PERFORMANCE AND TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

2023 to 2028

West Lothian Council

Introduction

Lawrence Fitzpatrick
Leader of the Council

West Lothian Council has long been known as one of the top performing local authorities in the United Kingdom and has been recognised as an outstanding performer across all sectors in the UK and Europe in prestigious external assessment and benchmarking exercises.

The Performance and Transformation Strategy is designed to support transformation and growth in a council that is working to improve lives and make West Lothian a great place to live, work, learn and do business. It sets out the key outcomes, activities and behaviours that the council will pursue in support of our corporate priorities and a culture of continuous improvement

The strategy reaffirms our commitment to continuous improvement and increasing the value and effectiveness of our services.

Graham Hope
Chief Executive

It sets out how we will develop our approach to transformation in the council to make our services more sustainable and agile. We will also harness the power of data and innovation to improve our performance.

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1. Strategy Purpose

Scope of the Strategy

The Performance and Transformation Strategy is a corporate strategy and adopted across the council.

The strategy covers the period 2023/24 to 2027/28, which is also the duration of the Council's Corporate Plan. The Performance and Transformation Strategy has been developed in support of this plan and the other key plans and strategies.

Outcomes

The Performance and Transformation Strategy is part of suite of strategies that are helping the council to transform and improve in a smart, flexible and efficient way.

There are four outcomes in the strategy and these are:

1. Transform for the future

2. Utilise data, information and knowledge

3. Technology innovation

4. Drive performance

Reporting on Progress

The Performance and Transformation Strategy will be progressed under the direction of a corporate board. An annual update will on progress in the outcomes and actions will be reported to Corporate Policy and Resources PDSP and published on the council website.

An end of strategy report will also be published in 2028.

Purpose

The purpose of the Performance and Transformation Strategy is to support the effective and efficient delivery of council services and transform for the future

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2. Strategy Overview

	Strategy Outcome **Transform for the future**	Strategy Outcome **Utilise data, information and knowledge**	Strategy Outcome **Technology innovation**	Strategy Outcome **Drive performance**
Description	This outcome sets out the principles for transformation in the next five years, ensuring the council has the ability to identify and respond to any opportunities or risks that present during the period.	This outcome is focused on ensuring that the relevant people in the council have access to accurate and sufficient information to support timely decision making.	This outcome promotes the use of innovation and technology to overcome challenges and improve performance, supporting a culture of continuous improvement.	This outcome identifies the quality and performance structures that will ensure the council is making progress towards the agreed strategic outcomes and our vision of a Thriving West Lothian.
Challenge	Balancing the demand for high quality, technology-enabled services, within the budget and resource constraints.	Council services utilise different technologies and solutions to collect, store and process data and information. This can result in areas of duplication and inefficiency in our approach to information management.	Combining knowledge of service challenges with technology capabilities to improve service delivery.	The council is going through a period of transformation and maintaining performance in the key strategic outcomes and satisfaction levels will be challenging.
Opportunity	There are opportunities to improve service provision by embracing digital technologies, enabling seamless service delivery and engagement.	There are opportunities to improve performance through better management and analysis of data and information and sharing of knowledge across services.	There are opportunities to match appropriate technology solutions to service challenges and achieve streamlined service delivery.	There are opportunities, through new technologies and better prioritisation, to enhance the use of performance data in the council and streamline how we manage and report performance.

	Strategy Outcome **Transform for the future**	Strategy Outcome **Utilise data, information and knowledge**	Strategy Outcome **Technology innovation**	Strategy Outcome **Drive performance**
Action	Deliver a structured programme of transformation that will improve the efficacy of council services and contribute to the Budget Strategy.	Improve information management and the data infrastructure and handling arrangements in the council.	Create opportunities for those with knowledge of service delivery challenges and those with technology expertise to enable dialogue and identification of solutions to address service challenges.	Review and update performance management framework and maintain improvement-focus through self-evaluation processes.
Measures	Delivery of the transformation programme and increasing digital services.	Improving data management and handling.	Enhance knowledge of the technologies and innovations that could improve service delivery and efficiency.	Overall performance and WLAM scores for services.

3. Supporting the Corporate Priorities

The new Corporate Plan and Budget Strategy were created to address the most pressing issues and challenges for the council in the next five years, ensuring that the council meets its statutory obligations sustainably and protects the most vital and impactful services for local people.

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.
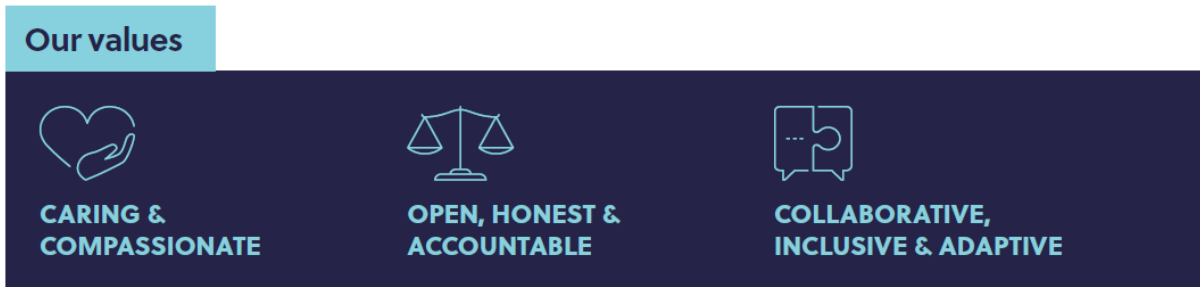

The Performance and Transformation Strategy is supporting the five priority areas in the Corporate Plan by helping the council to become more agile and respond to challenges and opportunities. With a focus on building key capabilities in respect to digital skills, data and information and performance management, the strategy will help the organisation transform for the future, while meeting our key strategic priorities and needs.

Council Values

As part of the development a new strategic direction and the Corporate Plan 2023/28, new organisational Values were also identified that better reflect the character and ambitions of the council.

The council wants to work with customers, staff and partners to make services better and deliver our Purpose and Vision of a *Thriving West Lothian*. In addition to a refreshed strategic direction, it was determined that the council needed Values that reminded staff and customers

what the council stands for and the type of behaviours we want to promote across the organisation.

Our values

CARING & COMPASSIONATE

OPEN, HONEST & ACCOUNTABLE

COLLABORATIVE, INCLUSIVE & ADAPTIVE

These Values have greatly influenced the development of the Performance and Transformation Strategy as they support a culture that is collaborative, inclusive and adaptive.

In tandem with the other Corporate Strategies, this strategy has been created to support positive change in the council and those Values are a thread through many of the activities and actions in the strategy.

4. Operating Context

Looking ahead, 2023/24 to 2027/28 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.

This strategy will help the organisation develop the capabilities and knowledge to transform the council for the future. The following factors reflect the challenges and opportunities that the council is likely to face and the strategy will address.

Societal Trends and Customer Needs

Customer service trends and importantly, customer expectations are likely to continue to evolve in the next five years. Change is likely to be influenced by wider societal trends and the innovations and market disruptions that occur in other sectors, in addition to the changing needs in our local area.

The Performance and Transformation Strategy will provide a robust framework for transforming our services in response to changing needs, utilising our skills, knowledge and technical resources to increase operational efficiency and improve the customer experience.

Economic and Market factors

The financial context is challenging and will require changes that will fundamentally impact upon the future composition of council services and the services that are provided to customers in the next five years.

Economic and market factors will have to be closely monitored for the duration of this strategy, with steps taking to mitigate their impact on council services, where possible.

Staying updated on the latest technological advancements and trends to assess suitability or potential for use within Local Government. Embracing new innovative technologies could further improve the customer experience when interacting with services.

Demographic Diversity

We serve a broad spectrum of people in growing and vibrant towns and the diversity of our customers, in all its forms, is ever increasing.

Every person who resides in or works in West Lothian will access or experience council services at some point in their daily life. It is vital to ensure that we design our services around the customers we serve.

Data and information from customer experience and user research are required to understand how individuals interact with our services. That data collected will inform service design and delivery, taking account of different needs and preferences to improve the accessibility and reach of council services.

Technology, Automation and the Demand for Technical Skills

Digital services and on-demand transactions are becoming ever more present in all areas of society, with the pace of technology-enabled change in other sectors driving customer expectation about the way that public services can be accessed and delivered.

In the next five years, the council will need to maximise the use of proven technology by introducing systems and appropriately skilled staff to meet the changing demands of our customer base. Ongoing investment in upskilling of our workforce to keep up with emerging technologies and trends will be critical.

The council will look for opportunities to automate processes that will increase productivity. Automating repetitive tasks and streamlining workflows will improve processing times and reduce administrative tasks for council staff.

Digital services will result in increased data generated and a growing demand for skills in data analysis, data science and machine learning. These types of experts can derive insights from data, identify patterns and make data driven decisions to allow teams to identify options for optimisation or automation of services.

Legislation and Regulation

Each council service has to be delivered and developed in line with the relevant legislative/regulatory frameworks and officers will have to ensure that future changes are considered and implemented timeously and with due consideration for the impact it may have on service users.

Changes in legislation can impact upon the level of service that customers receive from the council and sometimes the way that services will be provided.

Data privacy laws govern the collection, storage, processing and sharing of personal data and any new technology or system, or data collection must comply with regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The council will continue to implement robust data privacy practices and obtain proper consent from users as required.

Climate Change and Sustainability

The strategy will look to ensure that, where possible, green options are reviewed when procuring or sourcing new technologies and digital services.

The council will also review potential suppliers' use of renewable energy sources and commitment to reducing their carbon footprint.

Scarcity of Resources

The council will endeavour to address any pressures arising from scarcity of resources by looking at new innovations, sustainable procurement and new ways of working. This will help to mitigate any negative impact or disruption to service performance from supply issues.

5. Outcomes

The purpose of the Performance and Transformation Strategy is to support the effective and efficient delivery of council services and transform for the future.

The strategy has four outcomes, that we will work to advance in the next five years.

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

Outcome 1

Transform for the future

The Performance and Transformation Strategy is intended to advance cultural and transformational change in the council, supporting the delivery of service improvements that meet the needs of customers and staff.

This outcome sets out the principles for transformation in the next five years, ensuring the council has the ability to identify and respond to any opportunities or risks that present during the period. There is a strong link with the council's Budget Strategy, as we look to harness the potential of new innovations and technologies that will improve performance and bridge the funding gap for council services.

Our transformation approach also aims to embed a "digital mindset", where services are encouraged to take advantage of technologies to increase efficacy, as well as improve access to services and convenience for customers.

In order to ensure that our services are fit for the future, the council will:

- ◤ Transformation: the council will deliver the agreed programme of transformation projects that will modernise service provision in the council for customers and deliver efficiency savings, in line with the Council's Budget Strategy (see Action 1).

- ◤ Service design approach: in support of the Customer Strategy, the council will promote the use of the Service Design approach in the council for review and/or redesign of services, ensuring there is appropriate customer focus in the delivery of change process (see Action 2).

- ◤ Reduce duplication and time required to complete key processes: the council will review business processes to identify unnecessary steps for customers and, where possible, eliminate high volume repetitive manual tasks by introducing automation.

◤ Foster a digitally proficient workforce by providing relevant training and resources: the council will assess existing digital skills within the organisation and identify skill gaps and develop appropriate digital training (see Action 3).

◤ Support creativity and innovation: harnessing ideas from our customers, staff and partners through processes such as consultation and engagement and process redesign, will allow the council to improve services. We will continue to involve customers, staff and other stakeholders in the design and review of our services to ensure that we are connected to the needs of our community and open and transparent in our decision-making processes.

Performance will be monitored in this outcome through:

Key Output	Key Indicator	Target
We will deliver our transformation programme to modernise service provision	Percentage of projects delivered to timescale or at Green status	100%
Our transformation programme will help to address the funding gap	Percentage of identified savings that are delivered	100%
Embedding the "digital mindset" in the council, ensuring our services are designed to meet customer needs	Improved Digital Maturity (Digital Maturity Assessment)	Level 3
Implementation of the Service Design in the council, promoting customer focus in change processes	Improved Service Design Maturity (Service Design Maturity Assessment)	Level 4

Outcome 2

Utilise data, information and knowledge

We aim to foster a culture of collaboration and effective joint working throughout the council that encourages sharing of information and knowledge. This supports the delivery of joined up services as well as innovation and better public services.

As a local authority delivering services to anyone who lives, works or learns in West Lothian, the council has extensive data assets that must be transformed into information in order to be shared and effectively used.

This outcome is focused on ensuring that the right people are provided with accurate and sufficient information to support timely decision making. This will require the council to continue to develop systems and data sharing policies and procedures that ensure data assets are captured, managed, utilised and secured effectively. These approaches will make the council more agile and build capability in the organisation.

In order to ensure that data is appropriately managed and utilised, the council will:

◤ Improve the data architecture: we will work to create a data architecture that covers the whole council, enabling the identification of duplication and redundancy in data collected and stored across service areas. We will rationalise systems, where possible (see Action 4).

◤ Information management: we will continue to develop our information management approach in the next five years to ensure it reflects good practice standards (see Action 5).

◤ Manage our data and information: we will cleanse, enrich, secure, and consolidate data coming from all parts of the organisation to increase knowledge and our capacity to develop. Key factors will be taken into consideration:

  o Data quality: making sure data is accurate and usable for its intended purpose
  o Data integration: combining different datasets to increase knowledge, responsiveness and understanding of needs and preferences
  o Data access: employees can access and retrieve information through the effective application of technologies; ensuring processes are more efficient and effective

◤ Create a data platform: we will work towards building a data platform for the council that will centralise and automate (where possible) data reporting, easing the burden on services and improving the transparency and timeliness of information for management and governance purposes (see Action 6).

◤ Data disposal: the council understands the importance of managing and securing our data and have put in place robust policies, procedures and technical controls to do so.

The council will continue to ensure that our records are stored, managed and destroyed efficiently and securely and information can be shared appropriately and safely.

Performance will be monitored in this outcome through:

Key Output	Key Indicator	Target
Rationalise council systems	Reduce the number of systems used in the council	5% reduction
Data and information are managed appropriately	DPIAs are in place for data assets	100%
Staff understand their responsibilities in respect to records management and data protection	Percentage of staff who have completed the mandatory records management training	100%
	Percentage of staff who have completed the mandatory data protection training	100%
Improving the use of data, information and knowledge in the council	Improved Data Maturity (Data Maturity Assessment)	Level 4

Outcome 3

Technology innovation

The council's continued strong performance will be partly reliant on our ability to continue to evolve as an organisation and change with the external environment and the needs and expectations of our customers.

Innovation is necessary to adapt and overcome the challenges of change, it fosters improvement in performance and creates a culture of continuous improvement and achievement to the benefit of our customers.

The effective use of technology can improve performance and reduces the demand on staff to deal with routine and repetitive tasks, thereby improving levels of accuracy and consistency of approach.

In order to ensure that the council maintains the ICT infrastructure and openness to innovation that we need to succeed, the council will:

- ◥ Foster a culture of innovation: we will facilitate workshops for staff (see Action 7) that will provide an open forum for ideas, challenges and innovations, this will include:

  - o Delivery of focused sessions that highlight the potential of new/different technologies to improve the customer experience or increase process efficiency;

  - o Delivery of focused sessions where services can present challenges to technology experts who can identify solutions or technologies that may address or mitigate the challenges.

- ◥ Provide high speed connectivity: we will improve our connectivity to enable use of internet-based information and services in order to increase efficiency and accessibility for customers.

- ◥ Maintain key council systems we will maintain the key systems (essential to service delivery) to ensure they provide the required functionality and that the council is well positioned to exploit digital technologies and innovations.

- ◥ Deliver effective technology change: we will use structured project management methodologies to ensure that technology changes are delivered timeously and in line with the required objectives.

Performance will be monitored in this outcome through:

Key Output	Key Indicator	Target
Service changes consider technology as part of the proposed solution	Number of new technology products or services presented each year	4 per annum
Provision of high-speed connectivity	Quarterly network availability	99.95%
Maintain key council systems	Percentage availability of key council systems	99%
Deliver effective and technology change	ICT projects delivered to timescale	100%
	Percentage of innovative technology projects delivered on time	90%

Outcome 4

Drive performance

The council has a strong record of providing high performing, customer-focused services that are delivering lasting change in the local community. This has been achieved through vision, leadership and a dedicated workforce, but also by ensuring that the correct governance, structures and strategies are in place to deliver effective services aligned to the priority areas.

As well as promoting a culture of continuous improvement, the strategy identifies the quality and performance structures that will ensure the council is making progress towards the agreed strategic outcomes and our vision of a Thriving West Lothian.

In order to support continued high performance, the council will:

▼ **Develop a robust performance management framework:** the council will continue to refine the performance management framework and the supporting systems to ensure that performance management and reporting continues to be fit for purpose and reflects good practice and Best Value requirements (see Action 8).

▼ **Maintain high quality performance reporting:** we will ensure effective governance, monitoring and reporting of corporate and service performance ensuring that the council can demonstrate to customers and stakeholders that our services represent value for money.

▼ **Improve service performance:** self-assessment is an important part of the council's improvement approach, encouraging innovation from within and positively engaging employees in service planning. The council will continue to operate cyclical and risk-based assessment of all services to support performance improvement.

Performance will be monitored in this outcome through:

Key Output	Key Indicator	Target
The council performs well in the national benchmarking framework	Overall ranking in the LGBF	1
Our services are improving	Council average score in the WLAM	660
The council provides high quality customer services	Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation – percentage of elements achieving good practice / compliance plus rating	25%
	Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation – percentage of elements achieving partial compliance	2%

6. Performance and Transformation – Actions

The council will undertake a number of actions in support of the 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
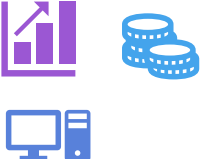
Improve performance and/or process efficiency

Reduce the cost of delivering our services

Increase the use of technology

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Action 1 **Transformation / project management approach**	Develop a robust approach to the management of transformation and change in the organisation. This should be highly adaptive and reduce the time and resources required to deliver change.	Increasing the pace of change and improvement in the organisation. Improved reporting and more responsive and adaptive management.	Corporate Transformation Manager	Dec-2023	Mar-2028	Outcome 1
Action 2 **Service design approach**	Development and implementation of service design approach to improve process performance and customer experience.	Improve process performance and customer experience.	Corporate Transformation Manager	Dec-2023	Mar-2028	Outcome 1
Action 3 **Digital skills – development of the workforce**	Developing the skills, knowledge and capabilities in the organisation to digital mentors and champions at every level.	The organisation increases the number of people who can support and deliver change effectively across all services.	Corporate Transformation Manager	Dec-2023	Mar-2028	Outcome 1

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Action 4 **Reduce the number of systems used in the council**	Reduce the cost of maintaining and upgrading systems in the organisation and improve data handling.	More sustainable ICT infrastructure with better data management.	IT Services Manager	Dec-2023	Mar-2028	Outcome 2
Action 5 **Enhance our approach to information management**	The function and performance of the information management arrangements will be reviewed. Ensuring corporate guidance, training and ILO functions operate effectively.	Improving data management and compliance with the Council's Information Governance policy and procedures. Reducing the risks associated from poor data management.	Improvement Manager	Apr-2023	Mar-2028	Outcome 2
Action 6 **Improve the collation and reporting of data and performance reporting**	Including collection and management of data and the key performance indicators that are used to manage and report performance.	Automation of processes Reduction in staff time to report/collect data	Improvement Manager	Apr-2024	Mar-2027	Outcome 2
Action 7 **Develop forum for pitches and staff innovation**	To provide a forum for service staff to be exposes to the capabilities of technologies and discuss the opportunities they offer to address service challenges.	Service areas will identify technologies they would like to progress to help meet service challenges	IT Services Manager	Jan-2024	Mar-2028	Outcome 3
Action 8 **Review the performance management framework**	The council will review the approach to performance management.	Improvement management and prioritisation of meaningful data in the system.	Improvement Manager	Jun-2023	Mar-2025	Outcome 4