10	
RTS005 Failure to maintain roads and related infrastructure	Failure of inspection and maintenance programme, leading to deterioration of infrastructure, i.e. roads, footways, structures, and signage. Resulting in death or injury of users or reputational damage due to the state of disrepair.	10	
WM006 Loss of transfer station	Fire or explosion leading to loss of the transfer station and resulting in an inability to receive waste and transport it onwards. Resulting in an impaired waste collection service, reputational damage, and additional costs. Estimated cost of replacing the transfer station in excess of £3.5 million.	10	
WLC027 Driver risk - injury or death to members of the public	Failure to ensure effective corporate policies, procedures and processes are in place which enable services to mitigate the risk of injury or death to members of the public or council staff from council drivers on council business.	10	

Risk Title	Risk Description	Current Risk Score	Traffic Light Icon
OPSHQ019 Failure to undertake, review, implement and monitor risk assessments and method statements leading to injury or death of employees or others	Failure to undertake or review risk assessments and method statements leading to unsafe working practices, or failure to implement and monitor the risk assessments, resulting in injury or death of employees or others	10	

## 7. Performance and Transformation – Actions

Operational Services will undertake a number of actions in support of the council’s Corporate Plan, Budget Strategy and other council strategies. We will focus on actions that will improve the customer experience, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services and advance or use of technologies that will increase choice and/or reduce costs.

Key This action should have the following intended impact:



Improve services for customers




Improve performance and/or process efficiency











Reduce the cost of delivering our services



Increase the use of technology








Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Review and improve the Employee Engagement approach	Improve the approach to employee engagement and communication and encourage creativity and innovation	Successfully embed a cohesive approach to employee engagement and improve employee satisfaction.	All Operational Services Service Managers	July 2023	Ongoing	Objectives 1, 2 and 3 
	Improve employee learning and development opportunities	Improved succession and progression across all roles within the service, with employee learning and development opportunities meeting operational requirements.				
	Promoting achievements	Recognising and encouraging employees to deliver outstanding customer service and increase morale.				




Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
	Recruitment Process	Strive for the service to position itself within the market as an employer of choice.				
Review and improve the Customer Engagement approach	Enhance the approach to customer engagement and interaction with group forums.	Provide clear, concise and up to date information for customers, while promoting a culture of driving improvement within the service, increasing morale and improved customer communication.	All Operational Services Service Managers	July 2023	Ongoing	Objectives 1, 2 and 3 
	Analysis of customer perception results	Understanding recurring themes and improvement opportunities.				
	Improve partnership working	Better working relationships with internal partners to proactively respond to market and societal trends.				
Community Choices	Deploy Community Choices processes to improve customer engagement and to empower and involve customers in decisions on future service delivery	Customers and communities will get a say and will be involved in making decisions to ensure services are delivered to meet community needs.	NETs, Land and Countryside Services Manager	March 2020	Ongoing	Objectives 1 and 2  
Development of the Transformation and Performance approach	Identifying areas of best practice and learning opportunities through strengthening benchmarking activities.	Improvement opportunities identified and evidenced through comparative information and learning from best practice.	All Operational Services Service Managers	July 2023	Ongoing	Objectives 1, 2 and 3    

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Service Modernisation	Improvement and transformation in service delivery: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of artificial intelligence to assess road condition</li> <li>• use of tablets for online staff to carry out on site notifications</li> </ul>	<p>Increase new ways of thinking to encourage innovation, with a focus on meeting customer needs.</p> <p>Make better use of the available data and information in the service, with a particular focus on the customer experience data that will inform improvement and transformation in service delivery.</p>	Roads and Transportation Services Manager	March 2023	Ongoing	<p>Objectives 1 and 2</p> 
	Explore opportunities to introduce automation and increase digital options in the service: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement replacement contract management and scheduling software to improve route planning and deliver efficiencies across the service</li> <li>• Introduce route optimisation software for emptying of litter bins</li> </ul>	<p>Automated processes developed and embedded within the service.</p> <p>Increased satisfaction throughout the customer journey by delivering a more efficient service.</p> <p>This will optimise and reduce the overall number of journeys required to empty litter bins improving service efficiency and reducing fuel costs.</p>	NETs, Land and Countryside Services Manager			



West Lothian Council  
Improvement Plan 2023/26 – Operational Services

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Review and Refresh Operational Services Strategies, Service Standards and Working Practices	<p>Review and update the Passenger Transport Strategy, Parking Strategy, Open Space Strategies in line with the council's budget setting using key stakeholder involvement and engagement to inform the review.</p> <p>Review service standards and working practices across Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing to improve service efficiency.</p>	<p>Development of Operational Services Strategies for 2023-2026.</p> <p>Identify synergies across service areas and identify opportunities for generic working to improve service delivery.</p>	Passenger Transport Services Manager, Roads and Transportation Services Manager, NETs, Land and Countryside Services Manager	March 2023	March 2025	<p>Objectives 1, 2 and 3</p>  
Implement Parking Strategy	Implement Parking Strategy Interventions.	Carry out the parking strategy interventions to improve parking in West Lothian for all customers.	Roads and Transportation Services Manager	June 2023	December 2026	<p>Objective 1</p>  
Implementation of Contamination Strategy	Implement Contamination Strategy in line with Zero Waste Scotland Code of Practice.	Reduction in contamination to increase quality and quantity of recycling collected.	Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services Manager	November 2022	Ongoing	<p>Objective 1</p>  
Collaboration with partners	<p>Investigate opportunities to collaborate with neighbouring authorities sharing information and capture ideas.</p> <p>Enhance collaboration with key internal and external partners to address challenges and jointly consider response to external market influences.</p>	<p>Delivery of the West Lothian Parking strategy interventions, benchmarking and Society of Chief Officers of Transport in Scotland participation.</p> <p>Better working relationships with partners to proactively respond to market and societal trends.</p>	Roads and Transportation Services Manager	March 2023	Ongoing	<p>Objective 2</p> 

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Planning for legislative changes	<p>Prepare the service for legislation relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circular Economy</li> <li>• Deposit Return Scheme</li> <li>• Extended Producer Responsibility</li> </ul>	Service prepared and ready for future challenges.	Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services Manager	August 2023	Ongoing	Objective 1 
Optimisation of resources	<p>Implement cost efficiencies through optimisation of internal staff and vehicle resources.</p> <p>Review janitorial resources used to facilitate West Lothian Leisure lets in high schools</p>	<p>Achieving cost efficiencies whilst improving service delivery with the use of internal fleet across multiple service areas.</p> <p>Retain janitorial resource Mon-Fri for Education support and minimise loss to weekends in support of West Lothian Leisure lets.</p>	<p>Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services Manager</p> <p>Facilities Management Service Manager</p>	August 2022	Ongoing	Objective 3 
Review of elements of Winter Service	Carry out winter service grit bin review and footway tractor assessment in line with the approved budget savings for 2023/24.	Reduce the cost implications of grit bin maintenance in line with policy and making winter tractor primary routes more efficient.	Roads and Transportation Services Manager	May 2023	November 2023	Objective 1 
Review of effectiveness of new waste collection service	Analyse performance of the recent changes to the collection service.	Deliver the most efficient and effective service possible.	Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services Manager	August 2023	Ongoing	Objective 1 