

CASE STUDY



WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

“Our people are our most valuable asset within the organisation and the Investors in People Framework has been a great tool to facilitate their continued development and support”

ALEX LINKSTON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



BACKGROUND

Size: 8466 employees
Sector: Public Sector – Local Government
Location: West Lothian
Status: Recognition renewed in 2007

THE ORGANISATION

West Lothian Council is a large organisation delivering a diverse range of services to the people, communities and businesses in West Lothian. With 9000 employees, we 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.

THEIR VISION

“Striving for excellence, working with and for our communities”

- Our new approach is more flexible and aligns to the organisations key priorities – which are based on business drivers, such as; customer needs and preferences
- The framework provides a clear structure for the organisation to evaluate and improve the approach to managing and developing our people
- The principles of IIP reflect the organisation’s commitment to improving services through our people
- The internal review methodology promotes a collaborative approach between the organisation and IIPS, one which supports our culture of regular self-assessment and involvement of our people in business change and improvement

CASE STUDY



THE CHALLENGE

West Lothian Council has put the delivery of excellent services to the local community at the heart of all endeavour and activity. From the development of long-term strategies and plans to the daily tasks, we are building services and a dedicated workforce that is committed to making West Lothian and its people healthier, happier and safer.

In the past ten years our people have achieved year-on-year improvements to service delivery and there is an internal and external expectation that the organisation will continue to realise improvement and innovation in our services.

Looking to the future, we recognise that any change and or improvement can only be achieved through effective, customer-focused people. Therefore, ensuring that our staff are effectively managed, developed, involved and recognised is critical to the organisation.

Underpinning this commitment is the IIP framework, which provides a structure by which to plan, manage and review our *People Strategy*. The framework is challenging and reflective of our key priorities, but in order to be sustainable, we need alignment with our other performance and improvement activity. This will ensure an integrated, efficient approach.

THE STRATEGY

West Lothian Council uses a number of tools and processes to gain insight on the effectiveness of management practice, planning activity and the outcomes delivered. This includes a comprehensive self-assessment programme using a quality framework called the West Lothian Assessment Model (which has linkages to the IIP framework). A cohesive corporate approach to excellence, including internal challenge and external assessment, is required to streamline and enhance improvement activity.

In recognition of this strategy, IIPS agreed to a pilot project in 2008 to increase the scope of our planned internal review. The review would include an evaluation of evidence obtained from the internal self-assessment programme (West Lothian Assessment Model) that would be used to complement and focus the activity of internal review.

A benefit from this development would be the ability of organisations using the WLAM (known outside West Lothian as the PSIF), to refine the process of on-going assessment against the IIP quality standard.

The training of the internal review team of 15 people was supplemented with information on the WLAM and the newly integrated approach. Through the training, the additional material and supporting meetings, the team was provided with necessary knowledge to prepare them for the new approach.

THE OUTCOME

The pilot is presently ongoing – scheduled to be completed in January 2010 – with an early evaluation indicating that the supplementary evidence has focused the internal review team on the strengths and areas for improvement of the organisation.

The next stage for West Lothian Council and IIPS will be to finish the pilot project and review the benefits and challenges of adopting this model for internal review. The evaluation will consider the time, resource and cost implications and the feasibility of transferring this model to another organisation.