



Citizen Led Inspection



An Introduction to

West Lothian Council



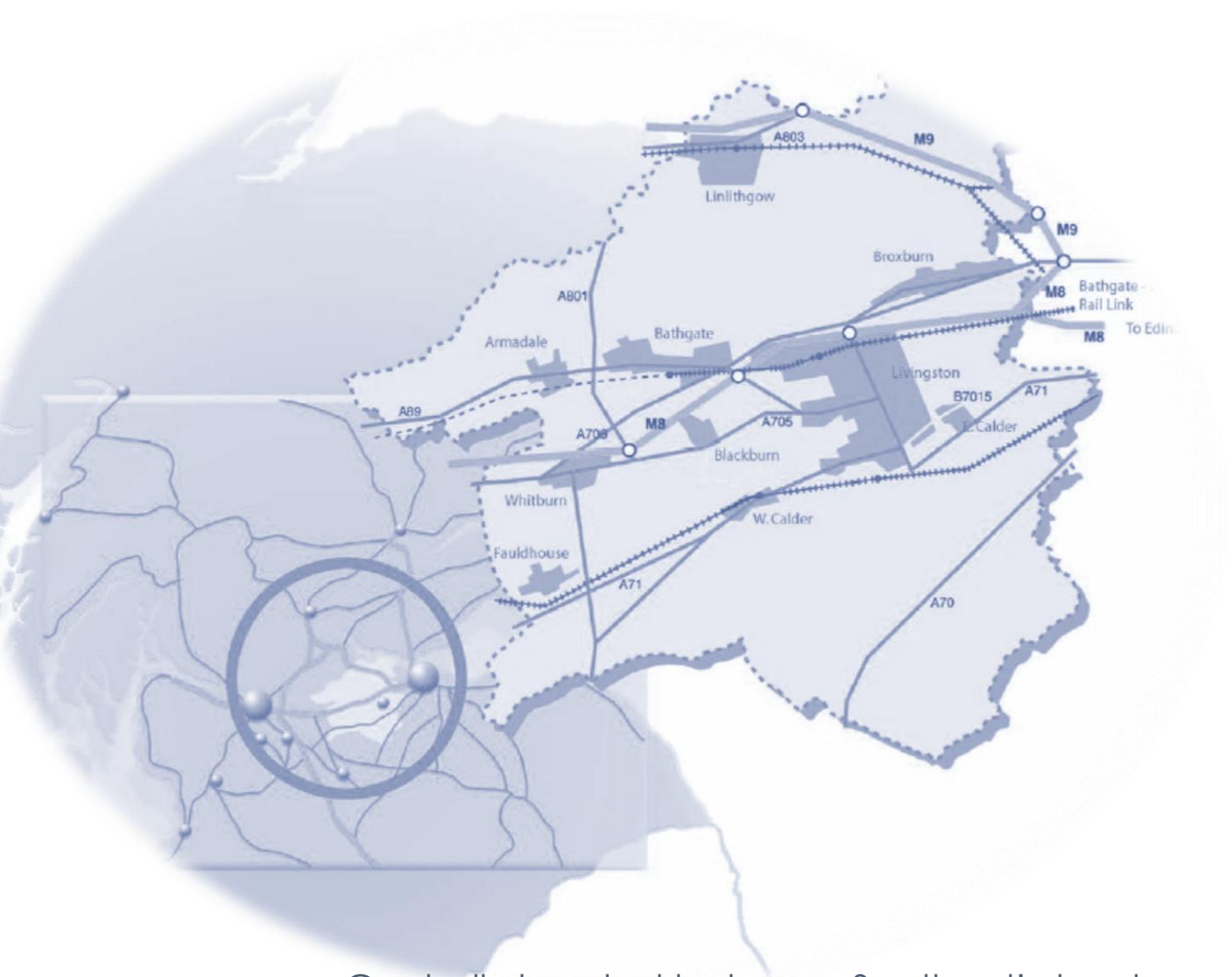
INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

westlothian.gov.uk



West Lothian
Council

The view from... West Lothian



Centrally located between Scotland's two largest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh, **West Lothian is home to over 175,000 people** and has the country's fastest growing population. The area has a mix of **traditional towns and villages** and vibrant local communities.

WELCOME TO WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

West Lothian Council (WLC) is a large organisation delivering a diverse range of services to the people, communities and businesses in West Lothian.

With over 8000 employees, the council provide around 100 key public services, including: schools, nurseries, social care, housing, road maintenance, waste collection, business support and enterprise, libraries and the management of community education facilities and country parks.

Established in 1996 with the national re-organisation of local government, the organisation has given a great deal of consideration to the kind of council we want to be. Our mission statement and values are a commitment to the delivery of high-quality and efficient public services, which are responsive to and reflective of local needs.

PURPOSE

Our aim is to improve the quality of life of all those living and working in West Lothian by providing services that add value to our communities.

A framework of measurable outcomes has been established to ensure the delivery of public services is based on strategic planning and partnership working, as well as being responsive to the needs of local communities.

The Scottish Government has identified 15 national priorities for public services that outline the main challenges for local areas. As part of a concordat with the government, the Council and its Community Planning Partners (CPP) have identified joint challenges faced by the area, which have been developed into priority outcomes. This is called the **Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and this represents the long term aims of the organisation.**

MISSION

*'Striving for excellence
– working with and for
our communities'*

VALUES

- Focusing on our customers' needs
- Being honest, open and accountable (taking responsibility for our actions)
- Providing equality of opportunity
- Developing employees
- Making the best use of our resources
- Working with other organisations

SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT (SOA)

The SOA sets out the key priorities for West Lothian for the next 3 years (2008-11):

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We make West Lothian an attractive place for doing business in Scotland 2. We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people 3. We are better education, more successful, renowned for our research and innovation 4. Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens 5. Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed 6. We live longer, healthier lives 7. We have tackled the significant inequalities in West Lothian society 8. We have improved the life chances for people at risk 9. We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger 10. We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> able to access the services we need 11. We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their actions and how they affect others 12. We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations 13. We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive society 14. We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production 15. Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs <p>There is also a framework of performance indicators that supports and monitors the progress of outcomes across all WLC service areas.</p> |
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FINANCE

The principal source of funding for our services is contained in the annual General Fund revenue budget. The General Fund revenue budget for 2012/13 is **£386 million** and this finances the day-to-day delivery of the council's services, with the exception of housing. The money that funds our expenditure comes from a number of sources, such as council tax, but is largely Scottish Government grants. The Housing Revenue Account records all expenditure and income associated with managing, maintaining and repairing the council's housing stock. By law, all expenditure on this account must be funded by council house rents. In 2012/13 this amounts to around £43 million.

LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

In providing our services, we are subject to the legislation and directives of the Scottish Government and our regulatory bodies.

The over-arching legislation for the Council is the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 – which was established to:

'...secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost)'.

To ensure that they are delivering Best Value and Community Planning, Audit Scotland conducts an audit of local authorities, as set out in the Act. Our last Best Value audit was in 2005.

DEMOGRAPHICS/POPULATION

West Lothian is the 10th largest local authority in Scotland. It has a population of over 172,000 and is growing much faster than Scotland as a whole. It also has the youngest population in Scotland. We expect the population of West Lothian to grow by 21% by 2024, compared to a 1% increase in Scotland. West Lothian's population is growing across all age groups, but in Scotland as a whole, only the numbers of older people are rising. It is predicted that we will have the fastest-growing older population of any local authority.

By 2024 in West Lothian:

- The number of **young people** (aged 0 to 15) will **increase by 5%** compared to a 12% drop in Scotland
- The number of **adults of working age** (16 to 60) will **increase by 13%** compared to a 7% drop in Scotland
- The number of **people over retirement age** (60 for women, 65 for men) will **increase by 75%** compared to a 39% increase in Scotland
- The number of **older people** (aged 75 and over) will **increase by 113%** compared to a 53% increase in Scotland

This growth in population is good for West Lothian and good for our economy. However, it also means we need to plan carefully in order to meet the rising need for our services. This has been particularly challenging because much of our existing infrastructure (schools, transport links, sewage services and so on) was at or near capacity. We work closely with developers and agencies such as NHS Lothian, Scottish Water and Transport Scotland to manage this growth.

CUSTOMERS

Our key customers are the people, communities and businesses of West Lothian. The services of WLC will touch on the lives of all people in the area. This may be directly through accessing education, social or housing services, or indirectly with the provision, maintenance and management of roads, lighting and parks. Customers can access our services through a variety of points, including a transactional website and the Council's Customer Service Centres (CSCs). The CSCs include a central call centre which is available 24/7 and 10 local Customer Information Service (CIS) and *Connected* offices. The *Connected* offices are partnership centres that offer multi-access points in one location, such as Blackburn *Connected*; which is a CIS, housing office, library and Credit Union access point to the Revenues and Benefits service.

Our customers live in a mix of urban and small rural communities with a diverse mix of social and economic backgrounds. West Lothian has large, growing towns such as Livingston, Bathgate and Linlithgow, but also has communities that are traditional ex-mining villages. Levels of unemployment (4.3%) are higher than both the Scottish (3.9%) and UK (4.1%) rates and the average earnings are some 7.5% lower than the national average. Levels of deprivation vary significantly across West Lothian, with several areas having a high index of multiple deprivation, particularly in the south-west of the Council area.

STAKEHOLDERS

As a local authority, we are accountable to the Scottish Government and varied inspection and regulatory bodies, including: Audit Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), the Housing Regulator and the Care Commission, etc. The inspectorates ensure the council is accountable for its performance.

ELECTED MEMBERS

The council is also governed by the elected members (EMs) that represent the communities of West Lothian. In the local council elections in May 2007 a new electoral system was introduced. This means that West Lothian is now divided into 9 electoral multi-member wards instead of the previous 32. We have 33 councillors and each multi-member ward is represented by three or four councillors instead of only one. However, our councillors still represent the public's interests, provide an important link with local communities and make sure that we provide democratically accountable services.

The present administration comprises 16 Labour councillors. Across the 9 multi-member wards there are also; 1 Conservative, 15 SNP and 1 independent.

PARTNERS

West Lothian Council's partnership approach is fundamentally based on achieving efficient, effective services that provide the highest level of customer service to the local community.

With our diverse range of services, each service area has identified and established effective partnerships with the relevant internal services and external organisations, e.g. Health, Police.

WEST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY PLANNING

PARTNERSHIP (CPP)

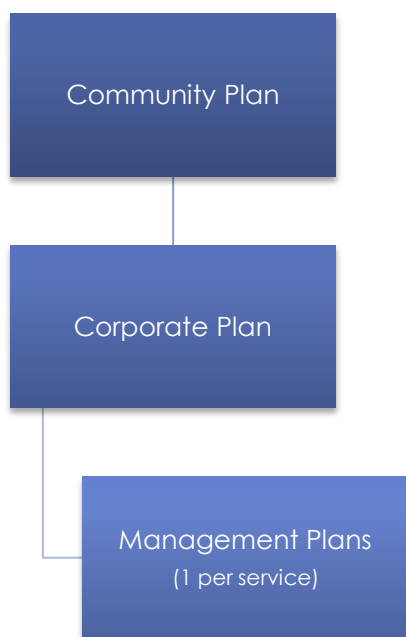
Strategically, the organisation is a key member of the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP), which was established in 1999 and now consists of seventeen partner organisations: **West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, Lothian and Borders Police, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue, Voluntary Action West Lothian, West Lothian College, Oatridge College, Scottish Enterprise, West Lothian Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Water, Association of Community Councils, Jobcentre plus, West Lothian Leisure, West Lothian Youth Congress, Skills Development Scotland, SESTRANs and the Pension Service.**

The West Lothian CPP has outlined its purpose and aims in the 10-year West Lothian Community Plan and manages this through the 3-year Single Outcome Agreement and the Locality Plans for each multi-member ward. Our individual priorities are defined in our 5-year Corporate Plan.

PLANNING

An organisation as large and diverse as West Lothian Council must have a structured approach to planning in place, to ensure there is a “golden

thread” running between the high level, long-term aims and the front-line service activity.



THE COMMUNITY PLAN 2010-20

Community Planning is a way of working which brings together a range of agencies from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to work together to improve the quality of life for local people. The **West Lothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP)** produced a new **Community Plan, 'Towards 2020'** which has set out the strategic direction for West Lothian over the next ten years and detailed the key targets and priorities for the Partnership's work.

THE CORPORATE PLAN 2012-17

The **corporate plan sets out the high level challenges faced by the council**, such as the growing population, and the priorities that the council will focus on from 2012 to 2017. The five-year plan identifies how the council will work together with our partners to provide excellent services to West Lothian.

MANAGEMENT PLANS 2012-13

Management Plans set out how services will deliver their key activities and drive performance in each financial year. Management planning is carried out by managers, using information from staff, partners and customers to allocate resources such as finance and staff to meet targets or achieve longer term outcomes. They are also used by the corporate management team to ensure services are managed effectively and to assess performance and improvement on a year-to-year basis.

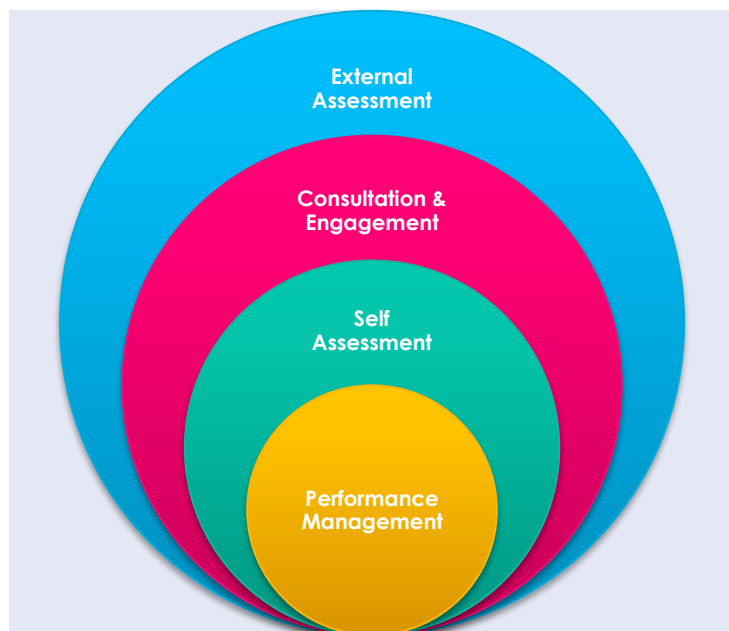
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

West Lothian Council has a strategy to raise the quality and value of all council services. The strategy is followed in every service and is reviewed every 3 years to ensure it is up to date and appropriate.

In the current economic environment the council has to ensure that services are delivered in the most efficient and effective way. The Improvement Strategy offers a joined-up approach to managing performance and quality. It defines the four core activities used to manage and improve services.

These include:

- Effective management of performance information from all key council activities and services
- Challenging self-assessment using a quality framework (called the West Lothian Assessment Model), and also using other quality improvement tools, where required, to identify strengths, areas for improvement and manage improvement activity
- Regular and meaningful consultation with customers, partners, stakeholders and staff to understand their needs and preferences
- Proportionate inspection from our regulators to ensure we provide good services and value for money for the people of West Lothian



Regular self evaluation has been embedded in our services for a number of years and the organisation has adopted a rigorous system of internal challenge that asks senior officers to challenge the way service perform for the customer.

The introduction of Citizen Led Inspections (CLIs) supports improvement activity in the council. They provide valuable feedback from the most important people in the process – the customers!