



Whitburn and Blackburn Local Area Committee

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

27 November 2018

A meeting of the **Whitburn and Blackburn Local Area Committee** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Seafeld Community Centre, Redhouse Road, Seafeld, EH47 7AL** on **Monday 3 December 2018 at 10:00am**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business.
4. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting of the Committee held on 10th September 2018 (herewith).
5. Police Ward Report - report by Police Scotland (herewith).
6. Fire Service Report - report by Station Manager Alan Cunningham (herewith).
7. West Lothian Community Learning and Development Inspection - report by Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) (herewith).
8. Advice Shop Service Update - report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith).

DATA LABEL: Public

9. Service Update - NETS, Land and Countryside - report by Head of Operational Services (herewith).
10. Housing, Customer and Building Services Update - report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
11. Pensioners' Christmas Fund Allocations 2018 - report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith).
12. Community Regeneration Update - report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith).
13. Workplan (herewith).

NOTE **For further information please contact Lorraine McGrorty on 01506 281609 or e-mail lorraine.mcgrorty@westlothian.gov.uk**

MINUTE of MEETING of the WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST Lothian Council held within BLACKBURN PARTNERSHIP CENTRE, ASH GROVE, BLACKBURN, EH47 7LJ, on 10 SEPTEMBER 2018.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Jim Dickson and Bruce Fairbairn

Apologies - Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan

In Attendance –

Laura Wilson, Community Regeneration Team Leader, West Lothian Council
Michelle Kirkbright, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council
PC Philip Wilkin, Police Scotland
PC Andrew Hendry, Police Scotland
Kenny Stewart, Fire and Rescue Service
Gary Stoddart, Housing Manager, West Lothian Council
Eirwen Hopwood, Country Park Manager, West Lothian Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the draft Minute of its Meeting held on 14th May 2018. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. POLICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by PC Fergus Middleton providing an update on police activity within the ward for the period to 30th June 2018.

The report was presented by Police Constables Philip Wilkin and Andrew Hendry and provided information on the Police Scotland National Priorities delivered locally, the West Lothian policing priorities and the ward specific community engagement priorities. It provided an overview of the performance statistics and explained that full information could be accessed via the Police Scotland website.

The report then went on to provide members with full information on the number of crimes recorded, solvency rates, warrants issued, etc., that had taken place across the ward during the reporting period on the following before concluding with contact details for the local police team:-

- Reducing community and social harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse;

- Reducing violence and antisocial behaviour within our communities;
- Making our roads safer; and
- Tackling acquisitive crime.

In response to a comment about the time that had elapsed since the end of the reporting period, the committee noted that the majority of committee reports were produced by services and partners on a quarterly basis and depending on the meetings rota, the information could be slightly out of date.

Arising from the discussion PC Wilkin undertook to establish how many guns had been handed in during the recent National firearm surrender campaign. He also undertook to establish whether Police Scotland had capacity to support Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the ward.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. FIRE SERVICE REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on activity in the ward for the period to 30th June 2018.

The committee was advised that following the publication of the Whitburn & Blackburn Multi-Member Ward Operational Plan, the Local Senior Fire Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian had produced quarterly performance reports detailing activity against key priorities.

The seven key priorities for the ward were outlined in the report and a series of graphs provided a breakdown of accidental dwellings fires, deliberate fires, fires in non-domestic properties, non-fatal non-fire emergencies and unwanted fire alarm signals for Scotland, West Lothian and the ward.

It was recommended that the local area committee note and provide comment on the Whitburn & Blackburn Multi-member Ward Quarterly Performance Report.

In response to a question, Kenny Stewart undertook to provide an update on the park at Gleneagles Court in Whitburn in the next report on actions to address anti-social behaviour and fire raising in the park area.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

5. HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING SERVICES

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of housing performance for the period 1st April to 30th June 2018.

The performance figures for property void and let for mainstream and temporary tenancies were detailed in the report and the committee noted that for the period April to June 2018 there was a total of 52 properties let for mainstream tenancies and 16 properties for temporary tenancies. There were currently 36 policy voids in the ward. The report explained that delays in re-letting properties occurred for various reasons.

The report provided an overview of the cumulative rent charge for the year and advised that there was a strong collection rate of 95.9%. The arrears in the ward at the end of quarter 1 was £385,509, an increase of £68,428 on the same period in the previous year. The position overall in West Lothian had increased by £261,111 from the previous year and at 1st July was £1,879,981. Despite 71 serious arrears cases in the ward, 69% of cases fell in the lower bands with rent arrears of £300 or less.

The overall increase in arrears compared to the previous financial year was attributed to the roll out of the Full Service Universal Credit, other Welfare Benefit reforms and the current economic climate. The report listed the priorities officers would focus on during the year to reduce arrears.

The report went on to provide members with information on the following:-

- Whitburn & Blackburn Area Team Activity;
- Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing;
- Tenant Participation Update; and
- Safer Neighbourhood Team Update.

The report recommended that members note the content of the Housing, Customer and Building Services activity report.

In response to a question, members noted that officers fully explained the allocations policy to tenants during the Housing Options interviews. It was also noted that officers would shortly be commencing a review of the housing allocations policy.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the recent activity of the NETS, Land and Countryside Services teams for the period 1st May 2018 to 31st July 2018 and highlighting future works planned for the locality. The outcome of the most recent Land Audit Management System inspection in the West area was also provided. The drop in scoring had been due to the level of weed growth in shrub beds which had since been addressed.

The report then provided an overview of the routine works and enquiries that had been carried out by the grounds maintenance and cleaner communities' and garden maintenance teams and provided information on the grounds maintenance enquiries received during the reporting period against the same period in 2017.

The report then moved on to provide members with an overview routine works and enquiries dealt with by the cleaner communities team before moving on to provide an overview of the various community enforcement action activities that had been undertaken. It continued with information on park and woodland and open space and cemeteries routine works along with statistical information for the same period in 2017.

Arising from discussion, the committee requested that officers should carry out maintenance and a tidy up at the roundabout at J4 of the M8. They also requested that officers make arrangements to replace the recently erected sign at Polkemmet Park from "Polkemmet Park Hartill" to "Polkemmet Park Whitburn".

The committee was invited to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2018

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the groups invited to apply for the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2018 in the Whitburn & Blackburn ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

In 2018, the total amount available was £29,054 with the fund being divided by the total number of beneficiaries. Eight applications had been issued to groups across the Whitburn & Blackburn ward, with three returned to date. The intention was to support all eight groups upon submission of their application. Appendix 1 of the report details those groups proposed to be supported and the approximate number of beneficiaries in each.

One application had also been sent to a Livingston-wide group and three applications to West Lothian-wide groups. The intention was to support

all of these groups once the applications had been returned. Appendix 2 provided further details on those applications and the approximate number of beneficiaries.

The committee noted that a full report on the final allocations would be presented to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP later in the year with letters to be issued to groups in late October advising of the level of funding they would receive.

The report recommended that the committee note eight groups within the ward that had been invited to apply to the fund and would be supported if applications were received.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on regeneration activity within the Whitburn and Blackburn ward.

The report recalled that the West Lothian Regeneration Framework approved in 2014 contained a commitment to develop regeneration plans in key areas of deprivation in West Lothian. Eight regeneration areas had been identified based on the data zones within the bottom 20% of the West Lothian, which included areas of Whitburn and Blackburn.

Regeneration plans had been developed for both areas and provided as appendices to the report. The overarching aim of the plans was to tackle inequalities.

The report provided the committee with an update on activities in Whitburn as follows:-

- progress to take forward the outcomes contained within the Whitburn Masterplan;
- the first version of a regeneration plan for the town;
- the provision of a summer lunch scheme at Whitburn community centre;
- Whitburn “place branding” and marketing;
- an update on the Town Centre Shop Front Improvement Scheme;
- ongoing work of Whitburn Traders and Whitburn Community Council Twin Town Initiative with Oswaldtwistle in Lancashire;
- ongoing work to engage with owners of vacant and under-utilised

sites on West Main Street and throughout the town;

- enhancements at Whitburn East End;
- delivery and installation of new bespoke Whitburn town gateway signage;
- ongoing work of the Friends of Polkemmet Park;
- an overview of the various updates by Whitburn Community Development Trust; and
- an update on the staff moves that had taken place to allow the creation of a new Whitburn Partnership Centre.

The report then proceeded to inform the committee of regeneration activities in Blackburn including updates on:-

- the work of the regeneration group to identify projects and develop actions and its renaming to Blackburn Future Group which had been well received;
- details of the Blackburn Week of Action;
- activities of Community Action Blackburn including the “Hungry Holiday” club and Blackburn Fun Day; and
- the current position with a variety of projects in the area that had been awarded money from the Villages Improvement Fund.

The report concluded that the process for developing regeneration plans was underway with local action groups established and evidence gathering and consultation exercises conducted. The first draft action plans had been produced and would become “live” documents that would be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

In response to the discussion, the committee requested that Property Services ensure that ward members and Mill Centre tenants be kept informed of ongoing discussions with the Head Tenant following the council’s decision to terminate its lease at the Mill Centre, Blackburn.

The report recommended that committee note:-

- (a) Progress to develop regeneration plans for the towns and associated activities;
- (b) The first drafts of the Whitburn and Blackburn Regeneration Plans;
- (c) Update on progress of the Whitburn town centre related matters;
- (d) The update on the progress of developing Whitburn Partnership Centre;
- (e) The report on the Blackburn Week of Action;

- (f) The update on Community Action Blackburn activity; and
- (g) An update on projects within the ward supported by the Villages Improvement Fund.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. WORKPLAN

The committee approved the workplan for the period to September 2018.

Decision

To approve the workplan.



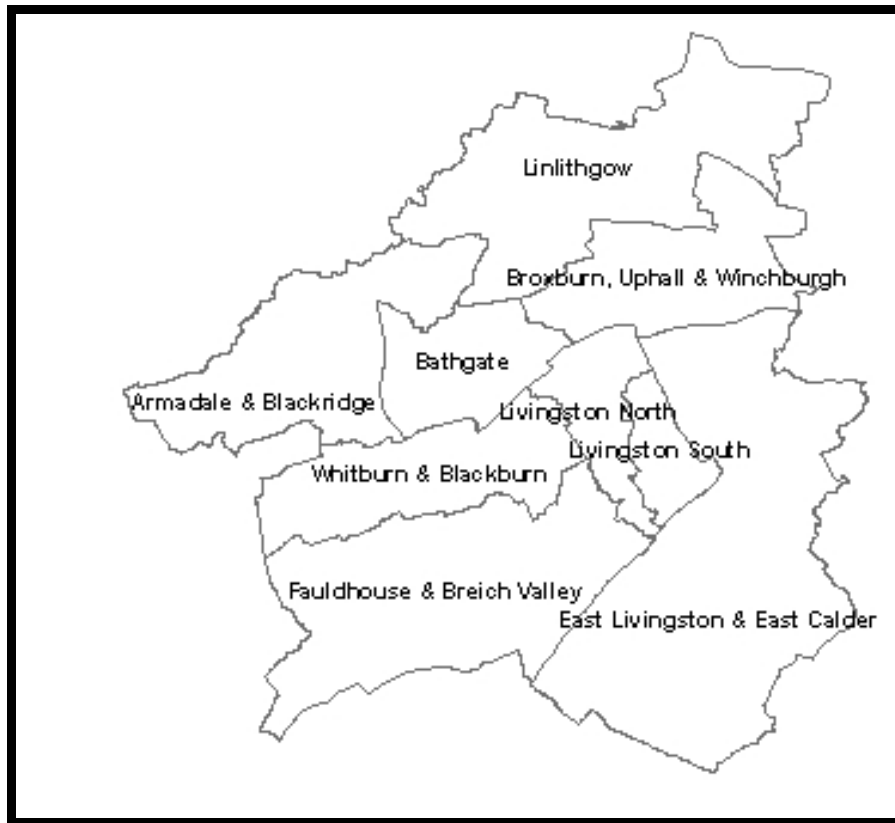
West Lothian Local Policing

Whitburn and Blackburn Ward

Report for the
Local Area Committee

July 2018- Sept 2018

Report compiled by PC Fergus Middleton



Our Vision

Sustained excellence in service and protection.

Our Purpose

To improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland.

Our Values

Integrity, Fairness and Respect.

National Policing Priorities	
Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour	Protecting People at Risk Of Harm
Serious Organised Crime	Road Safety
Counter Terrorism	Acquisitive Crime

Theme as per West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2013 to 2023	Identified Police Priority	Short Term Police Outcome
Protecting People	Child protection	Children at risk are safer and less vulnerable
	Child sexual abuse & exploitation	Children at risk are safer and less vulnerable
	Missing persons	To reduce the instances and harm
	Sexual crimes	To reduce the harm
	Adults at risk	Adults at risk are safer and less vulnerable
	Financial harm including doorstep crime & fraud	To reduce the instances and harm
	Cyber crime	To reduce the harm
Reducing Antisocial Behaviour & Hate Crime	Antisocial behaviour & hate crime	To reduce the harm
Reducing Violence	Domestic abuse	To reduce the harm
	Crimes of violence	To reduce the harm caused by public and private space violence
Tackling Substance Misuse	Misuse drugs & alcohol	To reduce the harm
Reduce Home, Fire and Road Casualties	Road casualties	To reduce the instances and harm
Tackling Serious and Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism	Drugs, financial harm & fear	To reduce the harm
	Extremism & terrorism	To reduce the risk

PERFORMANCE

For full details, please use the below link to access the Police Scotland Internet site.

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/our-performance/>

West Lothian Area Command Performance Summary Report Reporting Period: April – June 2018



Total Crime

↓ 0.4%

↓ 18 Crimes

Crimes
Recorded

0.4%



3654 (18 fewer)

Common
Assault

15%



466 (82 fewer)

Dishonesty

21%



856 (148 more)

Domestic
Abuse

2.1%



582 (12 more)

Overall Violent
Crime

1.9%



53 (1 fewer)

Sexual
Crime

1.2%



87 (1 more)

Road Traffic
Casualties

8.3%



13 (1 more)

Antisocial
Behaviour Calls

8.9%



2734 (267 fewer)

Missing People

3.5%



444 (15 more)

Counter Terrorism



SEVERE

The threat level from INTERNATIONAL
TERRORISM is currently set at SEVERE
meaning an attack is highly likely.

Housebreaking

19.8%



115 (19 more)

Protecting People

Within the ward, locality officers have carried out a number of warrant initiatives to ensure people are brought before local courts to answer for their crimes committed in the community or who are making attempts to evade justice.

They have also carried out Home security surveys and hand delivered harbouring letters to occupiers of addresses where vulnerable youths have been located. This is a tactic used to ensure the ongoing safety of the vulnerable youths.

Within the ward locality officers have been routinely tasked with carrying out enquiries into the granting or renewing of air weapon, shotgun and firearms licences. These enquiries ensure the continued safe use of all guns within the ward and ensure the person requesting to hold any such license is a suitable person. Should the suitability of a license holder be questioned, officers ensure the quick seizure of any weapons or ammunition, prior to a full enquiry being carried out into the continued suitability of that person.

Reducing Antisocial Behaviour & Hate Crime

In an effort to reduce the number of calls of anti-Social Behaviour and violence, officers when possible provide resources at key times in identified areas aimed at reducing ASB and violence within the ward.

There has been a large amount of partnership working between the police and the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. The consistent and firm approach has resulted in the number of joint visits and tenancy warning issued, showing a decreasing trend. This has also resulted in there currently being no live Anti-social behaviour orders in the ward.

The locality officers continue to maintain a good relationship with local licenced premises and off licences. Visiting and supporting them in an effort to reduce ASB resulting from either over consumption of alcohol or underage drinking.

There have been no significant patterns of hate crime.

Reducing Violence

When persons living within the ward are released from court with bail curfew conditions, locality officers visit the individuals to check compliance with the conditions, to minimise the disruption to the community and discourage further offending.

Following significant incidents in the community locality officers have conducted re-assurance patrols of the affected areas to facilitate the community returning to normal, allowing residents and businesses to go about their daily routines without fear or anxiety.

Patrols have also been carried out in known hotspot areas' to deter and prevent incidents of violence.

Tackling Substance Misuse

Locality officers have routinely patrolled area's within the ward highlighted by members of the public where alcohol or drug abuse may be occurring.

One Misuse of Drugs Act warrant was executed and locality officers and other local officers have carried out weekly visits and inspections of licensed premises during the weekend high time economy hours to deter and disrupt the supply of drugs and ensure adherence to alcohol licensing standards and conditions.

Members of the public are always encouraged to report suspicious activity, so that police can continue to gather intelligence and disrupt those who deal and misuse controlled drugs.

Reduce Home, Fire and Road Casualties

The locality officers continue to act on information regarding illegal or inconsiderate driving in various areas throughout the ward, to monitor and where necessary issue tickets for speeding and/or other motoring offences. The Police Facebook page and other social media is regularly updated with posts reminding drivers of the expected driving standards.

Locality officers have continued to sign post local Primary Schools to the Parksmart Scheme, on receiving information of complaints regarding inconsiderate parking. Officers will support the scheme and schools at a local level when appropriate. Local schools have access to the relevant materials on Parksmart, however should there be any issues, the contact within West Lothian Council is Karen McCubbin.
Karen.McCubbin@westlothian.org.uk

Tackling Serious and Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism

PC Tom White, the local Licensing officer has been recognised by the Immigration Enforcement department for his excellent partnership work at their recent award ceremony. PC White and an immigration officer are responsible for identifying joint working opportunities to tackle persistent foreign national offenders and raising awareness across the divisions and agencies. 8 operations have been actioned, with Locality officers forming part of the enforcement teams, resulting in 13 arrests for immigration offences and a value of £360,000 worth of fines served against rogue employers,. Working with HMRC, 7 cases have been identified which have been passed to the small business team and one which has been retained by the Fraud Investigation Service. Other offences detected include, HMO's, dangerous staff accommodation, theft of electricity and environmental health concerns.

Other

The Divisional Commander and Command Team have congratulated Team 2 Response, West Lothian, who have made it to the final selection at the Annual Force Excellence Awards.

Team 2 Response, West Lothian – Team of the Year

Team 2 Response, West Lothian have shown their continued dedication and commitment to all aspects of policing and serving the public in a challenging area. Through individual commitment, the team has developed an ethos and ethical working practices, resulting in them increasing the performance of the sub division through tracing more domestic offenders, reporting more cases and producing less domestic packages than all others. By doing so, they demonstrated that through cohesive team work, despite other constant demands, they could target force priorities and help keep the public safe in West Lothian.

Contacts

Locality Officers for the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward are;

PC Carol-Ann Wilson
PC Phil Wilkin
PC Fergus Middleton
PC Andrew Hendry

Details of your Community Policing Team can be found at:
<http://www.scotland.police.uk/your-community/the-lothians-and-scottish-borders/west-lothian>

Email: WhitburnBlackburnCPT@scotland.pnn.police.uk
You can also follow us on Twitter: @WestLothPolice
Tel: 101



WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

REPORT BY SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Whitburn and Blackburn Local Area Committee on the activity within Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward for the period up to 30th September 2018.

B. RECOMMENDATION

That Committee Members are invited to note and provide comment on the Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-member Ward Performance Report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being honest, open and accountable• Focusing on our customers' needs• Making best use of our resources• Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Quarterly reports on the Multi-member Ward Operational Plans are being produced to ensure delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan, which is a statutory requirement of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	WL CPP SOA Performance indicators.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	SOA1304_13 Number of deliberate fires per 100,000 population SOA1304_14 Number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The council contributes to directly and in partnership to the delivery of the Ward Plan
VII Consideration at PDSP	None

D. TERMS OF REPORT**D.1 Background**

Quarterly reports on the Multi-Member Ward Operational Plans have been produced by SFRS to ensure delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2018, which is a requirement under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Section 41E.

D.2 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-member Ward Quarterly Report

Following the publication of the Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-member Ward Operational Plan, the Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian has produced a Performance Report detailing activity against the key priorities.

The seven key priorities within the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward area are as follows:

Continuous Priority

- Local Risk Management and Preparedness.

High Priority

- Reduction of Dwelling Fires
- Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties
- Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Medium Priority

- Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting
- Reduction of Fires in Non-Domestic Property
- Reduction in Casualties from Special Services (excluding RTC's).
- Reduction in RTC Fatalities and Casualties

E. CONCLUSION

The Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-member Ward Performance Report aligns to the key priorities of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2018, the West Lothian Strategic Assessment of Community Safety and continues with the excellent partnership working on Community Safety, which is evident in West Lothian.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Alan Cunnigham

Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

September 2018

Appendix 1 - Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward Performance Report



West Lothian Council Area

Ward Performance Report

Quarter 2 2018/19

Whitburn and Blackburn

DISCLAIMER

The figures included in this report are provisional and subject to change as a result of quality assurance and review. The statistics quoted are internal management information published in the interests of transparency and openness.

The Scottish government publishes Official Statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

Please ensure any external partners in receipt of these reports are aware of this.

Introduction

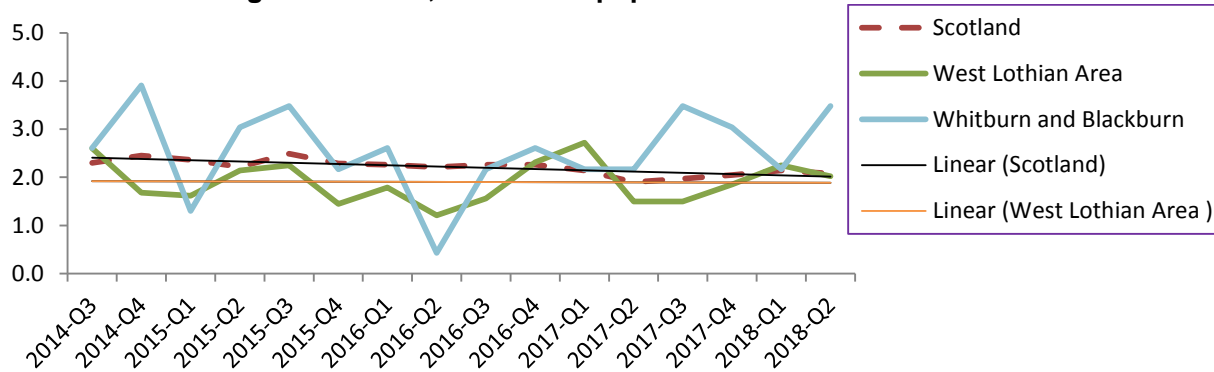
Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Ward Performance Report. This performance report is designed to provide citizens, stakeholders and partners with information relating to ward based activity undertaken by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

In addition to historical ward based activity, this performance report provides information on the historic activity in the West Lothian Council area and Scotland. To allow benchmarking to be undertaken, the units of measurement in the performance graphs in the report are based on incidents/events per head of population.

Whilst using historic statistical benchmarking data, consideration must be taken of the somewhat random nature of fire related incidents and events, and how this can pose difficulties in interpreting emerging patterns and trends. This is of specific relevance where ward level data is analysed due to the relatively small number of actual incidents/events that occur in ward areas.

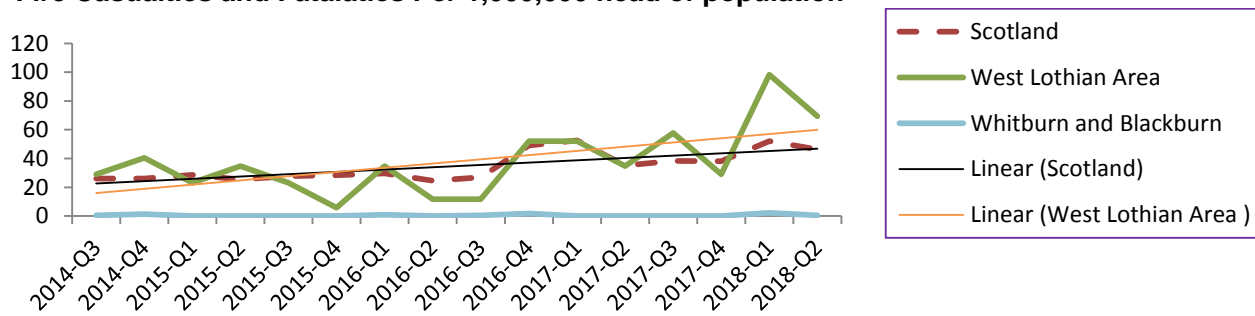
However, regardless of statistical anomalies, emerging patterns and trends in fire related incidents and events can assist the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Community Planning Partners plan and implement preventative intervention initiatives to target reducing fire related incidents and events.

Accidental Dwelling Fires Per 10,000 head of population



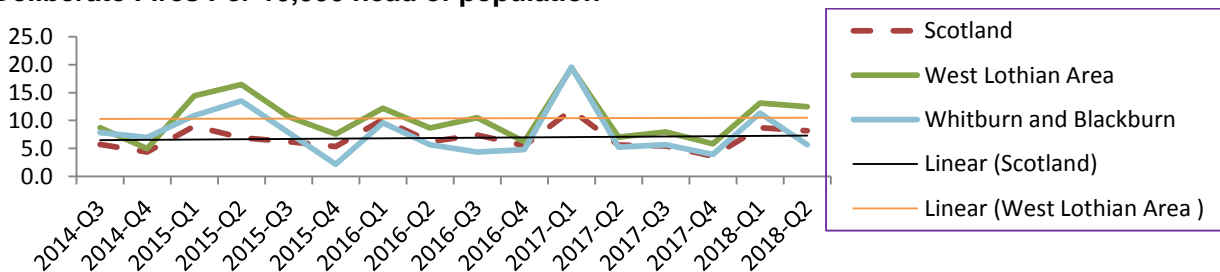
During the 2018-19 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 8 accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 5 during 2017-18 year to date reporting period.

Fire Casualties and Fatalities Per 1,000,000 head of population



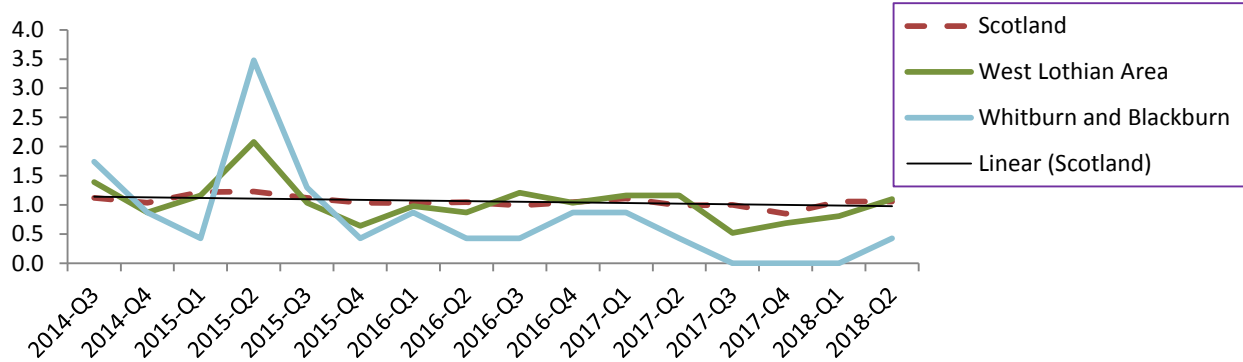
During the 2018-19 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 1 casualties due to fire in comparison to 0 during 2017-18 year to date reporting period.

Deliberate Fires Per 10,000 head of population



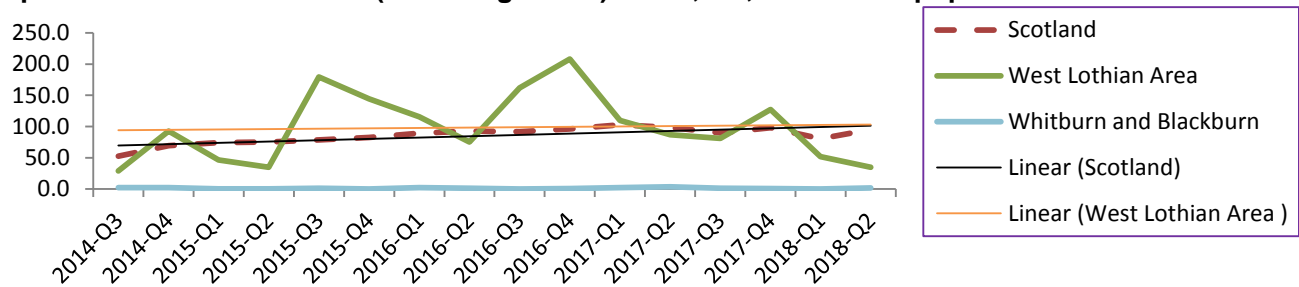
SFRS have dealt with 13 Deliberate fire incidents during 2018-19 year to date reporting period in comparison to 15 during 2017-18 year to date reporting period.

Fires In Non Domestic Property Per 10,000 head of population



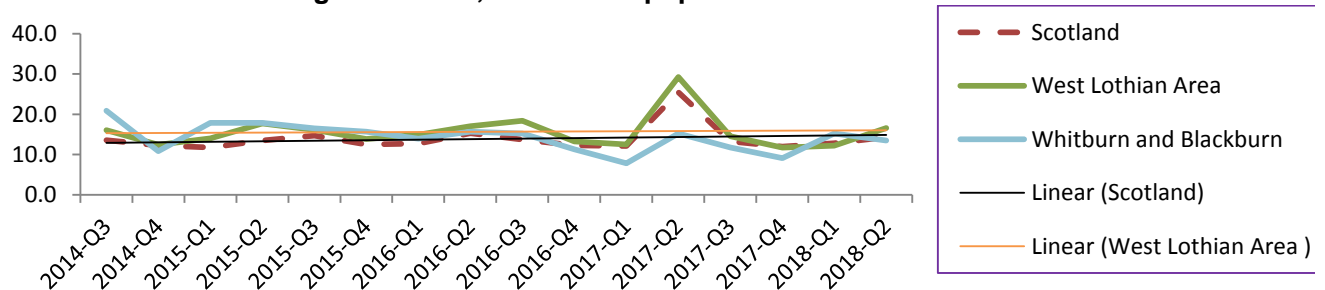
SFRS have dealt with 1 non domestic fires incident during 2018-19 year to date reporting period in comparison to 2 during 2017-18 year to date reporting period.

Special Services Casualties (excluding RTC's) Per 1,000,000 head of population



SFRS have dealt with 1 casualties from Special Services during 2018-19 year to date reporting period in comparison to 5 during 2017-18 year to date reporting period.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Per 10,000 head of population

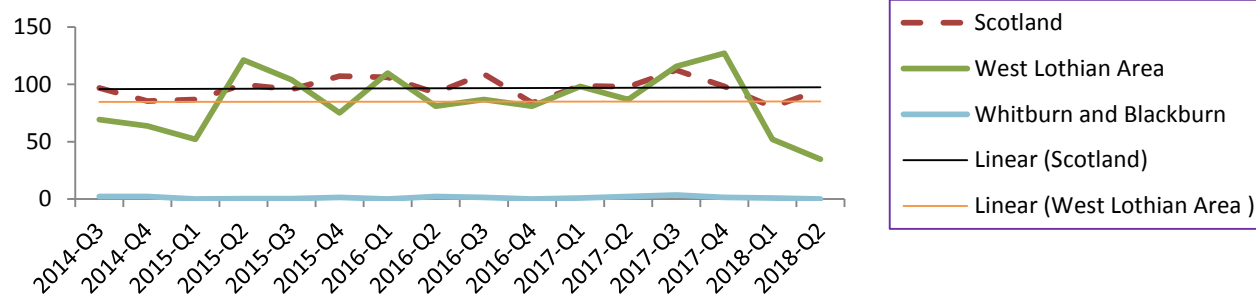


SFRS have dealt with 31 UFAS incidents during 2018-19 year to date reporting period in comparison to 35 during 2017-18 year to date reporting period.

Additional Comments

SFRS is committed to 'Working Together for a Safer Scotland' and to engage with business partners to reduce demand from Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS).

RTC Casualties and Fatalities Per 1,000,000 head of population



During the 2018-19 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 4 Casualties or Fatalities from RTC's in comparision to 8 Casualty and 0 Fatalities during 2017-18 year to date reporting period.



WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

WEST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT INSPECTION

REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (LEARNING, POLICY AND RESOURCES)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to update the Local Area Committee on the Education Scotland Inspection of Community Learning and Development in West Lothian, which took place in August and September 2018.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes the content of the attached report (Appendix 1).

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; and working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Corporate Plan 2018/19-2022/23 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2013-23 Education Services Management Plan 2018/19
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There is a suite of indicators linked to the CLD Partnership Plan 2018-2021.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 1 - Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed Outcome 2 - We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities. Outcome 4 - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.

Outcome 5 - People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances

Outcome 7 - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The CLD Partnership Plan will be implemented from existing resources of community planning partners.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Culture and Leisure PDSP
VIII	Other consultations	CLD Steering Board

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The report attached as appendix 1 outlines the findings from the Education Scotland strategic inspection of Community Learning and Development (CLD) partners within West Lothian Council and the place-based inspection focused on Armadale and Whitburn. The purpose of the inspection was to find out:

- The quality of the strategic leadership of CLD and the quality of CLD provision in the area.
- How well paid staff and volunteers are developing their own practices and building capacity.
- How well partners are contributing to current and evolving national policy objectives such as closing the poverty-related attainment gap; prevention; reducing social isolation; tackling health inequalities; and empowering communities.

Partners contributed to the preparation of the joint self-evaluation, collection of evidence, and the inspection timetable, focus groups and visits.

The inspection team talked to children, young people, adults and community organisations. The team also talked to elected members, senior leaders and staff across the range of partner organisations.

E. CONCLUSION

The inspection team noted the high quality of leadership, self-evaluation and that partners have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement and communities are achieving well.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments:

Community Learning and Development in West Lothian Inspection Report 12 November 2018

Contact Person: Beverley Akinlami, Interim Manager Community and Policy

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Date of meeting: 3 December 2018

Community Learning and Development in West Lothian Council

12 November 2018

For Scotland's learners, with Scotland's educators

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1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within West Lothian Council and the area of Armadale and Whitburn were inspected by Education Scotland during August and September 2018. During the visit Education Scotland staff talked to children, young people, adults and community organisations. We worked closely with local CLD managers, CLD providers, partners, paid staff and volunteers. We wanted to find out the quality of the strategic leadership of CLD and the quality of CLD provision in the area. We also looked at how well paid staff and volunteers are developing their own practices and building capacity. We looked at how partners are contributing to current and evolving national policy objectives such as closing the poverty-related attainment gap; prevention; reducing social isolation; tackling health inequalities; and empowering communities.

2. How good is the strategic leadership of community learning and development?

The governance of CLD across West Lothian is improving. Despite a period of considerable change, CLD managers are working well to ensure that staff and partners are engaged in planning for change. Elected members and senior leaders have a good understanding of the role of CLD and how it contributes to the key priorities of the council. Visions, values and aims are well-understood across partners. The recent re-structuring of CLD is enhancing the learning offer to communities and learners. Corporate priorities are now informing the development of the CLD Plan for 2018-21. The council and its partners have a strong focus on addressing poverty and disadvantage. This is evident in work to mitigate the impact of Universal Credit and the introduction of Holiday Lunch and Activity programmes. Reporting on CLD outcomes is clear and senior managers exercise flexibility to ensure that the correct outcomes are being measured and reported on. The West Lothian Assessment Model is well-established and CLD are using data more effectively than in the past. Connections between the CLD Plan, the Education Services Management Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) are improving. However, whilst joint working is improving, partners should continue to review existing structures to ensure there are clear lines of communication and reporting between thematic and locality planning. There is also scope to strengthen community voice at a strategic level. The recent formation of a Development Trust Forum has the potential to enhance the role the development trusts and social enterprises have in decision making. Similarly, youth voice at a strategic level could also be improved. Improving joint self-evaluation in aspects of CLD would better capture the overall impact on learners.

Across partners staff feel well-supported by managers to carry out their roles. Almost all staff have regular access to support, supervision and appraisal. CLD staff continue to seek out practice from elsewhere in Scotland to help them reflect on and improve their practice. Part-time and sessional workers are accessing regular training and development opportunities. Opportunities for leadership are supported well through line management structures, for example, working with dyslexia. Staff are given strategic leads for specific areas of work such as sexual health. West Lothian is the first local authority to achieve the Gold Chartermark for work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender young people. Activity Agreement Steering group partners share practice and develop new approaches as a result. However, there is potential to improve the coordination of training and professional development opportunities. A few CLD staff would benefit from further challenge and support to ensure their practice is up to date and relevant.

3. How good is the learning and development in this community?

CLD partners are improving the life chances of learners and the wider community. Analysis of need is improving and features in a range of plans such as the CLD Plan for 2018-21. Challenging targets for CLD are outlined in the LOIP. Reporting against outcomes is helping to target resources more effectively. Economic Development data is starting to drive Locality Planning priorities and there is a strong focus on reducing inequalities and addressing poverty. Small improvements in the numbers of young people completing the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are evident. The participation rate for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is also improving. Although some young people are not completing awards within the year, many will complete these at a later date. The participation of young people in Activity Agreements shows a positive trend. This is leading to improving outcomes for young people in Armadale. CLD staff are starting to benchmark with a view to improving performance and this could be furthered through the Regional Improvement Collaborative. The Larder Cook School and the Whitburn Internal Hub both demonstrate positive trends in relation to outcomes for young people. The use of clear, measurable targets in plans would help partners better demonstrate their collective impact. Similarly, young people would benefit from partners collectively tracking their achievements. Increasing numbers of adult learners access support from CLD and more people living with disadvantage are using services. More are progressing into positive destinations as there are slight increases in the achievement of personal goals. However, numbers of adult learners across the area remain relatively low and there is more to do to ensure that learners are aware of programmes on offer.

Almost all community groups and organisations provide a good level of service in Armadale and Whitburn. The Dale Hub offers a varied programme to the local community that helps people to progress their learning. Programmes such as the gardening project at the Dale Hub foster a strong sense of pride amongst local people. Fauldhouse Community Development Trust offer a range of quality programmes driven by community need. They are successfully attracting funding for a range of activity. Groups such as Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision provide advice regarding benefits and finance whilst engaging local young people in positive activities. Communities across Armadale and Whitburn demonstrate a strong sense of 'place'. Across the area, third sector organisations and partners deliver a good range of community events and celebrations. This is creating a strong sense of social cohesion. Community groups value diversity, providing programmes based on need such as the Whitburn Summer Lunch Club. Similarly, the Whitburn Re-generation Group is engaging local people in the design of local plans and priorities. The Armadale Shed makes a positive difference to the lives of older adults by reducing social isolation and building skills.

Whilst community groups are delivering good quality programmes, there is scope to clarify the support available to small community organisations. In some cases this is limiting the capacity of organisations to plan for the future. The Volunteer Sector Gateway and the council need now to work together to identify needs and jointly plan how these can be addressed. Whilst the Summer School programme had a positive impact on families there is scope to strengthen its contribution to raising attainment with local schools. A partnership approach to supporting volunteering would also strengthen the offer to volunteers across the area.

The learning offer for young people across Armadale and Whitburn is strong. CLD staff deliver high quality programmes to young people in local secondary schools. The offer is well-developed and based on the needs of young people. Increasing numbers of young people are registering to vote as a result of participation in the Democracy Challenge. Fauldhouse Girls Group members help design the activities, giving them access to a wide range of experiences.

Breakfast clubs run in conjunction with Active Schools staff support children in primary schools to better engage with learning. Across partners there is a strong focus on employability and improving outcomes for young people. The learner-based approach at The Larder Cook School fosters a strong sense of ownership amongst young people and their personal achievements are recognised and celebrated. More young people are becoming self-reliant as a result of their involvement in the Whitburn Internal Hub. The needs of participants engaged in Activity Agreements is key to ensuring school leavers move into employment or further learning.

Many adult learners are motivated and engaged in their learning. Most are well-supported to progress their learning goals. Through the Driving Theory programme, adults are gaining skills and improving confidence levels. Effective partnership working between the NHS and adult learning staff results in strong progression rates. Most programmes are designed with learners in mind and offer an appropriate level of pace and challenge. The Lip Reading class provides a life line for adults with hearing loss. All learners have individual learning plans based on their needs. Parents are supported to progress their learning through Bookbug sessions at Whitburn library and the Play Lab programme. However, next steps for a few learners across Armadale and Whitburn are not clear. Going forward, care should be taken to ensure that all adult learners have the opportunity to progress their learning. The learning offer for families and adults could also be clearer. Increasing opportunities for young people and adults to gain accreditation and celebrate their achievements would be beneficial.

This inspection of CLD in West Lothian Council found the following key strengths.

- Positive sense of place and civic pride.
- Improved governance of CLD.
- Well targeted programmes leading to positive outcomes.
- Strong and effective community organisations.

We discussed with partners how they might continue to improve their work. This is what we agreed with them.

- Improve community, youth and learner voice.
- Improve the consistency of support to community organisations and volunteers.
- Further strengthen joined up working to capture and develop CLD outcomes.

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

The inspection team was able to rely on the high quality self-evaluation provided by the local authority. Partners have a good understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement and communities are achieving well. As a result we have ended the inspection process at this stage.

Sheila Brown
HM Inspector
12 November 2018

Quality indicators help CLD providers, partners and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved. You can find these quality indicators in the publication [How good is the learning and development in our community?](#)

Education Scotland evaluates four important quality indicators to help monitor the quality of CLD across Scotland. Here are the results for this inspection.

Improvements in performance	good
Impact on the local community	good
Delivering the learning offer with learners	good
Leadership and direction	good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgments made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

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WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

ADVICE SHOP SERVICE UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the Local Area Committee of the work undertaken by the Advice Shop Service from April 2017-March 2018.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes:

1. The Advice Shop provision in the ward; and,
2. The impact provision is having in terms of supporting the outcomes of the Community Planning Partnership's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018-23.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The activity contained in the report contributes to service KPIs.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<p>We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities.</p> <p>We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.</p> <p>We have tackled significant inequalities in West Lothian society.</p>

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Activities delivered from approved budgets supplemented by external funding from Macmillan Cancer Support, European Social Fund and Scottish Legal Aid Board.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII	Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The Advice Shop is a free, impartial and confidential service to help the people of West Lothian with a focus to alleviate poverty, promote inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy. It does this by providing comprehensive advice to adults and specifically targets those who are:

- Without work or in low paid work.
- Are poor and/or fuel poor.
- Have money/debt issues.
- Have been affected by cancer or other long term conditions.
- Are over 60.

The Advice Shop service is funded through: a core council budget, European Social Fund, Macmillan Cancer Support and the Scottish Legal Aid Board.

All activity across the service is informed and prioritised by the recently refreshed Community Planning Partnership Anti-Poverty Strategy. The overall purpose of this strategy is to help minimise the impact of poverty on the people of West Lothian. Its objective is to ensure that people are equipped to cope with the challenges they currently face and the impact that this has on their health, education and community involvement.

D.2 Local Provision

Appendix one shows the number of people the service has worked with over the last year in the Whitburn and Blackburn area.

The Advice Shop has helped 2315 customers to manage their money and to resolve benefit problems. This resulted in 7833 separate enquiry types. This is an increase of 21% compared to the 2016-17 period and is a result of improved sessions within Whitburn and Blackburn. As a result, customers better understand that claimants and benefit administrators have rights, obligations and constraints and have some idea what these are. Customers know how to take the steps they can to sort out their benefit queries and are able to maximise their household income.

The Court Advice Project is funded through the Scottish Legal Aid Board to support anyone who is at court facing eviction and who engages with the service to provide positive outcomes. Customers can be in social or private housing or an owner occupier. The service worked with 99 families in the ward to support them to sustain their home. This is a decrease from the previous year and is mainly due to improved early intervention.

The service has identified the following priorities for development over the 2018/19

year. Namely, to;

- Embed Advice Shop sessions in Whitburn and Blackburn.
- Work with partners to mitigate the effects of the full roll out of Universal Credit which commenced in May 2018.
- Increase awareness of the One-2-One project which focuses on those with long term poor mental health.

We will be working to embed these services into the local community, continue to work towards National Standards for Advice Providers and to support customers who are affected by the introduction of the council's Contributions Policy.

E. CONCLUSION

The report and attached appendix summarise the work of the Advice Shop service in the Whitburn and Blackburn ward area and an overview of the Advice Shop Service as a whole. The Local Area Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and to consider how the service could better target its resources in this area. It is the intention to report on activity in the ward area on an annual basis.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: Whitburn and Blackburn Ward Profile Report April 2017-March 2018

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Donald Forrest

Head of Finance and Property Services

Date of meeting: 03rd December 2018

Advice Shop Ward Profile Report

Whitburn and Blackburn

April 2017 to March 2018

About Your Community



- 19% Children
- 63% Working Age
- 18% Pensionable Age



Number of people in West Lothian in receipt of out of work benefits

12,720

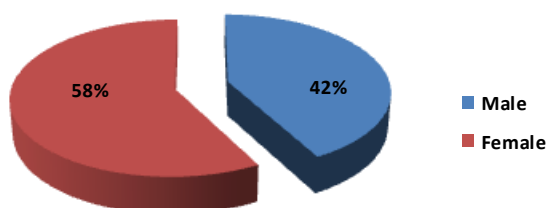
% of children in poverty after housing costs in Whitburn and Blackburn

32%

Who we have worked with

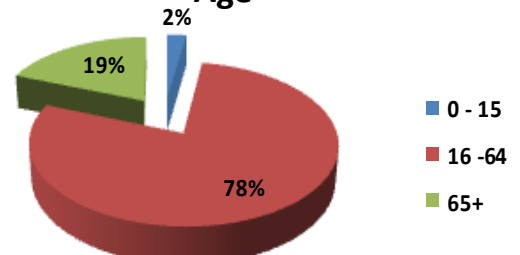
Individual Customers = 2315

Gender



Number of Enquiries = 7833

Age



Maximising Income For Customers in Whitburn and Blackburn

Type	Amount	Information
Benefit Awards	£4,816,625	The amount the service has gained in benefits
Appeal Awards	£269,230	The amount the service has gained through appealing unfair decisions
Energy Savings	£12,037	The amount the service assisted customers to make in fuel savings
Debt Managed	£750,145	This is the amount of debt the service help customers manage

The Advice Shop in Your Community



The Advice shop now has a permanent presence within St Johns Hospital. The new service is called Advice @ St Johns and offers a full Advice Shop service to patients, carers and their families. Advisors carry out ward visits, appointment sessions and information stalls with support of volunteers. The Advice Shop has developed

excellent partnerships with Citizens Advice Bureau and NHS Lothian to ensure customer receive the help at the earliest possible point to aid their recovery and return home.



Macmillan@WestLothian Cancer Information and Support Service offers anyone affected by cancer access to information and support and welcomes visitors with a friendly smile and a listening ear. You may have cancer yourself, be a relative, friend or carer of someone with cancer, or maybe you just want to find out more about cancer. The service continues to grow and support affected customers across West Lothian.

There are hubs at West Lothian Council partnership centres in Bathgate, Fauldhouse, Strathbrock and Blackburn. We also have a hub in Carmondean Connected in Livingston.

Case Study

Miss H is a single parent with two young children and was referred to the Advice Shop by her Social Worker as she had a very low income.

Client attended the Advice Shop and we were able to establish that her low income was the result of being refused Income Support due to being deemed to have failed the Habitual Residence Test. Her only income was Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Disability Living Allowance for one of her children. She was also in rent arrears as Housing Benefit had stopped.

From her circumstances, it was established she should have been receiving Carer's Allowance and an application for this, with three months backdating, was lodged with Department for Work and Pensions.

Working with the Revenues Unit, the Advice Shop were able to get Housing Benefit reinstated under EEA Legislation. This was backdated and the rent arrears were cleared.

We were then able to establish that the client had lodged a Mandatory Reconsideration against the decision to refuse her Income Support Claim, but had never received a decision on this. Due to the time which had elapsed, we raised the case with Department for Work and Pensions as a complaint. It was then discovered that the reconsideration had never been decided on and the case was fast tracked to a specialist decision maker.

Department for Work and Pensions then contacted the Advice Shop to inform us that Income Support had been awarded and again would be backdated. Client was awarded over £2500 Income Support Arrears and now receives all benefits she is entitled to.

In 2018/19 we plan to

- Become one of the first local authorities in Scotland to gain accreditation of Scottish National Standards for Advice Providers in Welfare Benefits, Money/Debt and Housing Advice.
- To work with customers and partners to support those who have been affected by the new contribution policy in non residential care by ensuring all entitlements are in place and minimising impact and maximising income.
- To continue to modernise the service by introducing new referral methods for partners improving efficiency and early intervention allowing the service to help customers at the earliest point of need.

Did you know?

In 2017/18 the Advice Shop represented customers at 537 Social Security appeals which was a 46% increase from the previous year. The service had a success rate of 74% which is above the national average of 61%.



The Advice Shop now has a permanent presence within St Johns Hospital. We supported 783 patients in 2017/18 with benefits, housing, money and energy advice enquiries.

In 2017/18 the Advice Shop worked with 8 Syrian Families and generated £169,000 through benefit entitlements.

In 2017/18 we had 41 volunteers working across our service in six different roles.

Volunteers contributed a total of 2325 hours resulting in over 1400 customers contacts across the year.

99% of respondents rated the overall quality of service from the Advice Shop as good or excellent in 2017/18.



The One2One project provides tailored advice and advocacy for the most vulnerable groups in West Lothian.

The majority of customers who have engaged with the project have faced the barriers of mental ill health and being in a jobless household. In addition to this many are affected by substance related issues and criminal convictions. Difficulties with engagement to statutory services have affected all those referred.

In total there have been 264 referrals to the project and a financial gain of nearly £921,548.

How to contact us

Email: advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk

Phone: 01506 283000 and select Option 5

Website: www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop



WHITBURN & BLACKBURN 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

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

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII	Other consultations	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 have also been completed for the year. Work has started on winter works of hedge pruning and are about to start shrub bed maintenance. 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 there were 24 grounds maintenance related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Adopt Open Spaces in Priv Est	0	1
Complaint Grounds Maintenance	0	3
Drainage Flooding Grass Areas	1	4
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	2	2
Fencing Enquiries	2	0
Grass Area Damaged	0	1
Grass Cutting Enquiries	2	11
Grass Cutting Missed Not Cut	0	1
Grass Left on Paths or Roads	1	0
Grounds Property Vandalised	0	2
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	3	6
Public Park Enquiries	3	12
School Grounds Enquiries	0	1
Shrub Bed Enquiries	0	2
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	5	10
Shrub Bed Obscuring Sightline	0	1
Shrub Bed Not Maintained	1	2
Sports Facilities Enquiries	0	3
Weeds General Enquiries	2	1
Weeds on Paths or Roads	2	2
Total	24	65

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

	2018	2017
Complaint Garden Maintenance	1	4
Garden Maintenance Change of Address	1	0
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	5	18
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut	9	5
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting	3	4
Garden Maintenance No Longer Required	2	2
Garden Maintenance Standard of Cut	3	5
Total	24	38

D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

The ward is covered by a mobile cleansing team consisting of five operatives and one compact sweeper. Whitburn has the additional resource of a street orderly and there is a backshift team covering the area from Whitburn Academy to the main street daily in the afternoon. There is a reduced level of staff on at the weekend covering West Lothian, and Whitburn 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 89 cleaner communities related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Complaint Street Cleansing	0	1
Dead Animals	11	4
Dog Fouled Grass/Open Space	0	6
Dog Fouling on Paths/Roads	13	24
Dog Waste Bin New Request	0	3
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	2	3
Graffiti Non Offensive	1	0
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	1	1
Illegal Fly Posting	1	0
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	21	46
Litter Bin Full Overflowing	2	0
Litter Bin New Request for Bin	0	1
Litter General Enquiries	5	1
Litter in Grass/Open Space	1	1
Litter On Paths/Road Verges	5	3
Needles/Syringes Abandoned	3	3
Street Sweeping Enquiries	6	7
Vehicle Abandoned	17	23
Total	89	127

Enforcement 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 litter offence and two fixed penalty notices issued for dog fouling offences.

Enforcement Officers have attended to all enquiries in relation to various environmental issues within area and carried out patrols. Visits to residents giving verbal warnings and warning letters issued in relation to dog fouling and fly tipping in order to change behaviours following complaints. Compliance gained with affected areas being cleaned up.

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.

Enforcement Officers have carried out audits on school transport buses and taxis on behalf of Transport Department, and assisted colleagues in Community Learning & Development Youth Services through the More Choices More Chances programme. Also assisted colleagues from Licencing Department carrying out inspection audits and delivering urgent correspondence.

Education and Engagement officers have liaised with several residents, community groups, and schools, and followed up any concerns raised. Organisation and arrangements made for community clean ups by a number of schools, community groups and companies.

- Litter Stencilling carried out the length of Shanks Road, along with shops at East Main Street and Mini Market area
- Information stand provided at Wild Wednesdays Polkemmet Park
- Dog Fouling Stencilling carried out Heartlands
- October West Lothian Tenants Association presentation

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 five temporary signs were erected at the roadside throughout West Lothian in relation to disposing of your gum in the bin.

Officers have also engaged in partnership working with various agencies such as Police Scotland, Housing Associations, Woodlands Trust Scotland, Forestry Commission, WLC Countryside Rangers, WLC Housing and WLC Waste Services on a range of issues.

D5 Parks and Woodland Enquiries

In total 51 Parks and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period. 34 enquiries were inspected, 16 enquiries required no action, 18 enquiries generated works instructions to programme and 17 works instructions were completed.

	2018	2017
Tree works completed for period	17	n/a
Tree works outstanding for LAC area	47	n/a
Tree related Enquiries for report period	34	n/a
Tree Enquiries not generating works orders	16	n/a
Tree Advice or Consultations	1	0
Tree Affecting Public Utility	1	1
Tree Blocking Light	2	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	10	6
Tree Broken/Damaged or Dead	1	4
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	16	3
Tree Enquiries General	17	9
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	3	6
Total	51	30

Blaeberryhill Park, Whitburn - Outline plans are being prepared for the woods at Blaeberryhill and also those behind Croftmalloch Primary School. Ideas will be presented at Whitburn Community Council's November meeting for initial feedback on the plans and also how best to consult / communicate with the wider community who use the park or live adjacent to it.

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. School groups attending Outdoor Education / Forest School Sessions	3
No. Pupils attending Outdoor Education / Forest School Sessions	91
No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	12
No. Conservation Surveys / Tasks	10
No. Volunteer hours	102
No. Ranger Events	5
No. attendees at Ranger Events	101

The Ranger Service attended the Whitburn Summer Club offering a free Pioneering session on the 6th August.

Strength & Soul ran a free Yoga in the Park session at Polkemmet on the 11th August which they are hoping to continue with their next date planned for the 15th September (weather permitting).

Artist, Katrina Stewart ran a free craft session inspired by nature in the last week of the summer holidays at Polkemmet on the 16th August. A free drop-in willow weaving event took place at Polkemmet on the 15th September.

Rangers held a successful Halloween Broom stick making event at the peat moss (Easter Inch Moss), Blackburn. 17 children used birch from the moss to make brooms. Birch removal is an important part of the management of the moss.

The Friends of Polkemmet co-hosted a number of work party sessions to carry out small conservation/maintenance tasks within the Park. 62 participants took part over the sessions contributing 102 'man hours'. They will be running two sessions a month through the rest of the year in partnership with the Ranger Service.

Work has been completed on improvements and resurfacing of both the Mausoleum and River paths. Contractors have also finished dredging the wildlife pond at Polkemmet and will finish upgrading the path, boardwalk and installing a new pond dipping platform within the next few weeks.

A number of tree limbs came down at Polkemmet as a result of the windy weather in September – all were swiftly reported by the Ranger team and dealt with by the arb squad.

D6 Open Space and Cemeteries

Open Space Routine Works

Redhouse Place Green, Blackburn. Consultation is complete for the new play area. Works will be completed in 2018. Works include installation of number of pieces of toddler play equipment and associated ground graphics (on the hardstanding area immediately north of the recycling bins). This area will be landscaped and a safe surface installed throughout. Wider park works will include the creation of a small tarmac pitch area, and installation of new seating. We will also clear some trees to the north west of the site which are attracting anti-social behaviour. These additional works will be completed in 2018/19.

Seafield Green Local Park. Additional play equipment has now been installed, and park furniture (picnic tables and handrail) has been refurbished. A seat adjacent to this woodland has been replaced. The small woodland area to the east of the school will be thinned and desire lines through this area will be cleared of vegetation, anticipated for 2018 completion.

Greenrigg Primary School, Shelter Belt. Work within the shelter belt has been completed by CSGNT (Central Scotland Green Network Trust). Works include planting fruit trees, path works, tree work, and creation of a natural outdoor seating area (wood logs). Two new bench seats have also been installed adjacent to the play area.

Greenrigg Community Woodland. Works are being planned to repair fences and gates at two entrances to the woodland. These have been vandalised by those using the site on motorised vehicles. Once repaired, additional barriers to access will be installed at the entrances. Work anticipated for 2018/19 completion.

Croftmalloch Play Area, Reveston Lane, Whitburn. A drain has been added to reduce the water crossing the path and a second drain is being installed for improving the drainage around the playground features. Works to be completed in November 2018.

Open Space Enquiries

There were no Open Space enquiries for this reporting period in 2018.

	2018	2017
Children Play Enquiries	0	2
Glass or Litter in Play Areas	0	1
Total	0	3

Cemeteries Routine Works

Whitburn Cemeteries

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

Cemeteries Enquiries

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

	2018	2017
Cemeteries General Enquiries	4	4
Cemetery Property Vandalised	0	1
Complaint Cemeteries and Burials	0	5
Lair Enquiries	1	6
Total	5	16

E. CONCLUSION

Work has started on winter works of hedge pruning and are about to start shrub bed maintenance.

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

Consultation is complete for the new play area in Redhouse Place, Blackburn. Works will be completed in 2018.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: None

Contact Persons: Eirwen Hopwood, Parks and Woodland Manager, 01506 284500

Eirwen.Hopwood@westlothian.gov.uk

Jim Jack
Head of Operational Services
3 December 2018



WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the service activities within Whitburn and Blackburn ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period 1 July – 30 September 2018.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There is no impact
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	There are positive impact on the following SOA indicators: SOA4 – we live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities SOA8 – we make the most effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Yes
VIII	Other consultations	N/A

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Housing Performance Information

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the activities of Housing, Customer and Building Services, specific to the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward.

Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies

Void Period	July 2018	%	August 2018	%	Sept. 2018	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	14	67%	21	55%	10	50%	55%
2-4 wks	0	0%	1	3%	1	5%	30%
4+ wks	7	13%	16	42%	9	45%	15%
Total Lets	21	100%	38	100%	20	100%	

Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies

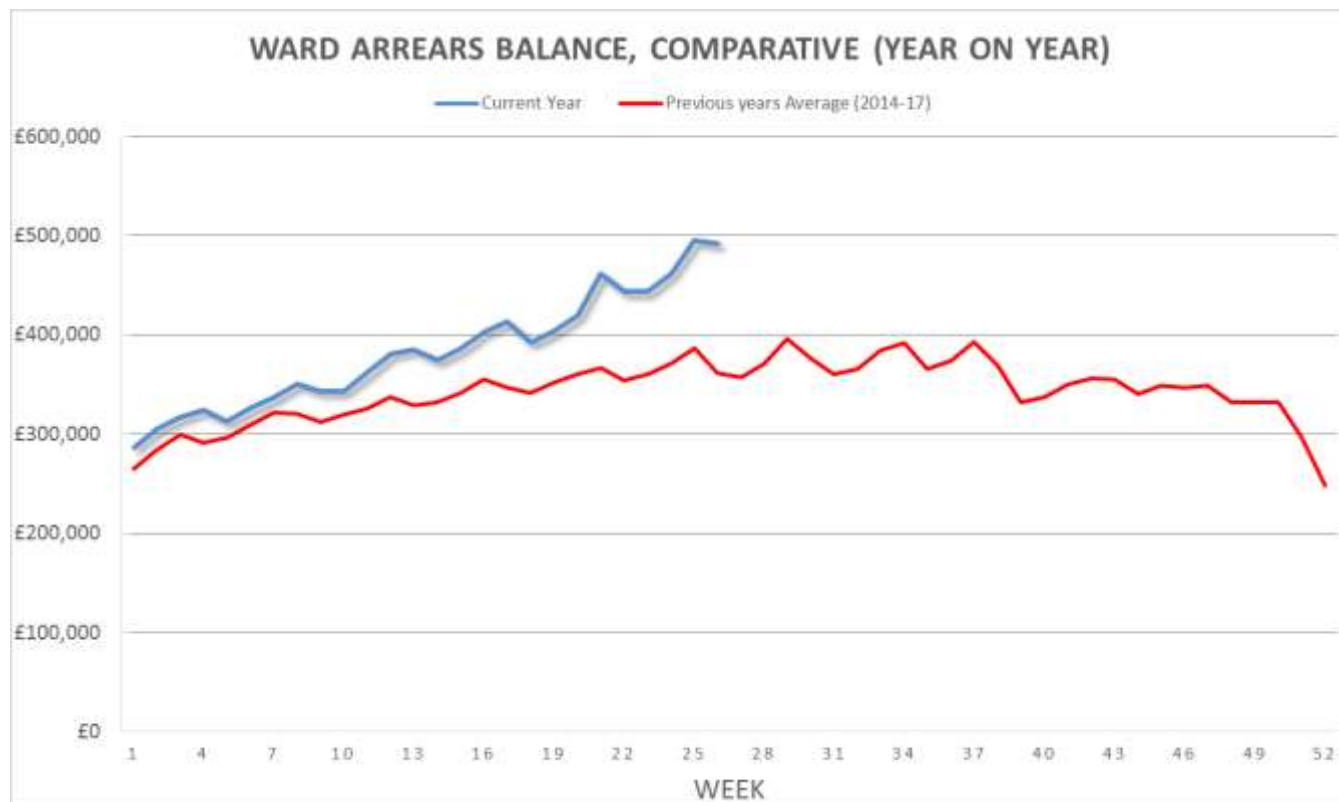
Void Period	July 2018	%	August 2018	%	Sept. 2018	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	2	18%	1	20%	3	75%	80%
2-4 wks	6	55%	1	20%	1	25%	15%
4+ wks	3	27%	3	60%	0	0%	5%
Total Lets	11	100%	5	100%	4	100%	

Delays in re-letting can occur for a variety of reasons. The type or location of the property, the completion of void work or the identification of additional works not visible during the initial inspection. Ensuring that vulnerable persons are appropriately supported through the viewing and sign up process can also add to timeframes. Some of our applicants have specific support requirements which require detailed planning and co-ordination by both social work and housing services prior to tenancy commencement.

In the year to date there have been 131 mainstream tenancies and 36 temporary tenancies let by the Whitburn and Blackburn Team. There are 43 Policy Voids in the ward, reasons for being vacant include properties unable to let due Health & Safety reasons, 5 properties are being held for decant purposes due to remedial works, all of the decant properties are occupied.

Rent Arrears

For this ward the cumulative rental charge this year (debit) for the housing stock is £5,354,348 and £5,078,668 has been collected giving a strong collection rate of 94.9%



Arrears Banding	2017/18 (WK26)		2018/19 (WK26)	
	Balance	Tenants In Arrears	Balance	Tenants In Arrears
£0.01 to £99.99	£15,088	331	£18,965	548
£100.00 to £299.99	£61,390	333	£67,632	355
£300.00 to £499.99	£64,322	165	£86,807	224
£500.00 to £749.99	£58,919	98	£71,813	116
£750.00 to £999.99	£39,993	47	£66,244	77
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£67,103	50	£125,528	93
£2000+	£38,907	15	£54,722	19
Total	£345,723	1039	£491,711	1432

The Ward arrears position for Q2 is £491,711. This is an increase of £145,989 on last year's position. The West Lothian overall position has increased by £593,408 from last year and on 01 October was £2,405,181

While there are 112 serious arrears cases (£1,000+) it should be noted 63% of cases are in the lower bands (£300 or less)

The overall increased arrears in comparison to last year are as a result of Full Service Universal Credit being introduced in West Lothian from May 2018, along with other Welfare Benefit reforms and the current economic climate.

During the course of this year we plan to focus on the following:

- Making best use of resources by considering communicating more with customers through email and telephone
- Increase Direct Debit Take Up by targeted work for example tenants who currently pay by Standing Order
- Benchmarking with other local authorities to ensure we identify and consider implementing any best practice
- Performance Monitoring and Reporting will be reviewed and where appropriate streamlined to ensure information is meaningful and robust to assist with improving rent arrears due.
- Promote Alternative payment methods, particularly the Tenant's Self Service Portal
- Undertake a root and branch review of our arrears process to ensure we maximise rental income.

Whitburn and Blackburn Area Team Activity

Officers in the team have a number of tenancies under supervision for issues such as child & adult protection, anti-social behaviour and poor tenancy conditions. Our officers' work with a range of services and agencies to ensure tenants and residents are fully supported, tenancies maintained and sustained as far as possible and appropriate action taken where necessary.

Rent arrears activity continues to be a weekly priority task for the team and will continue to work with all our tenants in offering the support, advice and assistance. Such assistance includes referrals for money and debt advice, benefit health checks, completion of income and expenditure to help set up a sustainable payment plan and where appropriate, assist with applications for Discretionary Housing Payments and assist with Universal enquiries.

The Housing Team overall have settled well into the temporary office space in Blackburn and there continues to be a presence of housing staff within the library at Whitburn enabling Housing and CIS staff to continue to deliver customer service in Whitburn. Staff continue to visit the communal bin areas and take action where there is evidence of rubbish being dumped, pro-active action is taken where rubbish is identified, and arrangements are made for this to be uplifted in order for waste services to be able to carry out the programmed service to empty the bins.

Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing

Local New Build Update

Site	No. Of Units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Complete
Redhouse	100	July 2016	100	October 2018

Capital Programme – Local Capital Upgrades

Blackburn	Ladeside	Upgarde BISF Properties to EESSH standard	85%	Progressing well, No issues.
Whitburn	The Loch Scheme	Structural roof works: Stairs and balcony repairs: Insulation: render upgrades:paths: lintel & cills where required	10%	Individual properties completed that required urgnt major repairs. Programme is still at development stage and requires a Legal Agreement to approve the strategy

Whitburn	Empire Street, Baillie Street and Bog Road	Roofs & Roughcast to all: Heating upgrades and chimney removals: steps and paths	80%	On site and progressing well, no issues
Whitburn	Glebe Road, Union Road, Armadale Road, Manse Avenue, Griffith Drive, Dick Gardens	Roofs & Roughcast to all: Heating upgrades and chimney removals: steps and paths	71%	Year 5 of the programme which is progressing well.

Tenant Participation Update

Tenant Led Inspection – The latest Tenant Led Inspection into areas of Homelessness commenced in August with two experienced tenant inspectors and one new to the process, the team meet weekly to look at how relevant policy and procedures work as well as carrying out interviews with staff and customers. The final report will be presented to Senior Management in December with a full action plan developed soon afterwards.

‘Al Nour’ (meaning Light) the new community group for Syrian Refugees have welcomed new families to West Lothian. The Group was established to allow families an opportunity to meet in a safe and secure environment to become more confident in communicating in English allowing them to integrate into their communities and become more independent. The group have received Office Bearer training and have now elected office bearers and drawn up a work plan

TIS Event the TP Team and a member of the Tenants Panel were asked to take part in an event where they gave a presentation on West Lothian approach to scrutiny of the Housing Revenue Account which was received with great enthusiasm

Street Environmental Site visits - Members of the Capital Programme Working Group visited a few sites with the potential to have work carried out through the Street Environmental projects in the coming months.

Housing Networks continue to meet on the third Tuesday of the month at the Tenants Resource Centre in Whitburn. Members of the Network discuss with staff areas of Housing Services and look at performance information to ensure we are accountable for our results.

Tenants who have shown an interest in joining an evening Network were invited to the first meeting which was held at the beginning of November.

Safer Neighbourhood Team

WLC Officer based in SNT

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT's) continue to work in two teams across the nine multi member ward areas as an integral part of the Community Safety Unit. In all the wards, partnership working involves the local housing team, youth worker, council officer with the SNT and officers from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service all working together to tackle antisocial behaviour. When necessary, the partners will liaise with partners from the voluntary organisations including Mental Health advisory workers and private landlords in order to reduce antisocial behaviour.

Letter drops with Police and Housing were conducted in response to an increase in ASB in East Main Street Whitburn. Visits to illegal encampments took place in Whitburn and the travellers have since moved on.

A case in Whitburn was closed in relation to loud music, shouting, banging and excessive noise following the noise being witnessed, and warnings served. The perpetrator was in a temporary tenancy, and was receiving support from various agencies due to poor gatekeeping skills. Joint visits were completed with Housing, and meetings held with support agencies. After a final warning was served, an agreement was made that the perpetrator would move to more suitable accommodation with onsite staff.

An Interim ASBO was granted in March 2017 in respect of a tenant in Whitburn. Multiple breaches of this took place resulting in several custodial sentences. Due to this, the SNT were unable to progress with action for a full ASBO. However, the tenancy has now terminated following appropriate processes in accordance with housing management legislation.

There were 341 incidents relating to noise complaints across all of West Lothian were reported, this was a reduction from the previous reporting period, 63 related to the Whitburn and Blackburn ward, an increase of 11 reports with 21 new anti-social cases opened. This was an increase of 8 cases.

There are 3 Interim ASBO's and 1 full ASBO active within the ward area.

E. CONCLUSION

To note the contents of the report.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

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Date: 3rd December 2018.



WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS' CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2018

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Area Committee of the allocations made from the Pensioners' Christmas Fund 2018 to groups in the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes that eight groups within Whitburn and Blackburn Ward applied to the fund and have been supported.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Being honest, open and accountable. Focussing on our customers' needs. Making best use of resources. Working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The duty of Best Value is set out in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration has the delegated authority to make the final allocations and payments.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	SOA 5 - Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Total fund of £29,054 agreed by the council. £2,246.94 will be distributed in the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward.
VII Consideration at PDSP	Following consideration at all nine Local Area Committees, an update will be prepared for the Voluntary Organisations PDSP.
VIII Other consultations	Similar reports will be prepared for the other eight Local Area Committees.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

Council approves the Pensioners' Christmas Fund each year. In 2018 the total fund amounts to £29,054. The fund is divided by the total number of beneficiaries which, in 2018, is 5,663. By using that number the global unit cost for 2018 is £5.13 per beneficiary (£29,054 / 5,663). In Whitburn and Blackburn Ward there are 438 beneficiaries and an allocation of £2,246.94. A full report on the final allocations will be made to the Voluntary Organisation PDSP later in the year. Letters were issued to groups in late October advising them of the amount of funding they will receive and asking for any outstanding information. Payments will be made directly to the bank accounts of groups during November via PECOS.

D2 Applications 2018: Whitburn and Blackburn Ward

Eight application forms were issued to groups across Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, with all eight being returned and the groups supported. Appendix one shows the groups supported and the allocation to each.

D3 Applications 2018: Livingston-wide & West Lothian-wide organisations

One application was sent to a Livingston-wide group. The application form was returned and the group has been supported. Three applications were issued to West Lothian-wide groups, and two have been returned. The two groups will be supported. The third group, West Lothian Visually Impaired Club has now dissolved. Appendix two shows the groups and the allocation to each.

E. CONCLUSION

The report advises of the allocations that have been made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2018 to groups in the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

A full report on the final allocations will be made to the Voluntary Organisation PDSP later in the year. Letters were issued to groups in late October advising them of the amount of funding they will receive and asking for any outstanding information. Payments made directly to the bank accounts of groups during November via PECOS.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, Review of the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund Process 2011, Report By Head Of Area Services.

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1: Allocations 2018 Whitburn and Blackburn Ward

Appendix 2: Allocations 2018 Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide Organisations

Contact Person: Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Officer
Scott.mckillop@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston, Head of Planning Economic Development and Regeneration

Date: 3 December 2018

WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS LOCATIONS 2018

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Appendix 1: Allocations 2018 Whitburn and Blackburn Ward

Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount
Blackburn Women's Social Services Club (WSSC)	38	£194.94
Brucefield House Tenants Association	37	£189.81
East Whitburn & Redmill OAP	36	£184.68
Scottish Pensioners Association Whitburn No1 Branch	16	£82.08
Seafield Senior Citizens	70	£359.10
Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Whitburn) - Conference	160	£820.80
Weavers Court Tenants Social Club	39	£200.07
Young at Heart	42	£215.46
Totals	438	£2,246.94

Note: N/A

WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2018

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Appendix 2: Allocations 2018: Livingston-Wide & West Lothian-Wide Organisations

Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount
Braid House Day Centre	150	£769.50
Total	150	£769.50

Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount
West Lothian 50+ Network	350	£1,795.50
West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network	400	£2,052.00
Total	750	£3,847.50

Note: West Lothian Visually Impaired Club has now dissolved.



WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update members on regeneration activity within the Whitburn and Blackburn ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members note:

1. update on Whitburn regeneration group;
2. updates on Whitburn town centre related matters;
3. an update on the progress of developing Whitburn Partnership Centre;
4. that a launch event is in place for the Blackburn plan; and
5. an update on Community Action Blackburn activity.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>Community regeneration reinforces the council's commitment to community planning at a local level.</p> <p>Local authorities have a statutory requirement for developing locality plans for targeted communities in their area. Regeneration Plans fit this requirement for West Lothian.</p> <p>The projects set out do not require a strategic environmental assessment. The projects to different degrees seek to address health and equality issues.</p>
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance	Performance indicators relating to the activity within the plans are captured within the set of

Indicators	Regeneration key performance indicators.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities. - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities. - We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The activities set out are funded from existing budgets and relevant external sources.
VII Consideration at PDSP	Annual updates on regeneration plans will be presented to the Community Planning Partnership.
VIII Other consultations	Whitburn Regeneration Group and Whitburn Town Centre Management Group regarding the review of the Placemaking in Whitburn masterplan. Blackburn's Future Group is involved in the development of a plan there.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Background

The West Lothian Regeneration Framework, which was approved by Council Executive in February 2014, contains a commitment to develop regeneration plans in key areas of deprivation in West Lothian. Thirteen regeneration areas have been identified, based on the data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Whitburn and Blackburn are two of these communities.

Regeneration plans have been developed for both Whitburn and Blackburn after extensive work between Community Regeneration Officers and steering groups from the local area, consisting of various community group representatives and personnel from public services and voluntary agencies operating in those areas.

This report highlights the main regeneration activity associated with these plans and the wider efforts of partners in the areas.

D1 Whitburn Regeneration Planning

The first version of the Whitburn Regeneration Plan was presented to members at the previous meeting of the Local Area Committee in September 2018. This built on the Placemaking in Whitburn masterplan from 2018.

As was also reported to the previous meeting of the LAC, the plan looks to pull together the existing projects in the town and theming these into priorities based on what they are trying to achieve, whilst at the same time recognising that the previous masterplan had a focus on economic and physical regeneration and, in line with the purpose of regeneration plans to tackle inequalities, more focus going forward needs to be on trying to improve the wellbeing and life chances of those experiencing poverty.

Therefore, the priorities in the regeneration plan, below, reflect this. As this plan is a 'live' document, these priorities will be reviewed as local circumstances change, such as future engagement exercises identifying new concerns or opportunities.

The plan looks to pull together the work of the various partnership groups in the town, namely Whitburn Regeneration Group, the Whitburn Town Centre Management Group and the recently formed Whitburn Services Group. It is emphasised that these groups have different focusses, and the Community Regeneration Officer for the area works to ensure their efforts are complementary rather than duplicative.

The Regeneration Plan is based on four priorities. Whilst the groups do not exclusively have ownership over each priority, the following priorities relates to their respective main contributions:

- Reducing inequality and tackling exclusion - the Whitburn Services Group mainly consists of services working with those people in the community who require additional support in order to improve their life circumstances.
- Promoting the town and making it more attractive - the Town Centre Management Group has used its capital budgets over the years to improve the town.
- Improving communication, partnership working and community activity - the Whitburn Regeneration Group consists of representatives from the main community groups.
- Increasing active health - this is a cross-cutting priority which covers activity across all three groups.

Summer Lunch Provision 2019

The Regeneration Group discussed the need to forward plan for a holiday lunch club in 2019, to build on the success of the 2018 programme. Recognition has been given to the need to look wider for funding sources, as well as the desire to have a coordinator in place to manage the programme, and to build in time to recruit and give basic training to volunteers. It is intended that the relevant partners will meet in January to begin planning.

Potential Allotments Project

Staff from the Inclusion and Well-being Service based at the building formerly referred to as Burnhouse School are considering whether part of the area to the south of the school (within the school grounds) could be used for allotments. This could benefit both the young people who attend the school and the wider community. At the Whitburn Services Group meeting, the Foodbank and other primary schools expressed an interest in linking to this as both an educational resource and source of food production.

At the recent meeting of the Whitburn Regeneration Group, the group have pulled together a timeline from the numerous projects and activities they are involved in to help coordinate all this, and look to see how they can pro-actively promote the allotments going forward.

Voluntary Sector Fund 2019/20

Link Officers for Community Action Blackburn and Whitburn Community Development Trust are working with the organisations to support them to develop applications to the fund to obtain funding for the 2019/20 financial year. Part of this

support is to help the groups articulate their links to regeneration work in the area and be explicit about the needs they are looking to address, and the gaps in service provision that they are aiming to fill.

The deadline for these applications is midnight on 2 December with groups being advised on the success or otherwise of applications by mid-January.

Twin Towns

The Traders and Community Council have reported that they have completed the Twin Towns project which culminated in an end of project conference. The Carnegie Trust is going to give continued support post-project by providing funding to cover the running costs of the Harrison Huts for its second year, as well as funding towards the community website the community council wish to create.

Funding has been allocated from the town centre capital funds for branding materials for the town. The Traders are consulting other community groups on the list of materials they have created – which will all include the Whitburn logo - to ensure the materials are something the groups will use for their events.

Town Centre Shopfront Improvement

Whitburn town centre traders and businesses continue to be eligible to apply for grant assistance through the Shopfront Improvement Scheme, to assist with costs associated with any external frontage improvements. Since the inception of the current operational scheme, and at the time of writing this report, there have been a total of 32 approved grants and awards made. The scheme is funded through the budget allocation made from the Whitburn Town Centre Improvement Fund. There is a similar scheme available elsewhere across the Whitburn and Blackburn ward area, for local indigenous retailers and traders. This is funded through the budget allocation made from the Village Improvement Fund.

Whitburn Town Centre Opportunity Sites

Council officers continue to engage with the relevant owners (and monitor the prospective actions) of vacant and under-utilised sites and buildings on West Main Street, and throughout the town centre, to facilitate and encourage physical improvement and bringing back to active economic or social use. For example, the change in ownership of the commercial property at 47-49 West Main Street (Former Direct Flooring) has seen it undergo significant investment and refurbishment, which will see it re-opened this year. This will be a positive outcome for what has been a long term vacant building and seen as a blight on the high street.

Whitburn East End Enhancements

Funding was committed through the Whitburn Town Centre Improvement Fund (Via Whitburn Town Centre Management Group) to work with the Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT) to implement environmental improvements at the east end approach to/from Whitburn. This forms part of a wider comprehensive project that extends into East Whitburn. It is funded through a combination of sources, including the Village Improvement Fund and West Lothian Development Trust. At the time of reporting, the work has now been substantially completed and has included a formal agreement from Woodland Trust to allow these CSGNT led works to be carried out on their land. CSGNT have received positive feedback to date from the community on the work undertaken.

Whitburn Town Gateway Signage

Following engagement and identification of proposed signage locations with local community stakeholders, delivery of new bespoke designed town entrance features at gateways to Whitburn is well under way. Three gateway signs, to be sited on the eastern, northern and southern approaches to Whitburn, have been procured. There remains dialogue with Heartlands (Greentown) over the planned location of the two western gateways to take full cognisance of their own development plans. This is anticipated to be delivered in early 2019. These works are being funded through the Whitburn Town Centre Improvement Fund.

Friends of Polkemmet Park

This group is continuing to grow, with volunteers continually attending at 'work party sessions' and enjoying getting involved in their local country park. The Community Development Worker is working with the Park Ranger to develop a running route within the park. They are also revisiting the notion of a heritage trail within the park for which a proposal was previously developed.

Whitburn Community Development Trust

Updates on Whitburn CDT activity include:

Walking Football – Numbers attending this are increasing and feedback has been extremely positive, with some participants calling it the highlight of their week. The Community Development Worker (CDW) is planning a Christmas outing to the snooker club in Bathgate rather than playing football one week in December.

Youth Forum - the CDW is working with Whitburn Academy and has encouraged young people to attend via morning assemblies. There are ten young people who are meeting with the CDW on Tuesday lunchtimes. Community Action Blackburn staff are also using their expertise to help to establish the group. One particular issue of interest from the young people is perceived poor mental health for young people, which they would like to highlight and potentially develop responses to.

Student placements – the CDT has an IT student from West Lothian College working with them a day-per-week to develop their website. It is hoped that they may also be able to contribute to the community website that the Community Council and Traders Group have received funding from Carnegie Trust to develop. The CDT is also getting a placement from the college of an events management student. Similarly, they were going to offer support to the Christmas Cracker event and may be able to offer support to a farmer's market event in the new year. This all adds resource to the CDT and community whilst at the same time providing valuable educational experience for the young people themselves.

Financial Inclusion Worker – the CDT has developed a proposal with Citizens Advice Bureau for a dedicated worker for Whitburn for financial/legal support. They are in discussion with potential funders for this to gauge how viable the proposal is with a view to submitting applications. This could provide additional resource in the town to support people with financial/legal difficulties.

Time Bank – the CDT is also developing its Time Bank idea as a longer term aspiration for the organisation to be a volunteering hub within the community which also provides services to residents.

Whitburn Partnership Centre

The Burgh Halls is currently being explored and prepared for the next stage of the project which will be the part demolition of the building in the new year.

There will be an electronic mailbox available for the Whitburn Partnership Centre project for the public to comment or enquire directly.

Community partners will be invited to a meeting early in the new year to hear more about developments

Customers continue to enjoy a professional service delivered from the co-located CIS and Library Services in the Whitburn Library building. The initial problems with the cash kiosk have now been largely resolved.

D2 Blackburn Regeneration Plan

The Draft Blackburn's Future Plan (BFP) was presented to the Local Area Committee (LAC) in September and was well received by local members. Comments were made regarding the plan and these have been taken into account and amendments made. The main amendment to be made is the labelling of themes; these are no longer going to be numbered ensuring that people do not think that one is more important than another.

A further change that was agreed at the Blackburn's Future Group (BFG) meeting was a change of title for some of the themes.

The overarching theme for the plan is poverty, health and wellbeing with the other three themes linking and feeding into this:

- Care, maintenance and feeling safe
- Health facilities
- Youth provision, play and recreation

The Change in Blackburn (CIB) youth group are leading part of the Care, Maintenance and Feeling Safe sub-group. CIB have begun planning for specific projects that will not only target actions for the care, maintenance and feeling safe theme but also a larger project on mental health. All activities and planned projects have been added to the plan.

Planning for the Redhouse Play Park is progressing. A local resident has been engaging with colleagues from Housing and with tenant's representatives regarding obtaining funding from the Housing capital programme towards this. Consultation with local schools was carried out by the play equipment supplier and staff from Operational Services.

Launch of Regeneration Plan

The official launch took place at CAB's AGM on 19 November. A short presentation on the Blackburn's Future Plan was given with the plan being displayed along with the interactive map.

The interactive map has also now been launched. A link to the map will be added to various websites to promote use by local people. It is hoped that a screen for the partnership centre will be purchased and in situ early 2019.

E. CONCLUSION

The process for developing regeneration plans is underway within the Whitburn and Blackburn ward. Local action groups have been established with evidence-gathering and consultation exercises having been undertaken, the first drafts of these have been produced. These will be 'live' documents that will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Placemaking in Whitburn masterplan available on
<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/whitburn>

West Lothian Regeneration Framework 2014-2034

Appendices/Attachments: None.

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Craig McCorriston, Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration
3 December 2018.

WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN – AS OF DECEMBER 2018

No.	Subject	Purpose	Lead Officer	Date
1	Housing Report	Quarterly update on housing issues	Gary Stoddart	March 2019
2	Police Report	Quarterly update on police/NRT activity	Sgt. Vincent Hughes	March 2019
3	Economic Development and Regeneration Report	To update local members on Economic Development and Regeneration service activity in the ward.	Craig McCorriston	March 2019
4	Fire and Rescue Report	Quarterly report on activity	Kenneth Stewart	March 2019
5	Operational Services Report	Quarterly report on activity	Jim Jack	March 2019