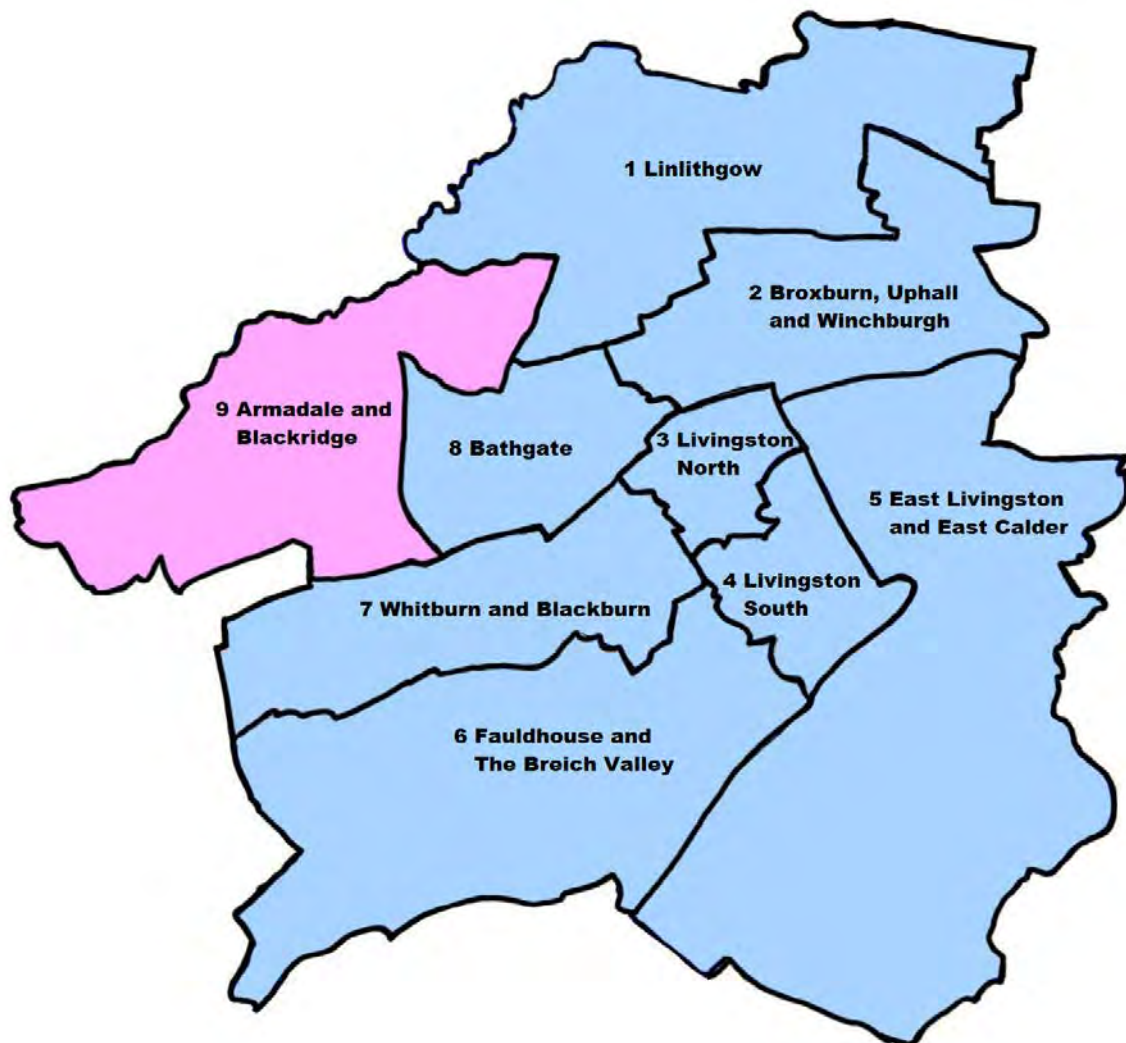




West Lothian Area Command

Lothian and Scottish Borders



Ward 7 Whitburn & Blackburn Multi Member Ward Report

Quarter 4 – 2020/2021

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an update on performance, activities and issues across the Ward for the period up to 29th March 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Local Area Committee notes the content of the report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; 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	Performance relative to the same period in 2020; set out in the report.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger; we take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive society
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII	Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Introduction:

This document is intended to provide a summary of the performance of West Lothian Area Command for the reporting period of Quarter 4 2020/2021. The report references the police priorities within the Local Police Plan for West Lothian 2020-2023, namely:

- Protecting The Most Vulnerable People
- Reducing Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Reducing Acquisitive Crime
- Improving Road Safety
- Tackling Serious and Organised Crime

The data provided in this report is for information purposes to allow Partnership Members to conduct their scrutiny responsibilities.

Armadale and Blackridge Community Engagement Priorities:

- Violence, Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Substance Misuse
- Acquisitive Crime
- Road Safety

Whitburn & Blackburn Community Officers

PC Carol-Ann Wilson

PC Barrie Kennedy

Executive Summary:

Officers in West Lothian have been focused to delivering, with our key partners, our Local Policing Priorities, and meeting our commitment to Keep People Safe.

- **Protecting the most vulnerable people**

Domestic abuse crimes is an area of focus in terms of providing confidence to report, undertaking professional investigations, providing victim support, pursuing perpetrators and managing offenders.

During 2020/2021, Operation Shoestack was established which increased solvency in respect of domestic and violent crimes. There has been an increase in domestic incidents reported during the year with many being historical incidents which have been identified by detectives engaging with victims, identifying previous partners and follow up enquiries to identify previously unreported crimes. We continued our use of Social Media to ensure the message of domestic violence being unacceptable is reiterated.

Significant demands are placed on the police when dealing with Mental Health concerns and missing persons enquiries, which can be hugely time consuming. In partnership with NHS we have access to the Acute Care and Support Team (ACAST) where officers can get direct contact with a Mental Health Nurse to seek direction and advice for persons suffering from a mental health or emotional episode. This was used on 12 occasions in March 2021 to ensure those people received the most appropriate support at source and also significantly reduced time officers spent in dealing with these issues.

We are continuing our work with St John's Hospital to refresh protocols relating to missing persons and deliver the Herbert Protocol to Care Homes, NHS and 3rd sector to help safeguard some of the most vulnerable people in areas from going missing, or maximising the likelihood of a swift and safe return.

Visits to the local young person's residential care homes continue when possible to engage with "cared for children" and build positive relationships. Visits have been well received by staff and young people and it is envisaged that this approach will improve safety through these positive relationships. In addition we have contributed to a request from Scottish Government to West Lothian Council around what each partner has been doing in relation to corporate parenting. Additionally local officers have contributed to the West Lothian Young Persons Champions board.

Officers have been establishing links with external agencies who can provide support to the most vulnerable in our community. The aim of this is to increase awareness of these agencies, to enable us to signpost vulnerable people and provide support to members of the community in an efforts to

reduce crime, break the cycle of behaviour and improve the life of the vulnerable person and the community they live in.

- **Reducing Violence and Anti-Social behaviour**

During Q4, the number of reported incidents of ASB has increased compared to the 2019/20 period. This can be attributed to the pressures of continuous on/off lockdown restrictions with frustrations and low tolerance, there has however been a reduction on vandalisms and fire-raising across West Lothian.

Neighbour disputes are included in the ASB figures with persons working from home, breaches to these restrictions are more likely to be observed causing tension and low tolerance levels. West Lothian officers continue to engage with the public and utilise the 4 E's – Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce with an overall good compliance level.

There is continued attention to public space anti-social behaviour and through the Community Safety Partnership, police work closely with partners to address repeat issues. This has resulted in several ASBOs being granted by the courts. We have also been proactive in looking at repeat offenders and are pro-active in providing follow up intervention visits.

There was an issue with a group gathering at Whitburn Cross in an apparent co-ordinated act. There were no identifiable leaders for officers to work with. The majority dispersed in comparatively quick time. Together with local partners, we are reviewing the circumstances to inform our policing approach should there be any incidents in the future.

We are working with partners in addressing youth ASB in the Whitburn and Blackburn area with various interventions having been carried out and subsequent decrease in reported issues.

Officers are seeing a rising trend across the division with the better weather and lighter nights attracting groups of youths. With the lack of places open or things to do the young people have been gathering in numbers and on occasions, alcohol use and secondary fires are apparent. That being said, it is important that we don't demonise our young people, our interactions with the majority youths have been in good spirit and they engage well.

The anti-social, illegal and dangerous use of motorbikes and other powered vehicles continues to be an issue across the division. There are a number of approaches in response including a high profile partnership approach, which has seen vehicles confiscated.

- **Reducing Acquisitive Crime**

Working to Protect People by reducing the impact of acquisitive crime on our community's remains a priority in West Lothian. The number of reported Crimes of Dishonesty has decreased, in particular domestic housebreakings being down about a quarter on the previous year. Following investigations into a series of thefts from motor vehicles, a number of local people have been reported for multiple offences.

As part of the "Made From Crime" Campaign, Community Officers worked alongside Trading Standards and SFRS to set up Crime Prevention packs regarding information and advice on bogus workmen, telephone/online scams and fire safety. These were thereafter distributed to vulnerable groups by West Lothian PSYV.

Furthermore, we posted a variety of Social Media posts offering online advice, in particular in relation to Rogue Traders (with Trading Standards colleagues), Bogus workmen and online/email scams. These continued online with further prevention activities planned as restrictions are relaxed.

With more people staying at home more often there is a greater awareness in communities of suspicious behaviour. Officers carry out high visibility patrols where possible to vulnerable business and domestic premises to deter acquisitive crime.

- **Improving Road Safety**

Officers in the West Lothian area work closely with partners to prevent collisions from occurring. During Q4, Roads Policing officers continued with Local and National Campaigns including Mobile Phone & Seatbelt Campaigns as well as a National Day of Speeding.

Through a proactive, intelligence led, targeted approach to priority locations throughout West Lothian, overall injuries in collisions have reduced by over 40%. In addition, there has been a significant increase of more than 30% in people reported for dangerous driving, speeding, disqualified driving, no driving licence and no insurance.

The slow return to schools has seen a rise in reports to police regarding parking near schools and the safety issues that inconsiderate drivers cause. The schools are encouraged to promote the PARK SMART scheme that they are all aware of to encourage parents to make sure they park sensibly and increase the safety of everyone in the area.

- **Tackling Serious and Organised Crime**

West Lothian officers continue to disrupt organised crime groups by targeting drugs supply offences, gathering intelligence and generate enforcement opportunities. This includes working with UK Border Agency to target those involved in online drug purchases. Due to this multi-agency approach, a substantial number of packages have been intercepted and investigations followed up.

During Q4, 13 MDA Warrants were issued and executed at various addresses within West Lothian and by the conclusion of 2020/2021, 61 MDA Warrants had been executed. We also explore all opportunities through Proceeds of Crime legislation with over £100,000 of cash and assets identified for restraint orders. A significant Cultivation was uncovered within West Lothian with an approximate value of £750,000, estimated to be the largest cultivation discovery of its kind in Scotland this year.

We continue to develop drugs intelligence from the local community. Drugs enforcement requires information from sources to build a picture and fill in the pieces of the jigsaw and the use of community intelligence in this cannot be underestimated.

Reporting Period April 2020 – March 2021			
Whitburn & Blackburn	Recorded		
Crime Type	YTD	LYTD	% Diff
Robbery	5	7	-28.5%
Serious Assault	16	15	+6.6%
Sexual Crimes	66	52	+26.9%
Housebreaking dwelling	17	23	-26.0%
Housebreaking non-dwelling (sheds/garages)	7	9	-22.2%
Housebreaking Other Premises	11	13	-15.3%
Theft of motor vehicle	31	46	-32.6%
Theft from motor vehicle (OLP)	12	28	-57.1%
Vandalism	182	246	-26.0%
Total drugs supply	13	12	+8.3%
Possession of Drugs	91	82	+10.9%
Common Assault	305	247	+23.4%
Common Assault - emergency worker	20	10	+100.0%
Total Crimes and Other Offences	1961	1842	+6.4%

Note: The above figures cover the period to Week 52. These are not end-of-year figures as these are not due to be released until Mid May.

Through local engagement we will continue to work with communities and partners to deliver a quality service which responds to their needs.

Together we can increase community resilience and prevent crime.