

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEST LOTHIAN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on the current activities being undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSSEN) in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of social enterprises within West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Notes the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network in supporting and representing the interests of the social enterprise sector within West Lothian.

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)	The report does not raise any health or risk assessment issues. No strategic environmental assessment is required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£31,500 has been awarded to WLSSEN from the Voluntary Organisation budget for 2020/21.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated on a quarterly basis.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

West Lothian Council is committed to supporting the development of more enterprising and sustainable third sector that contributes to the key Community Planning Partnership outcomes.

D.2 Current update

A report from WLSen on the activities they have undertaken since the previous meeting of the panel is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

E CONCLUSION

The Panel is asked to note the update report but the West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSen) that the PDSP will receive regular updates going forward.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: WLSen update

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18 February 2021



Report to Voluntary Sector Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
18th February 2021
(Report period 12/11/2020 to 5/02/2021)

Background

At WLSen we are continuing to support, inform and connect our social enterprise members.

Lockdown has been another blow to social enterprises, with trading income once again impacted. Many are tapping into funding to help them adapt their services and to survive until some semblance of normality returns. Our key role is to widely share information and support with applications, signposting and informal mentoring where possible.

Mental Health support for Social Enterprise Leaders

Social entrepreneurs by their very nature are creative in their approach to challenges however the long-term nature of the pandemic is beginning to take its toll. To help alleviate some of the stress we are exploring member benefits to social enterprise leaders including counselling provided by The Bridge Community Project as well as Business Coaching sessions.

Mental Health Forum

We continue to prioritise our support to both social enterprises and third sector organisations who provide mental health services. The group which formed almost 8 months ago is growing from strength to strength with 25 members now engaged.

- Mission – the members are driven by a desire to ensure those in need of mental health support are aware of services and can access them.
- Meetings – the forum meets every 6 weeks with 19 people in attendance at the last meeting. We are next due to meet on 23rd February.
- Connecting – with a view to raising awareness and increasing referrals, at our last meeting we welcomed Wendy Carmichael (LAMH) who leads the Community Wellbeing Hubs. Previous attendees include Greg Stark NHS, Claire Beswick, Occupational Health Team and Mary Sinclair, SENSCOT's Health SEN Coordinator
- Website – we now have a dedicated page for the Mental Health Forum which includes both social enterprises and third sector organisations – see [here](#)
- Mapping & leaflet – both are under development
- CPP – we have been invited to speak about the work of the Mental Health Forum along with Declan Harrigan from SMILE Counselling.

Member support

One to one support continues to be provided to members both online and by phone. Recent advice has been given regarding insurance, legal structure, consultancy & asset development as well as less structured support in the form of a sounding board for leaders. Organisations supported in this time include Community Moorings, Trash Panda, The Bridge Community Project, Polbeth Hub as well as a start-up enquiry centred around education.

Connection nationally

We continue to engage at bi-weekly meetings hosted by [SENSCOT](#), the national body for Social Enterprise Networks (SEN's). These meetings attended by SEN's from across the country and are an opportunity to hear about national initiatives as well as to influence regarding key issues being experienced by our members.

Current focus is on Net Zero strategy for Social Enterprise as well as the continuing development of SG Social Enterprise Action Plan.

Working with VSGWL

We continue to work closely with VSGWL not only delivering support to those third sector organisation operating as social enterprises but also in assessment of their small grant scheme.

Working with WLC

Our Network Coordinator was a panel member for the Community Support Fund. It is our view that a robust assessment process was delivered despite considerable time constraints. Our one concern centres round the delay in communicating decisions which we feel may negatively impact on relations between WLC and third sector organisations at a time when collaborative working is vital.

Online communication

Topics covered in our weekly e-newsletter & monthly round up included Net Zero Strategy, Adapt & Thrive Fund, Social Media guide, Connecting Scotland, Kickstart Programme, Scottish Business Support top up grants, Discretionary Business support etc.

Newsletters	Number	Ave. open rate	Ave. click rate
Weekly - Three Things for Thursday	9	53%	12%
Monthly Round-up	2	54%	15%

Social media	Posts	Views /Tweets	Engagements
Facebook	98	2,030	134
Twitter	106	10 Unique/ 96 Retweets	1,764