

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BROXBURN, UPHALL & WINCHBURGH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION ACTIVITY

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 some of the work of the Economic Development and Regeneration Team within the ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes the report.

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)	Appropriate assessments will be carried out as required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The paper supports the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement and other plans, in particular the Economic Recovery Plan.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Various funding sources support many of the activities.
VII Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

The report updates the committee on some of the work carried out by the Economic

Development and Regeneration Service to support communities in the ward.

D.2 Business Support

Business Gateway provides confidential and impartial support to residents looking to start-up in business, local firms, new and existing 3rd sector organisations and our major employers. All engagement with Business Gateway is client-led. Support is provided to individual clients and business owners/decision makers. Business Gateway also work closely with the West Lothian Social Enterprise Network to ensure network members receive the business support they need.

The team's key outcomes include helping residents to start their own business, enabling local firms to grow in a sustainable and inclusive manner and providing a single point of contact for our strategic employers.

As part of Council's long-term commitment to retain and attract the best businesses and to grow our value-added sectors, a commercially-focused website, <https://www.investinwestlothian.com/why-west-lothian/> has been developed to highlight the range of support available. It also sells West Lothian as an inward/mobile investment destination. Initial feedback from stakeholders has been positive with work on-going to ensure the site remains relevant and compelling.

Economic challenge has always been considered as a driver of new start businesses. In the half-year to September 2021:

New Business Starts BUW Ward	New Business Starts West Lothian
7	146
Businesses engaged with in BUW Ward	Businesses engaged with in West Lothian
51	412 inc. 42 Social Enterprises (19 operate across WL)

The 146 new businesses started trading with help from Council's Business Gateway advisers. Customer feedback remains consistently positive as the team continue to deliver the range of start-up services remotely. The vision and commitment of local people to start their own business, especially in such challenging circumstances, is commendable. These new start firms have created over 188 new jobs. The main business sectors are personal, professional and local services. Around 20% of all early stage firms go on to take premises, employ staff and grow the scale of the business. New starts are worth over £10.5 million to the local economy every year.

The Business Gateway team also includes advisers who deal with existing, growing and relocating firms to West Lothian. The advisers provided direct support to over 400 local firms in the half-year to September 2021. Our priority sectors include Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Engineering, Construction and enabling technologies. As restrictions were eased during the year, West Lothian firms engaged with us around new premises, new markets, working capital, Research & Development, export regulation, digital marketing and carbon reduction projects. Council's Business Gateway advisers support firms who have combined annual sales in excess of £1.41 Billion per annum. While these businesses employ over 8,300 staff, it is only 11% of

total jobs in West Lothian. However, they account for more than 30% of the annual gross value add (GVA) of the West Lothian economy.

With the end of the furlough scheme at the end of September and higher unemployment than pre-pandemic, we have focused on creating demand among local firms for additional staff. Our "Volume Job Grant" is funded with £1 million approved by Council Executive in June 2021.

<https://www.investinwestlothian.com/business-support/develop-your-business/job-creation-fund/> Support is targeted at viable local firms. Success will be the creation of at least 300 new jobs. Each new role must be permanent and pay a starting salary of approximately £21k+ pa. The new recruits must be currently unemployed and aged 25+. Support for our younger people aged 16-24 will see an additional 100 places offered as part of the successful Steps N2 Work programme.

In summarising the work to date of the Business Gateway team, it is not all about sales and wider economic impacts. The advisers have the trust of local people, working with them to find solutions often in complex circumstances.

D.3 Employment support

Access2employment provides employability support to residents throughout West Lothian. Support is provided to residents who are unemployed and who are in employment but are in uncertain employment or are struggling financially to make ends meet. Support is provided via 1 to 1's with individual clients and through the delivery of a range of courses including one day specific courses to 6 week personal development and employability courses, Women n2 Work and Men n2 Work.

Advisers will work with clients until they have met their individual goals to secure sustainable employment including better paid employment and education opportunities.

In March 2020 the service moved supported remotely during the pandemic with 1 to 1 support and courses being delivered remotely via video calls, web-based platforms, emails and the telephone. The service was expanded to provide support in the evenings and weekends to meet the needs of clients whose life circumstances had changed as a result of the pandemic. The service developed a weekly bulletin that contain information on the latest local vacancies for West Lothian Job seekers. This is sent weekly to job seekers and services supporting clients. The service also introduced a service offer to support parents who are currently unemployed or in work but in insecure employment or financially struggling. This is the delivery model that is still in place for the service during 2021.

From the 1st April 2021 – 30th September 2021 the service delivered the following:

	West Lothian	BUW Ward
Number of new registrations to the service	392	42
Number of clients supported into employment education or training	194	16

Overall 1136 new and existing customers were supported over the six months with 60 workshops and 4 short terms N2W courses delivered.

The service was also successful in securing 200 Chromebooks and internet

connections to give to unemployment clients seeking work that currently did not have any digital connectivity.

D.4 Town Centre Capital Fund 2019/20 and 20/21

As previously reported the Community Planning and Regeneration Team continued to support the delivery of the previously committed projects in the ward with community organisations and council services. A final completion report will be brought to the all Local Area Committees at a future meeting.

D.5 Enhanced Vaccination Drop-In

As reported at the last meeting Community Planning and Regeneration had been working with our partners in Health to promote additional local drop-in vaccination programmes in areas with identified hot spots. Several areas in the ward had been identified by NHS Lothian in Uphall, Dechmont, Kirkhill and around Almondell, Stewartfield and Fergusson Road area of Broxburn.

There were two additional sessions held in the ward at Broxburn United and Uphall Community Centre with 97 (44 and 53) local residents attending to receive either their first or second vaccination. Across West Lothian a total of 962 attended similar sessions. These were residents that were unlikely to have received the vaccination without the additional promotion and sessions.

The sessions were promoted with short sharp promotional campaign to retailers and leaflets through doors in key streets identified by NHS along with cascading details to schools, community councils, community groups and media.

D.6 Community Council Elections 2021

The Community Planning and Regeneration Team is currently supporting the delivery of the inaugural meetings of the newly elected Community Council's across West Lothian including the four in Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh Ward.

E. CONCLUSION

The Economic Development and Regeneration service continue to support communities and the work of partners in the ward. The report highlights some of the areas of work that the service is delivering.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: none

Appendix 1 None

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