

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



LIVINGSTON NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

SERVICE UPDATE – OPERATIONAL SERVICES

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To appraise members of the Operational Services activities for Livingston North from 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to:

1. Note the work carried out by the service within the local area.
2. Advise of any areas that require further information or investigation.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	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

The report covers the activity for the period 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022.

D2 NETs, Land and Countryside Services**Grounds Maintenance Routine Works**

Shrub bed maintenance was started in mid-December and was completed for the end of March.

Staff were involved with Winter Maintenance duties until 31 March 2022. Grounds Maintenance staff also covered at Waste Services for a short period of time.

Open Space summer works including grass cutting and weed control started on Monday 4 April 2022.

Enquiries are being dealt with on a daily basis.

D2.1 Grounds Maintenance Enquiries

In total 27 ground maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Allotment Enquiries	2	0
Ball Game Enquiries	0	1
Burns or Watercourses	0	1
Drainage Flooding Grass Areas	2	0
Emergency Tree Out Of Hours	1	0
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	0	1
Fencing Enquiries	3	0
Grass Area Damaged	0	2
Grass Highway Verges	1	0
Ground Ownership Enquiries	0	1
Grounds Property Vandalised	2	3
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	6	3
Neighbourhood Env. Teams	0	1
Public Park Enquiries	3	1
Shrub Bed Enquiries	1	1
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	6	2
Shrub Beds Not Maintained	0	2
Sports Facility Enquiries	0	1
Weeds General Enquiries	0	1
Total	27	21

D2.2 Garden Maintenance Routine Works

Recruitment for Garden Maintenance Scheme seasonal staff is still ongoing. Grass cutting for the scheme commenced on 11 April 2022.

D2.3 Garden Maintenance Enquiries

There were eight garden maintenance enquiries received during this period.

	2022	2021
Garden Maintenance Change Of Address	1	0
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	7	4
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting	0	1
Total	8	5

D2.4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

Staff have continued to empty street litter and dog waste bins on a regular basis and carry out routine works in the area. Also, litter picking/ sweeping of footpaths/ open spaces and road verges and dealing with enquiries as they arise.

Officers continue to work with volunteer's litter picking within the Ward and have assisted with the uplift of bags and debris that they have collected by the NETs team.

The NETs team have also been dealing with fly tipping enquiries and removing fly tipping from Council ground.

Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 150 cleaner communities enquiries were received and dealt with during this period.

	2022	2021
Complaint Street Cleansing	0	1
Dead Animals	8	16
Dog Bin New Request for Bin	1	5
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	1	2
Dog Fouled Kids Play Area	0	1
Dog Fouling on Paths Roads	9	13
Dog No Fouling Sign Request	0	1
Fly Posting	2	0
Fly Tipping/Dumping	67	77
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	2	0
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	1	0
Litter Bin New Request for Bin	2	2
Litter Bin Overflowing	1	1
Litter General Enquiries	3	8
Litter Grass Open Space	0	1
Litter Paths Roads Verges	12	29
Needles Syringes Abandoned	1	2
Street Sweeping Enquiries	9	10
Trolleys Abandoned/ Dumped	9	6
Trolleys Dumped in Livingston	1	1
Vehicle Abandoned	21	15
Total	150	191

Fly Tipping Enquiries (Full Year)

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	331	253	205	223	169

D2.5 Environmental Community Involvement

Officers continue to deal with enquiries relating to fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and general enquiries. For the period of the report, there has been 67 enquiries in relation to fly tipping compared to 77 for the same period in 2021.

In dealing with abandoned vehicles, Officers have gained compliance from vehicle owners with said vehicles getting removed from public highways or getting taxed in most cases. Where appropriate, requests have been sent to WLC contractors for removal. However, there are instances where vehicle owners are not compliant and result to moving their vehicles between streets. When presented with such tactics, officers have resulted to contacting the DVLA and VOSA for support.

Officers have also had to educate members of the public that their vehicles with a SORN marker needs to be off public roads and kept in a private drive or inside a garage. This is a scenario that has occurred quite frequently of late.

Throughout West Lothian, officers continue to engage with volunteering groups, attend regeneration group meetings and render the necessary assistance needed to encourage the exercise they currently perform.

There was no Fixed Penalty Notice issued in Ward 3 for the period of 1 January 2022 - 31 March 2022. For the same period in 2021, there was one Fixed Penalty Notice issued in the Ward.

Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022

Fly tipping is covered by the NETs teams who also carry out other non-routine works for Grounds. We are unable to split costs over specific ward areas or from the other works they carry out, but can give the yearly cost for the NETs teams with an estimate of their time spent on fly tipping which we currently estimate as 45% of their time. For 2021 the estimate was 70% of their time.

Weights for fly tipping brought into the transfer station are provided as a weekly total Monday – Sunday.

Fly tipping costs: 2022

1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022	77.64 tonnes
Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	£51,156.00
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL for all 9 wards	£51,156.00

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022 for the Ward was 67 out of 485 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 13.81% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 3.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the Ward of £7,064.64 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 January 2022 – 31 March 2022 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team).

Fly tipping costs: 2021

1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021	156.01tonnes
Cost of disposal including estimated costs for NETs team/vehicles	£102,805.90
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL for all wards	£102,805.90

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021 the Ward was 77 out of 727 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 10.59% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 3.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the ward of £10,888.65 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 January 2021- 31 March 2021 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team).

D2.6 Parks and Woodland Enquiries

In total 50 Parks and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Tree Advice or Consultations	4	3
Tree Blocking Light	1	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	8	11
Tree Broken Damaged or Dead	5	4
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	5	4
Tree Enquiries General	25	31
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	2	1
Tree Roots Causing Problems	0	1
Tree Woodland Enquiries	0	1
Total	50	57

	2022	2021
Access Rights Way Core Paths	1	2
Complaint Country Parks/ Trees	0	1
Country Park Forestry or Woods	2	0
Ranger Service General Enquiry	0	1
Total	3	4

No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	7
No. Access Enquiries	1

Ranger Service

The Rangers spent time processing another Lothian Running Club event application for Dechmont Law, based on agreed routes that avoided sensitive areas of the site. A site check was carried out after the event to check on the condition of the running route, and Rangers were satisfied with the post-event condition.

The Ranger Service have applied to NatureScot's Better Places Fund - 3 for seasonal Assistant Rangers and Assistant Operatives. If the funding is secured, successful applicants will start in early June and will help both the Ranger team and the Operative team over the busy summer months. The job listings for these have gone live, in anticipation of a successful funding application.

After many years of working for West Lothian Council Ranger Service, Ben Dolphin has departed the Ranger team. The team wish him all the best and have since had meetings about redistribution of work – including access issues, ongoing projects, and volunteer sessions.

Following successful partnership working with the Lyme Resource Centre, 'tick trails' have been installed by the Ranger Service at five locations across the three Country Parks. The trails are due to stay up until the end of May and have been advertised on social media by the Lyme Resource Centre, and on the Council's Facebook page.

The monthly Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) sessions continue to be popular with regular volunteers, and the Ranger team are still receiving new volunteer enquiries each week.

A Ranger met with an officer from the Woodland Trust at North Wood, resulting in a revision of the signage plan compiled for the Nell Burn Path. The plan was sent through to Roads & Transportation.

The Ranger team met with Open Space Officer Carol Campbell at Eliburn Park to assess path conditions. The plan is to upgrade part of the core path, and muddy route through the woodland, and create a circular route. No date for the work is scheduled yet.

The Ranger team have seen a recent increase in enquiries for Ranger Services and activities, from many different community groups, schools, and businesses. At the moment, the service has not been able to resume the activities programme and so the responses reflect this. However, officers are advising customers that they will be contacted once there is the capacity to offer activities, which hopefully will happen once the Assistant Rangers are in post.

Access

The Rangers continue to review all West Lothian planning applications for access implications, and submit comments to Planning Services.

The Access Ranger post has been filled, and the Ranger team are due to give a presentation to the Access Ranger on ongoing access issues in West Lothian. Any access enquiries should continue to be reported through the 'Report it > Core Paths & Rights of Way' section on the Council's website.

The Ranger team have resolved a long-standing access issue this month at the A89 entrance to the Loan Path, where bollards had been placed by Woodland Trust, who understandably wanted to secure their border. A customer reported that they could not fit their horse & cart through the gap between the bollards, and these have since been moved by contractors.

The Ranger Service have resumed the Shale Trail signage audit and compiled a document of existing, damaged, and missing signage, and have emailed Borders Signs for costings for replacement signage blades.

The Ranger Service received one new access enquiry during this reporting period. This enquiry was related to erosion of path surfaces from Burnfield to the River Almond path. This issue has been assessed by colleagues in Roads and NETs and the path may qualify for an upgrade. The customer has been contacted with updates.

Full details: Concern from customer regarding erosion on path surfaces (uneven surface for walking), erosion on riverbank at riverside walkway and flooding on concrete walkway. Colleagues in Flood Defence (Roads) assessed erosion around concrete walkway with no action required at moment but aware. Ongoing responsibility for the concrete walkway remains inconclusive. Colleagues in NETs arranged to replace the collapsed fencing around the culvert and burn. Colleagues in Roads are assessing the path for an upgrade as adopted, and street lit – awaiting the outcome.

Ecology and Biodiversity

Solomon Ede has joined the team to cover for Hannah Crow's maternity leave. The Ecology and Biodiversity Workplan is attached, as a reminder of the roles and responsibilities of the team.

Livingston North Blue-Green Network (LNBGN) - Works began in Howden Park and along various paths north and south of the River Almond at the end of February. All tree planting and vegetation management works in Howden Park are now complete. Pathworks (resurfacing) along the network are due to be finished by mid-June. The next phase to start is pathwork north of the Almond at Livingston Village.

Citizen Science - Wildflower meadow and freshwater invertebrate workshops will be led by Buglife this summer in parks throughout West Lothian. This will include Livingston Village Park and Eliburn Park.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan - The data-collection and analysis contract for the Local Biodiversity Action Plan has been awarded to Natural Capital Solutions. They will work in partnership with WSP to produce a baseline habitat map of West Lothian and a habitat condition assessment. Using this information, they will then calculate values for the multiple benefits provided by these natural assets (including carbon storage and sequestration, air quality regulation, and accessible nature). This work will be used to inform the revised WL Local Biodiversity Action Plan and the council's Carbon Management Plan.

D2.7 Open Space Capital Programme

Moncrieff Way 49 Play Area, Knightsridge. Refurbishment is programmed for completion in early summer 2022. Multi-unit and small play equipment items will be replaced with a new multi-unit and new toddler swings.

Livingston Village Ball Court. The Ball Court (tennis side) has been closed due to failure of timber retaining wall and rebound wall. Wall repair is ongoing and due for completion by end of May 2022.

Carol Campbell commenced in post as Open Space Officer on 24th January replacing Becky Plunkett who is now an Ecology and Biodiversity Officer.

Conclusion

The Capital Programme is progressing as planned.

Open Space Enquiries

There were one open space enquiries received during this period.

	2022	2021
Childrens Play Enquiries	1	1
Total	1	1

D3 Roads and Transportation Service

Street Lighting Routine Works

There are no Capital Street Lighting works scheduled for the Livingston North Area for the remainder of this financial year.

During the period we received and dealt with 82 customer enquiries from residents. Throughout the same period last year, we received 105 enquiries from residents.

Roads Maintenance and Operations - Capital Road Maintenance Programme

No works were carried out during this period. However, the design team are looking at the provision of surfacing for the car parking area beside the Livingston United football pitch in Deans. This is being funded from the LAC Recovery and Renewal Funding budget.

D4 Waste Services

Customer Enquiries

During the period we received and dealt with 735 customer enquiries from residents in Livingston North. During the same period last year, we received and dealt with 964 customer enquiries.

221 customer enquiries were received and dealt with relating to missed bin collections in the local area. During the same period last year, we received and dealt with 281 customer enquiries.

191 customer enquiries were received and dealt with relating to requests for new grey, blue or brown bins from local residents. During the same period last year, we received and dealt with 270 customer enquiries relating to new bin requests.

E. CONCLUSION

Officers continue to deal with enquiries relating to fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and general enquiries.

There has been a decrease in Waste customer enquiries, in bin requests and in the number of missed bins from local residents compared to the same period last year.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: One

Appendix 1 - Ecology & Biodiversity Officers Work Plan

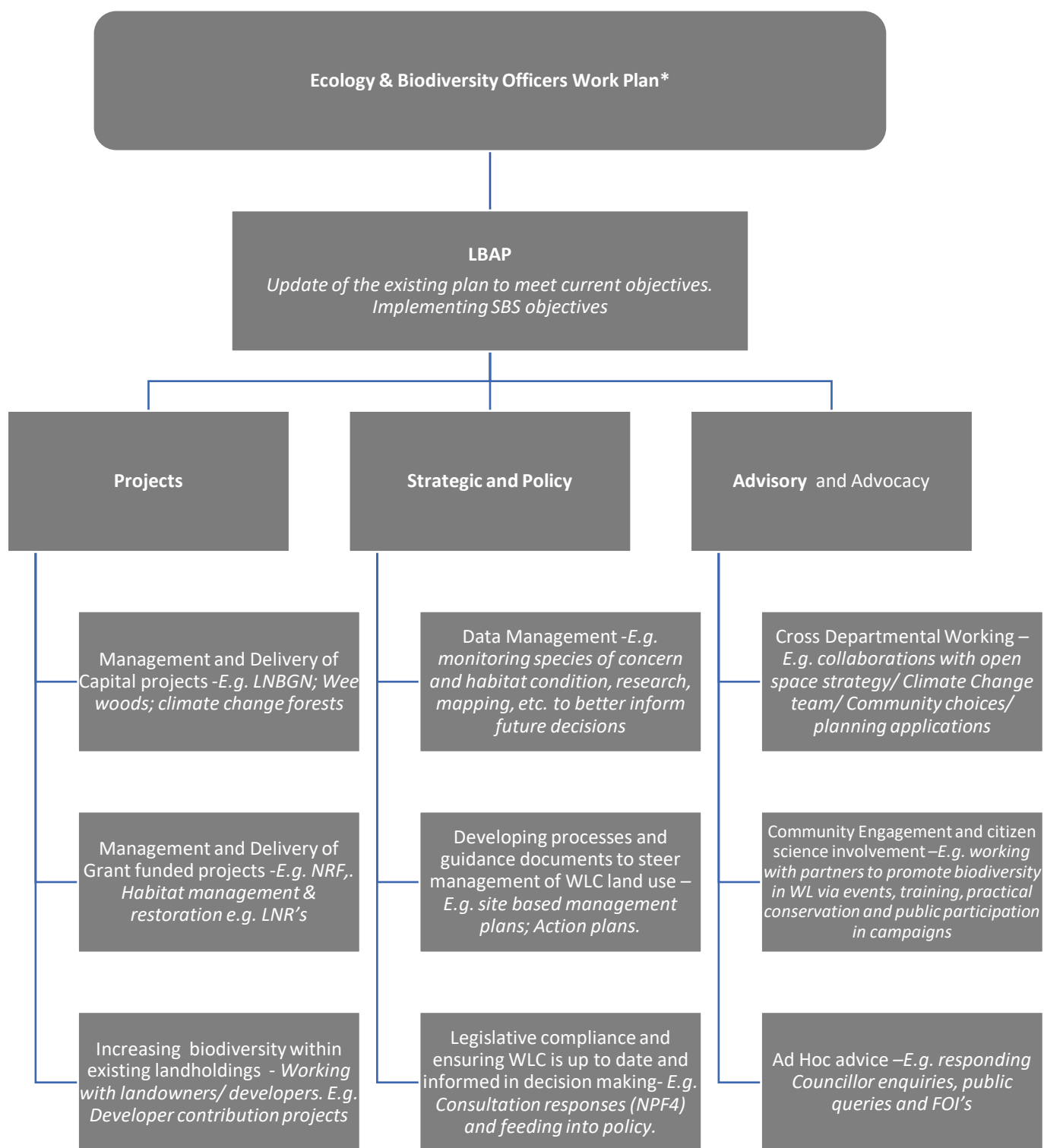
Contact Persons:

David Cullen, Open Space & Cemeteries Manager,
Whitehill Service Centre, 01506 284610, David.Cullen@westlothian.gov.uk

Gordon Brown, Roads & Transportation Service Manager,
Whitehill Service Centre, 01506 282340, Gordon.Brown@westlothian.gov.uk

David Robertson, Interim Waste Services Manager, Whitehill Service Centre, (TBC)
David.Robertson2@westlothian.gov.uk

Jim Jack
Head of Operational Services
10 June 2022



**The workplan provides an overview of current demands in relation to the role but is not exhaustive list. This has potential to change to meet Council and Government objectives.*