



Operational Services Service Improvement Plan

2026/28

Message from the Head of Operational Services



David Maule
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; Recycling and Waste, Fleet, 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: £25.484 million

Staff resource: 599 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, social care facilities, community centres and libraries - in total approximately 161 buildings. The service also provides internal support services.

NETs, Land and Countryside Services

Budget: £7.758 million

Staff resource: 223 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: £13.072 million

Staff resource: 53 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 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 support needs.

Recycling and Waste Services

Budget: £14.540 million

Staff resource: 181 FTE

The service is responsible for the collection and environmentally responsible management of all household waste. This includes waste collections to over 87,000 households, the provision of 5 household recycling centres and 145 glass recycling points.

Fleet Services

Budget: £7.979 million

Staff resource: 31 FTE

The service is responsible for the management and maintenance of a diverse range of fleet and mechanical equipment, comprising in excess of 1,000 items including refuse collection and other heavy goods vehicles, vans, mini buses, road and winter maintenance vehicles alongside other plant and pool cars.

Roads and Transportation Services

Budget: £12.124million

Staff resource: 151 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.

FTE = full time equivalent

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 over the next two years are set out in detail below.

Corporate Priorities

The council has identified five priorities for the period 2026/27 and 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 over the next two years, ensuring that we target our efforts towards the issues that matter most to the community.

Over the next two 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
- Test and explore electric vehicle options to deliver carbon emission reductions
- Support the improvement of health and well-being within communities by promoting active travel
- Maximise recycling opportunities to households to enable them to reduce residual waste disposal and to reduce contamination in waste
- Encourage the public to increase their recycling and re-use efforts.

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 and school meals.
- 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, including Power BI and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- 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 over the next two 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 2.7 million meals in schools, nurseries, and social care facilities
 - School crossing patrol service at 85 school crossing patrol points
- ▼ NETs, Land and Countryside Services
 - Maintenance of 2,600 hectares of open space and countryside land and 1,000 hectares of woodland
 - Street Cleansing service for 2,450 km of street and footpath surface
 - Garden Maintenance to approximately 2,000 residential gardens for the elderly
 - Access to 11 operational cemeteries, 22 churchyards and 18 war memorials
 - Access to 280 children's play areas and 113 parks and open spaces
 - Environmental Enforcement Officers to address environmental crime
- ▼ 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 and Waste and Services
 - Domestic waste collection to over 87,000 households
 - Glass collection at 145 sites
 - Community Recycling Centres at 5 locations
 - Work with communities to reduce waste continuation and maximise recycling rates
- ▼ Fleet Services
 - Management of the council's fleet and mechanical equipment portfolio
 - Delivery of a five-year rolling fleet replacement programme

- Maintenance and repairs to 81 Heavy goods vehicles, 758 cars, vans, mini buses and pick up vehicles and 198 items of other plant and machinery
- Provision of all year-round 24-hour fleet support

▀ Roads and Transportation Services

- Maintenance and improvement service for 1,060 km of public roadway and 1,390 km of public footway
- Street lighting maintenance service including 48,193 street lights, 163 traffic light installations and other illuminated bollards
- Maintenance of 578 bridges, culverts, underpasses and retaining walls
- Replenishment of 2,419 Grit Bins
- Road safety casualty reduction and traffic management
- 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 and Flood risk management services

Performance will be monitored in this objective through:

Key Output	Key Indicator	Target
FM Services are successfully delivered	FMSI01_6a.7 – Cleaning Services - customers rating overall services provided as good or excellent	75%
NETs, Land and Countryside Services are successfully delivered	NLCS017_6a.7 - Percentage of customers who rated the overall service provided by NETs, Land & Countryside Services as adequate, good or excellent through the Confirm system	92%
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	65%
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	82%
Fleet Services	FTS002.6a.2 - Percentage of customers who rated the quality of service provided by the Fleet service as good or excellent	75%
Roads and Transportation Services are successfully delivered	RTS014_6a.7 - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of service provided by Roads and Transportation Services as good or excellent	75%

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 Sustainable Amenity 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 to the management of West Lothian Council's trees and woodland areas.
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan to protect and enhance ecosystems, habitats and species across West Lothian.
- Litter Prevention Action plan to reduce litter as part of our aim to achieve a high-quality environment for our residents.

▼ Roads and Transportation Services

- Roads Asset Management plan for the management of the council's carriageways, footways, structures, street signs, 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 crossings, 2,524 grit bins, 11,376 signs and bollards, 631 bridges, culverts and underpasses and 136 retaining walls.

▼ 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 heavy goods vehicles.
- Vehicle replacement programme, ensuring modern and efficient fleet including exploring options to move to alternative fuel vehicles in support of the Council's actions on climate change

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	103 (out of a maximum 103)
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	92%
Grounds areas are well maintained	NLCS103_9b.2a - Land Audit Management System (LAMS) result	67 (national average)
Fleet assets are well maintained	FTS062_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	33.3%

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, social care buildings and libraries.
 - Security, maintenance and janitorial service to secondary, primary, nursery and additional support needs schools.
- ▼ Passenger Transport Services
 - School transport service for over 6,000 pupils across West Lothian
 - Community Transport service to various locations throughout West Lothian
- ▼ Fleet Services
 - Fleet maintenance service to over 1,000 assets supporting all services.

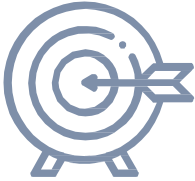
Performance will be monitored in this objective through:

Output	Indicator	Target
Facilities Management Services are efficiently delivered	FM210_7b.5 - Percentage of maintenance jobs completed by Janitorial Staff within 2 days of being reported	97%
Passenger Transport Services are efficiently delivered	PTS097_9b.1c - Percentage of Community Transport bus runs which are completed as scheduled	100%
Fleet Services are efficiently delivered	FTS062_9b.1c Percentage of HGV vehicles passing their MOT test first time	100%
	FTS071_9b.1c - Percentage of non-HGV vehicles maintained monthly as per service schedule	90%

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 highest risks scores 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	
NLCS008 Injury or death in cemeteries	Breach of cemetery rules leading to someone falling onto spiked railings around headstones or graves, or failure of inspection process leading to unsafe memorial falling on someone, resulting in injury or death.	10	
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	

RTS004 Damage to underground services by council employees or contractors	Failure of safe working systems in relation to excavation work leading to cable strike or cut. Resulting in injury or death to an operative, power cut, gas leak, or telecoms outage.	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	
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	

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	Continue to improve the approach to employee engagement and communication and encourage creativity and innovation, improve employee learning and development opportunities and promote achievements.	Successfully embed a cohesive approach to employee engagement and improve employee satisfaction, acknowledging achievements, and developing employees through access to learning and development and succession planning opportunities.	All Operational Services Service Managers	April 2026	Ongoing	Objectives 1, 2 and 3 
Review and improve the Customer Engagement approach	Continue to review and enhance the approach to customer engagement and interaction with group forums, analyse customer perceptions and improve partnership working.	Provide clear, concise and up to date information for customers through digital channels. Continue to improve methods for customers to request services from the council, or to communicate with us.	All Operational Services Service Managers	April 2026	Ongoing	Objectives 1, 2 and 3 

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Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Service Modernisation	Improvement and transformation in Roads and Transportation service delivery: - Introduce the latest in pothole repair plant and equipment to help improve road conditions. - Further develop the use of artificial intelligence technology to help detect roads defects.	Reduced the backlog of roads defects and time taken to make permanent repairs to carriageways. Improvement in the annual roads condition survey results. Using AI technology to identify potholes, cracks or areas of weakness across the road network, allowing a more preventative approach to be considered.	Roads and Transportation Services Manager	April 2026	March 2028	Objectives 1 and 2    
Service Modernisation	Implementation of Pavement Parking and Decriminalised Parking Enforcement	The management of enforcement powers for both Pavement Parking and Decriminalised Parking for all publicly adopted roads and council car parks. Reduced illegal parking, improved traffic flow, increased road and footpath safety.	Roads and Transportation Services Manager	April 2026	December 2027	Objectives 1 and 2    
Service Modernisation	Implementation of Grounds Maintenance and Cleaner Communities Service standards, and delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan and Litter Prevention Action Plan.	Restoration, enhancement and protection of biodiversity throughout West Lothian for the long term Improvements in street cleanliness Reduction in littering and fly tipping	NETs Services Manager	April 2026	Ongoing	Objectives 1,2, 3    

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Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Review and Refresh Operational Services Strategies, Service Standards and Working Practices	Review and update the Recycling and Waste Service Standards	Updated Service Standards for Recycling and Waste Services that reflect operational practices for collecting household waste streams, including management of contaminated waste.	Recycling and Waste Service Manager	June 2026	December 2026	Objective 1 
Optimisation of Resources	Implementation of Transport Review recommendations: - Engage with local bus operators on the introduction of quality contracts for the next contract period. - Conduct an in-depth analysis of sustainable school transport options in West Lothian. - Explore options for a community transport pilot.	Sustainable and effective local bus contracts Maximise the use of the council's own community transport fleet Deliver sustainable school transport services	Passenger Transport Manager	April 2026	March 2027	Objectives 1, 2 and 3  
Optimisation of Resources	Implement Contamination Strategy in line with the Circular Economy Statutory Code of Practice currently being developed Deploy Producer End Responsibility funding to improve the quality of recycling and to reduce residual waste going to landfill / energy from waste	Reduction in contamination to increase quality and quantity of recycling collected.	Recycling and Waste Service Manager	April 2026	Ongoing	Objective 1  

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Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Responsible Officer	Start	End	Links
Optimisation of Resources	Implement the rollout of the Vehicle Replacement Programme. Explore options for transition from internal combustion engines to alternative energy systems for fleet	Modern and efficient fleet and plant that meets the operational requirements of council services Assist the council in meeting its Climate Change targets	Fleet Services Manager	April 2026	March 2028	Objectives 1, 2 and 3 
Optimisation of Resources	Undertake a review of the Street Crossing Patrol Service	A street crossing patrol service aligned to service requirements	Facilities Management Service Manager	June 2026	October 2026	Objectives 1 and 3 
Optimisation of Resources	Carry out winter service review to ensure resources are used effectively within the available resources for winter maintenance.	Ensure current resources for gritting and snow clearance on carriageways and roads are deployed effectively within available resources.	Roads and Transportation Services Manager	May 2026	August 2026	Objective 1 
Planning for legislative changes	Prepare the service for legislation relating to: - Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024 - Statutory Code of Practice - Deposit Return Scheme - Emissions Trading Scheme	Service prepared and ready for future challenges such as: - Enhanced powers to enforce regulations on household waste, flytipping and litter - Impact of a deposit return scheme for cans and plastic bottles	Recycling and Waste Service Manager	April 2026	October 2027	Objective 1 