

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



FAULDHOUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

REPORT ON PROGRESS OF LOCAL REGENERATION PLANNING

REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Area Committee of progress on partner activities, local planning in the four regeneration areas and other activities within the ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the members:

1. note the successful delivery of winter events and activities;
2. regeneration activity across the ward including recent engagement undertaken around locality planning and the West Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP); and
3. Business Gateway and access2employment activity.

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)	<p>Community regeneration reinforces the council's commitment to community planning at a local level.</p> <p>Local authorities have a statutory requirement for developing locality plans for targeted communities in their area. Regeneration Plans fit this requirement for West Lothian.</p> <p>The projects set out do not require a strategic environmental assessment. The projects to different degrees seek to address health and equality issues.</p>
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Performance indicators relating to the activity within the plans are captured within the set of regeneration key performance indicators.

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities. - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities. - We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the- built and natural environment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Activities will be funded from existing budgets or external sources.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Annual updates on regeneration plans will be presented to the Community Planning Partnership.
VIII	Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

The report updates the committee on the work of the Community Wealth Building Team and its partners to support communities in Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley, with a particular focus on the communities of Addiewell, Fauldhouse, Polbeth and Stoneyburn, four of 13 areas covered by the local plans required by the Scottish Government as part of their Community Empowerment approach and reported through the Community Planning Partnership.

These areas were identified as being priority areas due to being within the bottom 20% of data zones in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

D.2 Updates

Regular planning meetings continue to take place in Addiewell, Fauldhouse, Polbeth and Stoneyburn building on the partnerships that have continued to grow and develop from the effects of COVID-19 on communities across the ward.

D2.1 Addiewell

The combined schools held a parent's night in October and provided an opportunity for services including Advice Shop and regeneration to engage and support families on a variety of issues.

A number of events were delivered through the community in partnership with Carers of West Lothian including a pamper day and a meal with entertainment. These provide the opportunity for carers to come together and also raise awareness of the role of carers.

Work is on-going to look at providing Wi-Fi at the Community Centre and the programme on offer at the centre continues to grow.

D2.2 Fauldhouse

Forestry and Land Scotland are working alongside Fallahill nursery to deliver the Forest School within a section of the woods. They are also looking to engage with other schools within the area.

In response to on-going complaints of antisocial behaviour and fire raising there have been several partner meetings to look at how best to address the issue with a number of actions on-going. Actions include looking at establishing a Friday night provision and local residents are involved in diversionary activities including establishing a fishing club and regular pool and darts nights.

D2.3 Polbeth

Polbeth HUB have appointed a new manager to the organisation who will be looking to build on existing positive relationships. Services within the HUB continue to be well utilised from the Counselling service to the Larder shop.

The community garden is preparing for winter with growing winter vegetables and working on path maintenance.

D2.4 Stoneyburn

Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision Group (SBFVG) have established a Community Larder and this is operating on Tuesday and Thursday with over 100 people registered. There is also Pennies Pantry provision on a Wednesday from the community centre.

The Community Connections drop-in (10:00 – 12:00) on a Tuesday at the community centre is on-going and a number of parents have been attending from the mother and toddler groups.

Our Lady's Primary were visited by HMle (inspectors of education) in late November which involved local groups and council services to look at collaboration across the community.

The MOOD group held an open day at their new premises at Stoneyburn Juniors football ground in October. It is going well and the group are looking to expand their opening times.

D.3 Christmas Events and Activities

Across the ward a number of successful Christmas events were delivered. These included Santa parades in Fauldhouse, Polbeth, Stoneyburn, West Calder and Santa sleigh and grotto in Addiewell alongside a number of other events and community support across the ward for pantomime, food hampers and extra support to those that were most in need.

D.4 West Calder Cares

West Calder High School delivered two events in conjunction with a number of partners at Addiewell Community Centre and Polbeth HUB. These events saw over sixty winter jackets given away alongside games of bingo, tea, coffee and cake and provided an opportunity for services to engage with the community and for residents to get a catch up.

D.5 Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Local Priorities updates

The Community Wealth Building Team has been leading on engagement within all of the regeneration areas for the purposes of refreshing both the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership's LOIP and local plans. Questions were designed that sought the views and opinions on the LOIP 'Pillars'. These pillars focus on:

- Creating Skills and Jobs
- Improving Health and wellbeing
- Creating Affordable and Sustainable Housing; and
- Creating Net Zero Carbon Communities.

As part of the first phase of this, community engagement activities were undertaken in Fauldhouse, Stoneyburn, Polbeth and Addiewell during autumn 2022. This involved using visual engagement tools in prominent locations in these places, with officers speaking to local groups and organisations along with discussions with local residents. Health staff from the respective health centres, and young people via local primary schools. The data from these exercises, in line with the other areas which were part of the first phase, will help to refresh the local plans moving forward.

The demographics of those who participated in the engagement so far has identified which remaining groups/sections of the community within all areas require to be engaged, for which subsequent activities will be arranged. Some emerging preliminary issues identified across the areas are concerns around public transport, mental health and the cost of living crisis.

D.6 West Lothian 2028 – Your Council, Your Say

From late October to mid-November, the Community Wealth Building Team led on engagement with residents in disadvantaged areas as part of the above consultation. This is to encourage and ensure that the views of residents in these areas contribute to the consultation and are taken into account in the decision-making process with regards to council budgets.

In the ward this included engagement in Addiewell, Fauldhouse, Polbeth and Stoneyburn.

D.7 Business Gateway Update

Council's Business Gateway team 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 supports a diverse portfolio of existing and new start social enterprises in West Lothian. Support is tailored to the needs of individual organisations. The support includes advice in areas such as business planning, finance raising, grant and loan applications, property, community benefit leases, asset transfers, income generation, governance and sustainability. In addition, social enterprises are signposted to the wider network of support programs available both locally and nationally. Business Gateway also work closely with the West Lothian Social Enterprise Network to ensure network members receive the business support they need.

The key outcomes for the team 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.

The vision and commitment of local people to start their own business, especially in such challenging economic circumstances since 2020, is commendable. Across West Lothian, the Business Gateway team supported 325 new start firms in 2021/22. These businesses created 407 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 811 local firms in the financial year to end of March 2022. This included 41 social enterprises, 20 of whom operate across West Lothian. Our priority sectors include Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Engineering, Construction and enabling technologies. West Lothian firms engaged with us around new premises, new markets, recruiting/training, working capital, Research & Development, export regulation, digital marketing and carbon reduction projects. All against a background of macro-economic challenges including fears of recession, weaker value of sterling, rising inflation and interest rate pressures.

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 12,000 staff, this represents 15% of total jobs in West Lothian. However, the supported firms account for more than 30% of the annual gross value add (GVA) of the West Lothian economy.

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, [Why West Lothian? - Invest in West Lothian](#) has been developed to highlight the range of support available for our local firms. It also promotes West Lothian as an inward/mobile investment destination. Our key inward investment partner is Scottish Enterprise (SE). We have built close and productive links with SE over the years. Their ongoing strategic investment in key firms has helped strengthen the West Lothian economy. Feedback from stakeholders is positive with work on-going to ensure the website remains credible, relevant and compelling. The site is responsive and details the range of support for our local firms, highlighting assistance with energy costs, options for low-carbon heating, managing cashflow and also help which is sector-specific [Find Business Support Launches: Cost of Doing Business Section](#) (investinwestlothian.com)

In the 6 months to September 2022, a further 16 new start businesses have been established in the Ward with the team's support. This is a healthy level of starts, especially in a strong jobs market with many vacancies. Over the same timescale, the Business Gateway team assisted 23 existing firms in the Ward who between them employ 170 staff and have sales of more than £44 million.

West Lothian	Fauldhouse & The Breich Valley Ward
April – Sept 2022	April – Sept 2022
New Business Starts 134	New Business Starts 16
Existing Businesses Supported 363	Existing Businesses Supported 23

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

Fauldhouse & The Breich Valley Local Area Committee is asked to note the team's ongoing contribution to a sustained and inclusive economic recovery.

D.8 Access 2 Employment Update

Access2employment provides employability support to residents throughout West Lothian, via a presence in local Partnership Centres, DWP offices and community initiatives, such as Community Fridge's, schools and Health Hubs across West Lothian. Support is provided to residents who are both unemployed or who are in employment and seeking to improve their employment situation due to uncertain employment, low pay or limited hours worked impacting on them financially and making it hard to make ends meet, or those whose skills are under-utilised.

Support is provided one to one consultation's with clients and through the provision 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.

A2E's Employment Adviser's offer tailored support to assist clients achieve their individual goals, with the ultimate aim of securing sustainable employment, improved household financial security and upskilling opportunities.

From 1st April 2022 – 30TH Sept 2022, the service registered 419 new clients, 40 from the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Ward, with 229 progressing into a positive destination, 20 from Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Ward. This support has been mostly been provided remotely during the year due to the pandemic, however employment advisers are now delivering a hybrid service in line with client needs, with 22/23 delivery being a mix of face to face and online.

The service delivered 8 online workshops, including 1 face to face Women N2 Work course and 3 Wellbeing Workshops. In total 61 residents attending workshops.

In 21/22 the service supported Connecting Scotland by securing over 200 Chromebooks and internet connections to give to unemployment clients seeking work that currently did not have any digital connectivity.

The service continues to provide a weekly Vacancy Bulletin, promoting information on the latest local vacancies for West Lothian job seekers. The Vacancy Bulletin is emailed out to on average 1200 clients and 200 stakeholders and partners weekly and is widely shared. It is estimated that 1500 individuals view the Vacancy Bulletin weekly.

Since Oct 21, with funding from the Scottish Government Long Term Unemployed provision, A2E have supported over 50 individuals aged over 25 and who have not worked for more than one year to secure employment. This support builds on a range of targeted interventions currently available which includes dedicated support for young people to assist them progress towards employment and support for parents.

During 2021/22 the team introduced two additional services to support parents who are currently unemployed or in work but in insecure employment and an intense family support programme based within Social Policy. This provision seeks to address the identified need for a whole family intervention approach to combat the complex issues the families that are engaging have presented with.

E. CONCLUSION

The Community Wealth Building Team continue to deliver and support the work of partners in the ward. The report highlights some of the areas of work and activities across the ward.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: None

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