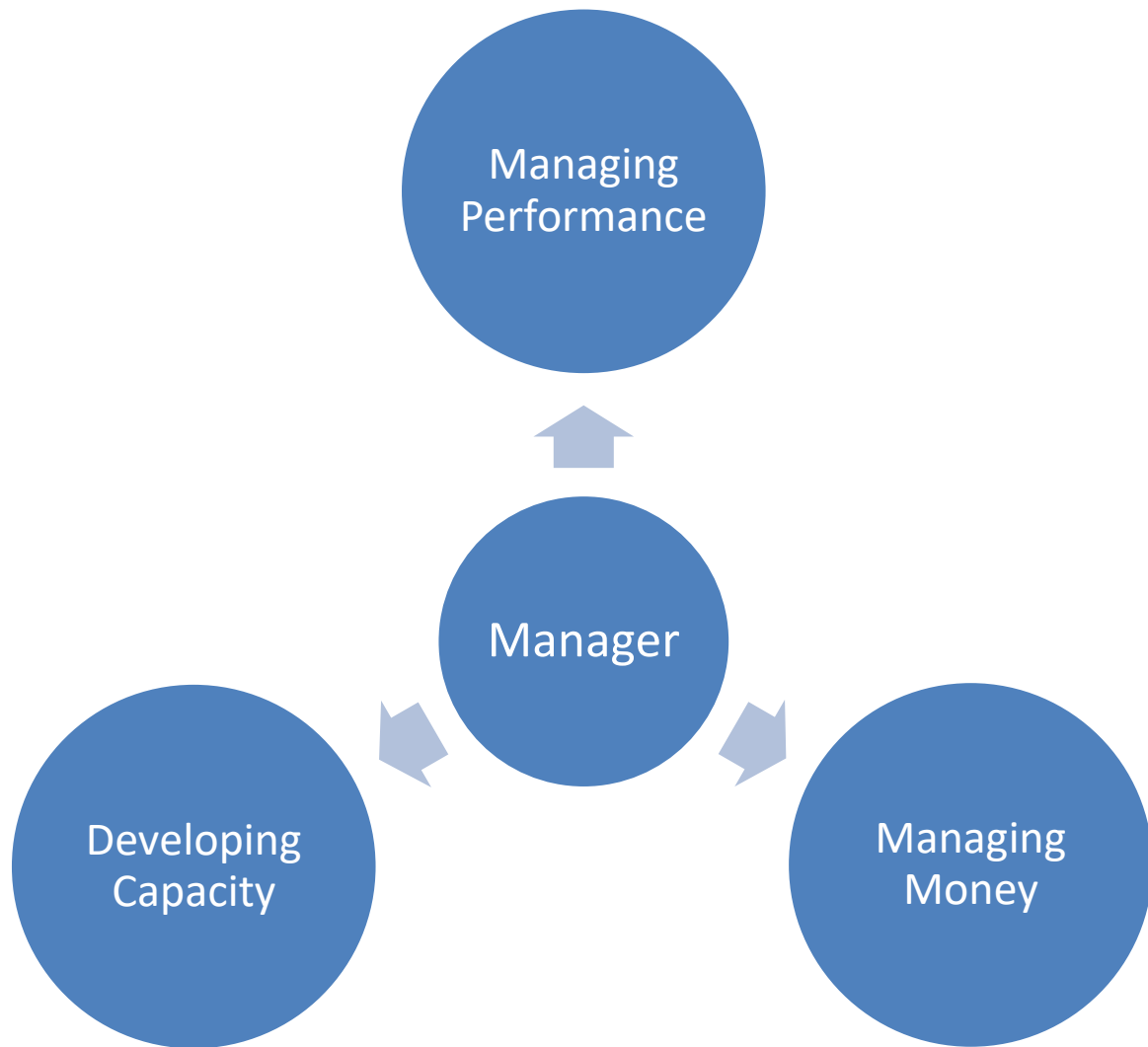


Your New Role as a Manager

What You Need to Know



Introduction

This guide provides an overview of what it means to be a manager in West Lothian Council.

Whether you are new to the council or this is your first management job, it's essential you know what's expected of you.

The guidance below provides you with essential information on what you need to know and do to perform your role effectively.

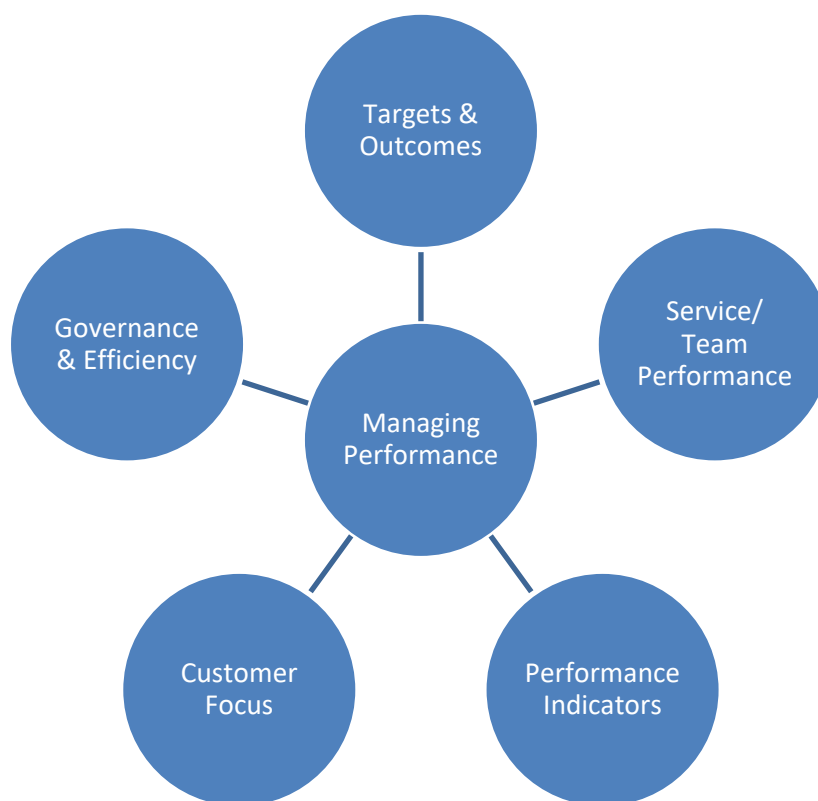
All text highlighted and underlined in blue is hyperlinked to the relevant site for further information.

The [competency framework](#) is linked to the council's [Appraisal and Development Review \(ADR\) Framework](#) which identifies role profiles for managers based on following key result areas.

- [Managing Performance](#)
- [Developing Capacity](#)
- [Managing Money](#)

If you are new to the council, you are required to undertake the on-line corporate induction to find out more about how the council works, the services it provides and relevant policies and procedures.

Managing Performance



What You Need to Know

1. Targets & Outcomes

The [Corporate Plan](#) sets the strategic priorities for the council and has been developed by taking into consideration the aspiration and needs of the local community and supporting national priorities for Scotland. The priorities in the Corporate Plan will support the delivery of positive outcomes for a growing and vibrant local community, the modernisation of council services and will target services to those most in need.

[Service Improvement Plans](#)

All council services are required to produce service improvement plans. These plans provide an overview of the service outlines activities and targets for the coming year.

2. Service/ Team Performance

The [West Lothian Assessment Model](#) (WLAM) is the council's self-assessment framework that helps services to ensure that they provide good quality and improving services to all customers and service users. WLAM underpins the council's approach to improvement; ensuring services have a structured framework for assessing their performance and identifying areas for improvement.

3. HR Policies/Procedures

The effective management of employee issues has a significant effect on performance. As a manager you are responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of all HR Policies and processes within your team. [MyToolkit](#) has been designed to provide direct access to HR policies, procedures and payroll information. There are a range of FAQs covering the most popular search topics and all necessary HR forms are on the site. The contact number for HR is 01506 282222.

Supporting Attendance at Work

Managing sickness absence is a key function and responsibility of all managers in the council and as such it occupies a high profile within the context of the council's People Strategy. The HR Advice and Support Team provides advice and support to managers in applying the [Supporting Attendance at Work Policy and Procedure](#) on managing sickness absence in a number of specific ways;

- Monitoring the application of the policy to ensure all cases are being appropriately managed
- Working with managers to ensure appropriate interventions are made timeously in cases of long term absence
- Working in partnership with the council's Occupational Health Advisers to ensure provision of high quality health reports which support managers in effectively managing sickness absence
- Targeting interventions in relation to the most common causes of sickness absence, i.e. mental health/wellbeing and musculoskeletal conditions.
- Helping to support the wider aims of the council's [Employee Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) through the promotion of healthy working lives initiatives and implementing measures to improve physical and mental wellbeing of the workforce.

Employee Relations Issues

The council's HR Policy and Advice team provide managers with advice and support on the application of a range of employment issues including disciplinary, grievance and bullying and harassment procedures, whistle-blowing, substance misuse/smoking, special leave, time-off policies and workforce management processes. Senior members of the team also attend council Appeals Committees supporting managers and advising Elected Members in relation to appeals against dismissal and Stage 3 grievance resolution.

The team has a key role in promoting constructive working relations with the council's recognised trade unions both on an informal basis and formally through the council's established consultative machinery. New employment policies and procedures are developed in consultation with the trade unions and other corporate employee relations matters are discussed within the relevant teaching and non - teaching consultative forums.

iTrent is an online system which allows managers to view and update general HR information. People Manager allows managers to view an employee's personal details, leave history and is used to authorise overtime and mileage/expenses claims.

4. Performance Indicators

The council uses a performance framework along with service planning to ensure the delivery of high quality customer focussed services. The focus of performance management is on the future – what do you need to be able to do and how can you do things better? Managing performance is all about managing for results. Performance management should demonstrate that:

- You know what outcomes you are seeking,
- You know what you have to do to meet your objectives
- You know how to measure progress towards your objectives
- You can detect performance problems and remedy them

[Ideagan](#) is the corporate system used to record and manage performance information. It is essential that you access Pentana on a regular basis to monitor and track performance information.

For more information on performance management and indicators see the, [Performance Indicators Guide](#).

5. Customer Focus

[Customer Service Excellence](#) is the government standard for the delivery of excellent services. The standard has been developed as tool to support the implementation of customer focused change in organisations. The council is assessed against the standard on an annual basis with all services providing evidence to support the council's application.

[Customer Records Management \(CRM\)](#)

CRM is the corporate system to log and manage customer enquiries. For additional information on CRM contact the Business Support Team.

[Complaints Handling \(CHP\)](#)

Customer views and experiences are important as they help the council to understand what we do well and where we need to improve. If a customer feels that the council did something wrong, the customer needs to be able to report it and receive a response.

Stage 1 Frontline resolution (resolution within 5 days)

Frontline resolution aims to quickly resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Any member of staff may deal with complaints at this stage. The main principle is to seek early resolution, resolving complaints at the earliest opportunity and as close as possible to the point of service delivery.

Stage 2 Investigation (resolution within 20 days)

Not all complaints are suitable for frontline resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints handled at the investigation stage of the

CHP are typically complex or require a detailed examination before we can state our position.

These complaints may have already been considered at the frontline resolution stage, or they may have been identified from the start as requiring investigation.

Requirements for Managers and the Service

The main objective of effective complaint handling across each WLAM unit is:

- To monitor and evaluate complaint handling against the two stage process and corresponding timescales.
- To manage complaint performance to derive learning from complaints and improve service delivery.
- To allow benchmarking between organisations to learn from one another and improve services for our customers.

Data Source for Complaint Performance Indicators

The council's [Customer Relationship Management \(CRM\) system](#) is used to capture complaints. A complaint report is provided to each Head of Service and Group Designated Complaint Officer monthly and this provides the information that is required to manage, monitor and report complaints.

Complaint Performance Monitoring

The frequency of the reporting on the performance indicators should be determined by the service, in agreement with the Head of Service, and should reflect the volume and frequency of complaints received by the service.

6. Governance & Efficiency

Managers need an understanding of how decisions are made from a committee and political point of view, the role of Performance Development Scrutiny Panels (PDSP), Council Executive and the Executive and Corporate Management Team. The Council Structure Awareness (bitesize session) provides information on how the council is structured and operates.

The [Scheme of Delegation](#) details the level of decision making authority delegated to specific management roles.

Information Management Data and IT Security

Information comes in many forms – policy documents, case files, reports, minutes, operational data and personal data – and is held in a variety of printed and electronic formats. Across the council we use this information in our daily working lives as we work to achieve our own objectives and those of the council – be it when delivering services, formulating policy, managing budgets, holding meetings, teaching pupils or managing staff.

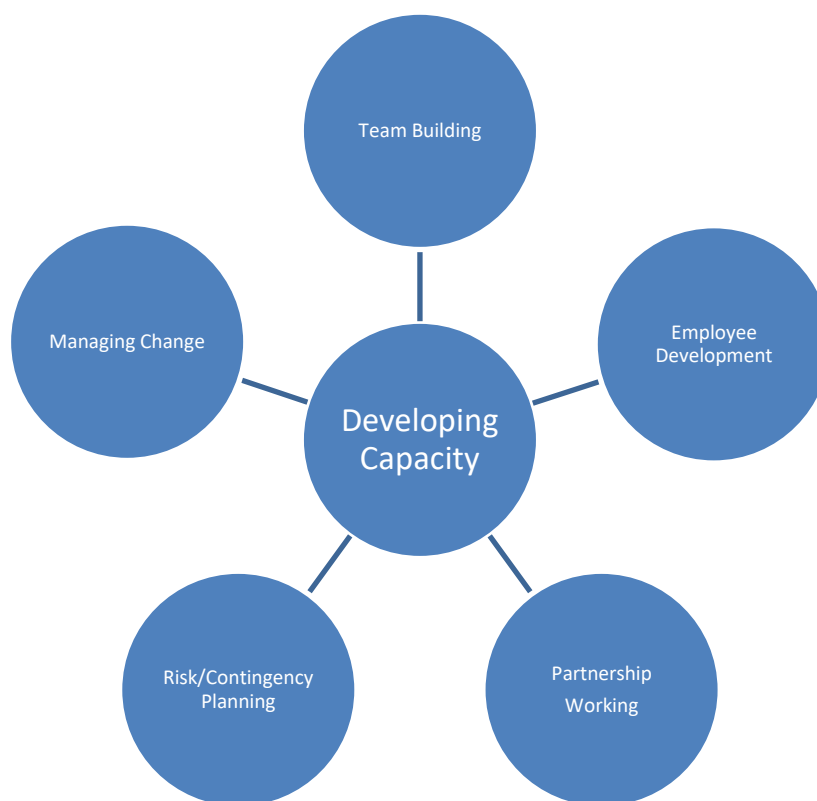
To maximise the potential benefit from our information we need to manage it effectively, re-use it where we can, share it appropriately and ensure that it is adequately protected. Please consult the council's [Data Protection Guidance](#)

Other useful links: [Records Management Plan](#), [Information Governance Policy](#), [Information Handling Procedure](#)

[Freedom of Information \(FOI\)](#)

The council has a process in place for dealing with FOI requests and ensuring that all statutory requests are dealt with in accordance with statutory timescales and requirements. All services have an Information Liaison Officer who will act as a support compliance with FOI legislation in the service.

Developing Capacity



What You Need to Know

1. Team Building

The [Employee Engagement Framework](#) is an essential element of the councils [People Strategy](#) and it is important that all managers are fully conversant with it. It emphasises the type of manager we want you to be.

'The council places great importance on developing supportive leadership throughout the organisation. Supportive leadership places an emphasis in developing and building capacity at all levels in the council to improve services and performance effective employee engagement, support and continuous improvement'

2. Employee Development

[ADR \(Appraisal and Development Review\)](#) is the council's appraisal process and is all about ensuring you are clear about what's expected of you, how you're expected to do it and how well you're doing it.

It ensures that all aspects of your job are considered in giving you feedback and agreeing any performance development action required.

ADR provides a focal point for drawing together any employee performance and development issues discussed during the year and should be regarded as a core framework to complement good day-to-day leadership and management practice.

You should also note that to comply with the council's [Employee Engagement Framework](#) all managers are expected to conduct an effective review using the ADR process once a year with all their direct reports.

Learning and Development Opportunities

A limited number of face to face training sessions for managers are offered through HR, however there a large number of elearning modules offered on the Council's e-learning platform [MyLearning](#).

As a Manager, you will be required to complete additional mandatory e-learning courses, alongside the mandatory e-learning that all Council employees are required to do, such as Prevent and Data Protection.

The current list of Mandatory e-learning courses for Managers include:

- Supporting Attendance at Work
- Mentally Healthy Workplace for Managers
- Bullying and Harassment
- Discipline and Grievance

Where it is relevant, Managers may also be asked to complete:

- Recruitment and Selection
- Conducting Workplace Investigations

The [MyLearning](#) platform also hosts additional learning and personal development opportunities through optional e-learning courses, such as Stress-less and Online Personal Safety Awareness. A number of courses with a focus on leadership development and managerial conduct are under development and will be made available on the platform within the next few months, such as Coaching Skills and Situational Leadership.

3. Partnership working

What the council it expects from its managers when considering effective partnership working is summarised below:

'Working collectively to achieve shared outcomes has never been more important for the council and their community planning partners due to the increasingly complex social, economic and physical environments.

The council must make the most of all resources that are available to achieve good value, high performing services. This will include well designed, led and managed partnerships that offer the council the chance to deliver services in a better and more efficient way, while providing more joined up services to customers'

4. Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning

Risk can be defined as the effect of uncertainty on an organisation's objectives. Service managers are expected to ensure that they are aware of, and understand, important risks to the achievement of their service's objectives.

The council maintains a corporate risk register on Pentana. Service managers are expected to regularly review risks for which they are responsible and ensure that there are effective measures in place to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

Business continuity planning is an important aspect of service planning as it is imperative to have considered and be ready for incidents or issues that result in interruptions to service delivery. The template can be found [here](#)

The council maintains approved lists of services for which business continuity plans must be maintained. A business continuity plan is a dynamic document and must be kept up to date and consistent with council operations and services.

Familiarise yourself with the plan for your service and what your role is both in maintaining it and executing it.

For more advice on risk management and business continuity planning contact either your service's risk champion or the [Audit Risk and Counter Fraud Unit](#).

5. Health and Safety

The council is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all employees and those who may be affected by our actions. The [Health and Safety Policy](#) outlines your responsibilities and the arrangements in place to ensure that measures in place are satisfactory.

As part of the policy managers have to think about what might cause harm to people and whether reasonable measures are being taken to prevent that harm.

Key elements of our health and safety system are:

- ensure working practices in place effectively control hazards, if not, they should be reviewed.
- create and demonstrate a positive attitude towards controlling risks.
- learn from incidents, accidents and near misses to help continually improve safety.

Health and safety procedures and risk assessment templates can be found on the councils Intranet under Corporate Services. They provide practical information on safety management.

For a list of health and safety advisers [click here](#)

6. Managing Change

There is a [Service Re-structure Process Guide](#) for managers to support them in taking forward service changes and you should familiarise yourself with this document.

Revised August 2025

The guide should be read in conjunction with the council's [Workforce Management Policy and Procedure](#), which provides practical information on the key stages of implementing organisational change.

Cost and Budget Management



What You Need to Know

1. Achieving Financial Targets

The [Financial Management Unit](#) in liaison with services undertake Zero Base Budgeting reviews annually on all service budgets prior to the first budget monitoring exercise of the new financial year. The purpose of the exercise is to ensure that the staffing establishment figures and allocated staffing budgets for the service are correct and that all other service budgets are aligned to reflect known committed expenditures.

2. Financial Awareness

Managers need to have general awareness of the council's financial position and strategy. This goes beyond dealing specifically with your own budget and financial targets and understanding the council's 'direction of travel'. Factoring that understanding into their planning process will ensure there is more effective partnership working and that expectation and targets are set accordingly

3. Cost Control/ Budgeting

The council's [Budgetary Control Framework and Procedure](#) sets out the responsibilities for those managers involved in the budget monitoring process. Monitoring of the full council budget is undertaken on a quarterly basis with budget risk areas being monitored on a monthly basis. A list of the finance staff who support services can be found by clicking [here](#)

4. Financial Procedures

[Procurement](#)

The Corporate Procurement Unit undertake tendering activity for the procurement of goods, services and works on behalf of all council services and ensures that best value is obtained, including financial and non-financial savings. The rules governing procurement are in the [Standing Orders for the Regulation of Contracts](#), and the [Corporate Procurement Procedures](#) provide additional guidance in relation to procurement activities. An online suite of documents to allow staff with Delegated Purchasing Authority (DPA) across the council to procure goods, services and works in a compliant and consistent manner can be found within the [Procurement Toolkit](#)

[Ordering Goods](#)

[PECOS](#) (Professional Electronic Commerce Online System) enables the council to effectively control its expenditure for goods and services, whilst achieving value for money. The system enables orders to be created, approved and transmitted to suppliers electronically by email, automated fax or directly into back office systems.