



## **BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE**

#### **REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise members of the recent activity of the NET's, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1 August 2018 – 31 October 2018.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

The Local Area Committee is asked to:

1. Note the work carried out by the service within the local area.
2. Advise of any areas that require further information or investigation.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Relates to items 9 - We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger & 12 – We value and enjoy our built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	None
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	None

**D1 Terms of Report**

Report on activity for period 1 August 2018 – 31 October 2018.

**D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works**

There have been four grass cutting visits within the reporting period completing the grass cutting for the season and the grass cutting and weed control has been carried out on the central reservation on the A801. Herbicide application on shrub beds and channels/hard areas has also been completed for the year. Work has started on winter maintenance of hedge pruning and work is about to start on shrub beds. Staff are also reacting to enquiries that come in.

The latest Land Audit Management score for the West area was 67, which is the target score.

**Grounds Maintenance Enquiries**

In total 42 ground maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Ball Game Enquiries	1	0
Bench or Seat Enquiries	5	0
Burns of Watercourses	1	0
Drainage Flooding Grass Areas	0	1
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	0	3
Fencing Enquiries	0	2
Flower Bed or Bulb Displays	0	1
GalaDay Public Event Enquiries	1	0
Grass Area Damaged	0	1
Grass Cutting Enquiries	2	9
Grass Cutting Missed Not Cut	2	1
Grass Highway Verges	0	1
Grass Left on Paths or Roads	0	2
Ground Ownership Enquiries	1	1
Grounds Property Vandalised	0	2
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	4	6
Neighbourhood Environmental Teams	0	2
Public Park Enquiries	8	2
Shrub Bed Enquiries	1	2
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	12	11
Shrub Bed Not Maintained	1	4
Shrub Bed Obscuring Sightline	0	1
Weeds General Enquiries	1	1
Weeds on Paths or Roads	2	3
Total	42	56

### **D3 Garden Maintenance Routine Works**

There have been five grass cutting cycles completed as well as completing the hedge cutting in the gardens in the ward during the reporting period. This work is carried out by a team of four operatives, who also cover 50% of the gardens included on the scheme across the whole of West Lothian. The Garden Maintenance works for the year have now finished and the seasonal contracts for the garden maintenance staff were ended on 3 November 2018.

#### **Garden Maintenance Enquiries**

In total there were 15 garden maintenance enquiries received and dealt with during this period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Complaint Garden Maintenance	0	1
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	7	10
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut	4	5
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting	2	2
Garden Maintenance No Longer Required	0	1
Garden Maintenance Standard of Cut	2	1
Total	15	20

### **D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works**

The ward is covered by a mobile cleansing team consisting of five operatives and one compact sweeper. Bathgate Town Centre area has the additional resource of a street orderly and there is a backshift team of three operatives covering school routes, hot spot areas and enquiries throughout West Lothian. There is also a reduced level of staff on at the weekend covering West Lothian. We also have two HGV sweepers that cover the whole of West Lothian.

Staff are continuing to deal with enquiries and carry out routine works to remove litter, fly tipping and debris on roads, footpaths and open spaces throughout the ward.

## Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 93 cleaner communities enquiries were received and dealt with during this period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Complaint Street Cleansing	0	3
Dead Animals	3	7
Dog Fouled Grass/Open Space	0	5
Dog Fouling Kids Play Area	1	0
Dog Fouling on Paths/ Roads	9	25
Dog Waste Bin New Request	2	2
Dog Waste Bin Overflowing	2	2
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	3	10
Graffiti Non Offensive	2	1
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	0	1
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	32	24
Litter Bin Full Overflowing	1	1
Litter Bin New Request For Bin	1	0
Litter General Enquiries	4	0
Litter on Paths Roads Verges	11	7
Needles/Syringes Abandoned	3	2
Street Sweeping Enquiries	3	6
Trolleys Dumped out with Livingston	4	4
Vehicles Abandoned	12	10
Total	93	110

## Environmental Community Action

The team consists of two Senior Enforcement Officers, two Education Engagement Officers and eight Enforcement Officers. They are split into two teams of six officers to cover seven days a week on shifts, with one team on shift at a time.

Abandoned/nuisance vehicles have been dealt with throughout the ward gaining compliance following negotiation, verbal warnings, warning letters, official notices served or WLC contractor removal. This also included partnership working with SNT regarding a vehicle in Boghall.

Enforcement Officers have attended to all enquiries in relation to various environmental issues within the area and carried out patrols. Compliance gained with a number of enquiries with tenants, owners or landowners. Removal of fly tipping following visits by Enforcement Officers and giving verbal warnings or issuing warning letters and then conducting follow up visits to ensure removal. Officers have also engaged in partnership working with various agencies.

Enforcement Officers assisting colleagues in Community Learning & Development Youth Services through the positive destinations programme by carrying out visits on their behalf as well as assisting colleagues from the Licencing Team to deliver urgent correspondence, complete licencing audits and checks within ward.

Officers have participated in 'Give Your Litter a Lift' a national campaign being conducted by Keep Scotland Beautiful. They also took part during September with the Chewing Gum Action Group in a campaign where posters were displayed in local shops and five temporary signs were erected at the roadside throughout West Lothian in relation to disposing of your gum in the bin. Also assisted Bathgate Early Years Centre in obtaining funding through Wrigley Litter Less Campaign and Chewing Gum Action Group, campaign to start in January.

## **D5 Parks and Woodland**

### **Parks and Woodland Enquiries**

In total 60 Parks and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period. 12 enquiries were inspected but no works generated, 9 enquiries generated works instructions to programme and 20 works instructions were completed.

	2018	2017
Tree works completed for period	20	n/a
Tree works outstanding for LAC area	52	n/a
Tree related Enquiries for report period	21	n/a
Tree Enquiries not generating works orders	12	n/a
Tree Blocking Light	0	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	11	9
Tree Broken/Damaged or Dead	5	2
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	19	6
Tree Enquiries General	23	11
Tree in the Garden Scheme WLC	1	0
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	1	1
Total	60	30

Balbardie Park - Options for the management of the woods around the park and their extension are being considered

### **Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)**

Trees and woodlands contribute to local amenity and the quality of the natural and historic environment. Tree Preservation Orders protect the most important trees in West Lothian from felling, or from works which might damage them.

Trees can form significant local landmarks and provide food and shelter for wildlife. They add to biodiversity and have an important role in mitigating the effects of climate change. They can be protected in a number of ways.

The council can make, manage and enforce Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) under powers set out in section 160 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and in the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order and Trees in Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2010 (the 2010 Regulations). Scottish Government Circular 1/2011 Tree Preservation Orders also applies.

In addition to TPOs, trees can be protected by conditions attached to planning approvals.

Trees within conservation areas are not protected in the same way as by a TPO, but if you live in a conservation area and want to carry out works to a tree you will need to inform the council before you do. The council then has six weeks to decide whether to seek any form of protection for the tree.

To clarify the situation, any enquiries regarding trees that are within Conservation Areas or covered by a Tree Preservation Order shall be passed to our colleagues in Planning Services for them to provide any advice.

It is an offence to cut down, lop, top, uproot or wilfully destroy any trees that are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. The maximum penalty for illegal works on a protected tree is £20,000 or twice the amenity value of the tree, whichever is greater.

Any applications to carry out works should be submitted to the Planning Department in the first instance and permission must be received in writing before any work can be undertaken.

For more information please refer to the West Lothian Council web site under Tree Preservation Orders ; - <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/4247/Tree-Preservation-Orders-TPO>

### **Ranger Service Update**

No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	4
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The Ranger Service submitted the full application to the Postcode Lottery Fund for £2000 for two wildlife interpretation panels at Wester Inch, a community litter pick and school engagement.

The Ranger Service carried out a site clean-up at Ravenscraig Woods, retrieving ten plus bags of rubbish, mainly made up of drinks cans and glass bottles.

Rangers are working with the Flood Prevention team, SEPA and Forth Rivers Trust on community engagement for forthcoming Bathgate Waters Restoration Project.

## **D6 Open Space and Cemeteries**

### **Open Space Capital Programme**

Boghall Playing Fields, Bathgate. The play area refurbishment is ongoing. This will include replacing old equipment and top up of safer surface. This will be completed in 2018 alongside works to improve access to the area i.e. a new raised tarmac path, which will connect the play area to Alexandra Avenue and Alexandra Drive. Any remaining budget will be used to add additional seating at the play area and repair the skate park.

Standhill Farm, Wester Inch, Bathgate. Installation of a new play area remains outstanding due to the incomplete transfer of land from the housing developer to the council.

Balbardie Park, Bathgate. Upgrade and refurbishment work to the play area is complete, including some new equipment and safer surface top up. Fitness equipment has been removed as it had reached end of life.

Phase one of the wider park improvements is complete including drainage, signage, and path works.

We are now working with CSGNT(Central Scotland Green Network Trust) on Phase two, entailing woodland management, and additional signage and path work in the north of the park. Securing external match funding to upgrade the bike track will follow in phase two.

Marchwood Crescent Park, Bathgate. Work to replace whin-dust paths with tarmac is being planned for completion in 2018/19. We will replace those paths most damaged by water erosion.

### **Open Space Enquiries**

There were nine Open Space enquiries for this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Children Play Enquiries	7	3
Complaint Childrens Play Areas	1	0
Glass or Litter in Play Areas	0	1
Play Area Property Vandalised	1	0
Total	9	4

### **Cemeteries Routine Works**

Autumn routine works which include – Grass cutting, hedge pruning, weed control and burial duties ongoing across the cemetery estates.

### **Cemeteries Enquires**

There were seven Cemeteries enquiries for this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Bench Donation	0	1
Cemeteries General Enquiries	5	9
Complaint Cemeteries & Burials	0	1
Lair Enquiries	1	4
Lair Sunken or Uneven	1	2
Total	7	17

## **E CONCLUSION**

Work has started on the winter maintenance of hedge pruning, and work is about to start on the shrub beds.

Enforcement Officers have attended to all enquiries in relation to various environmental issues within area and carried out patrols

Upgrade and refurbishment work to the Balbardie Park play area is complete, including some new equipment and safer surface top up.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: None

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**Jim Jack**

**Head of Operational Services**

**10 December 2018**