



Bathgate Local Area Committee

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

29 November 2016

A meeting of the **Bathgate Local Area Committee** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Conference Room 14/15, Bathgate Partnership Centre, South Bridge Street, Bathgate** on **Monday 5 December 2016** at **10:00am**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business.
3. 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.
4. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting held on 12 September 2016 (herewith).
5. Presentation - St. Kentigern's Academy (herewith).
6. Police Ward Report - report by Inspector Andrew Elliot (herewith).
7. Fire and Rescue Service Report - report by Station Manager Hall (herewith).
8. Housing, Customer and Building Services Update - report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
9. Service Update - NETS, Land and Countryside - report by Head of Operational Services (herewith).

DATA LABEL: Public

10. Advice Shop Service Update - report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith).
11. Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund Allocations 2016 - report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith).
12. 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 BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within CONFERENCE ROOM 14/15, BATHGATE PARTNERSHIP CENTRE, SOUTH BRIDGE STREET, BATHGATE, on 12 SEPTEMBER 2016.

Present – Councillors Harry Cartmill (Chair), John McGinty and Jim Walker

Absent – Councillor William Boyle

In Attendance –

Andrew Blake, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council
Ian Hepburn, Community Regeneration Manager, West Lothian Council
Station Manager Richie Hall, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Sergeant John Fleming, Police Scotland
Tony Fleming, Grounds Maintenance Manager, West Lothian Council
Karen Cawte, Customer and Community Manager, West Lothian Council
Kate Ward, Housing Manager, West Lothian Council
Eirwen Hopwood, Parks and Woodlands Manager, West Lothian Council
Steve Lovell, Planning Officer, West Lothian Council

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

In terms of Standing Order 11, the Chair ruled that agenda item 10 (Housing, Customer and Building Services) would be considered immediately following agreement of agenda item 4 (minute of last meeting).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 6th June 2016 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of housing performance for the period 1st April – 31th June 2016.

The performance figures for property void and let for mainstream and temporary tenancies were detailed in the report. Committee noted that for the period April to June 2016, a total of 31 properties had been let for mainstream tenancies and 16 properties had been let for temporary tenancies. There were 41 policy voids in the ward for a variety of reasons including unable to be let for health and safety reasons, held for decant

purposes at Rosemount Court and held to assist with decants due to remedial works.

A graph within the report demonstrated the position for rent arrears in the ward for the first quarter of financial year 2016/17 against the previous financial year. The current arrears balance for the ward was £221,779.43, a significant decrease on last year's position of £272,803. Overall, the arrears position for West Lothian had significantly improved.

A table within the report provided members with a visual overview of the level of arrears by banding and number of tenants in arrears in the ward at 30 June 2016. Despite 43 serious arrears cases with tenants owing £1000+, the committee noted that 73% of cases fell into the lower bands with arrears of £300 or less. The rent strategy for 2016/17 would continue to focus on improving rent collection methods and supporting customers in arrears.

Further information was also contained in the report on the following:-

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

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

Decision

To note the contents of the report

5. ECONOMIC VITALITY OF BATHGATE TOWN CENTRE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration outlining the key planning considerations that were taken into account to preserve the economic vitality of Bathgate town centre.

The report outlined in detail the various legislation and policies, both national and local, that were taken into account when determining planning applications for town centres. It explained that due to the policy and legislative background, the council was restricted in its powers to limit the number of businesses of a particular type from opening in town centres such as beauty salons, cafes, etc.

The report explained that town centre health checks could provide a means of assessing a town centre's strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses and resilience. It could also be used to inform development plans and decisions on planning applications. However, in the recently approved Local Development Plan, which had been submitted to the

Scottish Government for approval, there was no requirement to conduct a town centre health check.

As the Local Development Plan had been submitted to the Scottish Government for examination, no change to the policy position in the Plan could be made unless required by the reporter at Examination.

The report concluded that the current policy approach to development in Bathgate and other town centres was set out in the West Lothian Local Development Plan and was considered to be consistent with the requirements of the Scottish Planning Policy.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. FOREST MANAGEMENT AT BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK

The committee received a very interesting and informative presentation by Eirwen Hopwood, Parks and Woodlands Manager, supported by a report by the Head of Operational Services, on the progress that had been made with the Forest Management at Beecraigs Country Park and future plans.

The report provided the committee with information on the extensive work that had been ongoing at Beecraigs Country Park following the devastation caused by the worst storms in recent history in January 2012 and further windblow damage during the winters of 2013 and 2014. A slide presentation provided members with a visual overview of the damage prior and post improvements implemented to date.

The report recalled that a Long-Term Forest Plan had been signed off by the Forestry Commission Scotland in 2015 which was available on the council's website and at the visitor centre reception. The first 5 year phase of the plan included clear felling of 32ha of the 270ha forest and replanting. It also involved thinning most of the remaining areas with a view to gradually opening up the canopy to allow more light and encourage the natural regeneration of young trees.

The forest had been certificated under the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme which allowed timber to be sold into the larger sawmills/biomass producers, most of which produced certified timber, which resulted in an uplift in proceeds received.

The committee noted that over 40,000 young trees had been replanted to date mainly by contracts, although some had been planted by volunteers and the in-house tree and woodland squad. The more palatable broadleaves and conifers had been protected with tree shelters or deer fences. Basic landscaping with larger trees and grass and wildflower mixes had been carried out around the car parks. Roe deer browsing was evident even on the normally tough Sitka spruce and the report explained that should there be significant damage a programme of deer control would require to be put in place to reduce deer numbers to a level where damage was acceptable.

Finally, the report explained that most of the grass rides that had become blocked by trees had been cleared and the drainage of these and adjacent forest areas had been improved to allow a wider choice of routes for visitors who liked to explore the forest. The tree thinning programme would start in the winter and continue on a 5-10 year cycle.

The report and presentation acknowledged that whilst the improvement works caused some disruption to public access around the country park they were necessary for the long-term future of the forest. Where possible, main operations would be carried out during the winter months when the park was quieter. The co-operation of members of the public who adhered to the safety signage was appreciated.

It was recommended that the committee note the terms of the update.

Decision

To note the terms of the report and presentation.

7. WARD 8 BATHGATE, POLICE REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Inspector Andrew Elliot updating the committee on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 31st July 2016

Contained within the report was a series of tables detailing recorded crime in the ward and for the whole of West Lothian with a comparison for the same period the previous year; it covered crimes including youth calls, all ASAB calls, hate crime, vandalism & reckless conduct, fire-raising, alcohol related incidents and public space assaults.

The report provided an update on prevention activities which included reducing antisocial behaviour, reducing community and social harm caused by drug and alcohol, making roads safer and preventing violence in the night time economy.

Forthcoming events were also summarised in the report and advised that the Community Policing team continued to focus on acquisitive crime and carry out follow up work after an incident to provide crime prevention in the area.

During the discussion, the Sergeant provided the committee with further information on recent problems that had resulted in a sharp increase in the number of youth calls and anti-social behaviour calls and spoke of an option being explored to provide a safe jump obstacle course similar to that provided in another authority area. He also spoke of the sharp increase in the number of fire raising calls and of the action that was being undertaken by the owners of the former abattoir site to prevent young people from access the roof area or interior of the buildings to reduce the risk of fire raising.

It was recommended that the local area committee note the contents of

the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. BATHGATE MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on activity in the ward for the period up to 30th June 2016.

The committee was advised that quarterly reports on the Multi-Member Ward Operational Plans had been produced by SFRS to ensure delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2014 – 2017, which was a requirement under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Section 41E

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

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a summary report that provided a series of graphs showing details 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.

During the discussion, the Station Manager advised members of the plan to reconfigure one of the appliances at Bathgate station which would result in the current support vehicle being replaced with a 4x4 vehicle with a ready inflated boat and trailer which would see Bathgate Fire Station becoming one of three named water rescue stations in Scotland.

It was recommended that the local area committee note and provide comment on the Bathgate multi-member ward quarterly performance report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND & 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 to 31st July 2016 and highlighting future works planned for the locality.

The report provided an overview of the works that had been carried out on grounds maintenance and street cleansing routine operations. It also provided a summary of the enquiries dealt with and enforcement taken by

the environmental wardens.

The report then gave members an overview of the ranger services events and activities programme for 2016 and of the variety of improvements that were underway at Beecraigs, Ravenscraig and Little Boghead.

The report concluded with information on the open space and cemeteries works that were being carried out in the ward.

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

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND PROVISIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2016

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the provisional allocations to be made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2016 to groups in the Bathgate ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

In 2016, the total fund available was £29,106.54. The provisional number of beneficiaries was provisionally 2862. In the Bathgate ward, there were 393 beneficiaries and a provisional allocation of £3996.81.

Eight applications had been issued to groups across the ward, with seven having been returned. The intention was that the seven groups would be supported. Appendix 1 of the report detailed those organisations that would be supported, together with the provisional allocation to each. The remaining application was being followed up and until such time the figures provided were to be considered provisional.

One application had also been sent to a Livingston-wide group but not returned and two applications to West Lothian-wide groups, of which only one had been returned. The outstanding applications would be followed up. Appendix 2 provided further details on these applications.

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 funding they would receive.

It was recommended that the committee note that to date seven groups within the ward had applied to the fund and would be supported.

Decision

(a) To note the terms of the report.

(b) To suggest that officers establish whether the newly opened

Rosemount Court had a constituted group that would be entitled to apply for funding from the fund.

11. COMMUNITY REGENERATION – REGENERATION PLANS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the process for developing and implementing regeneration plans.

The report recalled the council's commitment in February 2014 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 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. These were Armadale, Blackburn, Boghall, Bridgend, Craigshill, Fauldhouse & the Breich Valley (Fauldhouse, Stoneyburn, Addiewell and Polbeth), Livingston Central (Knightsridge, Ladywell and Dedridge) and Whitburn.

The report went on to explain that Community Planning Partnerships were required by October 2017 to have locality plans in place for areas experiencing the poorest outcomes. Regeneration plans met the requirements for locality plans, addressed the themes within the Regeneration Framework at a local level and would focus on developing local actions. The themes in the framework were:-

- Employability and Employment
- Early Years and Family Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Economic Development
- Community Capacity and Cohesion

The framework would provide a long-term plan for targeted action to improve the life chances of people living in the most disadvantaged communities in West Lothian and would give fresh impetus and greater clarity to the targeting of interventions to address deprivation and economic exclusion within the specific areas. Not all interventions would apply in every area and plans would be developed dependent on the needs of each target area and the assets available.

The report went on to outline the process to develop regeneration plans, including launch events and themed workshops. It was anticipated that the draft plans would be present to local area committees toward the end of 2016 with final plans implemented by April 2017.

Steering groups would be established in each area. They would initially be co-ordinated by Community Regeneration Officers and it was hoped that they would eventually be community led. The groups would comprise key community organisations, local community planning partners, council services, community councils and other relevant agencies.

The report concluded with information on the work that would be undertaken to map community assets, how statistical information would

be analysed to ensure evidence gathered was a robust mix of primary and secondary research and that the regeneration plans would be live documents which would reflect the need for long term transportation change and allow for short, medium and long term plans.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

12. WORKPLAN

The committee considered the Work Plan (copies of which had been circulated) by the Lead Officer for the Local Area Committee.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.



Bathgate

Local Area Committee

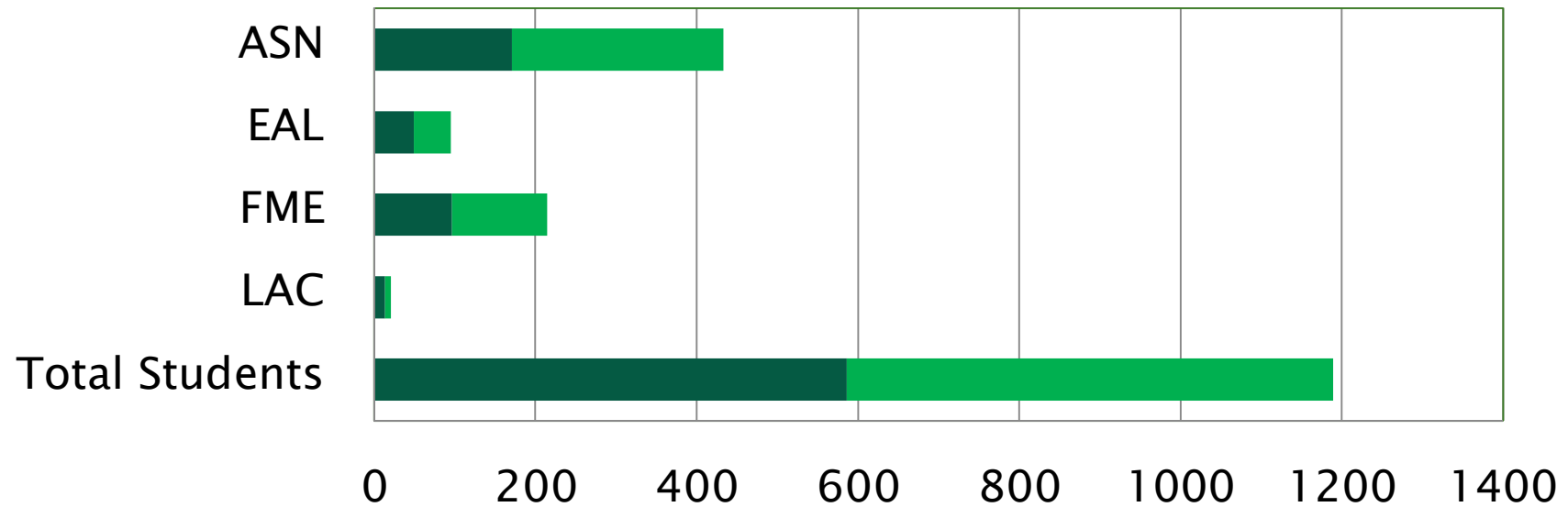
5th December 2016

Our Context

- One of two RC Secondary Schools in West Lothian
- 1200 students
- 220 intake in S1
- 10 associated primary schools (but students from 23 in S1)
- 1050 young people travel to school on school buses
- Free Meal Entitlement = 18% (up from 9.9% in 2009)
- Secondary School SIMD ranking = 3



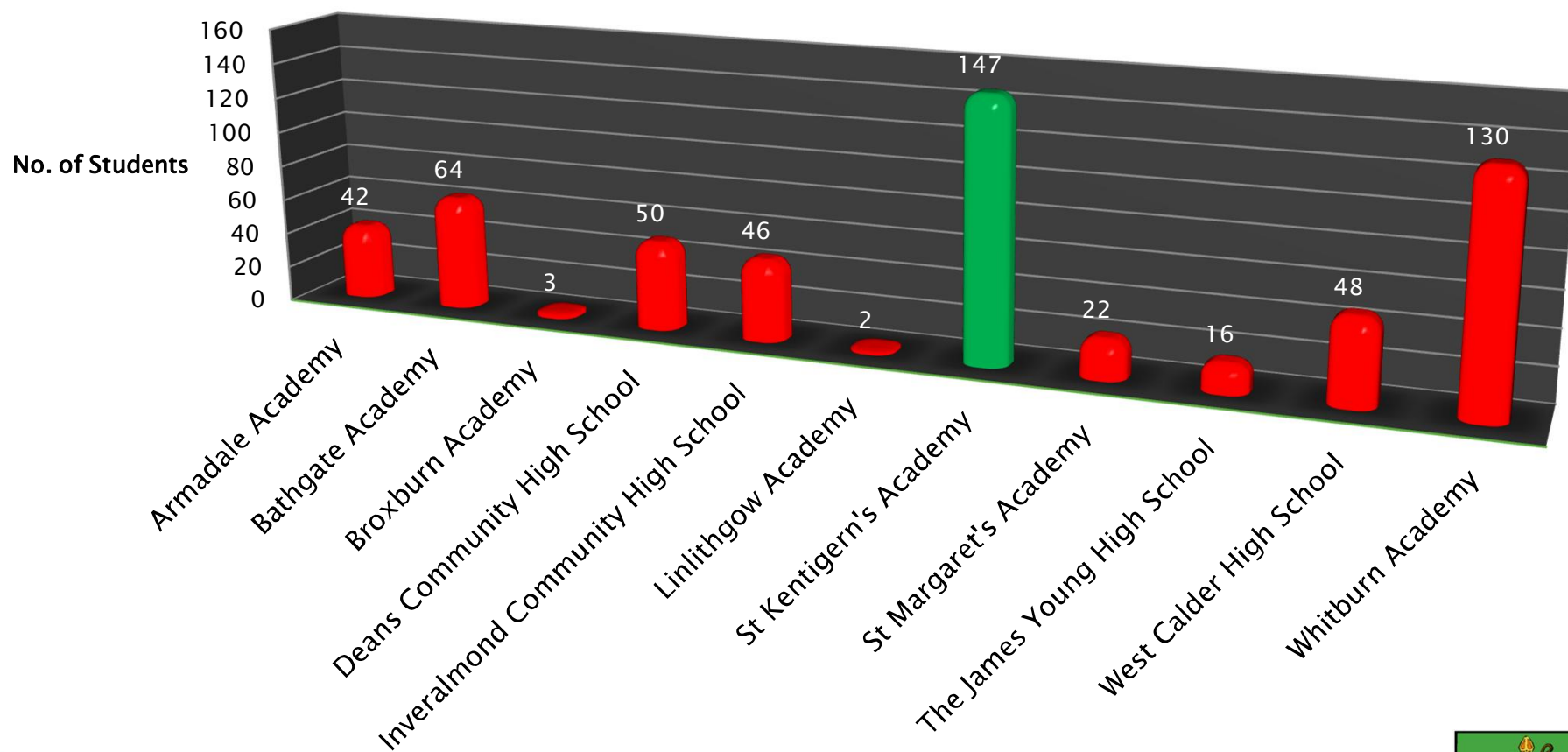
Our Learners



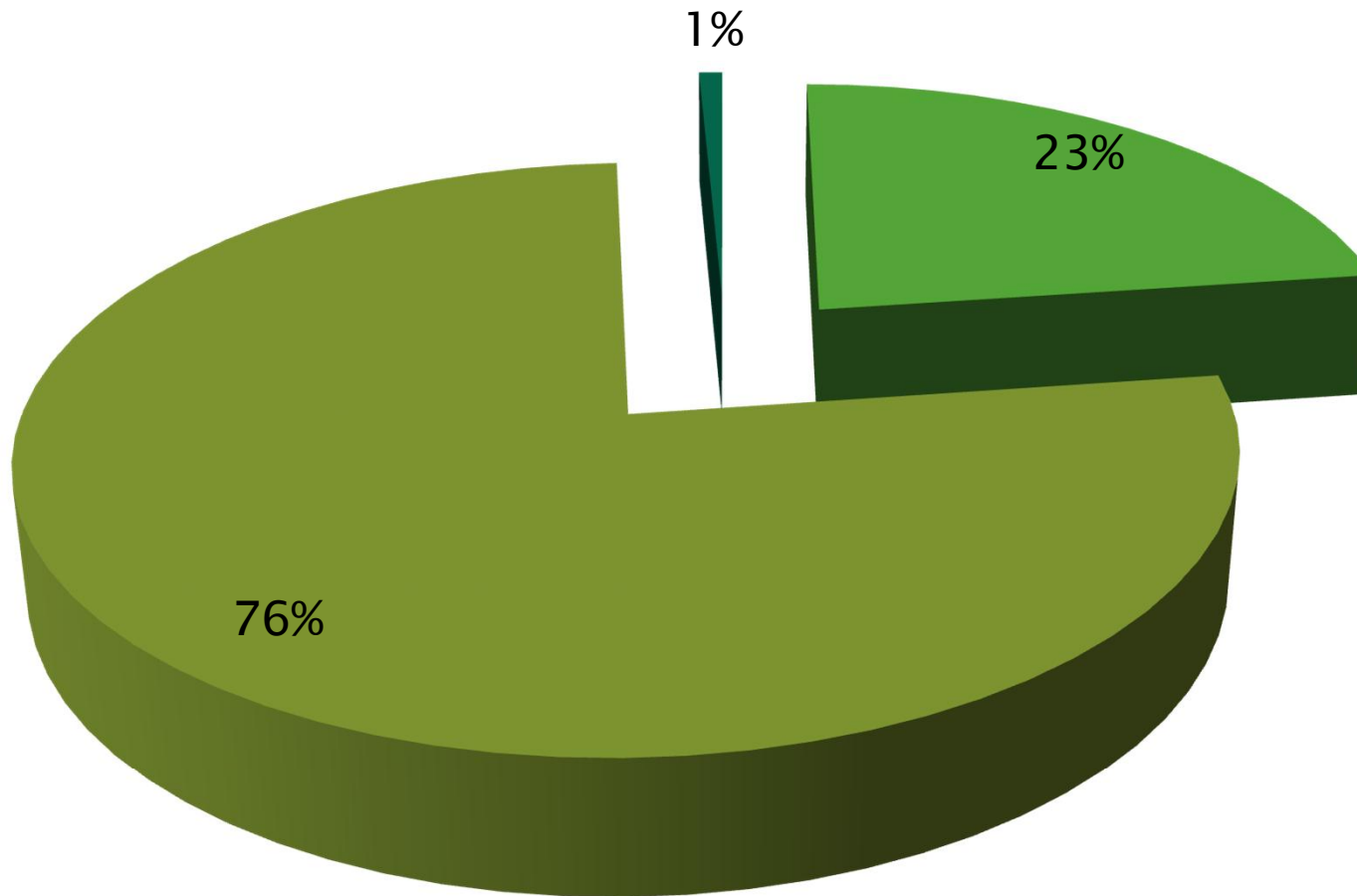
	Total Students	LAC	FME	EAL	ASN
Female	586	14	97	49	171
Male	603	7	118	46	262



Distribution of Most Deprived 10%



% Distribution in SIMD Bands



■ Lowest 20% ■ Middle 60% ■ Highest 20%



% Staying On Rates

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
S5	77	85	84	88	86	91	80	89	94*
S6	61	62	64	65	66	75	69	60	52*



School Leaver Destinations

West Lothian Council SLDR (Initial Destination Percentages)

School	Total Leavers	Higher Education %	Further Education %	Training %	Employment %	Voluntary Work %	Activity Agreements %	Unemployed Seeking %	Unemployed Not Seeking %	Not Known %	% Pos	% Other
St Kentigern's Academy	235	35.3	28.5	4.7	22.6		0.4	6.8	1.7	0	91.5	8.5
West Lothian Council	1,962	37.1	29.6	4.7	21.4	0.1	0.5	5.6	1.1	0.4	93.4	6.6



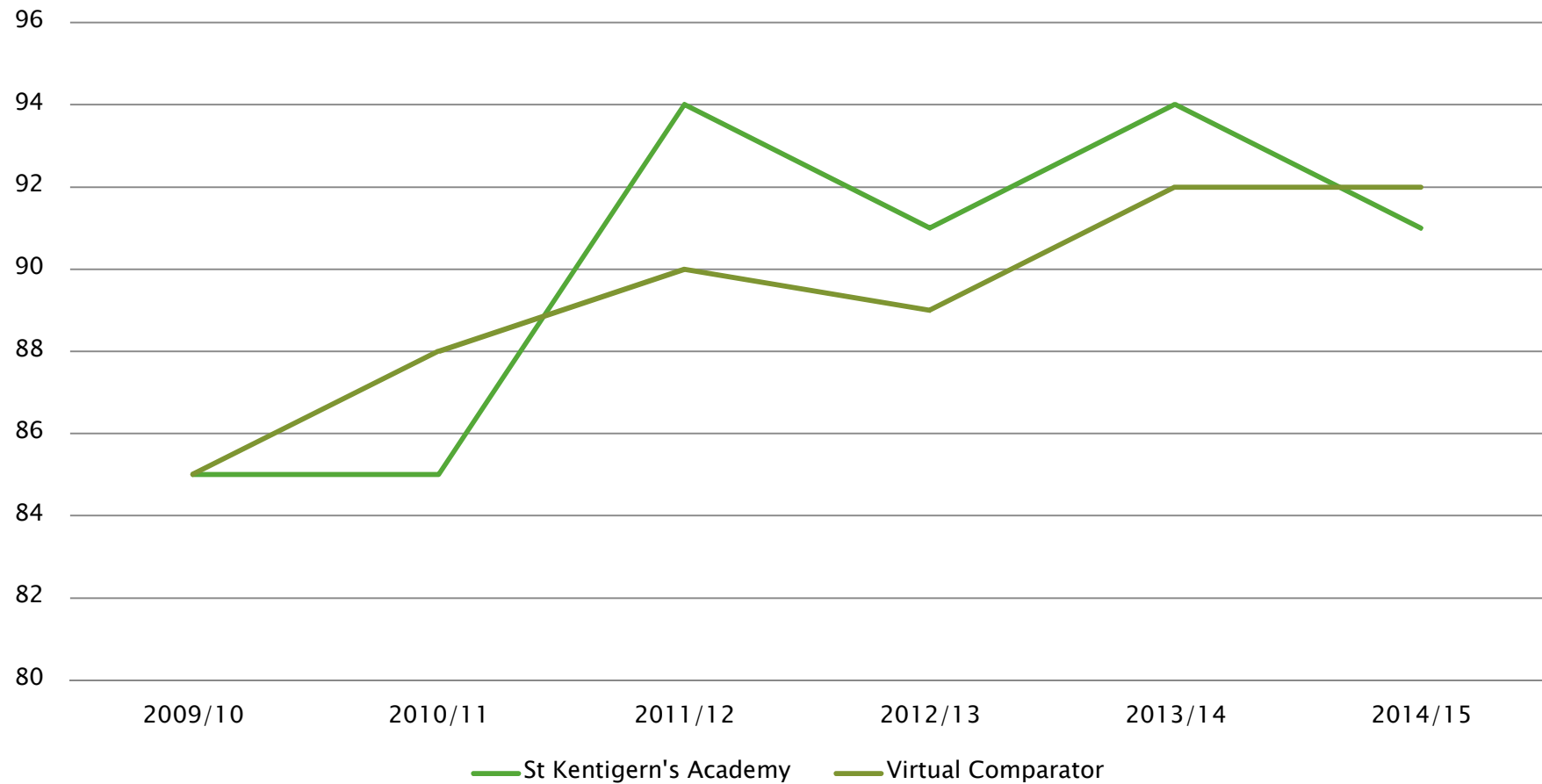
School Leaver Destinations

West Lothian Council SLDR (Follow Up Destination Percentages)

School	Total Leavers	Higher Education %	Further Education %	Training %	Employment %	Voluntary Work %	Activity Agreements %	Unemployed Seeking %	Unemployed Not Seeking %	Not Known %	% Pos	% Other
St Kentigern's Academy	235	33.2	24.3	2.6	29.4	0	0.9	7.2	2.6	0	90.2	9.8
West Lothian Council	1,954	34.5	24.3	2.6	29.3	0.2	0.6	6.7	1.4	0.4	91.6	8.4



School Leaver Positive Destinations



Exclusions

Exclusion Analysis - half days lost									
Month	Year 16/17	Year 15/16	Year 14/15	Year 13/14	Year 12/13	Year 11/12	Year 10/11	Year 09/10	Year 08/09
August	0	8	6	4	12	38	41	68	41
September	32	41	25	6	114	68	120	142	77
October	36	26	59	37	28	43	31	38	85
November	37	83	67	34	87	56	105	116	86
December		59	50	71	52	29	6	60	60
January		50	51	86	40	97	53	71	140
February		58	34	119	38	64	65	118	59
March		63	123	59	85	21	51	100	195
April		22	26	9	0	18	27	0	77
May		69	71	42	21	62	52	14	88
June		31	16	15	18	66	50	48	71
Total half days lost to exclusion	105	510	528	482	495	562	601	775	979
Percentage (16/17 v 15/16 half days lost)	20.59								
Percentage (15/16 v 14/15 half days lost)		96.59							
Percentage (14/15 v 13/14 half days lost)			109.54						
Percentage (13/14 v 12/13 half days lost)				97.37					
Percentage (12/13 v 11/12 half days lost)					88.08				
Percentage (11/12 v 10/11 half days lost)						93.51			
Percentage (10/11 v 09/10 half days lost)							77.55		
Percentage (09/10 v 08/09 half days lost)								79.16	
Percentage (16/17 v 08/09 half days lost)	10.73								

- 2015 / 16 figure equivalent to 0.001 of potential ½ days (456,000 ½ days)



Promoting Equality, Inclusion & Diversity

... demonstrate their Christian values through example, faith, love, mutual respect, justice and equality.



- Classroom Ethos
- Nurture Base
- Support for Looked After Young People
- Rights Respecting School
- Charity Work...



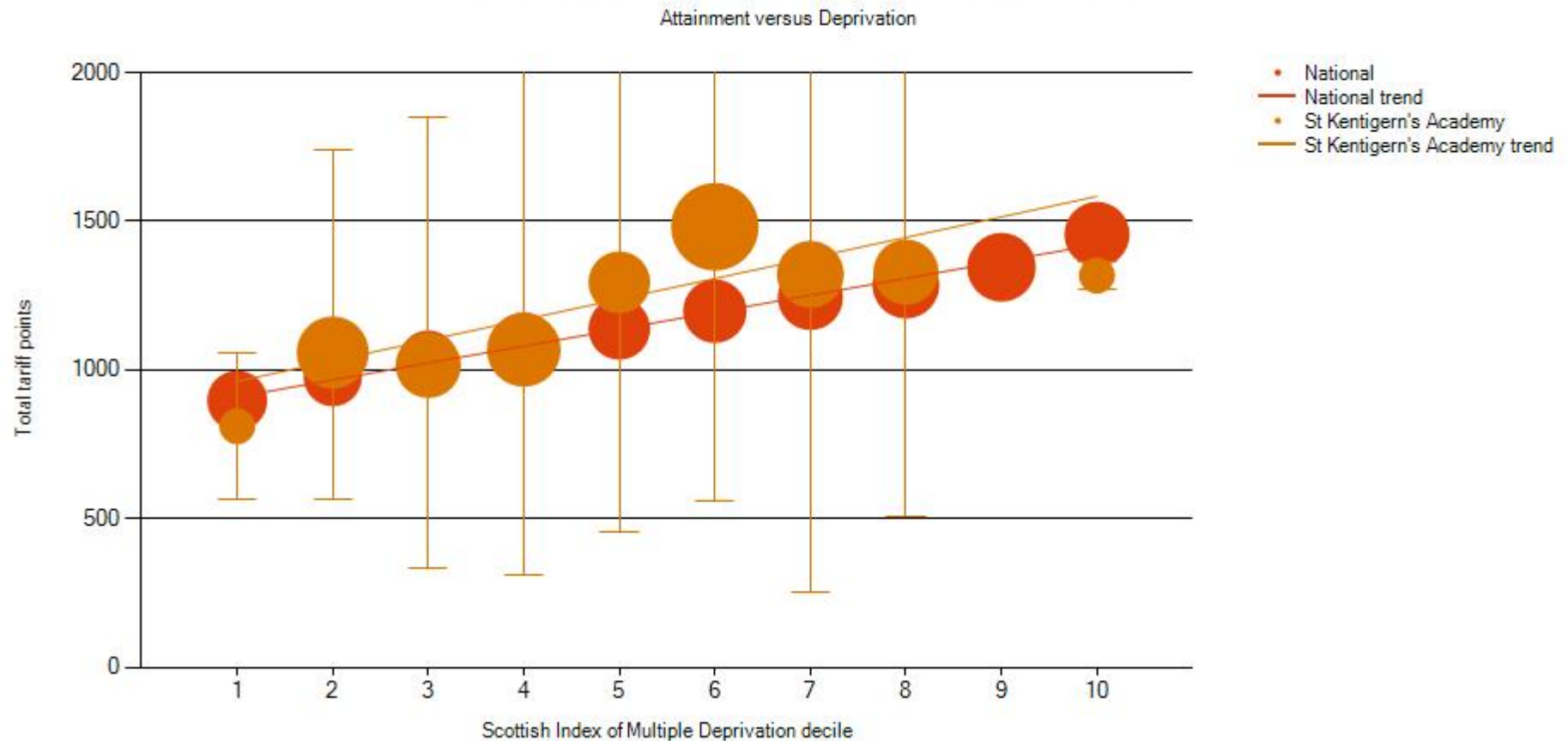
Senior Phase Exam Results

Year Group	Level	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
S4	5 + @ Level 5	33	34	33	31	32	31	40
	5 + @ Level 4	76	76	82	78	84	86	89
	5 + @ Level 3	94	90	98	95	94	94	95
S5	5 + @ Level 6	12	15	7	8	14	11	10
	3 + @ Level 6	21	27	21	23	26.5	30	25
	1 + @ Level 6	37	42	44	48	44	51	51
S6	1 + Level 7	17	19	22	17	17	19	18
	5 + @ Level 6	32	25	26	25	25	26	25.5
	3 + @ Level 6	29	40.5	34	34	38	35	38.5
	1 + @ Level 6	43.5	54	50	53	59	54	59
	5+ @ Level 5	n/a		47	53	59	52	53

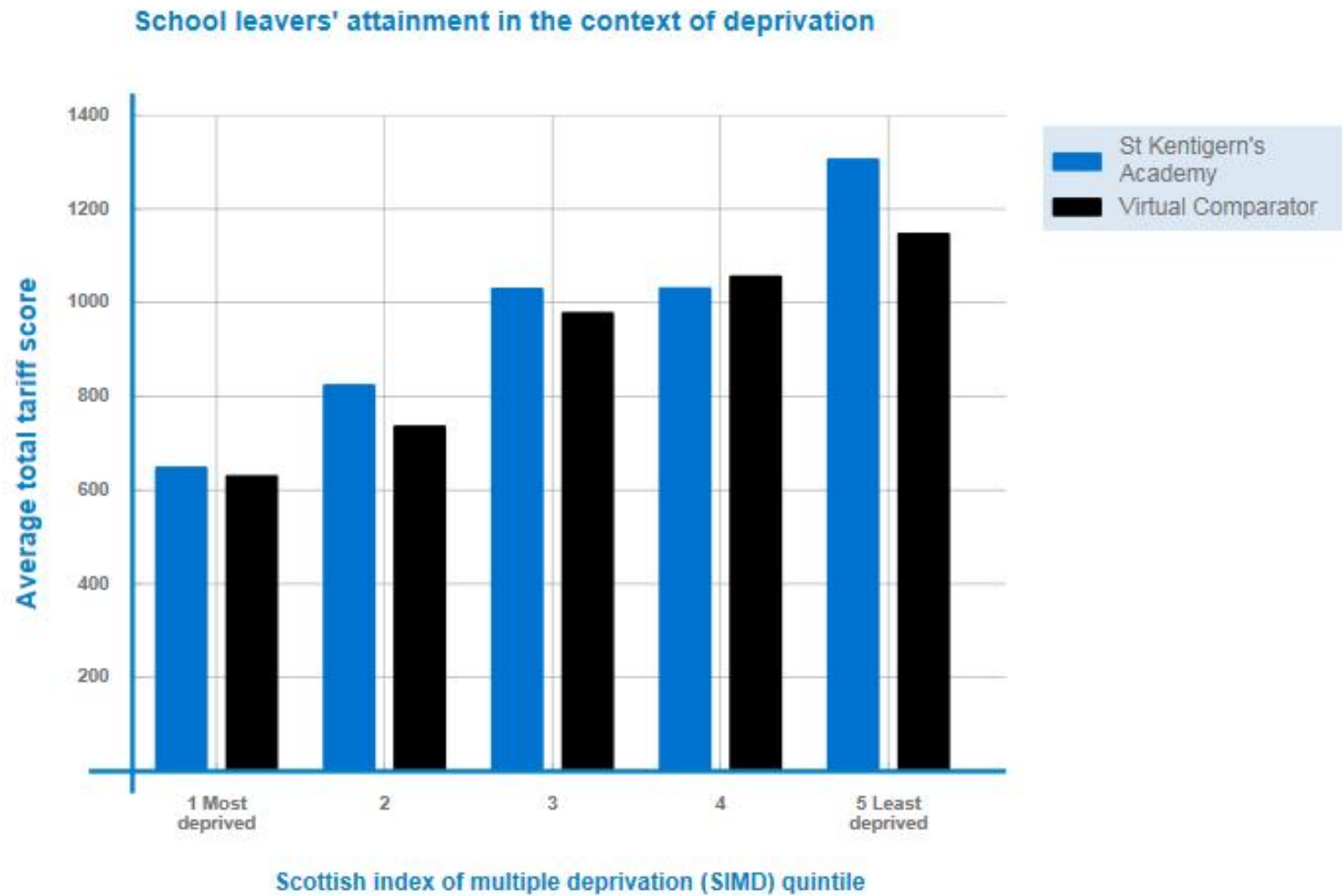


Narrowing the Gap

Tackling disadvantage by improving the attainment of lower attainers relative to higher attainers



Narrowing the Gap



Achievements

The school has worked to develop a wide range of opportunities for students in wider achievements

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| • Caritas | 32 Students |
| • Street Law | 42 S5 and S6 students |
| • Young Applicants in Schools | 8 S6 students |
| • Duke of Edinburgh | 15 S5/6 Students |
| • Stem Crest Awards | 90 S2 Students |
| • CPR | 20 Students |
| • Saltire Awards | Across all year groups there are currently 50 students registered |
| • Foundation Apprenticeships | |
| • Employer Partnerships | |



School Improvement Plan: Session 2016-17

Supporting Students' Learning

- Build upon the universal support model in the BGE to increase parental engagement and ensure the needs of all learners are met and understood by their key adult.
- Review systems for tracking in the BGE and Senior Phase with a focus on ensuring consistence of reporting through moderation.
- Implement our agreed Scottish Attainment Challenge Plans

Achievement and Attainment

- To further develop whole school approaches to increasing attainment and promotion of achievement with a particular focus on meeting learner needs and closing the attainment gap.
- Review of progress and further development of revised procedures and standards for Work Placement
- Implement our agreed Scottish Attainment Challenge Plans

Curriculum Development

- Review and continue development of the Broad General Education
- Continue to review and further develop flexible student pathways for all curricular areas
- Review and further develop work on enhancing transition points
- Ongoing implementation of the Wood Report-*Developing Scotland's Young Workforce*
- Continue to further develop partnership working in light of *Developing Scotland's Young Workforce*

Self-Evaluation

- Continue to develop systematic self-evaluation to deliver school improvement including further developing the use of HGIOS4.
- Further develop the school improvement model
- Develop further student voice in approaches to validation of self-evaluation
- Sharing standards and moderation activities within and across faculties



Areas of Strength

- ▶ Po
- ▶ Co
- ▶ Ef
- ▶ St
- ▶ H
- ▶ Pa
- ▶ Ef
- ▶ M



s of



Commitment Of Staff to Career Long Professional Learning Including: Lite Bite Sessions / Significant Numbers Working Towards Formal Qualifications in Education inc. Masters

Varied Catchment Area and Increasing School Roll

Widened Curriculum in Broad General Education including Elective Program (U-Choose), HFT And Drama.

Opportunities For Personalisation And Choice at the End Of S3.

Widening Choice for Students in Senior Phase: HND Courses, Construction, Drama, Philosophy, Environmental Science, Politics, Health Sector, etc.

Quality Of Partnerships: Street Law, Safe Road User, Premier Inn, Combermere, YASS, Institution Robin, Saint-Vincent-de-Paul, etc. Providing Opportunities For Work Placement, Additional Training and Careers.

Work of the 16+ Hub Improving Appropriate and Sustained School Leaver Destinations

Rights Respecting School Level 2 Award Demonstrates our Strengths in our Christian Values Through Example, Faith, Love, Charity, Mutual Respect, Justice, and Equality as well as our Internationalism





LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

WARD 8, BATHGATE,

REPORT BY POLICE INSPECTOR ANDREW ELLIOT

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Police Update for Bathgate.

B. RECOMMENDATION

For discussion by the Chair.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

Focusing on our customers' needs
Being honest, open and accountable
Providing equality of opportunities
Developing employees
Making best use of our resources
Working in partnership

**II Policy and Legal (including Strategic
Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues,
Health or Risk Assessment)**

**III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to
Officers**

**IV Impact on performance and performance
Indicators**

V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)

VII Consideration at PDSP

VIII Other consultations

D. TERMS OF REPORT

To update the Local Area Committee on performance, activities and issues across the Ward for the period up to 31st October 2016.

Our Purpose

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

Our Focus

Keeping People Safe

Our Values

Integrity, Fairness and Respect

NATIONAL PRIORITIES – DELIVERED LOCALLY

Police Scotland Priorities

1. Violence, disorder and antisocial behaviour
2. Protecting people at risk of harm
3. Road safety and road crime
4. Serious Organised Crime
5. Counter Terrorism

WEST LOTHIAN PRIORITIES

Your West Lothian Priorities

1. Protecting People
2. Reducing Anti Social Behaviour
3. Reducing Violence
4. Tackling Substance Misuse
5. Making our Roads Safer
6. Tackling Serious and Organised Crime

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Your Local priorities

1. Reducing Anti Social Behaviour
2. Tackling Substance Misuse
3. Making our Roads Safer
4. Preventing Violence (in the night time economy)
5. Tackling Acquisitive Crime

PERFORMANCE

Crimes Groups 1 to 5 (Ref: Crime Statistics JG Area Command) (April 16 – September 16)						
Area	This year to date			Last year to date		
	Rec.	Sol.	% Sol	Rec.	Sol.	% Sol
West Lothian Area	3697	1679	45.4%	3920	1594	40.7%
Bathgate (April-Sept)	569	278	48.9 %	505	213	42.2%

Future statistics will be posted on the Police Scotland Website that can be accessed via the link below.

Ward plans and Community information can also be obtained by using the link to access the website and then tab into 'your community' and enter your postcode to find the Bathgate Ward.

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

ASB performance for period up to and including 31/10/2016.

Bathgate Ward - to end October 2016				
Month	Oct-16	LYTD	TYTD	% Change
Youth Calls	36	138	307	122%
All ASB Calls	144	887	1064	20%
Hate Crime	1	21	21	0%
Vandalism & Reckless Conduct	18	112	129	15%
Fire-raising	1	4	13	225%
Public Space Assaults	11	95	96	1%

ISSUES OF NOTE

- **Exceptional Reporting on the above**

October 2016

Youth Calls – increased by 122% in the year to date and there were 36 youth calls reported in October 2016. Last year to date there were 21 reports in October. This rise can still in the main be contributed to a group of teenagers who are causing ASB within the Town Centre, Wester Inch and in Boghall. Many youths have been traced and charged and Youth Criminal Justice workers have been involved in an effort to divert them from their behaviour. Parents have been spoken to and where appropriate tenancy warnings have been issued to parents in respect of their children causing ASB locally. One youth has now, due to his continued ASB tendencies, went via a care home to secure accommodation.

ASB Calls – increased by 20% in the year to date. In October there were 144 calls and the Ward officers continue to monitor to deal with emerging trends. Again many of the calls re youths also have an effect on this figure.

Hate Crime – no change from last year to date. 1 crime reported in October and 21 calls this year to date.

Vandalism / Reckless Conduct – small increase from last year to date with 18 more crimes reported year to date.

Fire Raising – There was 1 incident reported in October with 13 calls this year to date. Work has been carried out to carry out demolition work at the former abattoir site on Whitburn Road leading to a reduction in calls.

Public Space Assaults – up 1% - 11 reported in October as opposed to 16 last year at this time. In response to identified issues additional officers from Police Scotland violence and reduction unit carried out a weekend of patrols in the Town Centre. No issues were identified.

PREVENTION

- **Activities**

Reducing antisocial behaviour within our communities

The Ward officers and CAT carry out high visibility patrols in identified locations for ASB. They have been concentrating activities in the Town Centre particularly in Whitburn Road, Kirkton Park and Balbardie Park.

The Ward Officers review all calls of ASB in an effort to identify offenders and will progress criminal complaints and ASB complaints to conclusion to ensure a positive outcome. This may involve reporting the person involved or tenancy warning via ASB legislation.

There continues to be an issue with youth ASB in Bathgate. The funded ward officer and his Community colleague have made significant inroads in identifying the main protagonists, dealing with them and their parents and submitting charge reports against them. This has led to partners taking steps to intervene and offer activities at key times to divert from their ASB. This has been a positive step however is work ongoing.

Hate Crime - Bathgate

There was 1 report of a Hate Crime in Bathgate. This was in relation to a person leaving a nightclub being verbally abusive to a police officer and made homophobic remarks. This person was arrested and reported.

Reducing community and social harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse

The Ward Officers and CAT continue to carry out stop and searches to deter, disrupt, divert and detect offenders.

6 people were reported for drug offences in October with 2 being cannabis offences, 1 for possession of suspected MDMA (Ecstasy), 1 for heroin and 2 for cocaine.

In October a male was reported for consuming alcohol in a public place, another person was reported for buying alcohol for underage persons and linked to ASB patrols a person was reported for urinating in a public place.

Making our Roads Safer

The Community team continue to carry out road checks to provide reassurance and carry out enforcement and education of young drivers to work towards reducing the communities fear in regards anti social driving by young persons.

Road Safety - Local officers have carried out Speed checks at various locations in the Ward and a number of Conditional offer tickets have been issued in the ward for a variety of Road Traffic offences and of these 6 have been for speeding.

In October 14 people have been reported for 17 separate Road Traffic offences that could not be dealt with by ticket. These included driving whilst over drink drive limit, No insurance, Dangerous driving, Fail to stop for police and fail to stop / report after an accident.

Local Ward officers are tasked when available to patrol the Town Centre and resolve parking issues either by enforcement or educating drivers.

Prevent Violence (in the night time economy)

To further address the issue of alcohol related incidents in Bathgate Town Centre the Ward Officers in partnership with the Licensing department have increased monitoring of licensed premises in order that issues both positive and negative can be highlighted. This may lead to premises being taken to a licensing review however this is to ensure that local licensees understand their obligations to their patrons and to the wider Bathgate community and assist in making Bathgate safer.

- **Initiatives**

Reducing Anti Social Behaviour

The Community Policing Team work closely with the WLC NRT officer for the area and continue to challenge ASB in the home, issue tenancy warnings, and this can lead to Anti Social Behaviour Orders being issued.

There is presently one 'party houses' identified in the area.

The Community Policing Team continues to make themselves visible and accessible to their community as they value the importance of public interaction and will attend community and resident meetings where possible.

The funded Ward officer and CAT officers work together and by involving partners from other agencies such as Social Work, Through Care After Care, NRT, WLYAP and WLDAS information is shared that will hopefully lead to a reduction in call volume and a change in direction for the offending youths.

Tackling Substance Misuse

The Community Policing Team will continue to carry out licensed premises visits and inspections to ensure licensees are supported and patrons can enjoy their night out safely.

Officers are planning an initiative with SIA officers to check accreditation for door stewards.

Officers from the CAT and Ward officers will continue to carry out proactive high visibility patrols in areas identified by locals as being frequented by Drug users and dealers.

Tactics used

Street Briefings

Stop and Search (evidence based)

Door to door delivery of Crime Stopper literature to engage local community to report dealing. This is done in the streets occupied by people where Intel would suggest they are dealing.

Making our Roads Safer

The local CPT will continue to address identified issues of speeding by carrying out Hand Held Radar checks on main arterial routes into Bathgate.

Work continues at Primary Schools at key times in an effort to deter inconsiderate and unsafe parking by parents and guardians. Work is ongoing with Simpsons Primary School to improve issues at the drop off / pick up area.

Where hotspots are identified the local Ward Officers will liaise with Roads Policing to include on their patrol matrix to maximise opportunity of a police presence to address issue.

Prevent Violence (in the night time economy)

The Ward Officers continue to work at local events and are committed to policing the night time economy when on duty to provide a high visibility police presence in and around Bathgate to 'keep people safe'. The Night Time Economy plan used in Bathgate has been replicated elsewhere as it allows for a dedicated team patrolling the streets at key times for violence and disorder.

In response to a small rise in violence associated with night time economy additional officers from Police Scotland violence and reduction unit carried out a weekend of patrols in the Town Centre. No issues were identified.

Police Inspector Drew Elliot supported by Sergeant John Fleming leads local policing in Bathgate. Their depth of local knowledge and community focus will assist as we move forwards in the community-policing model.

The email for the Bathgate Community policing Team has not changed and although not a method for reporting crimes this can be used to make contact with the local officers.

BathgateCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

We also request that people sign up and follow your local policing team on Twitter [@WestLothPolice](#) and Facebook – [West Lothian Police](#)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Bonfire night passed off in the Town without incident and calls to police re ASB were down in this regard.

The annual police Festive Initiative is in planning and this will be published shortly.

The Community Policing Team continue to focus on acquisitive crime and carry out follow up work after an incident to provide crime prevention in the area.

Your local community officers are contributors and partners in a number of local events and committees including Pub Watch, Town Centre Management groups, local events committees and strive to maintain local community contact whilst addressing issues of Anti Social Behaviour and criminality in Bathgate.

CONTACTS

Sector Inspector

Inspector Drew Elliot

Andrew.Elliot@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

Community Sergeant

Sergeant John Fleming

John.fleming@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

Community Policing Team Bathgate

Mail to:

BathgateCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

Ward Officers – Constables Iain Law and Colin Moore are the community officers for the Bathgate ward.

In addition to this there are 10 Community Action Team West officers supervised by Sgt Hughes who are available to deal with community issues and hot spot tasking in the ward.

Bathgate Academy Youth Community Officer

Constable Darryl Macaulay



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

BATHGATE MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

REPORT BY SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Bathgate Local Area Committee on the activity within Bathgate Multi-Member Ward for the period up to 30th September 2016.

B. RECOMMENDATION

That Committee Members are invited to note and provide comment on the Bathgate 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
VIII Consultations	West Lothian Citizen's Panel Survey, July 2014.

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 2014 – 2017, which is a requirement under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Section 41E.

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

Following the publication of the Bathgate 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 Bathgate 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 Non-Fire Emergencies.

E. CONCLUSION

The Bathgate Multi-member Ward Performance Report aligns to the key priorities of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2014 – 2017, 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.

Ritchie Hall

Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

October 2016

Appendix 1 - Bathgate Multi-Member Ward Performance Report



West Lothian Council Area

Ward Performance Report

Year to Date July to September 2016

Bathgate

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

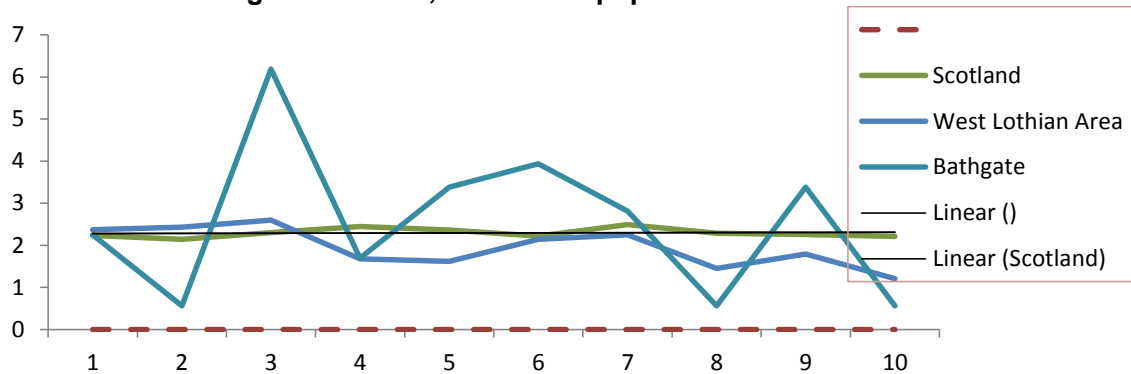
Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Ward Performance Report. This performance report is designed to provide citizens, stakeholders and partners with information relating to ward based activity undertaken by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

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.

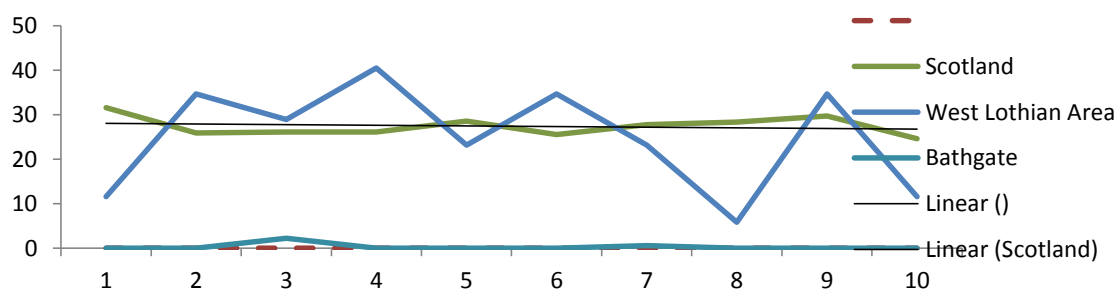
However, regardless of statistical anomalies, emerging patterns and trends in fire related incidents and events can assist the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Community Planning Partners plan and implement preventative intervention initiatives to target reducing fire related incidents and events.

Accidental Dwelling Fires Per 10,000 head of population



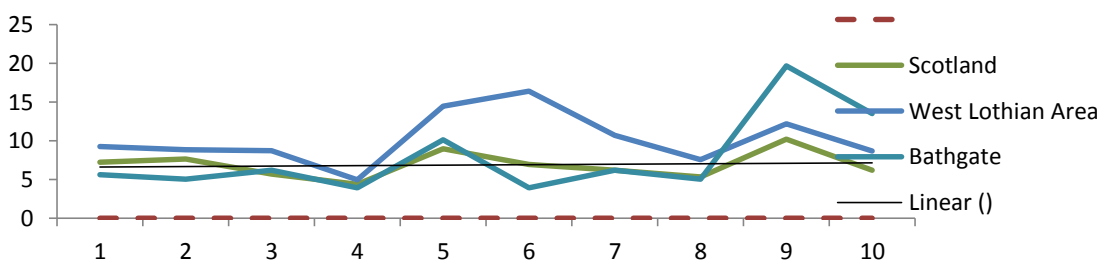
During the 2016-17 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 1 accidental dwelling fire in comparison to 7 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period.

Accidental Dwelling Fires (Casualties and Fatalaties) Per 1,000,000 head of population



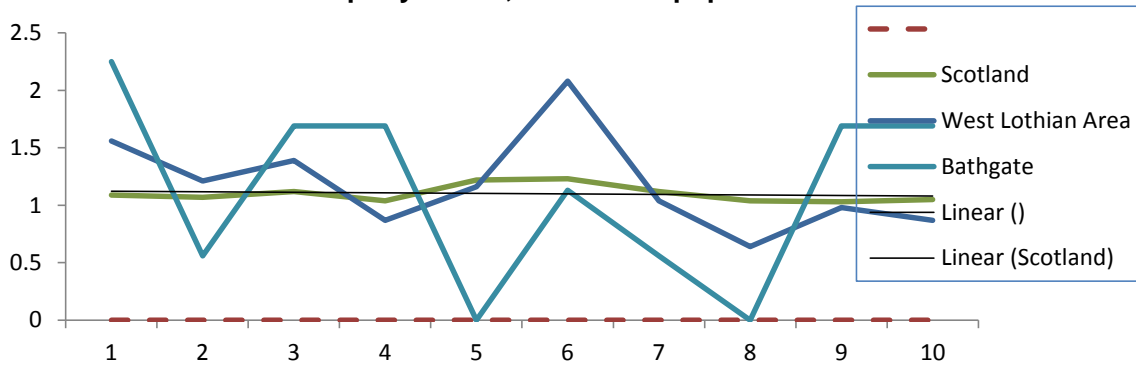
During the 2016-17 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 0 casualties due to fire in comparison to 0 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period.

Deliberate Fires Per 10,000 head of population



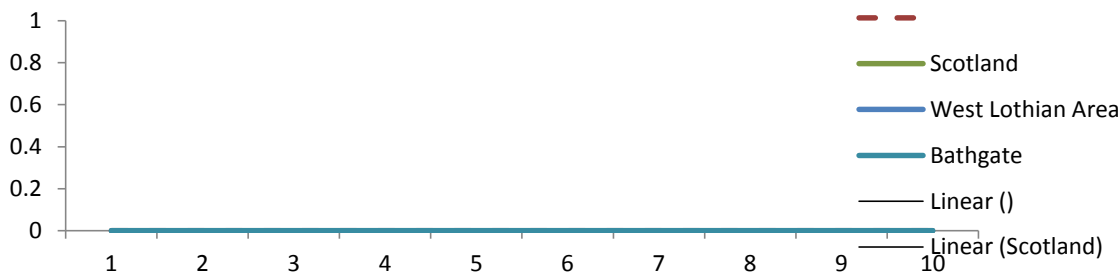
SFRS have dealt with 24 deliberate fires incidents during 2016-17 year to date reporting period in comparison to 7 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period.

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



SFRS have dealt with 3 non domestic fires incident during 2016-17 year to date reporting period in comparison to 2 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period.

Non-fatal Non-Fire Emergencies Casualties Per 1,000,000 head of population

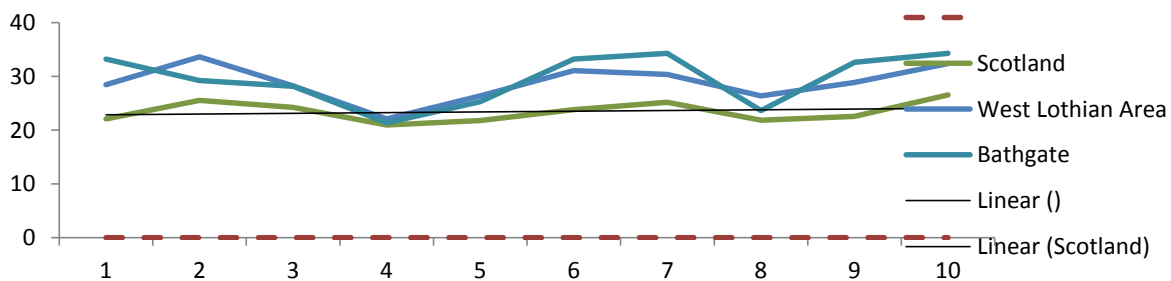


SFRS have dealt with 8 casualties from non-fire emergencies during 2016-17 year to date reporting period in comparison to 1 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period. West Lothian and Scotland totals are listed below for this period

West Lothian total = 23

Scotland total = 823

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Per 10,000 head of population



SFRS have dealt with 61 UFAS incidents during 2016-17 year to date reporting period in comparison to 59 during 2015-16 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).



BATHGATE 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 Bathgate 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 2016.

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 Bathgate Ward

Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies

Void Period	July 2016	%	Aug 2016	%	Sept 2016	%	WL Target %
0-2 weeks	13	100%	17	68%	12	67%	55%
2-4 weeks	0	0%	3	12%	0	0%	30%
4+ weeks	0	0%	5	20%	6	33%	15%
Total Lets	13	100%	25	100%	18	100%	

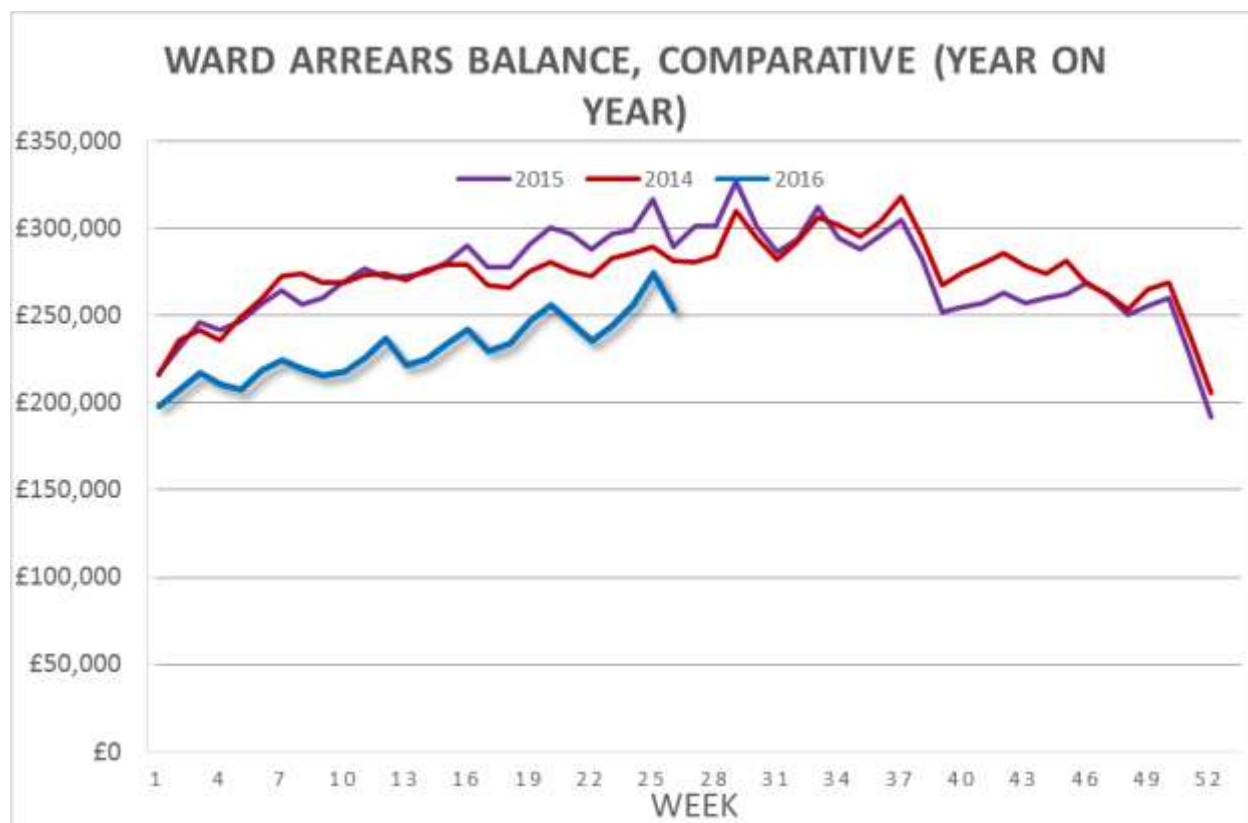
Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies

Void Period	July 2016	%	Aug 2016	%	Sept 2016	%	WL Target %
0-2 weeks	1	50%	6	100%	3	75%	80%
2-4 weeks	1	0%	0	0%	1	25%	15%
4+ weeks	0	50%	0	0%	0	0%	5%
Total Lets	2	100%	6	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 87 mainstream tenancies and 28 temporary tenancies let by the Bathgate Team. There are currently 40 Policy Voids in the ward. Reasons include properties unable to let due Health & Safety reasons, being held for decant purposes at Rosemount Court and properties held to assist with decants due to remedial works.

Rent Arrears



	2015/16 (WK26)		2016/17 (WK26)	
Arrears Banding	Balance	Tenants In Arrears	Balance	Tenants In Arrears
£0.01 to £99.99	£11,564	272	£11,885	275
£100.00 to £299.99	£45,759	251	£56,955	307
£300.00 to £499.99	£45,361	120	£43,471	112
£500.00 to £749.99	£32,532	53	£30,101	71
£750.00 to £999.99	£26,119	31	£19,633	23
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£60,753	44	£52,039	38
£2000+	£67,499	24	£39,217	13
Total	£289,587	795	£253,300	839

The Ward position for Q2 of 2016/17 is £253,300. This is a decrease of -£36,287 on last year's position. The West Lothian overall position has decreased by £15,556 from last year and at week 26 was £1,762,795

While there are 51 serious arrears cases (£1,000+) it should be noted 69% of cases are in the lower bands (£300 or less)

Although overall the position remains positive and we are tracking below last year we will continue focusing on the following:

- Arrangements to pay - increase the visibility of tenants with arrangements within the performance model to identify trends in missed payments for follow up action
- 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.

Bathgate 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.

Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing

Local New Build Update

Site	No. Of Units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Complete
Wester Inch	86	Enabling works are underway. Contract start date to be confirmed.	0	No
Glasgow Road	9	October 2015	9	September 2016

Capital Programme – Local Capital Upgrades

Following on from the completion in Balbardie Avenue last year, no other major programmes are occurring in the Bathgate area this year, but a share of all planned and high value reactive repair programmes take place in the area. Senior and vulnerable tenants are also benefitting from the Assisted Decoration Scheme.

Tenant Participation Update July - September 2016

The TP Team continue to support existing groups who give up their time to work with us

Facebook

Membership of the new Facebook group has risen steadily over the past months. Tenants can ask to join the group by email the TP Team or requesting on our Facebook page. The group share their views on housing issues and receive information and updates on housing issues.

Tenants Self Service Portal

The TP Team have been out and about in local offices promoting the new Tenants portal called 'Tenants Self-serve'. This new portal allows tenants to check their rent balances, make payments, set up a direct debit and report and check on the progress of any repairs they have logged with us.

HRA Guidance

In September, tenants were invited to a training session to learn more about the council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the new guidance from Scottish Government. Scotland Housing Network hosted this event in Whitburn and explained to tenants what their rent money was used for and how to scrutinise spend. Those attending found the session very informative.

Pamper Me Event

The Annual 'Pamper Me' event took place in September at the Regal Theatre in Bathgate. Over one hundred people attended this event and enjoyed lunch and refreshments as well as visiting the many information stall and trying out some new activities.

East Lothian Visit

Following the success of the Tenants Panel (Financial Scrutiny) winning the Tenant Information Services (TIS) National Excellence Award for the Most Inspiring Scrutiny Group in June. East Lothian tenants visited

to find out more about this initiative. Several tenants and staff members spent the day learning about the work the group covers and sharing good practice ideas and views.

Safer Neighbourhood Team

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) across the nine Multi-Member Wards are an integral part of the Community Safety Unit and are a key feature of partnership working. In the Bathgate ward partnership working sees the local housing team, youth worker, council officer within the SNT and Police officers all working together to tackle anti-social behaviour in the ward.

WLC Officer based in SNT July – September 2016

The Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer has been working with the Police, Bathgate Housing, Barony housing, Link Housing and also Victim Support.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer carried out joint visits with Barony this month relating to a young person, in his first flat regarding his poor game keeping skills. His tenancy has been used as a party house and Police have been called out on several times mostly at the weekends. The tenant has had his 3 tenancy warning from WLC, a section 54 served by the police and Barony have given their warnings to him resulting in an ASBO application being prepared against him for continued antisocial behaviour. Warnings were issued to a further two young tenants with council properties who were also finding it difficult to control their behaviour. Both have been offered support.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer, Police and Housing carried out 3 letter drops in areas that were getting a lot of complaint. Since this has happened, further calls from resident's confirming where the trouble spots areas are allowing the services to carry out more detailed patrols. A meeting at the partnership building has been a success. With the information received, there have been 2 arrests, 2 abandonment notices and 3 flats will be searched for drug activity.

Complaints received re youth problems, hanging round the corner shops, stealing, making a lot of noise and making the local residents feel scared and alarmed with their behaviour. The Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer and local police spoke with the youths, as well as the shop keepers, and followed up with speaking to the residents too in order to stop the antisocial behaviour/crime.

The Safer Neighbourhood Team Officer has been working with the DASAT, support workers, careers, speech therapist, victim support, Bathgate housing staff and Bathgate Police.

A lot of calls received from a new built area about neighbour disputes, such as dog fouling, children playing ball games in a non-ball area resulting in windows being smashed, cars being damaged and loud noise as well as neighbours not getting on, all requiring interventions.

A concerns meeting is planned regarding an older lady with learning difficulties who has assaulted one of her neighbours, and doesn't know how to act/behave around people and give them their personal space

Youth Worker based in SNT July – September 2016

The Youth Worker has been working with two young people during July and August.

E. CONCLUSION

To note the contents of the report.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

Contact Person: Kate.Ward@westlothian.gov.uk

Tel: 01506 283414

Date: 5th December, 2016.



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise members of the recent activity of the NET's, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1st August to 31st October 2016.

B. RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to:

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

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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	Relates to items 9 - We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger & 12 – We value and enjoy our built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
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 1st August - 31st October 2016.

D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works

Cyclic grass cutting is now completed for the season, although additional cuts to football pitches may take place, depending on weather and growth.

Weed killing operations are now completed for the season. The new residual chemical used for the first application appears to have been successful in reducing weed growth, and consequentially the amount of Glyphosate used for the second visit.

Hedge cutting and shrub bed maintenance will continue over the winter period.

Grounds Maintenance Enquiries

In total 34 ground maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

Drainage Flooding Grass Areas – 1
Grass Cutting Enquiries – 7
Grass Cutting Missed Not Cut – 3
Grass Highway Verges – 1
Hedge Cutting Enquiries – 5
Illegal Adverts/Estate Signs – 1
Shrub Bed Enquiries – 1
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path – 8
Shrub Beds Not Maintained – 1
Shrub Beds Obscuring Sightline – 3
Weeds General Enquiries – 2
Weeds on Paths or Roads - 1

D3 Garden Maintenance Routine Works

The Garden Maintenance scheme grass cutting for the season was completed on 18 October 2016. Staff are in the process of carrying out hedge cutting, at properties which have hedges, and this is due to be completed in November. Staff are completing outstanding works orders for Housing and Building Services. The scheme will be finished for the season once hedge cutting complete and will recommence April 2017

Garden Maintenance Enquiries

In total 19 garden maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

Garden Maintenance General Enquiries – 4
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut – 9
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting – 3
Garden Maintenance Standard of Cut - 3

D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

Cleaner Communities staff are continuing to remove litter, fly tipping and debris on roads, footpaths and open spaces throughout the ward.

Fly tipping is becoming an increasing issue within the ward with 22 reported instances in the last monitoring period. Staff have attended meetings with Zero Waste Scotland to discuss and explore options to reduce fly-tipping across the ward and the council area including joint campaigns.

Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 143 street cleansing related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

Dead Animals – 6
Dog Fouled Grass/Open Space – 2
Dog Fouled Kids Play Areas - 1
Dog Fouling on Paths/Roads – 23
New Dog Waste Bin Request – 1
Dog Waste Bin Overflowing – 8
Glass on Paths/Open Space – 16
Graffiti Non Offensive – 3
Graffiti Racist or Offensive – 1
Illegal Fly Posting - 2
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping – 22
Litter Bin Full/Overflowing – 8
New Litter Bin Request - 2
Litter General Enquires – 9
Litter on Paths/Roads Verges – 5
Needles/Syringes Abandoned – 2
Street Sweeping Enquires – 6
Vehicle Abandoned – 20
Trolleys Dumped – 1
Env. Enforcement Officers - 5

Enforcement Action

Environmental Wardens have issued 2 fixed penalty notices for littering offenses during the period.

D5 Parks and Woodland Routine Works

Beecraigs Tree and Woodland

The 40,000 trees planted in the Spring were weeded over the summer. Some failures have occurred due to the drought in May and significant browsing by Roe deer. Replacement of these is underway. In common with previous years, Appropriate Roe deer control will be undertaken following approval of SNH.

Tree and shrub planting is also being carried out around the new visitor centre, the caravan site and adjacent to car parks to provide seasonal colour.

The programme of drainage improvements and ride clearance has continued in the southern part of the country park. Preparations are being made to undertake the next phase of thinning work which is planned for this winter.

Access

Earlier in the year SRDP funding was secured to upgrade and link the path from the new visitor centre to Balvormie Play area. This together with 2 other sections of path for which a LandTrust grant application has been approved will be constructed over

the next month or so.

Little Boghead

The Ranger Service has been working with Bathgate Community Council and the Friends of Little Boghead for over a year now and have recently been successful in applying for a Tesco 'Bags of Help Grant'. Little Boghead is through to the public vote and is in with a chance of winning up to £12000 for new signage, interpretation, seating, and educational visits for local school children. You can vote for Little Boghead in Tesco in Bathgate between 31st October and 13th November.

Tree and Woodland Enquiries

Tree Advice or Consultations – 1
Tree Affecting Public Utility – 1
Tree Blocking Light – 3
Tree Branches Overhanging – 27
Tree Broken, Damaged or Dead – 1
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe – 1
Tree Enquiries General – 12
Tree Leaves Causing Problems – 3

D6 Open Space and Cemeteries

Balbardie Park

Allocated capital funding of £116k for 2017/18. Central Scotland Green Network Trust are currently working on a park improvement design, informed by community consultation.

Marchwood Crescent Park

Allocated capital funding of £47k for 2017/18. Draft design complete and approved. Planned improvements include new paths, seating, and trees. Next stage is feasibility costing. Design will then be made available for comment in mid-November.

Open Space Enquiries

Children Play Enquiries – 1
Public Park Enquiries – 7

Cemeteries Routine Works

Glasgow Road Cemeteries

Lair reinstatement works ongoing.
Leaf removal ongoing
Routine works ongoing.

Boghead Cemetery

Lair reinstatement works ongoing.
Routine works ongoing.

Cemeteries Enquiries

Cemeteries General Enquiries – 4
Family History Searches – 1
Lair Enquiries – 3
Lair Sunken or Uneven – 2

E CONCLUSION

Routine works for all areas are currently progressing as scheduled.

Staff have received and dealt with a number of customer enquires relating to various service areas throughout the period. They aim to maintain our strong performance dealing with enquiries within our target timescales

The Environmental Wardens have been involved in a number of community projects within the ward, with the aim of raising awareness of environmental issues.

The garden maintenance scheme grass cutting for season is now complete. Staff are carrying hedge cutting at properties with hedges and this is due to be completed completed in November.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: None

Contact Person: Tony Fleming, Waverley Street Depot, 01506 776437,
tony.fleming@westlothian.gov.uk

Jim Jack

Head of Operational Services

5th December 2016



BATHGATE 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 2015-March 2016.

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 'Better Off: Anti-Poverty Strategy'.

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)	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 'Better Off: West Lothian 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, the aim being to help people to obtain and retain employment as a key route out of poverty.

D.2 Local Provision

Appendix One shows the number of people the service has worked with over the last year in the Bathgate area.

The Advice Shop has helped 1751 customers to manage their money and to resolve benefit problems. 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 potential eviction who engages with our service to provide positive outcomes. Customers can be in social or private housing or an owner occupier. The service prevented potential 78 evictions in the ward to support them to sustain their home.

The service had identified the following priorities for development over the 2015/16 year. Namely, to;

- Further develop our Bathgate Partnership Centre service to offer a holistic approach to best meet the needs of our customers.
- Support local services through delivery of training, workshops and briefings to improve confidence and understanding of the social security system and how to refer.
- To develop partnerships with Cyrenians and Children 1st to support vulnerable customers.

Appendix Two shows the wider work of the Advice Shop and the specific campaigns which are delivered across West Lothian alongside a range of projects which are provided in partnership with key agencies to target the most vulnerable in our communities.

E. CONCLUSION

The report and attached appendices summarise the work of the Advice Shop service in the Bathgate 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.

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: Bathgate Ward Profile April 2015-March 2016

Appendix 2: Advice Shop Annual Report 2015/16

Contact Person: Elaine Nisbet, Anti-poverty and Welfare Advice Manager

Tel: 01506 282936 email: Elaine.nisbet@westlothian.gov.uk

Donald Forrest

Head of Finance and Property Services

Date of meeting: 05/12/2016

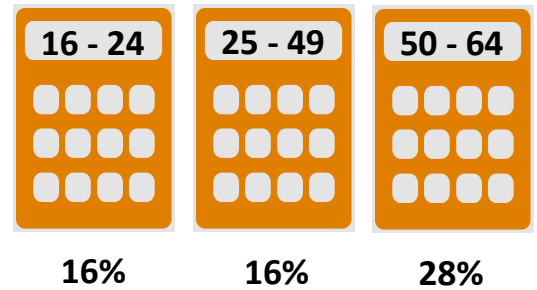
Bathgate Profile April 2015 - March 2016

What we know about the community*



19% Children
64% Working Age
17% Pensionable age

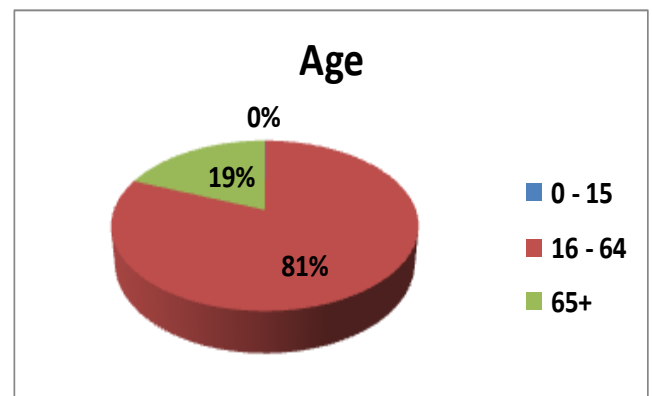
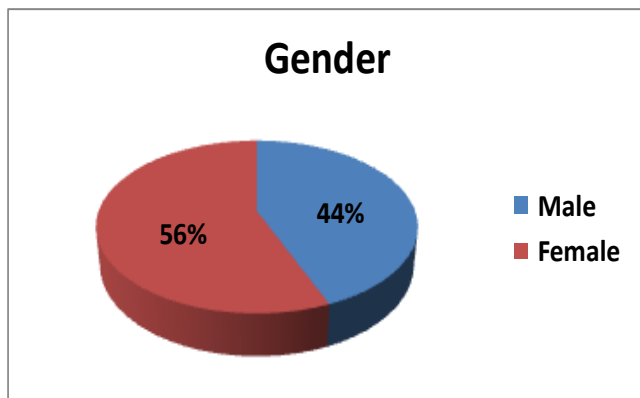
Percentage of working age adults claiming benefits by age



* taken from Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics: www.sns.gov.uk

Who we've worked with

1751 Advice Shop Clients



Evictions Prevented by engagement and positive outcomes



Maximising Income for clients

Benefit Awards



Appeals



Energy Savings



More accessible for clients

Cyrenians



Fortnightly Session to providing a full Advice Shop service.

Children First



Weekly session providing help and support to children and their families.

Case Study

We assisted Mr O to complete his PIP claim, which was fast-tracked due to the terminal nature of his illness. Once he was awarded Personal Independence Payment, we carried out a further benefit check with his wife and established that they would be entitled to Pension Credit, which would allow them to receive full Council Tax Reduction and other savings elsewhere. Unfortunately, Mrs O had a bad experience when calling the Pension Service to make her claim, and soon afterwards her husband passed away so she was unable to cope with addressing their benefit situation.

We contacted the DWP's escalation team on Mrs O's behalf to resolve the matter. We arranged appointments with Mrs O to assist her in person with her change of circumstances, to update the Council and Department for Work and Pensions. We also discussed whether she would qualify for any disability benefit. She had never looked into this herself as she was so busy caring for her husband through his illness, however she herself suffers from a health condition which causes her to lose consciousness, fall and injure herself. We identified that she may qualify for a disability benefit.

We assisted Mrs O to phone and make a claim for Attendance Allowance. She was quickly awarded the highest rate of Attendance Allowance, which gave her an extra £82 per week, along with giving her a new entitlement to Pension Credit and to full Council Tax Reduction. In total, we helped to increase her income by over £100 per week at a time when the household income had dropped when her husband passed away.

Mrs O was hugely grateful for our support and advice, not just for the financial benefit but for the kindness and compassion we showed her while she was going through such a difficult time dealing with the last days of her husband's illness. She explained that the extra income would enable her to enjoy a well-deserved break away, and she told us that she could not have coped through any of this without our help.

This Year we plan to;

- ◆ Further develop our sessions held at Children 1st and Cyrenians.
- ◆ To work tenants of new build properties to ensure sustainability and affordability.
- ◆ Development of an information and support hub in Bathgate Partnership Centre to help those diagnosed with cancer, their family and carers.



Annual Report 2015-16

The Advice Shop is a free, impartial and confidential service to help the people of West Lothian with a focus to alleviate poverty and to promote inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy.

Advice Shop customers and partners have told us that accessing advice is easier if it is in their local community. In response, the Advice Shop has set up outreach sessions across West Lothian. Customers have asked for an appointment rather than just dropping in. In 2015/16 there have been 3,100 appointments to support customers to gain over £1.7m in extra income.

For up to date information on where all of the outreach sessions are held go to: www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop



Better off
West Lothian

westlothian.gov.uk



**West Lothian
Council**

Macmillan Benefits Project

The service is for anyone living in West Lothian and for patients attending the Western General Hospital who are affected by cancer including family and carers. Advisors will not only look at income maximisation through benefits which may be available, but will assist with access to

Occupational Therapy, Home Safety and travel concessions. Over the last year at the Western General Hospital, the project has supported 589 clients to gain an extra £1.6m income as well as signposting customers to other services to help support them in their cancer journey.



*When someone has cancer or, a family member has had a cancer diagnosis, the shock can throw families into a frightening and confusing situation. People really struggle to cope with the initial news and there are important questions they need answered, such as, what help is available and can they access benefits whilst they are unable to work. The Macmillan advisor is someone they can turn to for financial help. As one of the Macmillan advisors, I am based in Bathgate, however my role involves me working within the Western General Hospital; it is one of Scotland's largest cancer care hospitals. There are information sessions on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Macmillan Information Point within the hospital. It is a morning drop in session and in the afternoon there are ward visits. The project has built up a great relationship with all health care professionals and staff within the hospital. There is a system in place for staff to refer patients to us for a ward visit or to contact them at home if need be. On average we help about 7 – 10 patients and their families each session.” **Macmillan Advisor***



MacMillan @ West Lothian: Information and Support Services



This is a new service which is available to anyone affected by cancer; be that people with a cancer diagnosis, family members, carers or friends and will welcome anyone at any point in their cancer journey. The service will provide emotional support, access to information materials around cancer and its effects and treatment, or simply a listening ear for people. As well as cancer information and emotional support, the service can refer people on to other services including benefits advice and counselling. Trained volunteers will play a key role in the delivery of the drop-in service. The first drop-in point will be in Bathgate Partnership Centre and the project has recruited six volunteers who are currently undertaking training.

Pensioner Income Maximisation Service

Working with West Lothian Social Policy, Carers of West Lothian and NHS Lothian, this service focusses on working with older customers, people affected by dementia and long term conditions. Over this last year, we have worked with 520 customers; the service has introduced a new outreach session with Carers of

West Lothian on the first Wednesday of every month. When older people leave hospital, often they will be referred to Social Work for an assessment. The PIMS advisor has been conducting joint visits with Community Care Assistants and this has proved to be very beneficial in relation to benefit entitlement.



A joint home visit with the Community Care Assistant was arranged. The visit was for a vulnerable, elderly couple to follow up on aids and adaptations that had been put into their home. The referral was only for the wife but, from a benefit perspective, it was immediately apparent that both husband and wife were eligible for a disability benefit. Applications were made for Attendance Allowance for both of them and they were awarded this benefit which made them better off by £110.00 per week. This allowed them to take a taxi to and from the hospital which was a great relief to both of them. If the couple had not been referred by the Community Care Assistant they would not have known that they were entitled to any benefits.” **PIMS Advisor**



Alzheimer West Lothian

More and more people are being diagnosed with Alzheimers or dementia and it is important that people living with dementia, including families and carers, are aware of the financial support available. Over the last year, the advisor has worked with over 100 families and gained almost £250,000 of extra income. On a regular basis, the advisor meets with individuals who attend the Alzheimer Scotland Peer Support Group. Usually, there are six couples attending and the advisor is able to provide information, advice and guidance on a range of topics.

As part of the campaign the advisor has been actively involved in helping Bathgate Partnership Centre become “dementia friendly”. All staff are trained in Dementia Awareness and are all Dementia Friends. This involved learning a little about dementia and doing very simple and practical things that can make an enormous difference to people living with the condition.



In partnership with Alzheimer Scotland, an advice session will take place in their offices in Livingston. It will start in April and appointments can be arranged to help support more people to get the help they need.

Ex Offenders Campaign

The project delivers a weekly advice session in HMP Addiewell. The advisor provides a link between prison and the community by working in partnership with other agencies to offer advice on benefits, housing, and debt and energy issues. Prisoners approaching their release date are automatically referred for an appointment six weeks prior to liberation. In the last year there has been a 60% increase in the numbers referred into the project.



Whilst in prison last year the advisor went beyond the call of duty in keeping my house. Without her I would have lost my house and came out of prison homeless” **Customer comment**

Young Parents Project

In partnership with Children 1st, and based at the Chill Out Zone in Bathgate, this project works with young parents and children up to the age of eight years. The project aims to improve the outcomes and life chances for families through tackling money worries, maximising income and providing one-to-one support on a long term basis. There is a drop-in

session every Friday afternoon with access to telephones and computers, crèche and play activities for the children. In the first year of the project, the money advisor has worked with 40 families to manage their debt, understand the benefits system and to budget effectively.

3 or More Project



Customers, who are referred to the Food bank can only receive three vouchers in any six month period. The project works in partnership with West Lothian Food bank to engage with customers experiencing persistent food poverty. Often customers with complex and enduring financial difficulties exceed this limit while their crisis remains unresolved.

The project aims to alleviate food poverty both in the immediate and longer term by providing an emergency food parcel when visiting customers in their own home.

The advisor will give one to one support to help the customer maximise their income, resolve any outstanding problems and refer them on for additional support. Over the past year, 58 individuals have been supported.



I don't know where I would be right now if the Food bank project hadn't been available. I had exhausted all of my vouchers and my crisis grant entitlement. I had nowhere else to turn. The project helped me through a difficult period when I was switching between benefits" **Customer comment**

Kinship Care

Sometimes children can no longer stay with their parents and instead live with relatives or friends in kinship care. This can be because of parental drug and alcohol misuse, mental ill health, imprisonment of one or both parents, neglect or bereavement. The advisor works with the family to increase their disposable income particularly in determining calculations to ensure they are better off during the

assessment period. This allows families to make informed decisions about accepting the Kinship Care Allowance as they may not always be better off.

The advisor works in partnership with the Social Work Family Placement team, Psychology of Parenting Project, ABE and 'We Kin Care' support group. Over the year, the project has worked with 29 kinship carers.



Mr Smith was referred by Social Work Family Placement Team for a financial check. Mr Smith is a kinship carer for his two grandsons aged 10 and 12. He was under assessment for Kinship Care Allowance and wanted to know how accepting the new allowance would affect his financial situation. Overall, taking into account his current income, if he accepted the allowance he would be better off and the amount he received would increase when the younger grandson turns eleven. This information helped Mr Smith to make decisions which affected not only him but also his two young grandsons.."

Kinship Advisor

Working to support customers to:

Stay Warm

The number of households experiencing fuel poverty in Scotland is 34.9% or 845,000 and in West Lothian the figure is 29%. Fuel poverty is defined as having to spend more than 10% of your disposable income on fuel in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime. A satisfactory heating regime means that you can maintain a temperature of 21°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms. Fuel poverty is caused by a combination of rising energy costs, low

disposable household income and poor energy efficiency in the home. The consequences of fuel poverty can be misery, discomfort, ill health and debt. The energy advisor helps with improving energy efficiency, helps customers make informed choices about energy suppliers and helps to assist with income maximisation and fuel debt. Last year we helped customers to save £251,192.



Mrs Brown, who is an 84 year old lady, contacted the Advice Shop after a friend told her about seeing an article about the Warm Home Discount Scheme in the local newspaper. She had heard of the Warm Home Discount Scheme but was certain she did not qualify as she is not in receipt of Guarantee Pension Credit. She called the Advice Shop to ask for advice. Although Mrs Brown does not receive Guarantee Pension Credit, her annual income is less than £16,190. Her energy supplier is British Gas. Mrs Brown qualifies for the Warm Home Discount under their broader criteria – ‘age over 62 with household income less than £16,190’ Mrs Brown was able to tell the advisor her British Gas account number, the advisor was able to go online and submit an application on her behalf. Mrs Brown was delighted, saying she has never bothered before as she really thought she didn’t qualify so didn’t want to bother us.” **Energy Advisor**

Appeal Decisions which they think are wrong

Customers can decide that a decision about a benefit claim they have made with the Department for Work and Pensions is wrong. If they take this decision then the Advice Shop will help represent them at the appeal hearing. The chart shows the different type of appeals; 54% of the appeals are related to decisions about Personal Independent payment.

Over the year, the service has dealt with 366 appeals which is an increase of 90% on the previous year. The service wins 70% of appeals and has generated £982,602 that people from West Lothian would have lost without the help and assistance from the appeal reps.

Mrs Brown was looking for help to appeal a benefit decision for her 5 year old daughter. Her daughter was previously in receipt of the high rate of care for a limited period. Mrs Brown had completed a renewal claim and the decision was made - nil award. A mandatory reconsideration was completed and the decision remained unchanged.

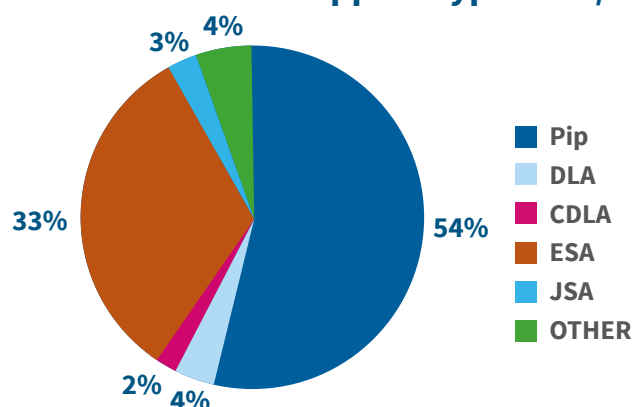
The service received the appeal papers and noted the conflicting evidence within the report from the school and the nursery. As part of representing the customer at tribunal, we prepared the customer for the type of questions she would be asked on the day, we pointed out the conflicting evidence and prepared a submission evidencing the care and mobility needs of the child. We asked the tribunal to consider making an award or consider adjourning for

new evidence from the school as the reports were so conflicting. The tribunal accepted an adjournment.

The Advisor:

- Contacted the head teacher and pointed out the inconsistencies and helped the teacher draft a letter of support.
- Advised the customer to get in touch with the health visitor for a letter of support.
- Updated the submission to include new evidence.

Appeal Type 2015/16



Appeal Decisions which they think are wrong (continued)

The appeal was successful and high rate care and lower rate mobility was awarded. This means that the customer and her child are better off by £310 per week.



I would never have coped with proceeding to appeal without the support of the Advice Shop, I found the whole thing so stressful and relied upon my representative to guide me through this and they were so helpful contacting the school, helping to try and resolve the issues on my behalf. I felt unable to do this myself as I was so upset with the issues and found it hard to communicate with the school.” Mrs Brown

Manage their money

The Advice Shop offers one to one advice for customers who are struggling financially. They may have high levels of debt or are struggling to budget and manage their expenditure. Due to welfare reform, income is being reduced which, for many customers, is leaving them with very little to budget with. We work with families to eradicate debt and explore the most appropriate debt solution route. We work closely with each family to enable them to maintain

their ongoing liabilities, prioritise their essential outgoings and budget to maintain a standard of living that is sustainable. Once the crisis is over, we want to prevent the situation from reoccurring. We will support people to become more financially capable. This may include referring to Adult Basic Education where they can join short courses such as ‘Cash Confident’ and ‘More for Less’.



This year the service helped customers manage **£9,897,165** of debt.

Keep their home



I met Ms Jones at the doors of court on 7 January. Ms Jones’ landlord was seeking decree for eviction as she had arrears of £2653.25. The arrears had accrued due to issues with Housing Benefit. A continuation was sought and granted in court until 18 February to allow us to investigate the Housing Benefit and affordable payments of £10.00 per fortnight. After investigation, a late reconsideration request showing “good cause” was submitted to Revenues on 26 January 2016. This requested consideration into all previous decisions. This was accepted by Revenues, and Housing Benefit of £65.58 per week was awarded together with a lump sum payment of £1639.50. There was also a Housing Benefit overpayment being deducted at the rate of £4.60 per week. A request for this to be reduced to 50p to help ease some financial pressures was accepted and reduced for thirteen weeks. After further negotiations with the landlord this case was continued at court on 18 February 2016 until 17 March 2016 to allow for further investigation into Housing Benefit. A further reconsideration of the late reconsideration was submitted to Revenues. This was re-looked at because of Ms Jones vulnerability and given the severe and enduring mental health issues, a further Housing Benefit was awarded and a request was also sent to Revenues asking to look into the current Housing Benefit overpayments which totalled to £1900.00. This request was accepted as an erroneous decision and subsequently written off due to this error. Ms Jones rental account is now in credit and the Summary Cause Summons to remove her from her home was subsequently dismissed in court on 14 April. Ms Jones now has security of tenure without the threat of homelessness hanging over her head. The account is now in credit of £23.23 and Housing Benefit overpayments are no longer being deducted.” Welfare Rights Officer

In 2015/16, the service supported **760** customers to keep their home.



Keep in touch with customers ...

by using SMS messaging. Since July 2015, the Advice Shop has sent over 1,700 messages to remind customers about appointments, inform them about the changes due to welfare reform and, encouraged customers to engage with the service. All staff have been trained on the system and have access to it whenever they need to contact a customer. Messages are immediate and

customers can respond quickly. Each message costs £0.035p to send and has helped us to save on printing and postage costs. Messages which remind customers about their appointments have been particularly successful with only 8% of no shows at appointments.

Update our web pages ...

to help customers and partners find information and advice on the services we deliver, to give practical guidance and to answer

frequently asked questions. Along with increasing the use of council's Facebook page, more customers are visiting our pages.

Introduce Self Help Guides ...

because we want customers to understand better what is happening. It can be challenging to remember all the information and advice and, with this in mind, self-help guides have been developed to support customers to manage their money, appeal benefit decisions which may be wrong, raise awareness of disability benefits and to understand what a sanction is.



Give staff the skills and knowledge ...

to be able to offer good, quality, independent advice. Over this past year, staff have had opportunities to attend a wide range of training including Mental Health Awareness training, Employment Support Allowance and the Right to Reside courses. In total we have provided 19 training opportunities and staff have undertaken over 96 hours of training along with opportunities to shadow at Livingston Sherriff Court, HM Tribunal & Court Services social security appeals as well as spending time with some of our partners to gain a better understanding of how we can work together.

Staff are always keen to extend their knowledge to better support customers. Staff have been successful in achieving accreditation for all their hard work: a Senior Advisor has gained a degree in counselling, two Welfare Rights Officers have gained the PDA in Home Point and Housing Law Advice Level 7. A Senior Development Worker has completed the PRINCE2 qualification in Project Management and, lastly, one of the Senior Advisors has completed the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health – Managing Safely.

Support volunteers...

to provide invaluable assistance in supporting our service; they are an integral part of our delivery. Over the year we have recruited and trained 17 new volunteers. Altogether we have worked with 46 volunteers. They have contributed over 2036 hours of volunteering and participated in 141 hours of training. In our annual survey of volunteers, 100% of volunteers rated the training and support they receive as good or excellent. One volunteer commented that “this has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience and I am very pleased that I joined the programme”. It is clear that customers value the assistance they receive from our volunteers, one client who had received support from our buddy programme told us ‘I

suffer from various medical conditions, including low self-esteem and anxiety which makes attending assessments daunting. With a volunteer by my side I felt more confident...he made me feel at ease’ We are delighted that the hard work and dedication of our volunteers was recognised this year at the West Lothian Volunteer Awards, where Advice Shop and ABE Volunteers were named West Lothian Volunteer Group of the Year. Not to be outdone, Advice Shop and ABE staff were also recognised at these awards, scooping the Employer Supported Volunteering award for completing a successful garden makeover at Barnardos’ Melbourne House in Bathgate.

Fundraise ...

To support the causes which mean a lot to our team.

Raising funds through a Macmillan Coffee morning



transformed the Barnardos garden as part of the volunteering project



Karen, Margaret and Ruth made up bags of toiletries to donate to the Food Bank



Abseiling to raise funds for Barnardos



Win Awards

Volunteers winning the Team of Year Award at the West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway Award Evening



Staff winning the Employer Supported Volunteer Category at the West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway Award evening.



One of our staff was part of the team which won the Leader Award which was presented to the Investors in Young People project

Better Off is the Community Planning Partnership's approach to tackling poverty in West Lothian. The strategy was developed in 2012 and an action plan is developed every year with details of the activities undertaken by the Advice Shop and a wide range of partners to address poverty and mitigate the impact for local residents.



Better off

West Lothian

West Lothian Advice Network

The network brings together a range of agencies to develop a more co-ordinated approach to ensure residents have access to high quality advice and information. The network membership includes the Advice Shop, Citizens Advice Bureau, Weslo Housing Management, West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network and the Bridge Community Project.

The Network has produced a guide on benefit sanctions offering practical information and advice to customers and key workers. The guide covers a wide range of information including: avoiding

sanctions, understanding how sanctions work and how to appeal an unfair decision.

A Help in Crisis information day aimed at frontline staff was successfully delivered in March 2016. Over 100 people attended the event held at Howden Park Centre to hear presentations about the range of help available to customers in crisis from partners including Scottish Welfare Fund, West Lothian Food bank and the West Lothian Court Advice Project among others.



Universal Credit

Universal Credit was introduced in West Lothian in November 2015. The new benefit combines six existing benefits into one single monthly payment. The Advice Shop is responsible for delivering personal budgeting support for Universal Credit claimants to help those affected by the change to better understand their new benefit and enable them to budget effectively. We are working closely with the DWP as well as West Lothian Council Housing teams to ensure that referrals are made for

support when it is most needed. Advice is offered with a range of issues such as understanding how Universal Credit works, how to calculate income and outgoings, understanding priority bills and how to identify where to cut back on spending.

A series of information briefings were delivered to frontline Council staff and partners and resources have been developed including a desk aid and frequently asked questions list.

Money Week 2015

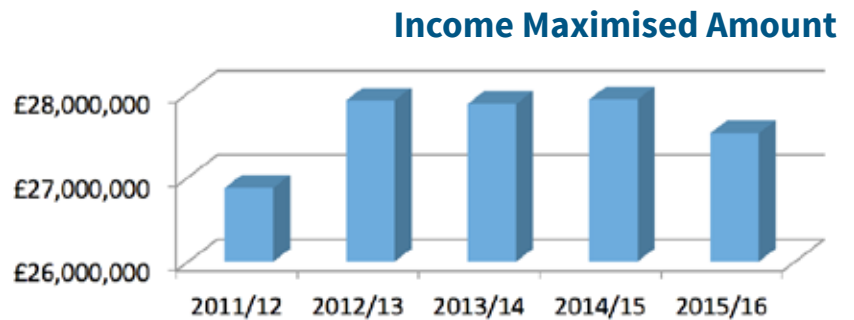
The fifth annual West Lothian Money Week was delivered in October 2015. A range of events were offered to residents with the aim of addressing key issues such as food and in-work poverty. A Fun with Food event was held in Whitburn Community Centre in partnership with West Lothian Food bank. Attendees were treated to a live food demonstration and children were offered free soft play whilst parents browsed information stalls. Two successful job fairs were held in Fauldhouse and Craigshill. Over 240 people

came along to meet local employers and access support with job searching.

A Five Day Money Makeover toolkit was offered to all Money Week participants and 75 people signed up for the information pack which contained a step by step guide to the five day plan as well as practical tools such as a budgeting sheet, recipe cards and self-help guides.

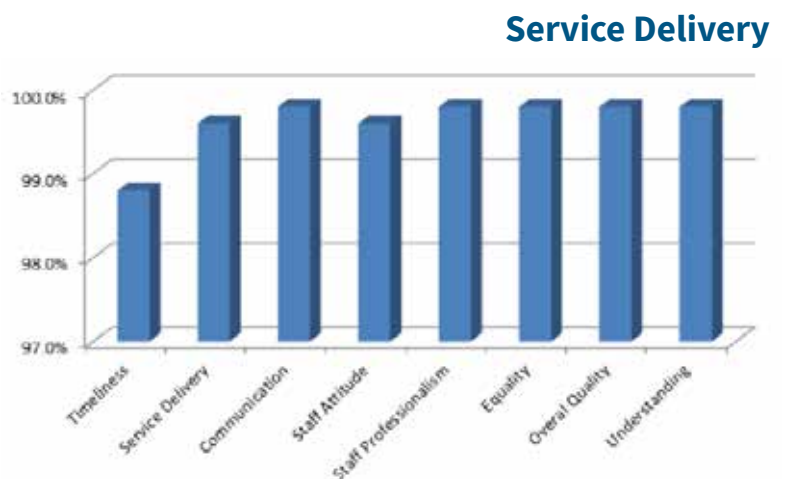
Maxmising Income

Given the impact of Welfare Reforms, we challenged ourselves to maintain our income target of £27,000,000. Through excellent campaign work we have continued to achieve our target; helping the people of West Lothian cope with the difficult benefit changes and increase their income.



Service Delivery

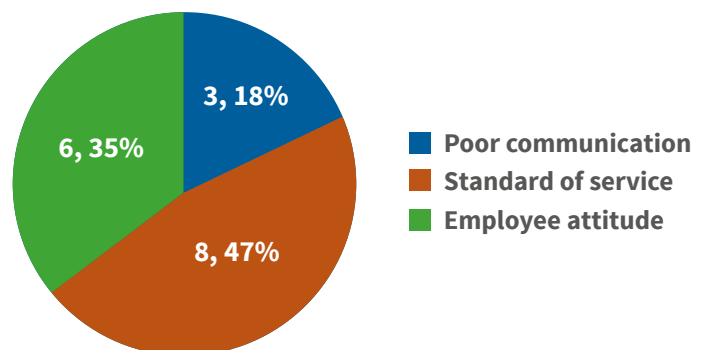
We want to deliver a service which meets our customers' needs and we encourage customers to complete survey cards to let us know how we are doing and make suggestions about improvements. Over the year, results have shown that we consistently work to a high standard.



We don't always get it right!


We closely monitor and analyse complaints to quickly identify any trends and we use complaints to make improvements in our service. In 2014-15 we received 16 complaints and there was an increase of 1 complaint to 17 in 2015-16. There has been an increase in complaints relating to our standard of service.


To improve we made our booking system easier to use and trained staff on the system. Training and coaching sessions have been developed and delivered to help staff be more confident in delivering difficult messages.



How to contact us:

-  **Telephone:** 01506 283000
-  **Email:** advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk
-  **Website:** www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop

 **Address:**
The Advice Shop,
Bathgate Partnership Centre,
South Bridge Street,
Bathgate,
EH48 1TS

 **Opening Hours:**
Monday-Thursday 8.30 – 5pm
Friday 8.30 – 4 pm

See our website for up-to-date information
on all of our outreach sessions.



Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages. Please contact the interpretation and translation service on 01506 280000. Text phones offer the opportunity for people with a hearing impairment to access the council. The text phone number is 01506 591652. A loop system is also available in all offices.



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2016

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 to be made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2016 to groups in the Bathgate ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes that eight groups within Bathgate ward have applied to the fund and will be 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 £29,093 agreed by the council. £2,639.52 has been distributed in the Bathgate 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' Groups Christmas Fund each year. In 2016 the total fund amounts to £29,093 (£28,765 in 2015). The fund is divided by the total number of beneficiaries which, in 2016, is 4,666 (4,949 in 2015). By using that number the global unit cost for 2016 is £6.24 (£5.82 in 2014) per beneficiary (£29,093/4,666). In Bathgate ward there are 423 beneficiaries and an allocation of £2,639.52. A full report on the final allocations will be made to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP in December. Letters were issued to groups on 31 October advising them of the amount of funding they will receive and payments will be made directly to the bank accounts of groups during November via PECOS.

D2 Applications 2016: Armadale and Blackridge ward

In total eight application forms were issued to groups across Bathgate ward of which eight have been returned. No groups were added to or removed from the list in 2016. The intention is that the eight groups that applied will be supported. Appendix one shows the organisations to be supported and the allocation to each.

D3 Applications 2016: Livingston-wide & West Lothian-wide organisations

One application was sent to, and returned by, a Livingston-wide group. The intention is that this will be supported. Two applications were issued to West Lothian-wide groups, with two returned. The intention is that these groups will be supported. Appendix two shows the organisations and the allocation to each.

E. CONCLUSION

The report advises of the allocations that were made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2016 to groups in Bathgate ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

A full report on the final allocations will be made to the Voluntary Organisation PDSP in December. Letters were issued to groups on 31 October advising them of the amount of funding they will receive, and payments were 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 2016 Bathgate Ward
Appendix 2: Allocations 2016 Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide Organisations

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Craig McCorriston, Head of Planning Economic Development and Regeneration

Date: 7 December 2015

BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2016

REPORT BY HEAD OF AREA SERVICES

Appendix 1: Allocations 2016 Bathgate Ward

Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount
1. Acredale House	60	£374.40
2. Boghall Pensioners Fund	80	£499.20
3. Carron Court Tenants Group	30	£187.20
4. Hanover Social Club	29	£180.96
5. Norvell Lodge Social Club	24	£149.76
6. Royal Scot Court Social Club	35	£218.40
7. St Marys and St Columbas 60s Club	25	£156.00
8. The Royal British Legion Scotland Bathgate Branch Club	140	£873.60
Totals	423	£2,639.52

Note:

BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2016

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Appendix 2: Allocations 2016: Livingston-Wide and West Lothian-Wide Organisations

Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount
Braid House Day Centre	160	£998.40
Total	160	£998.40

Group	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount
West Lothian 50+ Network	180	£1,123.20
West Lothian Visually Impaired Club	10	£62.40
Total	190	£1,185.60

**BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN 2016-17****FEBRUARY 2016**

	Issue	Purpose	Lead Officer	Date	Referral
1	Housing Report	Quarterly update on housing issues	Kate Ward	March 2017	No
2	Police/NRT Report	Quarterly update on police/SNT activity	Inspector Andrew Elliot	March 2017	No
3	Fire Service Report	Report Update on operational plan for 2014-17	Richie Hall	March 2017	No
4	Nets, Land and Countryside Services	Quarterly update on NETS activity	Daniel McComisky	March 2017	No
5	Community Health Champions	To inform members of the plans for Community Health Champions for each LAC	Jo MacPherson	June 2017	No
6	Housing Report	Quarterly update on housing issues	Kate Ward	June 2017	No
7	Police/NRT Report	Quarterly update on police/SNT activity	Inspector Andrew Elliot	June 2017	No
8	NETs Report	Quarterly update on NETS activity	Tony Fleming	June 2017	No
9	Fire Service Report	Report Update on operational plan for 2014-17	Richie Hall	June 2017	No
10	Regeneration Plan Update	To provide an update report on Regeneration Plan	Ian Hepburn	June 2017	No