

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE**PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT****SUBMISSION FROM WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 West Lothian Council welcomes the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Regeneration Committee's continued scrutiny on public sector reform and local government. West Lothian Council has embraced the public sector reform agenda and recognises the necessity for change.
- 1.2 West Lothian Community Planning Partnership have pioneered the development of a preventative, outcomes based approach to changing the way services are delivered. The Life Stages Outcomes Planning Programme is currently being implemented across West Lothian and is enabling us to use a logic modelling and evidenced based approach to ensure that our Community Planning Partnership plans and delivers more effective interventions to tackle social inequalities and build successful communities.
- 1.3 Whilst the current fiscal climate has prompted national debate on public service provision, the need for extensive evaluation of how we support and achieve outcomes for vulnerable people through multi-agency working goes beyond funding constraints. We must look at reshaping services by assessing what delivers the greatest targeted impact on those in our local community who are most in need. This has to include consideration of how we allocate and prioritise funding in order to provide resources to the most efficient and effective delivery methods. Furthermore, our interventions must be early enough to optimise the opportunity for success, enabling a greater number of individuals to experience more positive and fulfilling lives and thus reduce future pressure on services.
- 1.4 We are particularly pleased to see a shift towards prevention and early intervention in the recent review of the National Performance Framework. We asked for this in previous submissions to this and to other committees, and welcome the new National Outcome for older people and the new National Indicator on Early Years.
- 1.5 Our current challenge is in measuring the impacts of preventative action and work is currently underway to develop new local indicators linked to the new outcomes and indicators in the refreshed National Performance Framework.
- 1.6 The Council's response is structured around the questions within each of the three strands defined in the outline of the enquiry document. The questions are not rewritten but the responses follow the pattern of questions in the source document. The response also highlights areas that we feel are examples of good practice that have benefited West Lothian and could be adopted throughout Scotland as an effective means of delivering public services.

2. STRAND 1 – PARTNERSHIPS & OUTCOMES

To examine the on-going development of community planning partnerships and the community planning process and assess how these could be built upon to support outcome-based approaches to service planning and delivery in local areas.

- 2.1 West Lothian Council firmly believes that Community Planning Partnerships are well placed to take forward the public sector reform agenda. We have recently moved Community Planning into the Depute Chief Executive's Office and have appointed a Community Planning Development Manager to develop the partnership's capacity for driving through that change. The most recent meeting of the Community Planning Partnership has focused solely on prevention and consideration of how best to utilise the three change funds announced in the budget and spending review.

A key issue for us is strengthening and developing our local Community Planning Partnership to have joined and shared ownership of a common agenda. Council's have to genuinely see partnership as a means of generating a greater benefit for communities from collaboration and joint delivery of services and also to acknowledge that not to do so is to the detriment of our communities. This requires a real commitment at senior officer and elected member levels and an approach that permeates all of the council's work. We are particularly interested in collaborate workforce development – particularly around the theme of leadership to increase our joint workforces capacity for change.

- 2.2 West Lothian Council believes that consideration could be given to different levels of new kinds of integration. We would welcome a focus on further integration of services including health, fire, police and council to ensure better and more effective joined working between public, private and third sector organisations all delivering services and supports to individuals and communities, with partners all reporting to a single joint core management point.

Sir Michael Bichard in his reports on the Soham Inquiry noted that *“Good client outcomes depend upon agencies collaborating effectively and sharing information when they need to. Too often at the moment, agencies deliver fragments of what the client sees as one service and too often, as a result, clients are bombarded with services which are anything but joined up. There are examples of disadvantaged households receiving ‘support’ often very similar in nature from 6 or 7 agencies who are working in isolation with staff unaware that colleagues from another agency are working with the same family and failing to exchange knowledge and data effectively. This is often not a problem of resources but of effective coordination – in other words a great deal of public investment is being wasted perhaps the best thing we could do is give those families a diary secretary although perhaps more certainly they need a designated lead professional who can manage the support they receive and ensure that information about the family is effectively coordinated.”*

West Lothian Council has taken steps to try and streamline the supports available to people and families with complex needs in order to improve the

quality of support and to reduce the costs involved in getting it wrong. Our multi agency delivery of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) has seen the key development of the Named Person role: ensuring that all children will have one key contact to access all relevant supports at the right time, as well as implementation of the Lead Professional role and the Single Child's Plan. Our Life Stage approach has given us clear common outcomes and more effective deployment of input and resource.

- 2.3 While we have moved closer to having a shared set of outcomes, the varying budget cycles and resource planning between partners still impedes the sharing of budgets for shared outcomes. It would be advantageous to align budget cycles and greater sharing of budget plans at an earlier stage across the partnership.
- 2.4 West Lothian Council very much welcomes the role that the third sector plays in terms of engaging with communities and have taken steps to increase our strategic engagement with local voluntary groups. A recent round table meeting (and the first of a series) with the council's corporate management team and senior voluntary sector officers has supported better communication between these partners. The National Standards for Community Engagement give us a clear single set of principles for engagement and the Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement (VOiCE) tool is a useful and well used tool for enabling better engagement and consultation.

The third sector interface organisations have a role in organising and co-ordinating the sector but there are clear inconsistencies in the capacity of these organisations to engage strategically across the country. The council has regular, programmed consultation and engagement with the local community that have been integrated into our planning and decision-making processes and are used to inform the development and prioritisation of services.

Some organisations rely on infrequent or ad hoc feedback from customers, neglecting valuable, specific information that could be used to help prioritise and improve service delivery. Instead the focus is on internal processes, all of which prevents a genuine understanding of what the customer needs and wants. In West Lothian, our communities have a voice in the shaping of services and this has helped to build a stronger, more responsive organisation and allowed the Council to develop greater insight into the differing needs and preferences of our various communities and customer groups.

We have a toolbox of consultation and engagement methods and techniques that allow us to capture the views of our customers, from our youngest pupil to adults and older people living and working in our community to local businesses and community groups. This inclusive approach is fostered through a combination of quantitative methods, such as surveys that provide information on the levels of satisfaction, and qualitative methods, such as focus groups, panels and networks that explore in more depth the reasons behind satisfaction levels.

Carried out on a two-tiered basis, at a corporate and service level, consultation and engagement data has become vital management information that is used to design, plan and improve service provision. Our customers can also choose to take a more active role in the development and scrutiny of services and participate in; the citizens' panel, tenant and parental groups and voluntary citizen and tenant inspections. The Council have adopted a rigorous and unified approach to customer consultation and engagement in order to ensure we retain a clear customer focus at all levels of the organisation.

As a result we can rely on detailed customer measures of satisfaction and experience and specific examples of feedback for all key areas of activity in the Council, in addition to providing reliable statistical evidence on the sample and segmentation sizes used to gather the data. Community engagement has been a vital step in shaping the efficiencies included in the "Tough Choices" consultation document. The consultation process was extensive and was intended to ensure that all representations were considered in light of current and potential service provision. Meaningful engagement is vital in shaping priorities around the needs of communities, but also to encourage understanding of the decision making process.

In addition, the ongoing monitoring of progress towards the achievement of efficiencies is important to ensure timely action to correct any variations from plans. The use of performance management tools is key to this process, along with ownership at all levels of the Council's structure. West Lothian Council have taken positive steps to involve local community representatives in Policy and Scrutiny Development Panels (PDSPs). West Lothian Council firmly believes that working with our communities to co-produce better services is the best way to plan and deliver preventative outcomes. The Council welcomes the current focus on co-production and would suggest that further support from the Scottish Government on embedding the approach across the public sector would be beneficial. We need to hear stories from customers about their lives and journeys in order to work with them to plan better prevention focused services.

- 2.5 Community Plans are long term visionary plans. That's essential for setting long term outcomes. Also essential, are measurable short and medium term outcomes to illustrate and evidence the journey and impacts that we achieve from preventative spending. We must be mindful that prevention and early intervention is as effective within young people, adults and older people's services and must not only think of this as being particular to early year's intervention.

Our Life Stages approach enables us to redesign services on an intergenerational basis, knowing that the interventions we make now will affect whole families and over time. We know that children living in households where a parent or carer is misusing substances are particularly at risk of negative outcomes and growing up within a cycle of poverty and deprivation. For example, a key issue in terms of early intervention for substance misusers is that of intergenerational transmission (i.e. the cycle of the children of substance misusers having poor outcomes and frequently growing up to misuse substances themselves). We have targeted children under the age of 5, living in such

households and have changed services to target this group early and more preventatively. We fund a local voluntary sector organisation, Circle, to deliver a highly intensive targeted support service to families where there is parental substance misuse. This was commissioned using the Life Stages framework and enabled us to lever in additional external funds to support the organisation's capacity to change the focus of delivery.

This work is based on interventions with parents who use drugs problematically and is aimed at improving both the life circumstances and the parenting skills of this group. Outcomes are based on improvement in the lives of the family as a whole. We have also invested in community based projects delivered in partnership with schools based alcohol prevention because the evidence tells us that this works best.

We have targeted 4 areas of multiple deprivations and the work is based on developing local support for effective approaches to long term alcohol prevention; those based on addressing the drinking of the population as a whole. This is a much more preventative, upstream and effective approach than traditional approaches of managing the crises which arise when people have already developed serious alcohol problems. Within schools, we have piloted a local approach to developing children's resilience and improve their ability to cope with distress and access earlier support.

Again this is based on a deliberate move upstream rather than waiting for problems to arise. Whilst we have a clear local understanding of what prevention means, we are aware that there is a lack of a national common understanding of what measurement might look like. Taking preventative action should ensure that the early intervention will target services where most needed and reduce demand on services further downstream. That may mean investing in the short term to deliver longer term gains and should relate to all services across the public sector, not just individual public sector services.

West Lothian Council welcomes the recent update of the national Performance Framework and new sets of outcomes and indicators,. We are currently looking at these to enable us to measure some of the prevention activities we have recently invested in. A return to an 'initiatives' culture and short term funding regimes in any way would impede progress in this area.

- 2.6 West Lothian Council has recently reviewed the governance structure for Community Planning and scrutiny of the SOA. Progress on our SOA is reviewed quarterly by a partnership steering group and performance is measured using the partnership's covalent system.

An example of how West Lothian has achieved long term planning for preventative outcomes within a short term period is the Community Safety Unit's Community Safety Strategic Assessment. Through robust partnership working and multi agency planning, West Lothian Community Safety Unit have an analytical Community Safety Strategic Assessment linked to the SOA and Life Stages , is based on a longer term planning period, takes into account local and joint priorities and short term available budgets.

Work is underway during early 2012 to complete a strategic assessment process across the Community Planning Partnership to ensure that our next SOA is much tighter, with a clear focus and less but more locally assessed and relevant outcomes. Additionally, during 2013, we will focus on increased local accountability for performance on locally identified themes and outcomes. Outcomes are not based on yearly cycles, therefore, we are developing new prevention based and proxy measures that will allow us to measure longer term changes.

- 2.7 The SOA gives us clarity of purpose and focus on impact across the partnership. We have a strong and enthusiastic Community Planning Partnership who can and want to make a contribution to the outcomes of local communities. The SOA allows us to bring partners plans under a single umbrella and measure collaborative gain.

3. STRAND 2 – BENCHMARKING AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

To examine the development of work that has taken place over the last two years in relation to the development of benchmarking and comparative performance data and cost measurement and assess how it can contribute to the performance of local authorities in Scotland.

- 3.1 The principle challenge to developing benchmarking systems across local authorities is the level of disparity amongst councils in the progress of cultivating a comprehensive performance management framework (and by default, benchmarking). The core, consistent national drivers for performance have been the imposition of process-led Statutory Specified Performance Indicators (SSPIs) – that offer a narrow view of a limited number of activities – and the advancement of the national performance framework, which allows councils the autonomy to set their own direction of travel (and the measurable impacts and outcomes) and promote local priorities.

Building on the national requirements, West Lothian Council has developed a performance framework across all services (and the main streams of activity) that provides a multi-faceted and in-depth view of the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery and our impact on the community. Our approach is structured around the performance principles in the EFQM Excellence Model and provides a clear line of sight (golden thread) from the 15 outcomes established by our Community Planning Partnership (CPP) to activity at a service level.

The development of our performance framework has been supported by embedding expertise in performance management and improvement (at corporate and service-level), whilst nurturing capability in our leaders, managers and our employees. We have also established robust and regular internal challenge to ensure that there is confidence in our performance approach, our structure of support and in the data that they generate. There are now established, but evolving, performance structures in every area of the council providing integral data and management information that is used in the day-to-day operation and improvement of services.

Whilst West Lothian Council can validate the scope, depth and quality of our performance information, repeated engagement, networking and attempted benchmarking activity with peer organisations has not offered the same assurance. This has been a significant impediment to meaningful benchmarking of our performance. Excluding a small number of indicators, established by the Scottish Government or regulatory agencies, the advancement of performance has been devolved to a local level.

Consequentially there is no uniformity in the approach to performance management, including the methodologies used or in the systems and support structures adopted. Self-government and the promise of proportionate inspection, has liberated the councils (and their community planning partners) that have embraced a performance culture to achieve rapid maturity in the creation of a performance framework that meets local, statutory and management needs.

- 3.2 The SOLACE benchmarking exercise offered a small number of indicators that could be used to benchmark activities that were considered to be cross cutting across all authorities. The exercise was useful in its stated intent to act as a “can-opener” and encourage the practice of sharing comparable performance data. However, the suite of indicators identified in the project disproportionately viewed the performance of complex, needs-based services through the prism of efficiency. Taken in context, efficiency indicators can be useful management information, but if used as the sole indicator of performance, it is extremely limiting.

The performance of a service or success of an activity should be evaluated by measuring their impact in terms of customer satisfaction and effectiveness as well as efficiency. Additionally, there was concern regarding some of the data sources used by SOLACE/Improvement Service for a number of the indicators in the benchmarking exercise. For example, the use of the Scottish Household Survey undermined confidence in the satisfaction indicators as it was reliant on outdated information, where robust locally gathered consultation data provided a better, more representative sample and in some areas highlighted conflicting performance results.

Symptomatic of preceding attempts at benchmarking, the perceived effectiveness of the exercise was diluted once the political, geographical and social characteristics of local authority areas that affect performance were considered. A frequent barrier to benchmarking is the view that performance cannot be evaluated against a comparator unless there is commonality in the environment in which the organisations operate. Coupled with structural and cultural divergence, public services are not encouraged to look beyond the mitigating factors and find meaningful comparative data to stimulate improvement or discover areas of best practice and innovation.

- 3.3 The use of assessment and inspection frameworks rooted in the principles of EFQM has expanded over the local government landscape in Scotland over the past 5 years, with most councils now using PSIF, How Good Is Our Council or some form of the EFQM Excellence model in all or most of their services. Embedding EFQM methodology promotes a balanced approach to performance management, encouraging services to measure and assess their achievement within the context of a broader set of critical success factors. It rewards those services that have a mature and honest approach to performance and for those that can demonstrate a causal link between their performance results and their planned, strategic outcomes and their localised targets. Comparing performance against best practice and/or industry leaders is also a core theme in EFQM.

For most local authorities the development of a meaningful framework of measures is in the early emergent stages. Building capability across councils – with the range of activities and people – remains a significant challenge for most authorities. In the current climate of austerity it takes a dedicated commitment to establishing a performance culture to resource a supportive environment for people to develop and share the essential knowledge and skills. Greater support is required to assist councils and their community planning partners to develop a performance management framework that can be used to assess and compare the quality and value of service provision at a faster and more consistent pace of change. A national source of learning and expertise would be of benefit to encourage parity and to foment a mutual exchange of ideas of innovation across all local authorities.

- 3.4 Community Planning Partnerships have well defined priorities and measurable outcomes and as such, benchmarking data should form a significant part in the management of performance and in the assessment of impact and success. Whilst the targeted level of performance may vary at a local level, there is significant scope for the identification of common activities and associated measures of performance. A programme of strategy mapping, deriving from the SOA and community plans, could form a strong foundation upon which to develop comparable performance outcomes for CPPs. To support more effective early intervention and the shift towards preventative spend, it is critical that the partnership have a clear understanding of the performance and capability to improve of each contributing partner. Comparing achievement and testing competitiveness using benchmarking data can support more informed, strategic planning decisions about the design and delivery of integrated local services.
- 3.5 Benchmarking should have a dynamic and positive impact upon performance. Through the identification of challenging comparators, from within and out with the public sector, local authorities should benefit from the knowledge of leaders and innovators and the learning gleaned from sharing good practice. This should be used to improve and redesign service provision and encourage people to strive to achieve a higher quality of service provision in a more effective and efficient way. However, a significant cultural shift is required in public services in Scotland, not just to breakdown the barriers to productive benchmarking and

more positive dialogue and knowledge sharing between councils, but in the whole approach to performance management.

- 3.6 Local authorities and their community planning partners need the independence to develop and grow a multi-faceted performance management framework that will support the delivery and management of high performing and outcome-focused services. However, there could be significant benefit to establishing a core set of comparable indicators for satisfaction, delivery, efficiency and effectiveness that can be used to benchmark services in a more meaningful way. This would require a transition from the current approach; beginning with adopting a broader view of the key indicators of performance that is less reliant on the typical measures of efficiency and process outputs and timeliness, ensuring that there is greater capability in councils to validate the integrity of the data collected and managed and a stronger link with activities such as financial planning, community consultation and engagement and self assessment.

4. STRAND 3 – DEVELOPING NEW WAYS OF DELIVERING SERVICES

To examine progress in relation to the development of shared services and other innovative ways of achieving economies of scale and harnessing the strengths and skills of key public sector partners to deliver the best possible quality services in local areas.

- 4.1 West Lothian Council has a strong and cohesive corporate identity with clear values that support a culture that is open and transparent, driven to improve and focused on achieving real and lasting outcomes for our communities. We consider our values to be at the core of all planning, activity and success in West Lothian. This also applies to our key partnerships; the Community Planning Partnership in West Lothian has an agreed vision and set of aspirations for the local area which are reflective of the partners' values and minimise the structural and procedural barriers.

- Focusing on customer needs
- Being honest, open and accountable
- Providing equality of opportunity
- Developing employees
- Making the best use of resources
- Working with other organisations

Corporately we have put the delivery of excellent services to the local community at the heart of all endeavours. This is enabled by the values above, which are indicative of an organisation that recognises there are always ways to make better and more efficient services for the people we serve, balancing quality of service provision with value for money. As a result our services are some of the highest performing in Scotland, sustained by a genuine commitment to continuous improvement that is combined with a strong sense of self awareness. West Lothian Council firmly believes in the benefits of integrated services and partnership working for collaborative gain and achieving positive preventative outcomes. In line with that belief the council and its NHS and Voluntary Sector partners have worked together to develop a compact that promotes partnership

working. This reflects the changing culture and attitudes that are necessary to ensure that communities get the sorts of services they need. In the short term, the focus must be on existing organisations working more efficiently, targeting savings on areas of duplication, and those with the least impact. This would maximise outcomes on agreed priorities whilst delivering savings for re-investment in areas of local need and it is therefore important that partnership and joint working is done at the most appropriate level.

In general, the joining up of front line services is best done at a local level and experiences in West Lothian support this position. For example, West Lothian CHCP has brought community based health and social care services closer together and is working well towards a fully integrated management structure that will simultaneously deliver savings and a greater focus on outcomes. We have other examples of where we have strengthened outcomes by working in partnership.

We have particularly robust links with West Lothian College. This has enabled the development of the Senior School Campus, allowing us to work together to find innovative and cost effective solutions. By pulling together we are able to offer appropriate learning environments to senior students that allow them to access vocational, academic, employability and FE options appropriate to their learning needs. West Lothian Council believes that moving more closely towards an outcomes approach will go some way towards breaking down the barriers to partnership and collaborative working and strongly suggest that the Scottish Government continue to support an outcomes approach and to promote the value of preventative spending and service delivery.

We believe that further focus on breaking down barriers to partnership working would be of benefit to areas in which there is less of an emphasis on joint working. Additionally, we are aware that there is some work still to be done on tackling the transformational changes from moving from an output to an outcomes approach. In terms of promoting organisational and cultural change, we have noticed significant improvements in working together, communication and joint outcomes as a direct result of integrated physical working arrangements. Our new Civic Centre hosts a range of organisations under one roof and spun off to develop a highly successful Community Safety Unit.

- 4.2 In terms of mitigating against tensions that inevitably arise from sharing services, job losses and negative economic impact, West Lothian Council is already dealing with tensions of this kind as a result of the already impacting efficiency measures we have had to make during 2010/11. We have built up a degree of sophistication in this area and believe that having clarity of outcomes and purpose help to ease the process to a degree.
- 4.3 Despite, strong progress being made towards developing shared and innovative service delivery models, West Lothian Council believes that there is still work to be done in terms of breaking down legislative and institutional barriers. We particularly welcome the work instigated by the Scottish Government on creating new legislation to support the delivery and implementation of the Early Years Framework and GIRFEC. We would welcome a continued focus on this area.

We would also welcome a renewed focus on nationally shared information systems. At present, there is no single information management system for schools and Social Work, attention to this area would be beneficial as it would assist with information sharing as vulnerable children and families move between local authority areas. West Lothian Council firmly believes that joint collaborative approaches to workforce development, based on a leadership for outcomes approach, would assist with breaking down institutional barriers to finding new ways of working. We are aware of strands of work being led by the Scottish Government in this area and are about to have discussions at Community Planning Partnership about this.

- 4.4 We are investing in a mobile and flexible workforce through our “Worksmart” project. This project has been mutually beneficial for the organisation and the participating employees, offering more agile working patterns for our people. Worksmart is projected to generate savings in operational costs and a 15% increase in productivity (saving an average of 1 hour per day per employee). No longer tied to a fixed desk, staff will be empowered to be closer to where and when the service demand occurs.
- 4.5 West Lothian Council is actively examining the scope for shared service provision with public sector partners. We are in discussions with a number of potential partner organisations (including NHS and other local authorities) and areas of shared services have been identified. Further promotion of collaborative work on procurement for example across the public sector in Scotland would be beneficial in terms of keeping the efficiencies agenda on the table.
- 4.6 West Lothian Council would agree that there are lessons to be learned from elsewhere. We are in the process of developing a new innovative Families Included service, building on the Swindon ‘Life’ project. Families Included will work with vulnerable families, using an asset-based coproduction family intervention approach to support them through current crises and to continue to engage over time, whilst new patterns of behaviours, attitudes and values are established; thus improving long term coping skills and reversing trends. Whilst we must develop services that reflect local need, we know that there are models of very good service delivery available across the county that we can implement.

We would welcome co-ordinated information from the Scottish Government on what works and is tested. We are aware of the development of the Early Intervention Foundation. West Lothian Community Safety Partnership is currently working in partnership with the Social Justice Foundation to locally implement the nationally delivered Operation Youth Advantage + programme for vulnerable and disengaged young people at risk of reoffending. This programme has achieved employability related outcomes for disadvantaged young people in other local authority areas. Working with the Community Safety Partnership, the Social Justice Foundation have been able to deliver a pilot local programme that also achieves positive social behavioural and reoffending outcomes.

- 4.7 The recently published report from the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, chaired by Dr Campbell Christie highlights the absolute necessity to transform the way public services are planned and delivered. Key to this transformation is prevention, early intervention and providing better outcomes for people and communities. The commission's report recognises that this is not just about structural reorganisation or efficiency measures but requires fundamental cultural and attitudinal shifts within the public sector to make it happen.

The Christie Commission received a range of submissions including one from the National Community Planning Group (representing Chief Executive Officers from NHS boards, police, councils and fire services) which estimated that 40 percent of public spending is spent on negative outcomes. That's 40% of spending spent on problems after they have happened and that are consequently costly and complex to resolve. This emphasises the need to spend to save, to intervene earlier and to work on achieving the best possible outcomes as early as possible and prevent escalating costs and problems becoming bigger.

This is a consequence of a historical systematic output led approach to service delivery that needs to be supported to change. The Christie Commission calls for a new concordat for joined – up services between national and local government to be backed up by integrated funding arrangements. West Lothian agrees with this, has achieved high levels of effective integrated services and believes that this method of collaborative partnership working is key to delivering positive outcomes.

We have recently moved Community Planning into the Depute Chief Executive's Office and have appointed a Community Planning Development Manager to develop the partnership's capacity for driving through that change. The most recent meeting of the Community Planning Partnership has focused solely on prevention and consideration of how best to utilise the three change funds announced in the budget and spending review. West Lothian Council firmly believes that Community Planning must be the mechanism for driving through the changes described by Christie and are echoed in the Scottish Governments' response.

- 4.8 West Lothian Council has recently established a new reablement service. This service will assist clients by providing a period of support and encouragement to help themselves and to increase their independence. The outcome of this is to ensure that clients are able to live healthily and more independently at home for as long as possible. Clients who are referred to the new service will participate in a 4 – 6 week period of intensive reablement.

We have based this on extensive research that shows us that client care packages (numbers of hours that care is required) will be significantly less than otherwise would have been required without reablement and that we should also expect to reduce the number of clients who would otherwise have entered institutional care settings. As well as achieving the stated positive wellbeing outcomes, there will be a fiscal benefit by investing in reablement. Admissions to

hospital and care homes will be less than they would have otherwise have been, given the demographic increase in number s of older people, it's clear that current models of care are unsustainable in the medium to long term. Cost increases in these areas in recent years have been significant and are one of the biggest cost pressures on the public sector. Reablement will be a key strand in reducing the extent of future annual cost to the public sector. There is scope to develop new ways of delivering services whilst improving standards of care within the increasingly tight fiscal environment,. Quality remains at the heart of our service delivery.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 West Lothian Council has given careful consideration to the questions in each of the three strands. We are pleased to be able to contribute our response to the continuing discussion on public sector reform and local government.

West Lothian Council
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