



**ARMADALE & BLACKRIDGE 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 NETs, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1 August 2018 – 31 October 2018.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to:

1. Note the work carried out to date and future planned work.
2. Advise of any areas that require further investigation or inclusion in future work plans.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V 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 Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	None
<b>VIII 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 five grass cutting visits within the reporting period completing the grass cutting for the season. 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, with work 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 27 grounds maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2018	2017
Ball Game Enquiries	0	1
Bench or Seat Enquiries	1	0
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	2	0
Fencing Enquiries	4	0
Gala Day Public Event Enquiries	1	0
Grass Area Damaged	0	1
Grass Cutting Enquiries	5	1
Grass Cutting Missed Not Cut	0	1
Grass Highway Verges	0	1
Grass Left on Paths or Roads	0	2
Grounds Ownership Enquiries	0	2
Grounds Property Vandalised	1	1
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	4	3
Public Park Enquiries	0	6
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	3	8
Shrub Bed Not Maintained	1	0
Shrub Beds Obscuring Sightline	1	0
Weeds General Enquiries	1	1
Weeds on Paths or Roads	3	2
Total	27	30

### D3 Garden Maintenance Enquiries

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 10 garden maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Complaint Garden Maintenance	2	0
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	4	7
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut	2	6
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting	2	0
Garden Maintenance Standard of Cut	0	2
Total	10	15

### D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

The ward is covered by a mobile cleansing team consisting of five operatives and one compact sweeper. Armadale has the additional resource of a street orderly and there is a backshift team that cover the school route and the main street daily in the afternoon. There is a reduced level of staff on at the weekend covering West Lothian, and Armadale Main Street is one of the areas covered by them. 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 47 cleaner communities related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2018	2017
Dead Animals	3	1
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	2	1
Dog Fouling on Paths/Roads	8	10
Dog No Fouling Sign Request	0	1
Dog Waste Bin New Request	0	2
Dog Waste Bin Overflowing	0	1
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	3	0
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	0	1
Graffiti Non Offensive	1	2
Illegal Fly Posting	0	1
Illegal Fly Tipping Dumping	19	16
Litter Bin New Request for Bin	1	2
Litter General Enquiries	4	4
Litter On Paths Roads Verges	0	3
Needles Syringes Abandoned	1	0
Street Sweeping Enquiries	2	4
Vehicles Abandoned	3	9
Total	47	58

## **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.

There has been one fixed penalty notice issued for a dog fouling offence.

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. A specific vehicle complained about by Craiginn Community Centre in Blackridge which was abandoned within the car park outside the front entrance, was successfully removed due to owner having moved out of the country.

Enforcement Officers have attended to all enquiries in relation to various environmental issues within area and carried out patrols. Compliance gained with a number of enquiries with tenants, owners or landowners removing fly tipping, following visits by Enforcement Officers 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 Licencing team to deliver urgent correspondence, complete licencing audits and checks within ward.

Enforcement Team and Education Officer participated in 'Give Your Litter a Lift' national campaign being conducted by Keep Scotland Beautiful.

- 5<sup>th</sup> October Blackmoss Cleanup, Beechbrae Kids Project, Community Learning & Development Youth Services, Armadale Hub Kids Part 1
- 18<sup>th</sup> October Armadale Community Centre activity morning with Community Learning & Development Youth Services 40 -50 kids 10:30 -13:00
- 26<sup>th</sup> October Blackmoss Cleanup Beechbrae Kids Project, Community Learning & Development Youth Services along with Scottish Natural Heritage, Armadale Hub Kids Part 2.

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.

## D5 Parks and Woodland

In total there were 39 Parks and Woodland related enquiry received during this reporting period. All enquires were inspected with 16 not generating works instructions to programme and 18 works instructions were completed. 13 works orders were outstanding for the period.

	2018	2017
Tree works completed for period	18	n/a
Tree works outstanding for LAC area	13	n/a
Tree related Enquiries for report period	23	n/a
Tree Enquiries not generating works orders	16	n/a
Tree Blocking Light	2	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	3	12
Tree Broken/Damaged or Dead	0	1
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	17	5
Tree Enquiries General	15	2
Tree Felling Work Unauthorised	1	1
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	1	2
Total	39	24

### Ranger Service Update

No. School groups attending Outdoor Education / Forest School Sessions	1
No. Pupils attending Outdoor Education / Forest School Sessions	26
No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	6.5
No. Access Enquiries	2

Ranger Service met with Beachbrae and Armadale Hub regarding working with their After School Club at Blackmoss Nature Park.

### 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>

## **D6 Open Space and Cemeteries**

### **Cemeteries Routine Works**

Autumn routine works underway including grass cutting, weed control, hedge cutting, shrub bed pruning & grave reinstatement works and burial duties ongoing across the cemetery estates.

### **Cemeteries Enquiries**

There were no cemetery related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Cemeteries General Enquiries	0	1
Lair Enquiries	0	4
Lair Sunken or Uneven	0	1
Total	0	6

### **Open Space Routine Works**

St Anthony's Park, Armadale. The drainage upgrade has now been completed. The grass is partially established. We will monitor performance of the drainage features throughout the winter.

Wood Park, Armadale. The drainage upgrade has now been completed, as has the refurbishment of the play area, and addition of fitness equipment. Outstanding work to wider park will include thinning trees and clearing scrub and broken fences from the small woodland areas within the park. These works will be completed in 2018.

Hillside Drive Park, Blackridge. We are currently planning works to reinstate a footpath within the park, through the play area i.e. from the north east entrance. We will also replace damaged safer surface and add some additional play equipment alongside this new path (game panels).

Westrigg Park, Blackridge. The drainage upgrade has now been completed. These works will improve football playing conditions and improve access into the park from the south east entrance.

## Open Space Enquiries

In total there were one open space related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Children Play Enquiries	1	1
Glass or Litter in Play Areas	0	1
Safety Inspection in Play Areas	0	1
Total	1	3

## E CONCLUSION

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

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

The drainage upgrade in St Anthony's Park and Wood Park, Armadale has now been completed.

## F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: None

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**Jim Jack**

**Head of Operational Services**

**13 December 2018**