



Council Executive

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

21 October 2021

A meeting of the **Council Executive** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Virtual Meeting Room** on **Tuesday 26 October 2021 at 10:00am**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business, declarations of interest in any urgent business and consideration of reports for information.

The Chair will invite members to identify any such reports they wish to have fully considered, which failing they will be taken as read and their recommendations approved.

4. Deputation Request by Ms Lisa Constanza in relation to Petition regarding St Mary's Primary School Road Safety
5. Confirm Draft Minutes of Meeting of Council Executive held on Tuesday 05 October 2021 (herewith)
6. Correspondence
7. Petition - St Mary's Primary School Road Safety (full details of the petition can be obtained by contacting Committee Services)

Public Items for Decision

8. Scottish Government Consultation - Legislative Proposals to Support Covid Recovery - Report by Chief Executive (herewith)
9. Police Scotland Divisional Commander - Proposed Appointment - Report by Chief Executive (herewith)
10. Licensing of Short-Term Lets - Call for Views by the Scottish Parliament - Report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)
11. Appointment of Independent Director to West Lothian Leisure Limited - Report by Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources (herewith)
12. Future Budget Strategy 2023/24 to 2027/28 - Financial Context and Proposed Approach - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith)
13. West Lothian Local Child Poverty Action Report 2020/21 - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith)
14. Period Dignity: Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith)
15. Site Selection for Supported Housing for Young People in West Lothian - Report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith)
16. Rent Strategy Consultation - Report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith)
17. The Queen's Green Canopy: "Proposal for Calderwood, Mid Calder to be put forward for Nomination in the "Ancient Woodland" Category" - Report by Head of Operational Services (herewith)
18. Bus Partnership Fund Update - Report by Head of Operational Services (herewith)
19. Place-Based Investment Programme and Community Wealth Building - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
20. West Lothian Council Climate Change Strategy - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
21. Voluntary Organisations Budget 2022/23 - "West Lothian Youth Action Project" - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)

Public Items for Information

22. Councillors' Local Disbursement Fund - Report by Head of Corporate Services (herewith)

23. Integration Scheme Review - Phase 1 Consultation - Report by Depute Chief Executive (Health and Social Care Partnership) (herewith)

Public Items for Decision

24. PRIVATE SESSION - The Clerk considers that the following business is likely to be taken in private (exempt under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act

Private Items for Decision

25. Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Act 2020 - Powers to Intervene in Care Provisions as Amended by Coronavirus (Extension & Expiry) (Scotland) Act 2021 - Report by Head of Social Policy / Chief Social Work Officer (exempt in terms of Paragraph 1)

NOTE **For further information please contact Anastasia Dragona on tel. no. 01506 281601 or email anastasia.dragona@westlothian.gov.uk**

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

This form is to help members. It is not a substitute for declaring interests at the meeting.

Members should look at every item and consider if they have an interest. If members have an interest they must consider if they have to declare it. If members declare an interest they must consider if they have to withdraw.

NAME	MEETING	DATE

AGENDA ITEM NO.	FINANCIAL (F) OR NON- FINANCIAL INTEREST (NF)	DETAIL ON THE REASON FOR YOUR DECLARATION (e.g. I am Chairperson of the Association)	REMAIN OR WITHDRAW

The objective test is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role as a councillor.

Other key terminology appears on the reverse.

If you require assistance, please ask as early as possible. Contact Julie Whitelaw, Monitoring Officer, 01506 281626, julie.whitelaw@westlothian.gov.uk, James Millar, Governance Manager, 01506 281695, james.millar@westlothian.gov.uk, Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor, 01506 281626, carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk, Committee Services Team, 01506 281604, 01506 281621, committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk

SUMMARY OF KEY TERMINOLOGY FROM REVISED CODE

The objective test

“...whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role as a councillor”

The General Exclusions

- As a council tax payer or rate payer or in relation to the council's public services which are offered to the public generally, as a recipient or non-recipient of those services
- In relation to setting the council tax.
- In relation to matters affecting councillors' remuneration, allowances, expenses, support services and pension.
- As a council house tenant, unless the matter is solely or mainly about your own tenancy, or you are in arrears of rent.

Particular Dispensations

- As a member of an outside body, either appointed by the council or later approved by the council
- Specific dispensation granted by Standards Commission
- Applies to positions on certain other public bodies (IJB, SEStran, City Region Deal)
- Allows participation, usually requires declaration but not always
- Does not apply to quasi-judicial or regulatory business

The Specific Exclusions

- As a member of an outside body, either appointed by the council or later approved by the council
- The position must be registered by you
- Not all outside bodies are covered and you should take advice if you are in any doubt.
- Allows participation, always requires declaration
- Does not apply to quasi-judicial or regulatory business

Categories of “other persons” for financial and non-financial interests of other people

- Spouse, a civil partner or a cohabitee
- Close relative, close friend or close associate
- Employer or a partner in a firm
- A body (or subsidiary or parent of a body) in which you are a remunerated member or director
- Someone from whom you have received a registrable gift or registrable hospitality
- Someone from whom you have received registrable election expenses

MINUTE of MEETING of the COUNCIL EXECUTIVE held within MS TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 5 OCTOBER 2021.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Kirsteen Sullivan, Alison Adamson (substituting for Peter Heggie), Frank Anderson, Harry Cartmill, Tom Conn, David Dodds, Damian Doran-Timson, Chris Horne, Carl John (substituting for Janet Campbell) Charles Kennedy, Cathy Muldoon and George Paul

Apologies – Councillors Janet Campbell and Peter Heggie

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 23 (West Lothian Leisure Financial Statements) - Councillor Chris Horne declared an interest in that he was a council appointed member to the Board of West Lothian Leisure but as a special dispensation from the Standards Commission applied would participate in the item of business;

Agenda Item 23 (West Lothian Leisure Financial Statements) - Councillor Tom Conn declared an interest in that he was a council appointed member to the Board of West Lothian Leisure but as a special dispensation from the Standards Commission applied would participate in the item of business;

Agenda Item 24 (Compliance with IJB Directions) and Agenda Item 25 (IJB Performance Report) - Councillors George Paul, Damian Doran-Timson and Harry Cartmill all declared an interest as council appointed members to the IJB but would participate in both items of business; and

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Council Executive agreed, in accordance with Standing Order 8(3), that agenda items 22, 23, 25, 26, 27 & 28 were to be taken as read and their recommendations noted without further consideration;

Council agreed to ask questions on agenda item 24, which was on the agenda for "information only";

Council Executive agreed to hear the deputation request received from Mr John MacDonald (local resident) and from Mr David Stevens (Taylor Wimpey) in relation to Agenda Item 19 (RCC for Sibbalds Brae, Bathgate); and

The Chair ruled in terms of the Standing Order 11 that in light of the two deputations being agreed to be heard that he would promote Agenda Item 19 so it could be considered immediately after approval of the Minutes.

3. MINUTES

1. Council Executive approved the Minute of its meeting held on 7

September 2021; and

2. Council Executive approved the Minute of its special meeting held on 29 September 2021.

4. APPLICATION FOR ROAD CONSTRUCTION CONSENT AT SIBBALD'S BRAE ACCESS JUNCTION, BATHGATE

Councillor Harry Cartmill having previously declared an interest in the following item of business took no part in the discussion or voting

Deputation from John MacDonald (Chair of Residents Association and Planning Secretary for Bathgate Community Council)

Mr MacDonald expressed his concern for road safety in respect of the proposed junction onto Sibbalds Brae to serve the existing private road to Sandilands Gardens. He was concerned that there would be an increase in traffic movements which in turn could increase the road traffic accident rate. Mr MacDonald felt the consent application had been applied for prematurely as the outcome of the planning application had not been properly concluded. Mr MacDonald concluded his presentation by also expressing his concern for an ongoing issue with the removal of trees on the site adjacent to the development site.

Deputation from David Steven (Representative of Taylor Wimpey)

Mr Steven explained to members that Taylor Wimpey in submitting its application for Road Construction Consent (RCC) had complied with all the appropriate legislation and council guidance which would ensure that the junction was built to an adoptable standard by the council in the future. Mr Steven concluded by explaining that in order to obtain the consent of the council back in May 2021 it had carried out a number of industry standard checks in terms of vehicle lengths, widths and overhang which it was required to conduct in terms of complying with Section 21 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

Both parties then summed up their positions and responded to questions from members.

Report by Head of Operational Services

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Operational Services advising of an objection to a Road Construction Consent (RCC) application, submitted by Taylor Wimpey Ltd, for a new development access junction off Sibbalds Brae, Bathgate (plans were attached in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report).

It was recommended that the Council Executive grant the Road Construction Consent.

Motion

To approve the terms of the report

- Moved by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan

Amendment

To delay a decision until such time the consequences of the objections raised were known.

- Moved by Councillor Frank Anderson and seconded by Councillor Carl John

A roll call vote was taken. The result was as follows :-

Motion

Tom Conn
David Dodds
Lawrence Fitzpatrick
Cathy Muldoon
George Paul
Kirsteen Sullivan

Amendment

Alison Adamson
Frank Anderson
Damian Doran-Timson
Chris Horne
Carl John
Charles Kennedy

Decision

Following a vote for which the motion and amendment received 6 votes each, the Chair used his casting vote in favour of the motion and it was agreed accordingly.

5. CONSULTATION - SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS FOR RESPONDING TO AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARMS

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services informing of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) consultation on proposed options to reduce the number of false alarms from workplace automatic fire alarms and to present a draft response for approval.

It was recommended that the Council Executive note and approve the content of the proposed consultation response in Appendix 2 of the report.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report and the consultation response detailed in Appendix 2 attached to the report.

6. REVIEW OF PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services advising of a Scottish Government consultation on the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty

and seeking approval of the council's response to the consultation.

It was recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Note the intention of the Public Sector Equality Duty Review and the terms of the consultation;
2. Approve the proposed response to the consultation as set out in appendix 1; and
3. Agree to submit the consultation response to the Scottish Government

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

7. PROCUREMENT APPROVAL REPORT

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services seeking approval to enter into contracts where Committee authorisation was required by Standing Orders.

It was recommended that the Council Executive approve:

1. A direct award to Red Sky IT Ltd for support and maintenance for the job costing and stock management system for a period of 1 year from 30 January 2022 to 30 January 2023 with an estimated value of £34,462;
2. A direct award to Thera Scotland for the Gig Buddies Befriending and networking service for a period of 3 years from 01 July 2022, with the option to extend for a further 2 years, with an estimated value of £35,430.
3. A direct award to:
 - I. Action for Children for Term Time Activities Groups for Children with a Disability for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024, with an estimated value of £381,449; and
 - II. Lothian Autistic Society for Term Time Activities Groups for Children with a Disability for a period of 2 years from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024, with an estimated value of £152,869.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

8. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT 2021/22

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Finance and Property Services providing an overview of the Programme for Government for 2021/22 announced by the Scottish Government on 7 September 2021.

It was recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Note the key announcements made by the Scottish Government as part of their Programme for Government plans for 2021/22; and
2. Agree that officers would continue to monitor these plans as they were progressed and more information became available, assessing any potential policy, service and financial implications for the council, and reporting these to elected members as required.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

9. FOOD INSECURITY FUNDING UPDATE

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Finance and Property Services updating on the work of the West Lothian Food Network (WLFN) to support households facing food in security and to consider an application from the West Lothian Food Network for £272,011 to enable the network to continue over the period from October 2021 to March 2022.

It was recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Note funding of £1.2m for the period 2021 to 2023 to provide additional payments to the WLFN was agreed at the Council budget setting meeting on 25 February, 2021;
2. Note an application by WLFN for £324,800 for the six-month period April to September 2021 was agreed by Council Executive on 20 April 2021;
3. Note that from its inception in May 2020, the network has grown from 26 providers to 39 community food providers based in local communities responding to local need;
4. Note that from May 2020 to the end of July 2021, WLFN had provided a total of 1,818,642 meals and that over 80% of those accessing the network reported they were financially at risk, on a low income and/or unemployed;

5. Note the on-going work undertaken by network partners to become more sustainable;
6. Agree the application for £272,011 for the period October 2021 to March 2022 to West Lothian Food Network to continue to support households experiencing food insecurity; and
7. Note the early discussions with National Lottery on future funding of the WLFN.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

10. INCREASING UPTAKE IN FREE SCHOOL MEALS

The Council Executive considered a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by Depute Chief Executive (Education, Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Services) and Head of Finance and Property Services informing of the progress made in response to a motion at Council on 25 May 2021 which agreed that:

1. The Chief Executive should write to the UK Government Minister with responsibility for the benefits system to seek discussions about the Council being provided with relevant information to help ensure full uptake of free school meals across the county;
2. Officers should consider 'best practice' at other councils which have a higher uptake of Free School Meals (FSM) within their schools;
3. The council should write to COSLA asking them to conduct a study and report on how councils can increase the uptake of FSM; and
4. Officers should prepare on a 'joined up thinking approach' on how we could utilise our staff to engage with communities in increasing the uptake of FSM.

It was recommended that Council Executive:

1. Note that a letter has been sent by the Chief Executive to the UK Government Minister with responsibility for the benefits system seeking discussions about the Council being provided with relevant information to help ensure full uptake of free school meals across the county and a response was awaited;
2. Note a letter had been sent to COSLA asking them to conduct a study and report on how Councils can increase the uptake of FSM;
3. Note current practice in and new developments in relation to school meals;

4. Note the current funding position in relation to the roll out of universal meal provision to P4-7 children and agree the council should write to COSLA and the Scottish Government seeking confirmation that sufficient revenue and capital funding would be made available to fully fund the council's roll out of this universal provision;
5. Note the proposal to participate in the Glasgow Caledonian University SPIRU project on Uptake of School Meals in Secondary pupils;
6. Agree to contribute £4,000 for a Test of Change project in one secondary and one primary school to assess what initiatives work in increasing Uptake of School meals with the budget provided to the schools for this development; and
7. Agree that a further report be presented to Council Executive at a future date with the findings from both the SPIRU project and the Test of Change, setting out proposals for further development in school meal delivery.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

11. FORMER PAVILION, WHITBURN ROAD, BATHGATE - PROPOSED SALE TO MR MUHAMMAD ARSHAD

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Finance and Property Services seeking approval for the sale of the former Pavilion at Whitburn Road, Bathgate to Muhammad Arshad for £55,000 (Fifty Five Thousand Pounds).

It was recommended that Council Executive:

1. Approve the sale of the former Pavilion at Whitburn Road Bathgate to Muhammed Arshad for £55,000 subject to the terms and conditions set out in the report; and
2. Authorise the Head of Finance and Property Services to carry out further negotiations with the proposed purchaser, on the basis that any revised terms and conditions still represent the achievement of best value for the council.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

12. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - A NATIONAL CARE SERVICE FOR SCOTLAND

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Depute Chief Executive providing an overview of the Scottish Government's consultation A National Care Service for Scotland and providing a proposed outline response to the consultation.

It was recommended that Council Executive:

1. Note that the Scottish Government was consulting on the development of a National Care Service for Scotland which was anticipated to be operational by March 2026;
2. Note that the deadline for the submission of responses to the consultation was extended to 2nd November 2021;
3. Consider and approve the draft response prior to its submission to the Scottish Government;
4. Note that scope of the National Care Service (NCS) outlined within the consultation went beyond the recommendations of the Independent Review of Adult Social (IRASC);
5. Note that the proposals outlined within the consultation document would have significant implications for West Lothian Council and local decision making; and
6. Note that there were many areas over which the consultation documentation provided no clarity, in particular on Finance, Human Resources implications, the role of council Elected Members and the role of the Chief Social Work Officer.

Motion

To approve the terms of the report

- Moved by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan

Amendment

West Lothian Council SNP Group welcomes and notes:

- a. the Scottish Government's consultation document "A National Care Service for Scotland" released on 9th August this year;
- b. this consultation arises from the recent "Independent Review of Adult Social Care" (IRASC) known as the Feeley report;
- c. the Feeley report looked specifically at the provision of Adult Social Care Services;
- d. the Scottish Government's consultation covers a far wider remit and includes proposals for a National Care Service which would also cover a whole range of services delegated by West Lothian Council to the IJB and delivered by West Lothian Council:

- children's services;
 - Alcohol and drug services
 - Social work
 - Elements of mental health services
 - Potentially, criminal justice services
- e. the consultation proposes that IJBs become Community Health and Social Care Boards (CHSCBs) **which would be the local delivery body for the NCS, funded directly by the Scottish Government**
- f. CHSCBs would be the sole model for local delivery of community health and social care in Scotland. They would have responsibility and authority for planning, commissioning, and procurement of community health and social care and other relevant support, and for the management of GP contractual arrangements. **They will be able to commission services from local authorities, the NHS and the third and independent sectors;**
- g. CHSCBs would employ their own chief executives and staff who plan, commission and procure care and support. The chief executive of each CHSCB will report to the chief executive of the NCS; and

Furthermore, West Lothian Council SNP Group believes:

1. these proposals represent the most radical changes to the structure and functions of local government in Scotland since the last major reorganisation in 1996;
2. the Feeley report contained some sound proposals in regard to Adult Care Services
3. the recommendations of the Feeley report, progress on shifting the balance of care, and successful delivery of early intervention/prevention and providing integrated, person-centred services as well as anticipatory care in partnership with the NHS, the third sector and local communities, must be supported by adequate funding from the Scottish Government.

Council resolves to write to the Scottish Government welcoming these radical proposals contained within the consultation but asking for reassurances around the costs, financing and the employment rights of current staff.

A roll call vote was taken. The result was as follows :-

Motion

Alison Adamson
Harry Cartmill
Tom Conn
David Dodds
Damian Doran-Timson

Amendment

Frank Anderson
Carl John

Lawrence Fitzpatrick
Chris Horne
Cathy Muldoon
George Paul
Kirsteen Sullivan

Decision

Following a vote the motion was successful by 10 votes to 2, with 1 member absent, and it was agreed accordingly.

13. 2020/21 ANNUAL RETURN ON THE CHARTER

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services advising on service performance against the Annual Return on the Charter, and seeking approval of submission of the Annual Assurance Statement, signed by the Council Leader to the Scottish Housing Regulator on 31 May 2020.

It was recommended that Council Executive:

1. Note the content of the 2020/21 Annual Return on the Charter by HCBS, the data analysis and commentary, and subsequent improvement actions as identified during verification of the data, and wider benchmarking; and
2. Approve for the council leader to sign the Annual Assurance Statement (appendix 2) for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the deadline of October 31st.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

14. SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE, S72 HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing a report on the update to the Council's scheme of assistance or section 72 statement under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006. Services had collaborated to refresh the scheme to reflect current council policy, practice and align with the Local Housing Strategy (2017-2022) and Housing Capital Investment Programme 2019/20 – 2022/23, in relation to dealing with repairs and improvements in the mixed tenure estate

It was recommended that Council Executive:

1. Note that amendments included reference to the Tenement Management Scheme and clarity around when the council would use the Tenement (Scotland) Act 2004 to progress works within

mixed tenure blocks;

2. Note that the revised Scheme of Assistance would supersede the scheme approved by Council on 25 June 2019;
3. Approve the proposed changes to the scheme of assistance, as outlined below; and
4. Approve the updated scheme of assistance attached at Appendix 1.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

15. HOMELESS UNSUITABLE ACCOMMODATION ORDER UPDATE

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services updating of the challenges faced by the council in meeting its statutory homeless function under the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation (Scotland) Order 2014 (the Order).

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Note the current homeless position in West Lothian and the supply challenges the council faced in meeting the Order;
2. Note the outcome of meetings with the Scottish Government;
3. Note the actions outlined and delivered as part of the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019/20 to 2023/24 to meet the Order; and
4. Agree that officers would continue to monitor the actions as they are progressed, assessing any further implications for the council, and reporting these to elected members as required.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

16. INVESTMENT IN PLAY AREAS - ALLOCATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Operational Services updating on the allocation of additional funding from the Scottish Government, aimed at providing investment in the refurbishment of play areas, and seeking approval of the approach being proposed in relation to utilisation of these funds.

It was recommended that the Council Executive note the report and approve the following recommendations that:

1. West Lothian Council acknowledges and welcomes the additional funding aimed at supporting the refurbishment of play areas;
2. Approve the approach suggested by officers to utilise the additional funding as highlighted in D5 of the report; and
3. Approve the recruitment of an additional officer to support delivery of the projects resulting from the additional funding.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

17. BATHGATE WATER REGENERATION PROJECT - (BATHGATE MEADOWS NATURE PARK)

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Operational Services informing of the progress of the project to regenerate the Bathgate Water and improve the environment in the surrounding area.

It was recommended that Council Executive note the content of the report and approve the funding agreement for the project and the formation of Bathgate Water partnership and project board consisting of officers from SEPA, Sustrans, Forth Rivers Trust, Green Action Trust and West Lothian Council.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

18. WEST LOTHIAN FOOD GROWING STRATEGY 2020-2025

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Operational Services presenting the West Lothian Food Growing Strategy 2020-2025 and seeking formal approval.

It was recommended that the Council Executive approve the West Lothian Food Growing Strategy in Appendix 1.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

19. BUILDING REGULATIONS: PROPOSED CHANGES TO ENERGY STANDARDS AND ASSOCIATED TOPICS, INCLUDING VENTILATION, OVERHEATING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the Scottish Government Consultation - Proposed Changes to Energy Standards and associated topics, including Ventilation, Overheating and Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure and considered the proposed response.

It was recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Note the contents of the Scottish Government Consultation (Appendix 1); and
2. Agree the proposed response (Appendix 2) prior to its submission to the Scottish Government.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

20. CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY FOR ADULT NON-RESIDENTIAL SOCIAL CARE

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Social Policy informing of the changes made to the contributions policy for adult non-residential social care, which required to be reviewed on an annual basis.

It was recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Note the content of the report which outlined the changes to the Contributions Policy for Adult Non-Residential Social Care based on the annual review cycle; and
2. Approve the recommended changes to the policy in section D.3 of the report.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.

21. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT REPORT 1 APRIL 2020 TO 31 MARCH 2021

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Corporate Services presenting the Annual Procurement Report for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

It was recommended that Council Executive note the terms of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

22. WEST LOTHIAN LEISURE - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 - REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Finance and Property Services updating on the West Lothian Leisure (WLL) 2020/21 Audited Accounts which were approved and signed off on 16 September 2021.

It was recommended that Council Executive note the WLL Board had approved WLL's 2020/21 Audited Accounts.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

23. COMPLIANCE WITH DIRECTIONS FROM WEST LOTHIAN INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Depute Chief Executive (Health and Social Care Partnership) informing of the progress made in complying with the Directions issued to the council by West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB).

It was recommended that the Council Executive note the:

1. Council's legal duty to comply with the Directions
2. Reporting arrangements to ensure compliance with the Directions;
and
3. Progress in delivery of the commission plans.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

24. WEST LOTHIAN INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Depute Chief Executive (Health and Social Care Partnership) informing the West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) had

published its Annual Performance Report for 2020/21.

It was recommended that the Council Executive note:

1. The IJB had published its Annual Performance Report for 2020/21 in line with the statutory requirement to publish by 31 July each year; and
2. The content of the IJB Annual Performance Report and the National Indicators Performance at a Glance.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

25. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services updating on various initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing in West Lothian. The report also provided an update on the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on both the timescale for delivery and completion of the Council's 3,000 Affordable Houses programme.

It was recommended that Council Executive note:

1. Progress being made on delivering 3,000 affordable homes in West Lothian over the period 2012-2022;
2. The impact on construction of the new build houses due to the COVID 19 Pandemic; and
3. Projected delivery estimated at 89% of the overall programme by March 2022.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

26. AFGHAN CITIZENS REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Depute Chief Executive updating on the UK Government's Afghan Citizen's Refugee Resettlement programme and related issues.

It was recommended that Council Executive note the update on the Afghan Citizen's Refugee Resettlement programme.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

27. ACTION TO MITIGATE FUNERAL POVERTY - WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL ENDORSED RESPECTFUL FUNERAL - UPDATE

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Head of Operational Services updating on the success of the West Lothian “Respectful Funeral” model provided by local funeral directors, and to provide details of an agreed extension to the scheme. The model contributed to mitigation of funeral poverty.

It was recommended that the Council Executive note the report and the recommendations that:-

1. West Lothian Council acknowledges the success of the “Respectful Funeral” model and continues to endorse it in order to support West Lothian residents with funeral costs; and
2. Welcomes the extension of the scheme to 31 March 2023.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

Chief Executive Office

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 6FF

Our Ref: CEO/RK
Your Ref:

Contact: Graham Hope
Tel: 01506 281697
e-mail: graham.hope@westlothian.gov.uk

Private and Confidential

The Centre, Livingston
Almondvale Boulevard
Livingston
EH54 6HR

13 September 2021

Dear Patrick & Ashley,

Lease of Unit 101 to be used as a Community Learning and Development (CLD) Youth Facility

A meeting of West Lothian Council took place on Tuesday 7 September and the above matter was discussed.

I am contacting you on behalf of West Lothian Council to sincerely thank you for making this opportunity possible for our young people to be provided with a unique and easy to access space in an already familiar location.

We believe that this new HUB for our CLD Youth Services team and partner organisations will provide the positive environment and physical presence required to pro-actively and directly engage with our local young people as well as our wider community.

We look forward to entering into this new and exciting partnership with you and sharing the many benefits we believe this will deliver.

Yours sincerely



Graham Hope
Chief Executive

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS TO SUPPORT COVID RECOVERY

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to advise the Council Executive of the Scottish Government consultation on a range of legislative proposals to support COVID recovery, and ask the Council Executive to agree a response.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Note the consultation
2. Agree the proposed response to the consultation

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs Making best use of resources Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Coronavirus Act 2020 Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Act 2020 Coronavirus (Extension and Expiry)(Scotland) Bill
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	
VII Consideration at PDSP	Partnership and Resources PDSP 1 October 2021
VIII Other consultations	Education, Social Policy, Corporate Services, Planning and Economic Development, Finance and Property Services, and Building and Customer Services.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

The Scottish Government is consulting on a wide range of specific legislative proposals which they think have the potential to support Covid recovery. The consultation is available at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-recovery-consultation-public-services-justice-system-reforms/pages/1/>

This consultation focuses on reviewing the legislative powers that have supported the response to Covid. It begins with discussion of the aims for Covid recovery and ends with an open question, to invite comments on the action that respondents think is required to support a fair, safe and secure recovery.

The consultation invites views on specific legislative proposals that have the potential to support Covid recovery in the following areas

- Proposals for greater public health resilience, to protect Scotland against future public health threats;
- Proposals for public services and justice system reform, to ensure that the benefits of practical modernisations put in place during the pandemic are maintained; and
- Proposals to respond to the impact of Covid in the justice system specifically, where backlogs have unavoidably built up.

D2 Consultation Response

A draft response is in Appendix 1 to the report.

Due to the wide-ranging nature of the consultation, input to the response was sought from Education, Social Policy, Corporate Services, Planning and Economic Development, Finance and Property Services, and Building and Customer Services.

The deadline for the submission of a response to the consultation is 9 November.

D3 Consideration at the Partnership and Resources PDSP

A comment was made at the PDSP that all Covid emergency legislation should cease in March 2022, and any requirement for replacement legislation should be done in the usual and proper manner.

D4 Next steps in the process

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence and an analysis report will also be made available

E. CONCLUSION

The Scottish Government is consulting on legislative proposals to support COVID recovery, and the Council Executive is asked to agree a response

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Partnership and Resources PDSP 1 October 2021 - Scottish Government Consultation
- Legislative Proposals To Support Covid Recovery

Appendices/Attachments: 1. Consultation Response

Contact Person: Caroline Burton; 01506 281651; caroline.burton@westlothian.gov.uk

Name of CMT Member: Graham Hope, Chief Executive,

Date: 26 October 2021

Appendix 1

Covid recovery: a consultation on public health, services, and justice system reforms



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please Note this form **must** be completed and returned with your response.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy:

<https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

☐ Individual

☒ Organisation

Full name or organisation's name

West Lothian Council

Phone number

01506 281675

Address

Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston

Postcode

EH54 6FF

Email Address

Graham.hope@westlothian.gov.uk

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

☒ Publish response with name

☐ Publish response only (without name)

☐ Do not publish response

Information for organisations:

The option 'Publish response only (without name)' is available for individual respondents only. If this option is selected, the organisation name will still be published.

If you choose the option 'Do not publish response', your organisation name may still be listed as having responded to the consultation in, for example, the analysis report.

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Questionnaire

Chapter 2: Public health resilience

Question 1: Education: powers to make directions to close educational establishments, and to ensure continuity of education

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic H1 (Education: powers to make directions to close educational establishments, and to ensure continuity of education) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic H1 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic H1 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic H1 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic H1, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

The proposal is to make permanent provisions in the UK Act that relate to education, namely the duty on all operators of educational establishments to have regard to the advice of the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland ("CMO"), and the powers for Scottish Ministers to give directions in relation to the closure of educational establishments and the continuity of educational provision during the remainder of the current pandemic and future pandemics.

This proposal would take some powers away from Local Authorities in certain limited circumstances. Decisions regarding closure of all schools across the country, and requiring the continuation of services (for example free meals, provision for vulnerable children and young people etc) through alternative means may be best made by a central government with direct access to scientific and clinical advice, typically unavailable to a local authority.

Local authorities would retain discretion to close a school, or vary service provision in response to local circumstances, but could not disregard an order to close, or an order to continue services in a particular alternative way.

National decision making removes the prospect of a postcode lottery in relation to service provision, and the pressure local authorities may come under in relation to service provision in an emergency situation in the absence of clear national direction.

Permanent powers would remove the need for time to be taken up in legislation and communication in future emergencies, as all stakeholders would be aware of the powers, and the prospect of Direction.

Question 2: Power to make public health protection regulations

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic H2 (Power to make public health protection regulations) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic H2 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic H2 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic H2 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic H2, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

The provisions for Topic H2 should only extend beyond March 2022 for COVID control if there continues to be a serious concern regarding public health. The provisions should not be made permanent and not be extended to other infections and contamination. It is concerning that no mention is made in the information regarding the provisions which already exist within the Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008 for Scottish Ministers, Local Authorities and Health Boards in protecting and controlling public health. Significant powers already exist for situations which are clearly defined as significant threats to human health in this legislation.

It is concerning that no further clarification is given in terms of what Scottish Government consider are the infections or contamination they would seek to control. It is accepted that it is not possible to specify where this may involve new infections, but it is concerning that the proposals potentially give scope to government to impose restrictions on healthy individuals where previously public health legislation only required control of infected or contaminated individuals. It is therefore difficult to agree to providing new powers to government where there is no clarity or details to understand in what situation they may seek to use these.

It would be concerning for government to be able to decide that infections we have lived with and controlled by existing public health measures could subsequently be defined by them differently and require wide spread restrictions as were put in place for COVID. This would be a questionable burden on society and those tasked with monitoring and enforcing restrictions.

There is no need for permanence as governments were able to introduce legislation promptly in response to the COVID pandemic. If the provision is being established only for the purposes of such situations then it would seem appropriate to address concerns with specific legislation only when necessary. The machinery of government seemed to manage this during COVID.

It is also important to be able to maintain appropriate scrutiny of restrictions and regulations being proposed for other public health concerns. The level of information in this consultation is insufficient to allow this, and experience of the COVID pandemic response is that confusion and contradiction between legislation, guidance, and scientific evidence to support regulatory controls was a challenge throughout. It would be completely inappropriate to support permanent powers for government until appropriate lessons have been learned from the COVID regulatory response to ensure that any proposals for these new powers are properly considered and evidenced.

Question 3: Vaccinations and immunisations

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic H3 (Vaccinations and immunisations) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic H3 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic H3 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic H3 should be extended or made permanent

- ☐ Unsure
- ☒ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic H3, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

This is a question for health professionals

Question 4: Virtual public meetings under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010

It is proposed that new permanent legislative provisions for Topic H4 (Virtual public meetings under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010) as described will be developed.

Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the proposed provisions for Topic H4 should be developed
- ☐ I do not think the proposed provisions for Topic H4 should be developed
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on the proposed provisions for Topic H4 please write them below.

Increasing the use of digital channels to enable service delivery should be supported with the caveat that digital engagement doesn't become the only means of engagement.

Greater flexibility with regard to holding virtual public meetings during normal times would be welcome. In normal times we have found attendance at public consultation meetings to vary considerably. Low turn-outs don't always reflect the level of interest but their ability to attend. Recent virtual consultations involving primary and ASN schools has often enabled both parents to attend without having to make child care and transport arrangements.

Chapter 3: Public services & justice system

Question 5: Alcohol licensing remote hearings

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P1 (Alcohol licensing remote hearings) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P1 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P1 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P1 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P1, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Increasing the use of digital channels to enable service delivery, such as virtual licensing meetings should be supported with the caveat that digital engagement doesn't become the only means of engagement.

Question 6: Bankruptcy: debt level that enables creditors to pursue the bankruptcy of a debtor through the courts

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P2 (Bankruptcy: debt level that enables creditors to pursue the bankruptcy of a debtor through the courts) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P2 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent (i.e. with a creditor petition debt level of £10,000 as per the current provisions)
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P2 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent with an amended creditor petition debt level of £5,000
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P2 should be extended beyond March 2022 (i.e. with a creditor petition debt level of £10,000 as per the current provisions), but not made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P2 should be extended beyond March 2022 with an amended creditor petition debt level of £5,000, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P2 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P2, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

A permanently amended creditor petition debt level of £5,000 will achieve a more balanced approach for both creditors and debtors beyond March 2022

Question 7: Bankruptcy: electronic service of documents

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P3 (Bankruptcy: electronic service of documents) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P3 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P3 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P3 should be extended or made permanent

- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P3, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

The electronic service of documents provides for a more efficient process that ensures a quicker delivery of information to recipients and reduces administration costs

Question 8:

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P4 (Bankruptcy: moratoriums on diligence) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P4 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent (i.e. with a moratorium period of 6 months as per the current provisions)
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P4 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent with an amended moratorium period of 12 weeks
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P4 should be extended beyond March 2022 (i.e. with a moratorium period of 6 months as per the current provisions), but not made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P4 should be extended beyond March 2022 with an amended moratorium period of 12 weeks, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P4 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P4, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

An amended 12 week moratorium period will ensure that individuals will remain focused and engaged with advice services in finding a solution to their debt problems.

Question 9: Bankruptcy: virtual meetings of creditors

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P5 (Bankruptcy: virtual meetings of creditors) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P5 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P5 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent

- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P5 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P5, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Allowing virtual meetings of creditors to be made permanent will improve efficiency and reduce costs which in turn will potentially increase the returns available to creditors.

Question 10: Care services: giving of notices by the Care Inspectorate

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P6 (Care services: giving of notices by the Care Inspectorate) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P6 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P6 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P6 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P6, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Increasing the use of digital channels to enable service delivery should be supported

Question 11: Civic government licensing remote hearings

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P7 (Civic government licensing remote hearings) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P7 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P7 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P7 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P7, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Increasing the use of digital channels to enable service delivery should be supported with the caveat that digital engagement doesn't become the only means of engagement.

Question 12: Courts: intimation, etc. of documents

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P8 (Courts: intimation, etc. of documents) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P8 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P8 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P8 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P8, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Increasing the use of digital channels to enable service delivery should be supported

Question 13: Criminal justice: arrangements for the custody of persons detained at police stations

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P9 (Criminal justice: arrangements for the custody of persons detained at police stations) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P9 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P9 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P9 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P9, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

This proposal seems to be in line with the modernising agenda for the justice system.

Question 14: Freedom of Information: giving notice electronically

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P10 (Freedom of Information: giving notice electronically) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P10 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P10 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P10 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P10, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Increasing the use of digital channels to enable service delivery should be supported with the caveat that digital engagement doesn't become the only means of engagement.

Question 15: Legal aid

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P11 (Legal aid) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P11 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P11 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P11 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☒ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P11, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

This is a question for providers of Legal Aid

Question 16: Legal writings etc.

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P12 (Legal writings etc.) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P12 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P12 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P12 should be extended or made permanent

- ☒ Unsure
☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P12, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Increasing the use of digital channels to enable service delivery should be supported

Question 17: Mental health: named person nomination

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P13 (Mental health: named person nomination) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P13 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
☐ I think the provisions for Topic P13 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P13 should be extended or made permanent
☐ Unsure
☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P13, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

It is sensible for this to be made permanent as there have been no issues with this from a West Lothian Council perspective during the pandemic.

Question 18: Parole Board: delegation

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P14 (Parole Board: delegation) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P14 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
☐ I think the provisions for Topic P14 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P14 should be extended or made permanent
☐ Unsure
☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P14, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

This would appear to be pragmatic and allow contingency for the Parole Board to continue to operate.

Question 19: Parole Board: live link

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P15 (Parole Board: live link) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P15 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P15 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P15 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P15, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

This would appear to be a sensible measure and allow Parole boards to become more efficient.

Question 20: Remote registration of deaths and still-births

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P16 (Remote registration of deaths and still-births) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic P16 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P16 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic P16 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P16, or the proposal for permanence, please write them below.

Remote death registrations are the preferred option being much more streamlined. Previously the MCCD (death certificate) would be given to the family for them to make an appointment to come into the office to register the death where now it is scanned and emailed direct from the doctor or hospital with the informants contact details. The registration office can then arrange a convenient time to telephone the informant where the registration can be done in the comfort of their own home. All completed forms to the Funeral Director and Procurator Fiscal are scanned and emailed direct. With the current

travel restrictions another benefit is that family members who live abroad can be involved in the registration.

Question 21: Remote registration of live births

It is proposed that new permanent legislative provisions for Topic P17 (Remote registration of live births) as described will be developed. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the proposed provisions for Topic P17 should be developed
- ☐ I do not think the proposed provisions for Topic P17 should be developed
- ☒ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on the proposed provisions for Topic P17 please write them below.

There is a concern where the parents of the child are not married to each other. Currently both parents would need to attend the office to sign the register page where a hard signature of both would be produced. If a birth was registered remotely it would only produce a transcription of both signatures and would not stand up in a court of law.

Question 22: Tenancies: protection against eviction (discretionary grounds of eviction); and pre-action requirements for eviction proceedings on ground of rent arrears

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic P18 (Tenancies: protection against eviction (discretionary grounds of eviction); and pre-action requirements for eviction proceedings on ground of rent arrears) as described will be made permanent. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P18 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P18 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent, but only to the extent that rent arrears should continue to be a discretionary eviction ground – with all other eviction grounds returning to their pre-pandemic status
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P18 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic P18 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent, but only to the extent that rent arrears should continue to be a discretionary eviction ground – with all other eviction grounds returning to their pre-pandemic status
- ☒ I do not think the provisions for Topic P18 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic P18, or the proposal for

permanence, please write them below.

The extension to the Pre Action Requirement (PAR) notice period and restricting Evictions during the Covid19 Pandemic was a reasonable and practical decision as the country faced significant and serious public health crisis.

During this time it provided Registered Social Landlords an extended period of time to support and engage with tenants to sustain their tenancy during the pandemic and lockdown measures to keep people safe. The temporary provisions continued to strike an appropriate balance between the tenant and the landlord. However, to extend and make the provisions permanent is a concern.

We find that the use of Pre Action Requirements is one of the tools available that can prevent arrears escalating and becoming unmanageable for the tenant. In West Lothian, a significant amount of engagement, support, welfare and money advice is offered to our tenants who face financial difficulties in meeting their rental payments. For those tenants who engage, we work with the tenant to reach a sustainable repayment plan even where high level of debt has arisen and we mitigate escalation to court stage. Unfortunately, for some tenants, progressing with rent arrears recovery processes is necessary and often only when we reach court stage that a tenant's behaviour changes and we have engagement. Eviction in West Lothian is very much the last resort and each case is reviewed on an individual basis and if we can prevent Eviction we will.

Therefore, there has to be a balance as we also have to think about all the tenants who do pay their rent regularly, who update the circumstances to receive the assistance with their housing costs either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. A concern about extending the notice period of a PAR is leading to much higher rent arrears for that individual tenant and also what message it sends to Tenants about being a tenant and paying rent is integral to that landlord /tenant relationship.

Chapter 4: Responding to the impact of COVID-19 in the justice system

Question 23: Courts and tribunals: conduct of business by electronic means

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J1 (Courts and tribunals: conduct of business by electronic means) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J1 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J1 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J1 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☒ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J1, or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

This is a question for the Scottish Court and Tribunal Service

Question 24: Courts and tribunals: virtual attendance

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J2 (Courts and tribunals: virtual attendance) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J2 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J2 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J2 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☒ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J2, or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

This is a question for the Scottish Court and Tribunal Service

Question 25: Criminal justice: early release of prisoners

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J3 (Criminal justice: early release of prisoners) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J3 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J3 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J3 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J3, or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

This provision was utilised to a limited extent in the early part of the pandemic and caused no significant issues. There is an opportunity to extend this further. A wider range of prisoners could be released subject to multi agency discussion.

Question 26: Criminal justice: expiry of undertaking

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J4 (Criminal justice: expiry of undertaking) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J4 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J4 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J4 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J4, or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

This provision appears to be particularly relevant to COVID 19 and therefore should remain a time limited provision

Question 27: Criminal justice: fiscal fines

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J5 (Criminal justice: fiscal fines) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J5 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J5 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J5 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J5, or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

This appears to be a proportionate measure and would support efforts to limit unnecessary prosecutions. It can be used as a measure alongside other similar disposals such as Diversion from Prosecution.

Question 28: Criminal justice: national court for cases beginning with an appearance from custody

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J6 (Criminal justice: national court for cases beginning with an appearance from custody) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J6 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J6 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J6 should be extended or made permanent

- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J6, or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

Whilst this is predominantly a question for the Scottish Court and Tribunal Service, the measure appears to enable more efficient use of resources for the SCTS and for other agencies.

Question 29: Criminal justice: time limits - relating to the time limit on summary-only cases at section 136 of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 (1995 Act)

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J7(i) (relating to the time limit on summary-only cases at section 136 of the 1995 Act (Criminal justice: time limits)) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J7(i) should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J7(i) should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J7(i) should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J7(i), or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

This is a complex area. A balance needs to be found between the administration of justice for both the victim and the accused person. There are also significant pressures on prisons. A permanent extension would not seem proportionate at this point in time but extending them on a temporary basis would seem sensible.

Question 30: Criminal justice: time limits - remand time limits at section 65(4) and section 147(1) of the 1995 Act

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J7(ii) (remand time limits at section 65(4) and section 147(1) of the 1995 Act (Criminal justice: time limits)) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J7(ii) should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J7(ii) should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J7(ii) should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J7(ii), or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

There would be some concern that extending time on remand would have a detrimental impact on the prison system. Any extension should therefore be time limited.

Question 31: Criminal justice: time limits - extending time limits relating to the maximum time between first appearance on petition and the first diet/preliminary hearing and commencement of the trial at section 65(1) of the 1995 Act

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J7(iii) (extending time limits relating to the maximum time between first appearance on petition and the first diet/preliminary hearing and commencement of the trial at section 65(1) of the 1995 Act (Criminal justice: time limits)) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J7(iii) should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J7(iii) should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J7(iii) should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J7(iii), or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

Any extension should be limited in this case.

Question 32: Criminal justice: time limits - removing time limits on the length of individual adjournments for inquiries

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J7(iv) (removing time limits on the length of individual adjournments for inquiries (Criminal justice: time limits)) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J7(iv) should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J7(iv) should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J7(iv) should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J7(iv), or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

Any extension should be limited in this case.

Question 33: Proceeds of crime

It is proposed that the provisions for Topic J8 (Proceeds of crime) as described will be extended beyond March 2022. Which of the following best describes what you think about this?

- ☐ I think the provisions for Topic J8 should be extended beyond March 2022 and made permanent
- ☒ I think the provisions for Topic J8 should be extended beyond March 2022, but not made permanent
- ☐ I do not think the provisions for Topic J8 should be extended or made permanent
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have any comments on either the provisions for Topic J8, or the proposal for extension beyond March 2022, please write them below.

It seems reasonable that individuals subject to confiscation orders have more time to pay but this should be limited to a time where COVID 19 is impacting.

Chapter 5: Final questions

Question 34: Covid recovery

To support the key three themes for Covid recovery as described, do you have any proposals for legislation which goes beyond or is different to the consultation proposals in Chapters 2 to 4?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to which of the three themes are of particular interest to you.

Questions 35 to 39: Do you have any comments on potential impacts of the proposals in Chapters 2 to 4 of this paper, not sufficiently covered by the previous impact assessments, on:

Question 35: Business and regulatory impact assessment

- ☐ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
- ☒ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

Question 36: Child rights and wellbeing impact assessment

- ☒ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

As the Child Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment is a mechanism to identify, research, analyse and record the anticipated impact of any proposed law, policy or measure on children’s human rights and wellbeing as rights recognised in the UNCRC’, it may have an impact on Public Services and the Justice System when it is deemed that rights are not being adhered to and this leads to prosecution.

In terms of Public Health Resilience any specific requirements or imposed public health protection regulations would need to ensure all children have a right to the highest attainable standard of health, and to health care services that help them to attain this.

Any changes in policy directly impacting on children would need to ensure that children are provided with the opportunity to be heard, either directly or through a representative or appropriate body.

Question 37: Equality impact assessment

- ☒ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

Increasing use of digital channels should be supported, but digital channels should not become the only means of engagement so as to ensure no-one is excluded

Question 38: Socio-economic equality impact assessment (the Fairer Scotland Duty)

- ☒ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
☐ No
☐ Unsure
☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

Increasing use of digital channels should be supported, but digital channels should not become the only means of engagement so as to ensure no-one is excluded

Question 39: Human rights

- ☐ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
☒ No
☐ Unsure
☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

Question 40: Data protection impact assessment

Do you have any comments on potential impacts of the proposals in Chapters 2 to 4 of this paper on data protection and privacy (the handling of personal data)?

- ☐ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
☒ No
☐ Unsure
☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

Question 41: Island communities impact assessment

Do you have any comments on potential impacts of the proposals in Chapters 2 to 4 of this paper on people in rural or island communities?

- ☐ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☒ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

Question 42: Strategic environmental assessment

Do you have any comments on potential impacts of the proposals in Chapters 2 to 4 of this paper on the environment?

- ☐ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
- ☒ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

Question 43: Financial Memorandum

Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the proposals in Chapters 2 to 4 of this consultation paper for public bodies, individuals and businesses, having regard to the Financial Memorandum for the Extension and Expiry Bill?

- ☒ Yes I have comments on potential impacts
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ I have no view

If you have selected “Yes” please write your comments below. It would be helpful if you could refer to topics of particular interest to you with their topic codes.

The pandemic and the response has shown that financial impacts may be difficult to quantify in advance. Alongside increasing demands on service provision in many areas, increasing costs and also reducing levels of income generated in a number of areas means it is essential that vital public services are funded adequately by government during the recovery period from the pandemic

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

POLICE SCOTLAND DIVISIONAL COMMANDER – PROPOSED APPOINTMENT

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To appraise Council Executive of the proposed appointment of a new Police Scotland Divisional Commander for the Lothian and Borders area. This role was previously fulfilled by Chief Superintendent John McKenzie but will soon become vacant when he retires.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Executive agrees to support the appointment of Chief Superintendent Catriona Paton to the role of Divisional Commander for the Lothian and Borders area.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Focusing on our customers' needs;- Being honest, open and accountable;- Providing equality of opportunities;- Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The legislative framework for local policing is set out within the Police & Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The appointment to the Divisional Commander role is key to delivering improved performance in addressing community safety.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The Divisional Commander will be responsible for leading and managing policing within the local authority area and will also have responsibilities in relation to community planning, community engagement and working with partners. This will underpin several elements of the Single Outcome Agreement.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None

VII Consideration at PDSP None

VIII Other consultations None

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The Assistant Chief Constable for the East of Scotland has written to notify the council of his proposals to appoint a new Divisional Commander for the Lothian and Borders area as the role will soon become vacant.

The Assistant Chief Constable has notified the Chief Executive of his intention to appoint Chief Superintendent Catriona Paton as the Divisional Commander for Lothian and Borders. Detail of Chief Superintendent Paton's extensive background with Police Scotland can be found in Appendix 1.

E. CONCLUSION

In advance of the scheduled retirement of Chief Superintendent John McKenzie, it is recommended that the Council Executive agrees to support the appointment of Chief Superintendent Catriona Paton as the new Divisional Commander for Lothian and Borders.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Letter from Assistant Chief Constable for the East of Scotland Region to West Lothian Council Chief Executive (see appendix 1).

Appendices/Attachments: 1

1. Letter from ACC Tim Mairs to the Chief Executive

Contact Person: Caitlin Hirst, Project Officer; Caitlin.Hirst@westlothian.gov.uk 01506 281278

Graham Hope
Chief Executive

Date of meeting: 26 October 2021

5th October 2021

Graham Hope
Chief Executive
West Lothian Council
7 Whitestone Place
Whitehill Industrial Estate
Bathgate
EH48 2HA



Tim Mairs
Assistant Chief Constable

Local Policing East
Police Scotland
Tulliallan Castle
Alloa
FK10 4BE

01786 893 109

ACC.LocalPolicingEast@scotland.pnn.police.uk

Dear Graham,

Police Scotland Divisional Commander – Lothian & Scottish Borders

As you will be aware, the role of Police Scotland Divisional Commander in Lothian & Scottish Borders Division will soon become vacant.

As Assistant Chief Constable responsible for Local Policing in the East of Scotland, it is my responsibility to assist the Chief Constable in identifying a suitable and experienced officer to take up this important role. I want to ensure that the best person is identified to deliver effective policing services through productive partnerships. This includes consideration of their overall ability to lead and manage policing in your local authority area, including their commitment to community planning, community engagement and working with partners.

I believe that you have had a very positive working relationship with Chief Superintendent John McKenzie and I am confident that the person identified to assume this role as his successor will quickly forge a strong professional partnership with you and your staff with a structured handover scheduled to allow that early engagement.

My nomination for your Local Police Commander is Chief Superintendent Catriona Paton and I write to consult you on this proposition and seek your views. In particular it would help me to know of any specific local challenges or opportunities which might await her, and what your expectations are in relation to your local partnership, looking ahead.

Chief Superintendent Catriona Paton currently works within Criminal Justice Services Division, leading on an organisational wide change project which is seeking to remodel middle office functions to continue to support the effective delivery of operational policing. Catriona was promoted into this role in July 2020.

Catriona has over 30 years policing experience having joined Central Scotland Police in 1989 as a Police Cadet. During her time in policing Catriona has been a leader across virtually the full spectrum of policing functions both operationally and organisationally. Her experience includes leadership roles within Response Policing, Community Planning, Community Policing, Criminal Investigation, Public Protection, Counter Terrorism and Organisational Change.

On the creation of Police Scotland, Catriona was head of Public Protection in Forth Valley Division and used her experience within this field to lead the Risk and Concern Project, which together with partners, transformed services designed to protect our most vulnerable people across Scotland. Over recent years Catriona has held command of other key aspects of policing including Head of Border Policing Command and also Head of Counter Terrorist Intelligence. At the outset of the pandemic, Catriona led on Organisational Learning as part of our Recovery Strategy.

Catriona is a Strategic Firearms Commander (SFC) and an experienced Hostage and Crisis Negotiator, a role she has carried out for over 15 years.

Catriona has an extensive history of leading investigations, reviews, commanding challenging and critical incidents and addressing wider partnership and community issues. In all of these roles, and many others, Catriona's focus remains on listening to understand the views and perspectives of others, especially those who feel marginalised and / or victimised and committing to play her part in establishing trusting resilient relationships which help transform lives for the better.

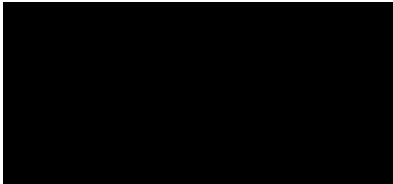
Catriona still resides within Forth Valley and she is the mother of two adult sons both of whom are in the process of taking up careers in the military.

I would be grateful if you could therefore respond, advising whether you support my nomination of Chief Superintendent Paton as Local Police Commander for your area. I would appreciate an early reply, which would allow me to share your views with the Chief Constable.

Chief Superintendent Paton is a highly experienced officer and I am certain the positive working relationship the Council previously enjoyed with Chief Superintendent McKenzie will continue in the capable hands of Chief Superintendent Paton.

I am happy to receive a response in writing, but if you would rather discuss this by telephone I will of course arrange that. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Kind regards,



Tim Mairs
Assistant Chief Constable
Local Policing East

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

LICENSING OF SHORT TERM LETS – CALL FOR VIEWS BY THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To make the Council Executive aware of the Scottish Parliament's call for views on the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce a mandatory licensing scheme for Short Term Lets and to invite the Executive to consider the draft response appended to this report.

B. RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Executive approves the proposed response in Appendix 1 to the call for views on the proposed new licensing scheme for short term lets.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focusing on our customers' needs• Being honest, open and accountable• Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Regulations are to be laid in the Scottish Parliament in November 2021 to introduce a mandatory licensing scheme for short term lets under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 – Part II
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None
VII Consideration at PDSP	18 October 2021 HCBS, Environmental Health & Trading Standards
VIII Other consultations	

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

The Scottish Government announced on 28 April 2019 that it intended to introduce a mandatory licensing scheme for Short Term Lets using secondary legislation under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and make regulations giving local authorities powers to introduce control areas for short term lets under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. The council has responded to two earlier consultations regarding this. The first was responded to in 2019. A response was prepared by Housing, Customer and Building Services on behalf of the council and approved by the Council Executive on 25 June 2019.

A further consultation exercise was undertaken by the Scottish Government in the autumn of 2020 on a licensing scheme and planning control areas for short term lets in Scotland. As this second consultation focussed on the practical and legal aspects of the proposed scheme and the planning control regulation an officer response was prepared and approved by Councillor Conn.

The Control Area Regulations were approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into force on 1 April 2021. Regulations laid at the Parliament in December 2020 to introduce the licensing scheme were later withdrawn and further consultation has taken place.

D2 Timeframe for Introduction of Licensing Scheme

The proposal to licence short terms lets has led to some controversy. The Scottish Government set up a working group of stakeholders in February 2021 to develop guidance on the licensing scheme and planning control areas, and to consider any changes to the legislation that may be needed. The stakeholder working group met between February and August 2021. At the fourth meeting of the group on 4 August 2021 the resignations from members representing the Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers, Airbnb, the Scottish B&B Association, and the UK Short Term Accommodation Association were noted. The trade bodies are opposed to the scheme and are of the view that if regulation is required it should be done by way of a registration scheme rather than a licensing scheme.

The Scottish Government now intends to lay the Licensing Order at the Scottish Parliament in November 2021, this has been delayed from September 2021. However, the promised guidance which was due to be published in the autumn along with the Order to assist hosts and operators, platforms, and local authorities in preparing for the scheme to go live has not yet been published and local authorities remain uncertain of the exact requirements of the scheme.

The Government has said that subject to the approval of the Scottish Parliament, the Order is expected to come into force on 1 January 2022. Local authorities will now have until 1 October 2022 to set up a scheme and start to receive applications, this gives an additional 6 months from the earlier published date of 1 April 2022.

The Government has stated that this will give local authorities sufficient time to prepare.

Existing hosts and operators of short term lets will have until 1 April 2023 to apply for a licence. This date remains unchanged. However, new hosts and operators will require a licence to operate after 1 October 2022.

D3 Call for views

The Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee has now made a call for views of the public and stakeholders on the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce a mandatory licensing scheme for short term lets. This call for views was published on 27 September and closes on 29 October.

A draft response has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 1.

D4 Consideration at Environment PDSP

The draft response was considered at the Environment PDSP meeting on 18 October 2021 and the panel raised a number of issues (listed below) that they wished to be noted and considered in the draft response:

1. The response should provide a definition of what is considered to be a short term let and consideration be given to consistency with the definition for self-catering units used by the Assessor for council tax/rates purposes;
2. The response should address whether or not the licensing scheme should be mandatory across Scotland or not;
3. The response should explore an alternative being a licensing scheme instead as there is no threat to public safety;
4. The last paragraph of the response should be reviewed as it makes much reference to Covid-19 pandemic when it needs to address the situation going forward;
5. To include in the response the complexity of the proposed system for those applying for a short-term let licence; and
6. To ensure reference is included in the response to the way in which neighbours/objectors could engage in the process.

D5 Responses to comments at PDSP

1. The finalised wording of a statutory definition of a short term let will be a matter for the drafters of the scheme and its final form will not be known until the Scottish Government finalise the legislation and the guidance later this year. The drafting of this definition is complex as the scheme is likely to encompass a wide range of different types of properties and circumstances and is likely to be subject to a number of exclusions. The importance of the need for clarity in terms of the definition is included in the draft response. The definition of self-catering units used by the Assessor has been considered, but as it focuses on tax liability and a requirement for property to be available for let for a set period of time (140 days in any financial year) it is not considered to be appropriate as the 140-day threshold could potentially exclude a number of short term let properties from the requirements and regulation envisaged by the proposed scheme.
2. There are very few issues with short term lets in West Lothian. The main drivers behind the proposed licensing scheme are problems of housing shortage and anti-social behaviour linked to short term lets in particular locations in Scotland e.g. Edinburgh. These issues in relation to short term lets are not known to exist in West Lothian to any significant degree although the need for such regulation in other localities in Scotland is recognised.

The draft response suggests that it would be preferable for the licensing of short term lets to be made an optional scheme that could be adopted by councils if required by their local circumstances. This would allow councils flexibility to introduce the scheme in the future if required by changing local circumstances including increased complaints or issues arising from short term lets. The draft response notes that proceeding in this way would potentially provide more time for the Council to consider the position in West Lothian before taking steps to introduce the scheme. If the implementation for the legislation proceeds on a mandatory basis on the current proposed timetable the timescale will be very challenging as noted in the draft response.

3. The Scottish Government has previously consulted on the regulation of short term lets in Scotland and has made clear a settled intention that regulation of short term lets is to proceed in terms of a licensing scheme rather than a less onerous regulatory system such as registration.
4. The focus of the comments in the last paragraph of the draft response is the likely impact of attempting to introduce a new licensing scheme whilst still in the midst of seeking to manage the significant impact Covid has had and continues to have on Council business. Once the scheme is implemented, the issues for the team managing the process will become less of a concern because by then, the intensive process of setting up the scheme and putting in place procedures, information, guidance and systems to manage it will be in place.
5. It is not anticipated that the scheme will necessarily be any more complex than any existing licensing schemes however the draft response does recommend that Guidance and style objection letters are developed to ensure that the process is as user friendly as possible.
6. The draft response includes comments about neighbour notifications, site notice requirements and possible publicity of applications on the Tell Me Scotland website (see link below at F. Background References).

A paragraph highlighting the matters in points 5 and 6 has been added to the draft response. In light of all the above this was the only amendment made to the draft response considered by the Environment PDSP.

E. CONCLUSION

The Scottish Government has issued a call for views on the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce a mandatory licensing scheme for Short Term Lets and the Council Executive is being asked to approve the attached response.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

1. Council Executive Report on Short Term Lets consultation 2019
<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Dh%8Fj%81%88>
2. Approved consultation response from 2020 – within Legal Services files.

3. Link to call for views published on 27 September 2021

<https://yourviews.parliament.scot/spice/licensing-of-short-term-lets/>

4. Tell Me Scotland

<https://www.tellmescotland.gov.uk/>

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: Draft response to the call for views by the Scottish Parliament on the introduction of a Short Term Lets licensing scheme.

Contact Person: Audrey Watson, Managing Solicitor – Licensing, Legal Services
(01506) 281624 audrey.watson@westlothian.gov.uk

Julie Whitelaw, Head of Corporate Services

Date: 26 October 2021

Appendix 1

DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT'S CALL FOR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSED LICENSING SCHEME FOR SHORT TERM LETS

What is the purpose of the proposed licensing scheme?

How would you describe your view of the proposed licensing system for short-term lets?

- ☐ Strongly support
- ☐ Support
- ☐ Neither support nor oppose
- ☒ Oppose ✓
- ☐ Strongly oppose

Why do you think this? (tick all that apply)

- ☐ It should not include traditional Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- ☐ It will disproportionately affect accommodation in rural areas
- ☐ It will lead to the closure of short-term let businesses
- ☐ It will increase costs for short-term let businesses
- ☐ It will increase uncertainty for short-term let businesses
- ☐ (None to be ticked)

Other reasons

Whilst it is appreciated that this scheme is urgently needed in some areas where numbers of short term lets have led to housing shortages and an increase in antisocial behaviour this is not the position across Scotland. In West Lothian there are very few issues with short term lets. This council believes strongly that the proposed licensing scheme should not be mandatory and that the legislation should allow for each local authority to decide whether to implement the scheme and what the timetable should be for such implementation. Many of the licensing schemes operated under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 are optional rather than mandatory and the council is of the view that this works well. The licensing schemes which are mandatory involve public safety issues such as knife dealer and skin piercing and tattooing licences but public safety is not likely to be a factor in most applications for short term let licences.

The pandemic has put significant pressure on local authorities to deliver core services and it will be very difficult to introduce a new licensing scheme by the proposed date of October 2022 when the regulations have not yet been finalised and so the exact details are not yet known.

If Parliament decides that the scheme must be mandatory the council would welcome a change to the timetable to allow local authorities scope to delay implementation until October 2023 if required.

Thinking about your response above, how do you think the proposed licensing system could be improved? Please set out how you think the system could be improved

(1) The 20-metre rule for neighbour notification may well lead to a large number of neighbours being notified in most cases. Is this designed to be in addition to the usual site notice requirements under the 1982 Act? This could lead to large number of objections from the

public which do not relate to any of the statutory grounds of refusal and which will delay the processing of applications.

How this can be resolved:

- Clarify the site notice requirements and consider if extensive neighbour notification is required.
- Include in guidance that notices should be posted on the Tell Me Scotland website and that councils should direct the public to sign up to receive notices affecting their area to obviate the need for site notices and neighbour notification.
- The Government should publish guidance for potential objectors with a style objection notice to prevent unstructured and irrelevant objections.

(2) A clearer definition of antisocial behaviour in the Licensing Order is required together with further clarity in the guidance on the powers relating to antisocial behaviour to assist local authorities with effective enforcement.

(3) A clearer definition of what a short term let is for the purposes of the licensing scheme is required.

Is there anything else about the proposed licensing system, or its potential impact, that you would like to mention to the Committee. It would be helpful if you could keep any comments brief and provide evidence to support any claims made.

The new scheme must be as simple and straightforward as possible for applicants and other stakeholders e.g. potential objectors to use. The Council notes that the publication and availability of information about the scheme and particular applications is vital and this importance should be reflected in the implementation of the proposed new scheme. The finalised guidance for stakeholders should be made as accessible as possible and in conjunction with legislation provide clarity on the requirements of the new scheme and all connected matters. It would be helpful if the finalised guidance included information about how the proposed new system will interact with any other existing regulatory schemes affecting properties that will fall to be licensed under the scheme e.g. landlord registration.

The Committee should be aware that the pandemic has placed significant pressure on licensing services within local authorities. The move to working from home has meant significant changes to working practices and has led to inevitable delays in receipt of correspondence from many customers who find using email and online processes challenging. The effects of the pandemic have led to an unprecedented volume of enquiries and complaints from the public and licence holders. In addition, due to the need for liquor premises to change their operations to comply with covid regulations applications for premises licences and variations which require to be referred to the Board have increased locally by over 3000%. Applications for occasional licences for the sale of alcohol on a temporary basis received for the first nine months of 2021 have increased by 252% from the numbers received in 2020. This has led to an unprecedented 6-month delay in liquor licensing applications being referred to the Licensing Board in West Lothian when previously there were no delays in processing such applications. Against this background the requirement to introduce a new licensing scheme over the next 12 months will put even more pressure on already stretched resources. The council's view is that the timescale is unrealistic and is aware that this view is shared by SOLAR (the Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland).

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR TO WEST Lothian LEISURE LIMITED

REPORT BY HEAD OF HEAD OF EDUCATION (LEARNING, POLICY & RESOURCES)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Council Executive of the recommendation of the Nominations Committee of West Lothian Leisure for the appointment of an independent Director to the vacant position on the Board of West Lothian Leisure.

B. RECOMMENDATION

That Council Executive agrees to the appointment of Ms Gillian Hentges to the Board of West Lothian Leisure.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	West Lothian Leisure is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, the relationship with the sole owner and shareholder, West Lothian Council, is set out in the Articles of Association.
III Implications for scheme of delegation	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance indicators	The efficient operation of West Lothian Leisure contributes to key performance indicators in sports, leisure and culture.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Council Executive agreed core revenue funding of £2.312 million and a one-off capital payment of £0.370 million for 2021/22. In addition, the council's approved 2021/22 to 2022/23 Revenue Budget includes an additional £3 million to help WLL cope with the continuing demands of Covid-19; currently of £1.5 million in each of 2021/22 and 2022/23.

VII Consultations at PDSP Not applicable.

VIII Other consultations West Lothian Leisure, Finance and Estates.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The Articles of Association of West Lothian Leisure provide for the appointment of Directors with a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 11 with Council Directors not forming a majority. There are 5 Council Directors of West Lothian Leisure, 1 trade union nominated Director, 1 employee Director and a maximum of 4 independent Directors.

A vacancy for an independent Director had arisen and so it was necessary to seek to appoint to this vacancy. Independent Directors are appointed by the council.

West Lothian Leisure established a Nominations Committee to guide West Lothian Council in relation to the selection of an appropriate individual for appointment as an independent Director.

The Nominations Committee membership included a Council Director and the Senior Officer of the Council nominated as the Business Liaison Officer in line with the Articles of Association.

The Committee considered applications received following public advertisement and through a subsequent interview has recommended that Ms Hentges be appointed as an independent Director to fill the vacant position.

Ms Hentges is a qualified management accountant and is currently Head of Banking with Sainsbury's Bank. She is also a freelance fitness instructor.

Independent Directors of West Lothian Leisure do not receive remuneration for their services.

E. CONCLUSION

The Council Executive is invited to approve the appointment of Ms Hentges as an independent Director, who in the view of the Nominations Committee has the relevant skills and experience to assist the company in carrying out its objects.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Leisure Articles of Association
<https://www.westlothianleisure.com/about-xcite/documents/>

Contact Person: James Cameron, Head of Education (WLC/WLL Business Liaison Officer)

26 October 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

FUTURE BUDGET STRATEGY 2023/24 TO 2027/28 – FINANCIAL CONTEXT AND PROPOSED APPROACH

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides Council Executive with an update on the financial context facing the council and sets out initial budget scenarios for the next ten year financial planning horizon to 2032/33 and five year financial planning period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

It also summarises all committee decisions in relation to the council's approach to financial planning and outlines the proposed approach for developing the five year financial plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Notes previous committee decisions regarding the council's approach to financial planning and development of the council's medium term financial plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28;
2. Notes the current financial context for local government, including information and forecasts in recent publications from the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and Accounts Commission;
3. Notes the uncertainty around the financial outlook over the short, medium and long term;
4. Notes that, over the longer term to 2032/33, the council could face a budget gap in a range between £36.2 million and £109.9 million, noting that this is high level forecast which remains subject to considerable uncertainty;
5. Notes the initial budget scenarios for the five year financial planning period 2023/24 to 2027/28, the high level assumptions used to prepare them and that the model will remain under review and will be subject to change as assumptions are refined and updated;
6. Notes that there is a wide variation between the low and high budget gap scenarios for the five year financial plan with the council potentially facing a budget gap of between £22.8 million and £56.5 million, with a central scenario of a gap of £39.6 million;
7. Notes the risks associated with this initial estimate of the budget gap facing the council over the next five years, including specific risks in relation to potential costs and funding pressures;
8. Notes the currently volatility in energy prices and, although the council has some short term protection as energy is purchased in advance, that this is a significant issue for consumers, industry and the public sector;
9. Notes the proposed approach for development of the next five year financial plan which reflects decisions already taken by elected members in relation to financial planning;
10. Agrees that officers continue to implement the process to ensure the council has a balanced revenue budget over the period 2023/24 to 2027/28;
11. Agrees that the issues highlighted in the report in relation to funding pressures and associated risks are raised with COSLA and the Scottish Government;
12. Agrees that a further update on the financial plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28, including any developments in relation to identified risks, will be provided in the 2022/23 revenue budget report due to be considered by Council in early 2022.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Being honest, open and accountable, making the best use of resources, focusing on our customers' needs and working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>The council is required to approve a balanced revenue budget for each financial year. Audit Scotland, the Accounts Commission and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) best practice guidance recommends medium term financial plans are prepared for at least five years in duration, with detailed budgets prepared for at least three years.</p> <p>The CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice requires councils to have a longer term financial planning outlook of at least ten years.</p>
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	No implications at this stage.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Ongoing restraint in relation to government grant funding inevitably has implications for the council's budget and performance.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The revenue budget provides resources necessary to help deliver the Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIP), Corporate Plan and council activities. Effective prioritisation of resources is essential to achieving key outcomes.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	<p>Scottish Government grant funding has not been sufficient since 2007/08 to meet the increasing costs and demands for services.</p> <p>Based on initial assumptions it is forecast that West Lothian Council may have a revenue budget gap of between £22.8 million and £56.5 million over the five year period 2023/24 to 2027/28, with a central scenario showing an estimated gap of £39.6 million.</p>
VII Consideration at PDSP	<p>The Partnership and Resources PDSP considered the council's approach to revenue financial planning for the last five year plan on 19 January 2018. In addition, the PDSP considered a summary of the outcomes and the recommendations from the review of elected member involvement in financial planning on 1 June 2018.</p> <p>The Partnership and Resources PDSP considered the context and process included in this report on 1 October 2021. A query regarding core funding, which has now been clarified in this report, was raised at the Panel. No other points were raised in relation to the report. This report forms part of the ongoing process of briefing elected members on the council's financial position and budget strategy.</p>
VIII Other consultations	Depute Chief Executives and Heads of Service.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 BACKGROUND

West Lothian Council agreed a five year revenue financial plan in February 2018, which has subsequently been updated each year to incorporate changes and amendments, most notably confirmation of annual finance settlements from the Scottish Government. This complied with best practice which states that public bodies should focus on their medium to long term financial sustainability.

Since 2007/08 the council has had to deliver considerable savings to balance the budget whilst Scottish Government funding has been constrained. It is within this context of delivering nearly £152 million of savings that the council looks ahead to another financially challenging five year period.

Table 1: Revenue Budget Savings 2007/08 to 2022/23

	£'m
2007/08	3.6
2008/09	6.5
2009/10	2.8
2010/11	5.3
2011/12	16.7
2012/13	8.8
2013/14	7.7
2014/15	7.1
2015/16	12.1
2016/17	12.5
2017/18	8.8
2018/19	13.9
2019/20	14.7
2020/21	12.2
2021/22	9.0
2022/23 (proposed)	9.9
Total	151.6

D.2 SUMMARY OF RELEVANT COMMITTEE AND ELECTED MEMBER DECISIONS

On 20 February 2017, Council agreed that the established integrated approach to corporate and financial planning should continue for the five year period 2018/19 to 2022/23. Council agreed objectives, a process and a timetable for corporate and financial planning.

Following conclusion of the Transforming Your Council (TYC) consultation, a revenue budget strategy update report was presented to the Partnership and Resources PDSP on 19 January 2018 setting out the proposed approach to developing a revenue budget strategy for the five year period 2018/19 to 2022/23. This report was considered by Council Executive on 6 February 2018 where the methodology for ensuring the council had a balanced budget for each of the five years was agreed.

The strategic approach to financial and corporate planning agreed by Council Executive was consistent with the parameters established by Council in February 2017 and the recommendations of the Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland and CIPFA who all emphasise the need for public bodies to focus on their medium to long term financial sustainability. Public bodies are required to develop strategies that are based on defined priorities, providing a clear road map for service delivery. Constrained financial resources are not a short term issue, therefore a strategic approach is essential to meet the long term challenges arising from the fundamental structural changes to public sector funding.

Arising from the Best Value Assurance Report, a review of elected member involvement in financial planning was undertaken in 2018. Following the review Council Executive agreed in June 2018 the following council financial planning principles:

- The council should continue to have a five year strategy, aligned with political administrations, and detailed three year budgets.
- Estimated budget gaps for at least three future years should be reported to elected members before local elections.
- The Corporate Plan and revenue, capital and treasury plans should continue to be considered and agreed at the same Council meeting.
- Any future financial plan should be subject to public consultation (which is a legal requirement and is supported by National Standards for Community Engagement).
- Public consultations should cover proposed priorities, the approach to local taxation and the approach to identifying saving measures.

A full list of the recommendations relating to the financial planning process is included in Appendix 1 for information.

West Lothian Council on 25 February 2021 noted the council's established approach and principles for financial and corporate planning and agreed that, in accordance with Audit Scotland and CIPFA Best Practice, officers will commence initial preparatory work on a priority based revenue financial plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

On 1 October 2021, the Partnership and Resources PDSP considered the financial context facing the council, as outlined in this report. It also considered initial budget scenarios and the council's approach to financial planning. A query regarding core and additional funding was raised at the Panel, which has been clarified by providing further information in this report. No other points were raised in relation to either the budget scenarios or the council's approach to financial planning.

D.3 CIPFA FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE OF PRACTICE

In October 2019 CIPFA published the Financial Management (FM) Code of Practice which requires councils to develop a longer term financial planning outlook to ensure financial sustainability is understood.

The council has a statutory duty to meet the requirements set out in Section 12 of Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, whereby councils must comply with proper accounting practices that are confirmed by external auditors. The CIPFA FM Code would be regarded as a published code with regard to proper accounting practices and, as such, compliance with the code should be demonstrated. Compliance with the code, which is required from 2021/22 onwards, is the collective responsibility of elected members, the chief finance officer and the leadership team. Standards within the code which relate to financial planning include:

- To demonstrate financial sustainability, a longer term perspective is essential – the greater the uncertainty the greater the need to demonstrate financial resilience.
- It is the responsibility of the leadership of the authority, including elected members, to have a long-term view acknowledging financial pressures.
- Councils need to demonstrate robust understanding of risks to financial sustainability and how these have informed strategic plans and long term strategy.
- CIPFA does not anticipate that a long-term financial strategy would provide sufficient detail to shape the annual budget setting process. Councils, therefore, need to translate their long-term financial strategies into a medium-term financial plan (MTFP).
- Councils should engage, where appropriate, with key stakeholders in developing their long term financial strategy, medium term financial plan and annual budgets.

A report on the code and how the council's existing processes, procedures and documentation comply with the code was presented to Council Executive on 9 February 2021. The Council Executive unanimously agreed at that meeting that a high level financial strategy will be developed for 2023/24 to 2032/33 setting out a high level plan and a range of assumptions to be reported as part of the planning process for the next administrative term.

There were some actions to be undertaken, including updating the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation, which have been progressed in advance of, and during, 2021/22 to ensure full compliance. The updated Financial Regulations were agreed by Council Executive on 7 September 2021. Specific requirements in the council's financial regulations that relate to the code's requirements, and which were agreed by Council Executive, include:

- The council should develop a high level ten year revenue and capital financial strategy.
- The council should have a medium term five year financial plan, aligned with political administrations, and three year detailed revenue budgets.
- It is the Head of Finance and Property Services' responsibility to ensure appropriate procedures and instructions are issued for producing the annual, medium and long term revenue and capital budgets in compliance with the FM code.

The council's established approach to financial planning has been consistently highlighted by the council's external auditors, Ernst and Young (EY) LLP, as a key strength. The auditor has concluded that the council continues to demonstrate good practice in forward planning. EY have assessed financial sustainability as amber, which reflects the challenge facing all local authorities, and the significant level of uncertainty outwith the council's control, rather than the council's approach. Key points noted by the auditor in relation to the council's financial planning and sustainability include:

- All savings required for the medium term financial plan have been identified and are on course to be delivered.
- The council has a strong track record of identifying and delivering planned savings.
- Good progress has been made in long term financial planning despite risks and uncertainties out with the council's control.

The approach outlined in this report, and the provision of initial high level income and expenditure assumptions to 2027/28, is consistent with the requirements of the code and assists in ensuring the council has sustainable financial plans over the longer term.

D.4 CURRENT FINANCIAL CONTEXT

Since the financial crash in 2008, the economic outlook facing local government and public services more generally, has been constrained, difficult to forecast and impacted by the UK leaving the European Union and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Currently the council does not have confirmed Scottish Government grant funding beyond 2021/22. Previously the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution made a commitment to provide three year funding for local government, however to date this has not been forthcoming. It is the Scottish Government's intention to produce a five year spending plan in December 2021, with the Scottish Budget date confirmed as 9 December 2021. It is anticipated that any longer term plans will be at local government level therefore councils do not expect to receive individual revenue allocations beyond 2022/23.

It is the Scottish Government's view that the next five year period will be very challenging financially. COSLA and the Accounts Commission recognise that conversations may be required regarding services that are provided in the future, what the most important priorities are and potentially what can no longer be afforded within the funding available. Although there appears to be a presumption towards the removal of ring fenced funding, as the recent 100 day commitments demonstrate, there remains a risk that core funding could be redirected to national priorities, having an adverse impact on vital core funding for existing local government service provision.

There is also an issue that recently the focus of funding has been on inputs (e.g. 1,000 teachers commitment) rather than outcomes and what this could mean for core council funding. In response COSLA is liaising with the Scottish Government and the parties in the Scottish Parliament to emphasise the need for greater flexibility, less initiative based controls and focus on input measures.

In recent years the concept of core funding has become more and more important with increased ringfencing of funding for new national policies and priorities. To date national priorities have had funding attached, however this has been to the detriment of core funding. In recent years, councils have seen an overall increase in grant funding in cash terms, however a proportion of this cash increase is attributed to Scottish Government priorities, which are additional to existing core service delivery provided by council, and does not reflect the real terms increase in costs and demand for services. As outlined above, funding for new and expanded service delivery has meant a cut in core funding for existing council services already being delivered. With this reduction in funding for core existing services, this has meant substantial savings have been required. The implications of this for core council funding since 2014/15 is shown in the following table.

Table 2: Movement in Core Scottish Government Grant Funding 2014/15 to 2021/22

Year	Ring Fenced Funding for New Additional Spend Requirements £'m	Net Movement in Core Funding for Existing Service Provision £'m	Gross Movement £'m
2014/15	4.307	(0.173)	4.134
2015/16	6.465	(0.505)	5.960
2016/17	2.084	(6.664)	(4.580)
2017/18	5.052	(5.851)	(0.799)
2018/19	5.331	2.384	7.715
2019/20	9.462	(1.707)	7.755
2020/21	9.923	(3.519)	6.404
2021/22	6.610	5.458	12.068
Total	49.234	(10.577)	38.657

In addition, although funding may not be specifically ringfenced in the settlement, Scottish Government statutory requirements and input measures, such as teacher numbers, can have the effect of ringfencing core funding for national priorities, limiting the council's ability to prioritise resources and make local decisions about service delivery. This is particularly true for education and social policy which represent the largest proportion of the council's budget.

COSLA and Directors of Finance are increasingly emphasising the unsustainability of using core funding to fund new priorities, but there remains a risk that Scottish Government additional commitments, including the consultation on the proposed National Care Service, could result in less funding overall for core council services. COSLA also continue to emphasise the requirement for national priorities to be appropriately resourced. Recently funding for initiatives, such as early learning and childcare funding following the child, has demonstrated that the council has not been sufficiently funded for the shift to increased demand for external provision.

A five year medium term financial strategy produced by the Scottish Government could provide more certainty for funding in the short to medium term. **There are concerns however, that should a revenue medium term settlement mirror the recent capital settlement, this would be catastrophic for local government finances.** Other areas of uncertainty regarding funding and service delivery include the ongoing capital accounting review. Should the technical issues not be resolved satisfactorily and consensus reached on ongoing differences, this would have a major impact not only on the council's revenue plans but also on capital. The ongoing review of social care could also result in financial implications for councils, especially if functions are moved to a separate public body and additional funding is needed for a range of new policy commitments in this area.

D.4.1 Scottish Government Medium Term Financial Strategy

The third annual medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) was published on 28 January 2021 alongside the 2021/22 Scottish Budget. The Scottish resource budget is expected to grow by £6.675 billion between 2020/21 and 2025/26 in the central scenario, excluding the short-term impacts of Covid-19. The level of increase in overall funding appears higher compared to previous years, however as much of the increase is a result of the Barnett Consequentials relating to health, most of this increase may be allocated to the protected NHS budget.

In addition, the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, announced on 7 September 2021, includes a number of commitments, some of which span multiple years, which are likely to have either direct or indirect impact on core funding for local government. This means that non-protected budgets are likely to face reduced settlements. Over the next five years, spending on day-to-day public services (after excluding the transfer of new social security powers) is expected to grow by 4.0% a year in nominal terms.

Based on recent experience and the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, it is highly likely that policy priorities will continue to have a substantial impact on funding available to local government, especially if increased ring fencing of funding continues. It is clear from the forecasts that public sector funding will remain constrained. Although there is an increase in the Scottish Budget, the vast majority of the increase may be allocated to the protected NHS resource budget, meaning that non-protected areas are likely to face reduced settlements in the medium term.

D.4.2 Accounts Commission Local Government Overview

The Accounts Commission published their latest local government challenges and performance overview report in May 2021. The report considered how councils have responded to the pandemic and how recovery and priorities have to be delivered within an increasingly challenging financial outlook. The report emphasises the importance of long term financial planning and the certainty provided by multi-year financial settlements. The Accounts Commission noted that the pandemic has highlighted fundamental issues that need to be addressed to ensure essential services are maintained and councils can respond to the challenges ahead. This includes longer term financial certainty that is sustainable.

In relation to funding specifically, it was found that councils continue to face significant financial challenges which have been exacerbated by the pandemic. The Scottish Government has provided substantial additional financial support but the nature and timing of funding has created challenges, particularly in relation to additional administrative burdens but also the one off nature of funding potentially presenting financial sustainability risks.

Councils have started to plan for a longer term recovery from the pandemic, thinking about how to rebuild local communities and that business as usual will not be possible. Recovery plans should help address the longer term implications of the pandemic, recognising long standing inequalities, but it is equally important that plans are appropriately resourced.

D.5 REVENUE BUDGET PLANNING SCENARIOS

The nature of long-term forecasting means it is challenging to identify with any certainty expenditure pressures and income. To allow for consideration of the potential budget gap in the next ten-year financial planning horizon and five year financial planning period, an initial assessment has been made of the potential costs and funding. This provides an understanding of the range of potential budget gaps the council is likely face, however the forecasts will change as the planning period gets closer and planning assumptions are solidified or confirmed.

High level budget scenarios have been developed, including key aspects of expenditure and income, including staffing, demographics, revenue consequences of capital, service pressures and developments, inflation and indexation, council tax income and grant funding.

For clarity, the one off resources agreed in the current financial plan, including support related to the pandemic and initiatives funded by the loans fund review, all end in 2022/23 with no further funding commitments beyond that year. It is also assumed that where external funding is currently secured for council activities, for example European Funding or specific Anti-Poverty projects, once funding is no longer forthcoming, the activity will cease.

Due to the uncertainty associated with a forecast, three planning scenarios have been modelled for the key variables of pay award, council tax income, Scottish Government funding, fees and charges and indexation. This provides a central scenario and high and low ranges for consideration. Details of high-level assumptions included in the scenarios are provided in Appendix 2. The variables used for each of the planning scenarios are as follows:

Table 3: Financial Planning Variables – Annual Increases (Percentage and Cash)

	Pay Award	Council Tax	Scottish Government Funding	Fees & Charges	Indexation
High Budget Gap Scenario	2.5%	3.0%	£1.0m	3.0%	2.5%
Central Scenario	2.0%	3.5%	£2.0m	3.5%	2.0%
Low Budget Gap Scenario	1.5%	4.0%	£3.0m	4.0%	1.5%

D.5.1 Ten Year Financial Planning Horizon

Longer term financial planning is subject to considerable uncertainty, however councils are required by the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice to develop a longer-term financial planning horizon. Building on the assumptions in the draft financial plan being developed for 2023/24 to 2027/28, an initial very high-level estimate of the potential gap facing the council for the period 2027/28 to 2032/33 has been calculated. It should be noted that although key expenditure and income areas have been forecast, at this stage it is not possible to determine the revenue consequences of capital beyond 2027/28, as the approved capital investment programme is only to 2027/28. This means the overall budget identified gap is likely to be more than the projected gap once revenue consequences are incorporated into the model.

At this stage, from 2023/24 to 2032/33 the council is expected to face a projected budget gap in the range between £36.2 million and £109.9 million, with a central gap of £72.8 million.

D.5.2 Five Year Financial Plan

The central scenario assumes an estimated budget gap of £39.6 million over the next five years and is included in Appendix 3, along with the high and low budget gap scenarios. Key elements of the central scenario is summarised as follows:

Table 4: Central Scenario Budget Model 2023/24 to 2027/28

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
Staffing	5,686	5,800	6,027	6,146	6,265	29,924
Demographics & Demand Pressures	3,484	2,993	2,629	2,836	3,107	15,049
Revenue Consequences of Capital	3,659	853	1,380	83	158	6,133
Service Pressures	2,485	120	120	120	370	3,215
Inflation & Indexation	3,944	4,126	4,220	4,409	4,583	21,282
Gross Expenditure Increase	19,259	13,892	14,376	13,594	14,482	75,603
Council Tax Income	(4,257)	(4,442)	(4,635)	(4,836)	(5,046)	(23,217)
Fees & Charges Increase	(388)	(401)	(415)	(430)	(445)	(2,078)
Finance Settlement	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(10,000)
Approved Savings	(749)	0	0	0	0	(749)
Estimated Budget Gap	11,865	7,048	7,326	6,328	6,991	39,559

In summary for the council could face a lower budget gap in the region of £22.8 million, but a high substantial budget gap of £56.5 million over the next five years. For comparison, the budget gap for the current five year period 2018/19 to 2022/23 is £61.9 million and the previous period 2013/14 to 2017/18 was £46.3 million.

It should be emphasised that these scenarios represent initial estimates and plans. Officers will continue to update and refine assumptions, reflecting the council's long established approach to financial planning and budgeting, as circumstances become clearer or risks materialise. The purpose of this report is to establish the overall parameters and outlook for the next financial planning period and, as work continues, the assumptions will change.

D.6 RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES IN MEDIUM AND LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING

As identified above, there are always be risks and uncertainties associated with long term financial planning and assumptions. The scenarios include a number of assumptions regarding the current financial planning period. These assumptions will most likely change in response to decisions to balance the 2022/23 budget, for example the gap to be funded by one off resources, therefore the opening position the model is based upon will be vary from that used in this planning exercise.

In addition, although further information has been forthcoming regarding potential public sector funding, there is very little robust information or reliable forecasts beyond 2021. The publication of the anticipated Scottish spending review and local government finance settlement could provide more certainty for the current financial planning period but it is too early to determine what this could mean. The recent publication of the National Care Contract Service consultation could also have a potential impact on local government funding and financial and planning assumptions.

All short, medium and long term financial plans continue to be complicated by the continued high degree of volatility in the economy, including the impact of the UK leaving the EU and the pandemic. The medium to longer term impacts these factors could have on the economy are unknown. In particular, and in addition to the potential reduction in public sector funding, inflation forecasts in this model could be understated, resulting in additional costs for the council. Other potential factors, such as a second Scottish independence referendum, could also create further market and economic uncertainty.

The scale of the economic shock from the Covid-19 pandemic is still being realised, although stabilisation in economic activity is starting to show as most parts of the economy have reopened. Economic implications from Covid-19 still remain highly uncertain and may not be clear for some time. Economic announcements will continue to be reviewed and taken into consideration to ensure that financial plans remain reflective of current assumptions.

It is acknowledged that all of the assumptions and information provided in this forecast are subject to substantial uncertainty, due to the planning time horizon, however it provides an initial estimate of the potential future gap for discussion and consideration. Some of the other key risks and uncertainties include:

- Lower economic growth compared to the rest of the UK continues to have an impact on Scottish income tax receipts meaning further and continued negative income tax reconciliations.
- Nature of UK and Scottish Government priorities and how these are funded, including the impact of the consultation on the National Care Service.
- The continued ring fenced funding for Scottish Government priorities, severely constraining how local authorities allocate their resources to delivering national priorities.
- The uncertainty of potential future pay awards.
- Increase in costs associated with demand led services, such as social care for the elderly, is greater than population assumptions.
- School pupil forecasts are higher than anticipated.

- Difficulty in forecasting inflation and indexation rates, given current instability in the economy and the financial planning time horizon.
- Changes to the capital investment programme resulting in changes to forecast revenue consequences of capital, especially if additional schools are required.

In addition to the general risks identified above, there are also a number of potential pressures to the council's budget model which represent a risk that the budget gap in this paper is understated. The financial impact of these risks is considered substantial, and should they materialise, it would have a devastating impact on the council's financial plans. It is important that the following risks are considered and acknowledged to understand the fragility of the council's financial position.

- Continued suppression of council income as a direct result of the pandemic beyond the period for which the council has received grant funding to offset under recovery of income. This specifically includes, but is not limited to, licensing and the council's tenanted non residential property portfolio (TNRP) income.
- Following the conclusion of one off funding for Covid-19 related expenditure pressures in 2022/23 there is a risk of continued demand for support or increased costs. It is difficult at this stage to know what structural changes could result from the pandemic, but areas of risk, that are currently funded on a one off basis for 2021/22 and 2022/23 only, include:
 - increased domestic waste collection as a result of continued home working
 - costs associated with continued health and safety measures, such as higher energy costs from increased ventilation
 - continued high demand for support to alleviate food insecurity
 - continued increased demand for Scottish Welfare Fund, which will also be exacerbated if the Scottish Government removes additional funding for this lifeline financial support for individuals
 - increased social care costs funded through the Scottish Government Mobilisation Plan process
- Recently energy prices, especially gas, have increased substantially. The council purchases in energy in advance, therefore is largely protected from these increases in the short term. There is a risk that should these increases continue that it will impact on future energy costs. The impact on individuals and consumers could result in increased demand for support, such as that provided by the Anti-Poverty Service.
- Contract price risk, especially in the area of public transport, has become increasingly prevalent. Although not necessarily directly linked to the pandemic, experience is starting to highlight increased prices as suppliers aim to recover increased costs associated with pressures such as driver supply. The council will soon commence new procurement exercises for these areas. Thereafter officers will review what this means for the council's financial plans and affordability of contracts within existing budget provision.
- Demand for residential school placements remain high, although officers are currently undertaking significant service redesign to help mitigate costs. As demand is externally driven, and outwith the council's control, there remains a risk that despite interventions, demand for residential school placements is greater than budget.
- Underfunding of legislative changes or Scottish Government policy decisions, where they are intended to be fully funded, is a considerable risk to the council and has recently been borne in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). With funding following the child, the council's costs for ELC provision are substantially more than the grant funding received. Although funding distribution is set to be amended from 2022/23 onwards to better reflect demographic information, there remains a risk that this funding may not be sufficient or there is a timing delay in receiving full funding due to the phased implementation of distribution changes. Officers will review the position in relation to ELC following the finance settlement in December 2021 with the potential requirement for one off funding.

- Councils are required to decarbonise light vehicles by 2025 and heavy vehicles by 2030 which, due to alternative energy source vehicles costing significantly more, would result in a significant pressure in the council's vehicle leasing costs. As these costs are a direct result of Scottish Government legislation, officers have raised this pressure with COSLA. In these circumstances, it is the council's position that this should be funded by the Scottish Government, although there remains a risk that funding is not forthcoming.
- Officers are currently investigating the potential costs associated with the safe removal of trees affected by Ash Dieback. Although removal of trees, as an open space asset, is likely to be a capital rather than revenue cost, there may be associated revenue staffing. Work is underway to assess, based on asset and risk management principles, what works will be required however it is anticipated that between now and 2041/42 it could cost as much as £12 million, with over £5 million required in the next financial planning period to 2027/28. As a nationwide issue, the substantial costs involved in managing Ash Dieback have been raised with COSLA and the Scottish Government.
- In May 2021, Council approved use of over three quarters of the Winter Resilience Fund for self-help salt locations and squads to maintain grit bins for three years. If particularly adverse winter weather is experienced, this could result in the Fund being used faster than anticipated, meaning resources are unavailable for this commitment.

D.7 PROPOSED APPROACH TO PRIORITY BASED FINANCIAL PLANNING

D.7.1 Summary of Key Elements of Proposed Approach

To meet the requirements of the CIPFA Financial Management Code of Practice, it is necessary for a ten year financial outlook to be developed at a high level. Following the approach used for previous financial plans, and in line with the recommendation that the council should have a financial plan that matches administrative terms, it is proposed that a five year financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 is developed focusing on a central planning scenario. Thereafter, it is proposed that a three year detailed revenue budget for 2023/24 to 2025/26 will be developed and reported for approval in early 2023. This meets both best practice requirements but also council decision making in relation to financial planning.

As the last five years of the longer term ten year financial planning horizon are at very high level and contain a range of scenarios, it is proposed that potential saving options are only identified for the five year period 2023/24 to 2027/28. As agreed by West Lothian Council in February 2021, officers will commence initial preparatory work on a priority based revenue financial plan for 2023/24 to 2027/28 which includes developing potential saving options. The report will now consider in summary the main components of the proposed process to development of a new financial plan which is based on the council's approach agreed by Council in 2018.

D.7.2 Activity Prioritisation

With priority based budgeting, a considerable amount of information is required to enable appropriate consideration of activities and their contributions to outcomes. Previously, the prioritisation of activities and the development of savings have been undertaken at different times. It is proposed for the 2023/24 to 2027/28 plan to undertake these activities in parallel. The prioritisation of activities should include the following key elements:

- Priority analysis of services against the council's priorities and enabler themes.
- Review of each activity, using a consistently applied basis to help guide and inform whether the service should continue to be provided and, if it should continue, should it be at a greater, similar or lower level, or if it should cease.
- Officer prioritisation scores provide a starting point from which to review proposed future service delivery.
- Taking into account the considerations above, the scores are a guide to inform proposals. This is similar to the approach to prioritising capital investment.

The council's current priorities, confirmed following the TYC consultation, are as follows:

1. Improving attainment and positive destinations for school children
2. Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years
3. Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality
4. Improving the quality of life for older people
5. Improving the employment position in West Lothian
6. Delivering positive outcomes on health
7. Reducing crime and improving community safety
8. Protecting the built and natural environment

There was strong support from the consultation responses for these priorities, ensuring that constrained resources are allocated to achieve desired outcomes and value for money. The priorities may change as the new Corporate Plan is developed and following public consultation, which as agreed by Council Executive in June 2018 must be completed in advance of approving the new financial plan, but they provide a starting basis for officers. Whilst developing potential prioritisation savings, services will also be asked to identify modernisation and efficiency savings as detailed in the following section.

D.7.3 Modernisation and Efficiency Savings

Whilst considering prioritisation savings, officers will think about how activities can continue to be delivered within available resources. This will include identifying more efficient ways of delivery. This will be particularly important for statutory services. Whilst the council has to continue to deliver these services, due to the budget gap this has to be done as cost effectively as possible. The prioritisation approach to balancing the budget means that services need to focus on delivering statutory services at minimum cost and potentially removing or substantially reducing non statutory services. Developing modernisation and efficiency savings will include the following:

- As required by best value legislation, consideration of whether the council delivers the service directly, commissions the service or procures the service from a third party.
- Consideration of whether services should continue to be delivered in the same way or if they could be redesigned.
- Identification of efficiency savings based on the considerations above.

Given the level of savings delivered to date, and recognising the increasingly difficulty in identifying and delivering further savings, strategic transformational change will be the key driving factor for future savings. The focus will have to include fundamentally changing, redesigning or removing discretionary services that no longer support the council's key priorities. On this basis, innovation in the delivery of essential council services within constrained resources is vital.

The council has a well established approach to integrated impact assessments. Although initial work by officers on saving options will not be subject to public consultation at this stage, officers will commence initial considerations in relation to equality and the council's duties to ensure that options appropriately consider the implications for equality at an early point.

D.7.4 Corporate Projects

Following the experiences of the Delivering Better Outcomes (DBO) project methodology, it was agreed for the 2018/19 to 2022/23 financial plan that, where appropriate, corporate modernisation projects should be developed. These corporate projects provided project support to large scale complex, multi-service savings to ensure they achieve project objectives and are delivered on time.

A number of the TYC projects continue to build on the initial work undertaken in the DBO workstreams. It is likely that some of these will not be required beyond the current five years, however there are some projects, such as digital transformation, that will be essential in supporting budget savings in the next five year period.

Building on the experiences of DBO and TYC, it is proposed to slightly amend the approach to corporate projects, focusing more on them being corporate saving options. As the creation of corporate projects, and the use of project management principles to ensure their delivery, has been beneficial to date, initial savings areas for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28, could include income generation, digital transformation, shared services and climate change.

D.8 WORKING WITH PARTNERS, PROPOSED TIMESCALES AND KEY ACTIONS

The council's key partners for financial planning include West Lothian Leisure (WLL) and the West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB). When developing a transformation change saving programme it is important to work with all key partners to facilitate the successful delivery of the plan. To ensure both the council's and WLL's plans are aligned, discussions will take place with WLL on their approach to financial planning.

At this point, IJB assumptions on the overall approach and timescales for future financial planning are largely aligned to the approach set out in this report. West Lothian IJB has also adopted the CIPFA FM Code and future planning timescales agreed by the Board cover the period 2023/24 to 2027/28. The future financial plan associated with IJB functions will be aligned with the next IJB Strategic Plan which is intended to cover the same five year period. In terms of adult social care functions delegated to the IJB, it is proposed that potential saving options will be considered in overall health and social care terms with saving options being assessed against current IJB strategic planning objectives.

While the recently published National Care Service consultation could result in very substantial changes to the future role of councils and IJBs on delivery of social care, it is likely that savings and transformation options will continue to be required regardless of the agreed recommendations that may take several years to implement. Given this, it is suggested that integrated financial plans for social care services are developed as part of existing approaches agreed at this stage by the council and IJB.

As acknowledged throughout this report, there are a number of risks to the council's financial plans for the next five years which are directly related to Scottish Government policy commitments and grant funding. The council continues to highlight areas of concern with COSLA and CIPFA Directors of Finance, however consideration could be given to how these concerns are more formally raised with the Scottish Government to help ensure the most optimum outcome for the council's funding.

Recognising the substantial work required to develop the next five year financial plan, and the reporting requirements agreed in 2018 as part of the review of elected member involvement in financial planning, the following indicative timescales are suggested:

Table 5: Proposed Timescales

Activity	Timescale
Initial work by officer on development of five year financial plan	November 2021 to April 2022
2022/23 budget report (including update on new plan)	February 2022
Council Executive report on proposed consultation process	June 2022
Stakeholder consultation	Autumn 2022
Council Executive report on full results of consultation	Late Autumn 2022
PDSPs to consider savings options for 2023/24 to 2027/28	December 2022/January 2023
Approval of detailed three year budget/five year plan	February 2023

D.9 BENEFITS OF PRIORITY BASED BUDGETING

Priority based budgeting seeks to align resources across services which contribute to particular outcomes. The current climate, where the council has delivered over £152 million of savings, means that budget saving options will require transformational changes, with greater challenges around planning and implementation. A long lead in time is necessary for future savings which require fundamental and significant changes.

The council's approach is beneficial as it:

- Provides a medium term view which is essential when implementing effective service and workforce planning, allowing workforce changes to be made in a proactive manner.
- Provides greater certainty for council employees and trade unions on the plans and actions to deliver budget savings and service changes.
- Provides officers with sufficient time to implement, what in many cases, will be fundamental changes to service delivery which require a significant lead in times, and may be dependent on or linked to other saving options.
- Helps officers and elected members to consider the long term implications of policy decisions and changes to service delivery.
- Creates greater certainty surrounding detailed financial plans, especially for the first three years of the five year financial plan.
- Provides services and customers with advance notice of changes.
- Helps to integrate services and planning with community planning partners, especially where outcomes are focused on longer term objectives.

E. CONCLUSION

This report provides the Panel with an initial update on the potential future budget scenarios facing the council for the next ten-year financial planning horizon and five-year plan 2023/24 to 2027/28. A range of scenarios are provided, with a central forecast budget gap of £39.6 million over the next five years.

Whilst the forecast is subject to a high degree of uncertainty, and is undertaken at a high level at this stage, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the continued difficult financial outlook facing the council. It is clear from the full range of scenarios that funding will continue to be less than projected expenditure, and despite delivering nearly £152 million of savings over the last 15 years, the council will continue to have a constrained financial position that requires more budget savings to be identified.

The challenging financial position faced by the council, with constrained funding and increasing demand for services, is not new. With changing economic circumstances and uncertain levels of growth and productivity in the Scottish economy potentially impacting on the overall resources available for funding Scottish public services, the council will continue to have to identify and deliver significant budget savings beyond 2022/23. There continues to be a high level of uncertainty around future funding and indications are that, due to subdued medium term economic growth, funding for public services will continue to be constrained.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Revenue Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 6 February 2018

Review of Elected Member Involvement in Financial Planning – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 12 June 2018

CIPFA Financial Management Code – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to Council Executive on 9 February 2021

Revenue Budget 2021/22 and 2022/23 – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 25 February 2021

Horizon Scan – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services and Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration to Partnership and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 20 August 2021

Report to Members and the Controller of Audit on the 2020/21 Audit – Report by Head of Finance and Property Services to West Lothian Council on 27 September 2021

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – Summary of Review of Elected Member Involvement in Financial Planning

Appendix 2 – 2023/24 to 2027/28 Budget Scenario Assumptions

Appendix 3 – 2023/24 to 2027/28 Budget Scenarios

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Head of Finance and Property Services
1 October 2021

Appendix 1 – Summary of Review of Elected Member Involvement in Financial Planning

Building upon the financial planning principles summarised in section D.2 of this report, the key recommendations from the review of elected member involvement in financial planning agreed by Council Executive in June 2018 were as follows:

Consultation

- Future financial plans should be subject to public consultation.
- Public consultation on financial plans should consider council priorities, taxation options and budget saving measures.
- Future consultations should proactively ask stakeholders for their opinions and suggestions.
- The Council Executive should consider and agree the approach for future consultations by the end of June if the local election is at the start of May.
- The results of the consultation should be reported to the Council Executive rather than individual PDSPs in a more truncated report, with full information on all consultation responses continuing to be provided online.

Medium and Long Term Financial Planning Process

- Individual PDSPs should consider potential savings measures and good ideas received from a consultation which are relevant to that PDSP.
- Budget savings measures required to address the remaining budget gap to 2022/23 will be considered by PDSP before approval by Council or Council Executive.
- Where timescales permit, all additional future savings measures will be considered by PDSP before approval by Council or Council Executive, with the only exceptions relating to factors out with the council's control such as late amendments to the local government finance settlement.

Annual Revenue Budget Report

Review of structure and content of the revenue budget report, focusing more on what will be delivered.

APPENDIX 1 – 2023/24 TO 2027/28 BUDGET SCENARIO ASSUMPTIONS

1. STAFFING

a) Pay Award

It is challenging to identify what the pay award may be for the five year period 2023/24 to 2027/28, especially as there is no agreed pay award for 2021/22 and 2022/23. Three scenarios have been calculated for pay award annual increase of – 1.5%, 2% and 2.5%. The base budget used is based on the current budget and assumed pay award increases as detailed in the approved financial plan to 2022/23. This base remains subject to change before the commencement of the new financial planning period, most notably as the pay award has still to be agreed for the last two years.

The living wage will be consolidated into the pay structure from 2021/22 however it is assumed that the living wage will continue to be slightly higher than base pay award. A supplement of 0.5% above the pay award assumption is incorporated into the model for increased living wage rates. At this stage no further information is available on the basis of future increases.

The initial budget model does not currently include the anticipated 1.25% increase in national insurance announced by the UK Government in September 2021. It has been suggested that the extra national insurance cost to councils maybe funded but this has still to be confirmed by the Scottish Government. COSLA are seeking to clarify the position regarding funding the increase, however if funding were not provided this would result in an additional cost to the council of nearly £1.4 million over the five years 2023/24 to 2027/28.

b) Superannuation

Lothian Pension Fund agreed at the contribution stability review in December 2019 to freeze contribution rates for non-teachers for four years from 1 April 2021 with increases/decreases by no more than 0.5% per year.

In 2019/20 the employer contribution rate for teachers increased from 17.2% to 23%. The rate of 23% will remain up until March 2023.

Incremental increases for teaching and non-teaching pensions are based on an annual 0.5% increase from 2023/24 for teaching staff and 2025/26 for non-teaching staff.

2. DEMOGRAPHICS AND DEMAND LED PRESSURES

a) Social Policy

Social Policy demographics have been forecast for 2023/24 to 2027/28 using up to date information on service demand and future growth assumptions. The forecast is based on current service delivery. As social care services are currently under consultation nationally, this presents a risk that the model does not represent potential future service delivery. The forecasts incorporate the impact on demand as a result of changes to eligibility criteria and the introduction of the contributions policy in the current financial planning period. The assumed level of growth is less than would have been the case had the Transforming Your Council changes not been implemented.

Assumptions used in the calculation of social policy demographics are based on previous year trends following the introduction of the revised eligibility criteria and the contributions policy and incorporate elements such as forecast increases in residential beds, average cost of placements and forecast growth in clients for all key groups.

b) Schools

Schools demographics for each sector have been calculated based on the most recent pupil forecasts. Assumptions used in the calculation of school demographics include base school pupil numbers, projected movements for early learning based on population estimates and house completions of 900 per annum. Teachers required for new schools as a result of development are incorporated into school demographics as the cost driver for teaching staff is pupil numbers. Support and management staff for new schools are included in revenue consequences of capital.

Pupil rolls have been increasing in each sector over the last number of years and this trend is anticipated to continue until 2024/25. From 2025/26 the primary roll is expected to reduce each year until the end of the budget strategy period in 2032/33. For secondary, the roll continues to increase over the next five years as pupils move through primary into secondary.

c) Operational Services

Demographics have been calculated for roads and footpaths, street cleaning and waste collection based on the established methodology. This includes assumptions about adoption for roads and footpaths, average costs for delivering services and the impact on waste collection routes from 900 house completions each year.

d) Housing, Customer and Building Services

Recognising that increased population can result in increased demand for homelessness support and services, an initial £80,000 demographic increase in homelessness costs is included in the model. This will address increases in costs such as council tax, rent for external suppliers and Building Services repair costs. Further work is being undertaken by officers to refine these assumptions and is therefore potentially subject to change.

3. REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The revenue consequences of capital are based on the current approved capital investment programme to 2027/28. Key assumptions in the calculation of revenue consequences are:

- For new schools, revenue consequences have been provided for additional promoted and administrative posts. No provision is made for teaching staff as this is covered within education demographics. In addition, no education staffing provision is made for extensions as administrative and management structures already exist for these schools.
- Although the Schools for the Future projects will be subject to review given the ongoing discussion regarding availability of funding, it has been assumed at this stage that the approved projects will deliver a like for like basis therefore no additional revenue consequences are included.
- Provision is made for Finance and Property Services property costs (i.e. NDR, utilities and maintenance) and Operational Services property costs (cleaning and catering).
- It is assumed that revenue consequences apply from the year the project is completed.
- For the period beyond 2027/28 there are no revenue consequences as there is currently not a capital programme for that period. The model will be updated when the plan is being developed to incorporate anticipated revenue consequences.

4. SERVICE PRESSURES

a) NDR Revaluation

Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) rateable values are revalued on a regular basis, usually every five years. The last revaluation was in 2017. The next revaluation will occur in 2022/23, therefore it is reasonable to assume that there will be another revaluation by 2027/28. A fixed amount of £250,000 has been added based on previous experience.

b) Prudential Borrowing for Approved 10 Year Capital Programme

In February 2018 West Lothian Council agreed a ten-year capital investment and asset management programme for 2018/19 to 2027/28. As part of the process of developing the programme long term treasury forecasts were undertaken to ensure that the programme was prudent, affordable and sustainable over the longer term. Beyond 2022/23 it was identified that additional revenue resources would be required to offset forecast treasury deficits and ensure the programme remains prudent, affordable and sustainable.

There are ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government on PPP flexibilities, which could release one-off and recurring resources, however discussions to date have not been positive. In addition, the Scottish Government Capital Spending Review announced in early 2021 confirmed that capital grant funding will be constrained and will be substantially less than the assumptions in the programme approved to 2027/28. Following the review of the approved programme, within the parameters of reduced resources and if the service concession flexibility is not agreed, there may be a need to consider further prudential borrowing to meet capital commitments.

c) Procurement Contract Rebates

The procurement landscape has changed considerably over the last number of years. Historically the council was able to secure considerable contract rebates, however most, if not all, suppliers no longer provide rebates. This has resulted in a recurring income pressure over which the council has no control.

d) Homelessness

In the current financial plan 2018/19 to 2022/23 the council has provided one off resource to help mitigate budget pressures associated with homelessness provision. Although work is ongoing to deliver the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) to help address some of the recurring budget pressure, it has become clear that there is a structural budget deficit that requires to be addressed to ensure this service is appropriately funded. The one off funding of £550,000 in 2021/22 and 2022/23 will be baselined from 2023/24.

e) Registration – Nationality Checking

Previously nationality checking was undertaken by local authorities, however this has now been retained by the Foreign Office. The removal of this activity, and associated income, has resulted in an income budget pressure over which the council has no control.

f) Staffing Pressures in Council Run Care Homes

Staffing pressures in care homes, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, have been well documented. Additional budget is essential to ensure that the council continues to meet statutory care requirements.

5. RECURRING BUDGET DEFICIT

One off funding of £1.685 million was agreed on 28 February 2020 to fund a one-year gap in 2022/23. This figure may change depending on the settlement for 2022/23.

6. INFLATION AND INDEXATION

- The financial planning timeframe means that it is very difficult to identify what inflation and indexation may apply in 2023/24 and beyond.
- Inflation and indexation for energy and fuel has been modelled based on average annual increases forecast from 2020/21 onwards.
- Three scenarios are currently modelled for CPI inflation – 1.5%, 2.0% and 2.5% per annum.
- Three scenarios are currently modelled for RPI inflation – 2.5%, 3.0% and 3.5% per annum.

7. COUNCIL TAX INCOME

For the opening council tax base, the current approved council tax assumptions were used (i.e. 900 house completions per annum with a 3% annual increase for 2022/23). This base will change following confirmation of the annual band D report and is subject to Council decisions regarding council tax increases for 2022/23 which will be undertaken in early 2022.

The council tax collection rate is maintained at the current rate of 97.75%, with 900 house completions per year assumed. Council tax increases are agreed by Council annually. Three potential scenarios have been calculated – 3%, 3.5% and 4%.

8. FEES AND CHARGES

Three scenarios modelled for fees and charges are increases of – 3.0%, 3.5% and 4.0% per annum.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT

The current financial plan to 2022/23 assumes a total increase in the local government finance settlement (LGFS) as a result of funding being received for national priorities. Although the funding outlook is uncertain it is hoped that there is a return to investment in public services and local government specifically. In addition, West Lothian's population is forecast to continue to grow therefore it is anticipated that the council should continue to receive increases in funding to reflect a growing population.

Three scenarios are currently modelled for the core revenue funding in the financial settlement – freeze, £500,000 per annum and £1 million per annum increase in core funding. Grant funding assumptions include funding for health and social care of £1 million per annum, £1.5 million per annum and £2 million per annum.

10. BUDGET SAVINGS

There are £749,000 of approved savings in 2023/24, these savings have slipped from 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Appendix 2 – 2023/24 to 2027/28 Budget Scenarios

Revenue Budget Scenarios 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Lowest Gap

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
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Staffing						
Pay Award	4,026	4,086	4,148	4,210	4,272	20,742
Living Wage	173	177	180	184	188	902
Superannuation	101	102	213	215	215	846
Total staffing	4,300	4,365	4,541	4,609	4,675	22,490

Demographic & Demand Pressures						
Social Policy	1,801	1,898	2,000	2,116	2,233	10,049
Operational Services	276	134	135	136	136	817
Housing, Customer and Building Services	80	80	80	80	80	400
Schools	1,327	881	413	505	657	3,783
Total Demographic & Demand Pressures	3,484	2,993	2,629	2,836	3,107	15,049

Revenue Consequences of Capital	3,659	853	1,380	83	158	6,133
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Service Pressures						
NDR Revaluations	150	0	0	0	250	400
Potential borrowing for approved capital programme	270	120	120	120	120	750
Cessation of Procurement Contract Rebates	150	0	0	0	0	150
Registration Income - Removal of Nationality Checking	30	0	0	0	0	30
Staffing Cost Pressures in Council Run Care Homes	200	0	0	0	0	200
2022/23 Gap Funded by One Off Resources	1,685	0	0	0	0	1,685
Total Services Pressures	2,485	120	120	120	370	3,215

Inflation and Indexation	3,717	3,887	3,970	4,149	4,309	20,031
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GROSS EXPENDITURE INCREASES	17,646	12,217	12,641	11,797	12,618	66,918
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Council Tax Income	(4,721)	(4,952)	(5,193)	(5,446)	(5,711)	(26,024)
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Fees & Charges Inflationary Increase	(440)	(457)	(476)	(495)	(514)	(2,381)
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Local Government Finance Settlement	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(15,000)
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ESTIMATED BUDGET GAP	9,485	3,808	3,972	2,856	3,392	23,513
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Approved Budget Savings	(749)	0	0	0	0	(749)
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ESTIMATED BUDGET GAP	8,736	3,808	3,972	2,856	3,392	22,764
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Revenue Budget Scenarios 2023/24 to 2027/28 - Central Scenario

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
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Staffing						
Pay Award	5,367	5,475	5,585	5,696	5,810	27,933
Living Wage	218	223	229	235	240	1,145
Superannuation	101	102	213	215	215	846
Total staffing	5,686	5,800	6,027	6,146	6,265	29,924

Demographic & Demand Pressures						
Social Policy	1,801	1,898	2,000	2,116	2,233	10,049
Operational Services	276	134	135	136	136	817
Housing, Customer and Building Services	80	80	80	80	80	400
Schools	1,327	881	413	505	657	3,783
Total Demographic & Demand Pressures	3,484	2,993	2,629	2,836	3,107	15,049

Revenue Consequences of Capital	3,659	853	1,380	83	158	6,133
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Service Pressures						
NDR Revaluations	150	0	0	0	250	400
Potential borrowing for approved capital programme	270	120	120	120	120	750
Cessation of Procurement Contract Rebates	150	0	0	0	0	150
Registration Income - Removal of Nationality Checking	30	0	0	0	0	30
Staffing Cost Pressures in Council Run Care Homes	200	0	0	0	0	200
2022/23 Gap Funded by One Off Resources	1,685	0	0	0	0	1,685
Total Services Pressures	2,485	120	120	120	370	3,215

Inflation and Indexation	3,944	4,126	4,220	4,409	4,583	21,282
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GROSS EXPENDITURE INCREASES	19,259	13,892	14,376	13,594	14,482	75,603
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Council Tax Income	(4,257)	(4,442)	(4,635)	(4,836)	(5,046)	(23,217)
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Fees & Charges Inflationary Increase	(388)	(401)	(415)	(430)	(445)	(2,078)
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Local Government Finance Settlement	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(10,000)
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ESTIMATED BUDGET GAP	12,614	7,048	7,326	6,328	6,991	40,308
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Approved Budget Savings	(749)	0	0	0	0	(749)
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ESTIMATED BUDGET GAP	11,865	7,048	7,326	6,328	6,991	39,559
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Revenue Budget Scenarios 2023/24 to 2027/28 – Highest Gap

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
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Staffing						
Pay Award	6,710	6,877	7,049	7,226	7,406	35,268
Living Wage	263	270	279	287	296	1,394
Superannuation	101	102	213	215	215	846
Total staffing	7,074	7,249	7,541	7,728	7,917	37,508

Demographic & Demand Pressures						
Social Policy	1,801	1,898	2,000	2,116	2,233	10,049
Operational Services	276	134	135	136	136	817
Housing, Customer & Schools	80	80	80	80	80	400
	1,327	881	413	505	657	3,783
Total Demographic & Demand Pressures	3,484	2,993	2,629	2,836	3,107	15,049

Revenue Consequences of Capital	3,659	853	1,380	83	158	6,133
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Service Pressures						
NDR Revaluations	150	0	0	0	250	400
Potential borrowing for approved capital programme	270	120	120	120	120	750
Cessation of Procurement Contract Rebates	150	0	0	0	0	150
Registration Income - Removal of Nationality Checking	30	0	0	0	0	30
Staffing Cost Pressures in Council Run Care Homes	200	0	0	0	0	200
2022/23 Gap Funded by One Off Resources	1,685	0	0	0	0	1,685
Total Services Pressures	2,485	120	120	120	370	3,215

Inflation and Indexation	4,172	4,367	4,474	4,678	4,866	22,557
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GROSS EXPENDITURE INCREASES	20,874	15,582	16,144	15,445	16,417	84,462
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Council Tax Income	(3,792)	(3,937)	(4,087)	(4,243)	(4,404)	(20,463)
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Fees & Charges Inflationary Increase	(336)	(346)	(356)	(367)	(378)	(1,783)
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Local Government Finance Settlement	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(5,000)
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ESTIMATED BUDGET GAP	15,746	10,299	10,701	9,835	10,635	57,215
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Approved Budget Savings	(749)	0	0	0	0	(749)
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ESTIMATED BUDGET GAP	14,997	10,299	10,701	9,835	10,635	56,466
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DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT 2020/21

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the Council Executive of progress on the delivery of the Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) 2020/21 for West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Approves the draft LCPAR for 2020/21 as set out in appendix 1, and
2. Notes the intention to publish the report on the council website.

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 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Activities and actions contained in the report will impact on SOA1301_11 'percentage of children in poverty'
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 6 – we live longer and healthier lives Outcome 7 – we have tackled significant inequalities in West Lothian society Outcome 8 – we have improved the life chances for people at risk Outcome 13 – we take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive society

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	The proposed format of the annual reports was presented to the Partnership and Resources PDSP on 25 June 2019. The Panel noted the format and no changes were suggested.
VIII	Other consultations	West Lothian Child Poverty Reference Group and West Lothian Anti-Poverty Task Force

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out ambitious targets to significantly reduce child poverty in Scotland by 2030, with interim targets set for 2023. The Act also places a duty on local authorities to work together with health boards to develop, produce and deliver an annual local action report. The report sets out actions taken to address child poverty and assessment of local impact as well as future planned activity.

The coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on service delivery from March 2020 as resources were re-prioritised to respond to the challenges of the pandemic crisis and services adapted to remote and digital delivery channels. In May 2020, a joint letter from the Scottish Government and COSLA reinforced their collective commitment to reducing inequality and asserted that “consideration of both the Fairer Scotland Duty and the requirements of the Child Poverty Act should remain at the heart of decisions taken locally, ensuring that those most in need continue to receive support at this challenging time”. The Covid-19 pandemic has served to further highlight longstanding inequalities within our communities as the financial impact of the pandemic has been more significant for those at the highest risk of poverty. Consideration of socio-economic factors and the commitment to tackle child poverty has been integral to the pandemic response at both national and local level.

The Act requires that reports are produced ‘as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of each reporting year’ and a report is usually published by the end of June each year. At the end of the 2019/20 reporting year, it was recognised that a delay to publication was likely and necessary and the 2019/20 LCPAR originally due to be submitted in June 2020 was published in February 2021. Given the short timeframe since the publication of the last report and the significant changes to service delivery in the last year, the 2020/21 report has been rescheduled until the impact of significant new activity during the period has been able to be assessed. Going forward, the intention is to revert to the standard reporting schedule for 2021/22 onward.

D.2 LCPAR 2020/21

The 2020/21 LCPAR for West Lothian, Appendix 1, sets out existing, new and planned activity to address child poverty at a local level. NHS Lothian, West Lothian Council and members of the Child Poverty Reference Group and Community Planning Partnership Anti-Poverty Task Force have worked to co-produce the report.

Tackling child poverty is a shared responsibility and in West Lothian, this responsibility is assumed by Community Planning Partners through the Anti-Poverty

Strategy which aims to protect people from the worst extremes of poverty and help those experiencing poverty to escape the cycle of deprivation and improve life chances. Tackling child poverty is a key tenet of the strategy and one of the eight outcomes is to 'reduce the number of children living in relative poverty'.

Latest estimates indicate that 24.6% (8740) of children in West Lothian were in relative poverty in 2019/20, compared to 24.3% in Scotland. This is the largest proportion of children living in relative poverty since 2014/15 and represents a 3.3% increase in the five-year period between 2015 to 2020. It is important to note that the latest child poverty data covers the period prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Latest estimates show that the prevalence of child poverty was already on the increase, even before taking account of the financial impact of the pandemic. Local work alone will not result in the transformational change required to reduce and prevent child poverty at the pace and scale required. Action is required at Scottish and UK Government levels to support children and families.

The LCPAR highlights local anti-poverty initiatives delivered by West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian and a number of third sector partners that contribute to these aims and help improve the financial position and life chances of families most at risk of experiencing poverty. In the 2020/21 period, Covid-19 continued to inform our activities, taking account of the ever-changing situation and fast emerging data. The strong partnership network and embedded nature of anti-poverty work in West Lothian has resulted in a range of targeted, responsive activity and evidence of forward planning as we move into a post-covid landscape.

A two year child poverty action plan has been developed with a focus on what partners consider to be the priorities moving forward as we continue to respond to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and plan for recovery. This has been developed with cognisance of the interim target milestone as set in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 which aims to reduce the number of children in relative poverty by 2022/23 to no more than 18% and will align with the end of the lifetime of the current Anti-Poverty Strategy.

E. CONCLUSION

The report sets out the statutory duty and the scale of the challenge to reduce child poverty in West Lothian. It demonstrates the commitment to work across the Community Planning Partnership to mitigate the effects of poverty. There is a strong focus on interventions and approaches that will impact on reducing child poverty across West Lothian and which specifically reflect the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable households.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1: Draft Local Child Poverty Action Report 2020/21

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Donald Forrest
Head of Finance and Property Services
26 October 2021

West Lothian Local Child Poverty Action Report

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Section 1: Setting the scene

1.1 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act

Child poverty can have a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing, educational attainment, and the future life chances of children, young people, and their families. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 was introduced to drive and monitor action to reduce the number of children living in poverty in Scotland. Four statutory income targets were set for 2030, and four interim income targets for 2023. These are:

- Less than 10% of children live in households that are in relative poverty by 2030 (18% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in absolute poverty (14% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in combined low income and material deprivation (8% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in persistent poverty (8% by 2023)

The Act states that Scottish Ministers must publish child poverty delivery plans in 2018, 2022 and 2026, and report on them annually. The Act also places a duty on local authorities and health boards to jointly prepare an annual report on the activity they have taken, and will take, to reduce child poverty in their local area.

1.2 Drivers of child poverty and priority groups

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act and associated delivery plan sets out the three key drivers of child poverty that need to be addressed. These are:

- Income from employment – including consideration of hourly pay, number of hours worked, skills and qualifications and the labour market
- Costs of living – including housing, energy and food costs, affordable childcare and transport, digital inclusion, savings, affordable credit and debt management and the cost of the school day
- Income from social security and benefits in kind – maximising income by ensuring awareness and uptake of benefit entitlement

Some families are at higher than average risk of poverty and may require specific and targeted support to address their needs. These priority groups and the proportion of children living in poverty in Scotland is set out below in Table 1:

Priority group	Relative poverty (%)	Absolute poverty (%)	Low income + material deprivation (%)
Disabled person in household	30	27	20
3+ children in household	31	28	18
Baby aged under 1 in household	32	30	13
Minority ethnic household	44	41	23
Lone parent household	39	34	27
All children	24	21	12

Table 1: Percentage of children in poverty after housing costs 2016-19¹

1.3 West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy

Work to tackle child poverty in West Lothian sits within the broader anti-poverty work of West Lothian Community Planning Partnership and its Anti-Poverty Strategy. Much of the work in this report reflects that strategy and the infrastructure that surrounds it. There are links to other partnership plans including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Children's Services Plan and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Whilst our ultimate goal remains unchanged – *working towards a West Lothian where fewer people experience poverty, where no-one experiences destitution and where everyone has the opportunity to build a future free of poverty* – the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our local communities and economy must be acknowledged. The challenge is now greater, progress has been hampered

¹ Family Resources Survey as referenced in Scottish Government. Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan Second year progress report 2019-20. [tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-second-year-progress-report-2019-20.pdf](#) (accessed August 2021).

and we must do more and better to support children and families most in need.

The West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report 2019/20 was published in December 2020. The 2020/21 summarise action taken in 2020/21 to prevent and mitigate the consequences of child poverty and to provide an outline of actions that will be undertaken over the next two years in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

1.4 Lived experience

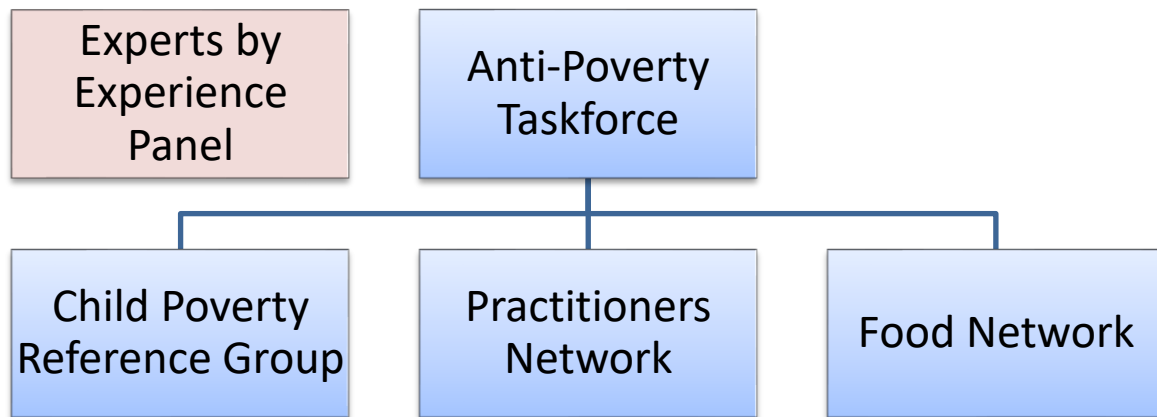
A key part of the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy was to establish an 'Experts by Experience' panel to gather the views of those who have had experience of poverty at some point in their lives and to provide a platform for local residents to have their say about how we address poverty at a local level.

The panel currently has ten members who meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to them and provide feedback on actions developed to mitigate the impact of poverty.

During 2020/21, the group was unable to meet face to face due to the Covid-19 restrictions, so new opportunities for remote engagement have been developed. The panel has continued to meet throughout the pandemic via video conferencing platforms and a new online forum has been developed to enable the Experts to start or contribute to discussion threads, take part in surveys and review documents.

The Experts regularly review new anti-poverty activity and provide feedback which is used to shape the anti-poverty action plan. During 2020/21, the Experts tested a range of online tools and resources including a self-help benefit calculator and budgeting planner, an interactive map of local community food resources and a crisis support toolkit developed in response to the pandemic. The diagram below illustrates how the Experts by Experience panel, as well as the Practitioners Network and Food Network help to inform

the work of the Anti-Poverty Taskforce and Child Poverty Reference Group.



1.5 Learning from best practice

Consideration has been given to examples of policy and practice in other Scottish local authorities published by the Improvement Service. These, along with other examples of good practice, have been used to inform action in West Lothian.

Fuel Poverty

Learning from similar approaches from different local authorities, activity was developed to tackle fuel poverty in West Lothian during the pandemic. During 2020/21, the council's energy advice team supported those experiencing fuel poverty with energy efficiency advice and support. Good practice was identified from partner organisations such as Lone Parent Families Scotland and Home Energy Scotland, who delivered energy redress funds, offering one off grants to households struggling with increased energy costs. During 2020/21, energy advisors provided support to make 529 applications for grants from partner organisations, helping families and individuals in hardship to access financial assistance worth over £26,000 in total.

As a result of this example of good practice, West Lothian Council implemented a similar fund during winter 2020/21, offering grants of £100 to households identified as experiencing fuel poverty or being in danger of

disconnection from their energy supply. In total £28,000 was distributed to 280 households in West Lothian experiencing fuel poverty or energy hardship.

Schools

Evidence from a pilot programme delivered in Glasgow has shown that a more regular and sustained presence offering income maximisation advice within the school setting can have a positive impact. Since the recruitment of a Financial Inclusion Officer based in one Glasgow high school in December 2019, families have been supported to maximise income by more than £400,000. Learning from this approach, a similar pilot has been developed for West Lothian to be delivered in 2021/22. The two-year West Lothian pilot will embed advice workers in school settings for families who are experiencing financial hardship to help them to become more financially confident. Young people will have the opportunity to undertake a Citizenship and Tenancy SQA qualification including a personal finance module.

Fast Online Referral Tracking

Good practice in relation to active referral mechanisms between advice and support agencies was identified in Fife where the Fast Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system has been in place for several years to strengthen partnership links between local organisations and improve the client journey toward financial security. The FORT system offers a secure online portal to send and receive referrals between local agencies with built in outcome tracking and a robust directory of support. The FORT system was introduced in West Lothian in 2019 and has grown exponentially in the last year. During 2020/21, 35 new partners have signed up and been trained to use the referral system resulting in 3,910 active referrals made for advice and support.

1.6 Child Poverty Reference Group

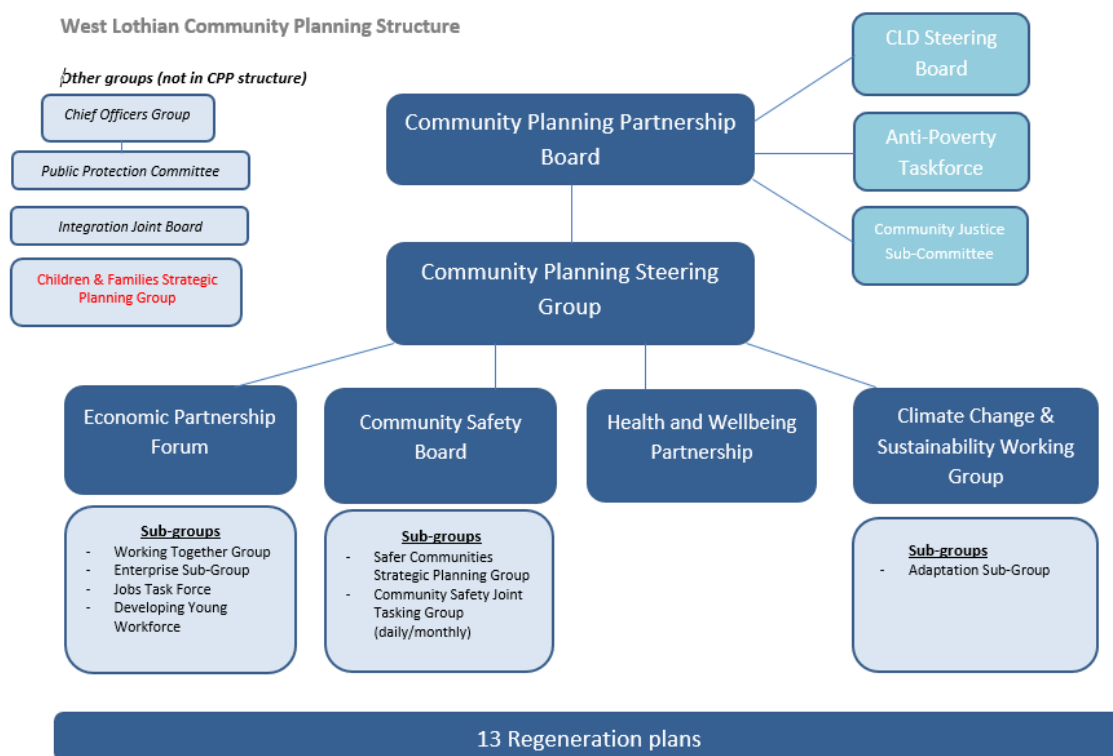
The Child Poverty Reference Group was refreshed in early 2021/22 and will:

- Contribute to the development of the West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report
- Identify gaps and develop solutions to prevent and mitigate the impact of child poverty in West Lothian

Local Child Poverty Action Report 2020-21

- Ensure the voices of those with lived experience of poverty are heard
- Ensure publication and dissemination of the Child Poverty Action Report (by June each year)
- Monitor the progress of actions in the West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report and support implementation of these where required
- Ensure key messages in relation to child poverty and the Local Child Poverty Action Report are communicated to groups and networks across West Lothian

The group reports progress to the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Taskforce which is embedded within the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership structure (see below).



1.7 Community Wealth Building in West Lothian

Community Wealth Building is an approach which aims to tackle the challenges of rising inequality by placing a greater degree of control into the hands of local people, communities, businesses, and organisations. It has been developed in response to traditional approaches to economic development,

which are often based on the need for constant economic growth, and the assumption that this will create wealth for all. However, evidence of ongoing, and increasing, poverty indicates that this wealth is not ‘trickling down’ to those most in need. In addition, the wealth that is generated locally, through wages and local business activity, is often channelled away from the communities that generate it through spend with national and international companies and the profit enjoyed elsewhere.

Community Wealth Building promotes working in partnership with communities and businesses to build a strong and resilient local economy which supports fair work, encourages local spend and uses land and property for the common good. Community Wealth Building seeks to use the economic levers available to local authorities and other ‘anchor institutions’ such as the NHS, further and higher education institutions, and larger private sector (and third sector) organisations to support their local economies, ensuring that wealth is locally retained and benefits the communities that generate it. The approach views anchor institutions as trailblazers that will exert influence and impact upon economic, social, and environmental priorities, generating community benefits and wealth.

A key focus of the West Lothian Jobs Task Force and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2020-2023 is to prioritise inclusive and sustainable economic change. Several activities are already being taken forward locally that are consistent with a Community Wealth Building approach and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan includes additional relevant actions.

There is an opportunity to build on the positive work underway and explore a more strategic approach to Community Wealth Building in West Lothian, focused on the five ‘pillars’, which look at the ways in which we can create a more resilient local economy, diversify businesses, and offer training and employment to local communities.

As part of our COVID Recovery, the Community Wealth Building approach presents an opportunity to contribute to the economic empowerment of communities, encouraging plural ownership of community services and promoting socially just asset transfer, thus contributing to a circular economy that offers many additional social benefits.

1.8 NHS Lothian and the role of Anchor Institutions

NHS Lothian is strengthening its approach to tackling poverty and inequalities, both pre-existing and those exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. A key part of this overall approach is to develop its role as an anchor institution. Anchor institutions are described as ‘large public sector organisations rooted in and connected to their local communities. They can improve health through their influence on local social and economic conditions by adapting the way they employ people, purchase goods and services, use buildings and spaces, reduce environmental impact, and work in partnership’.² The anchor institution approach aligns with West Lothian Partnership’s commitment to Community Wealth Building to deliver inclusive economic growth across the local authority area.

Dedicated local public health teams are also being established to work with community planning partners to shape and influence policies that will tackle the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities, including, tackling poverty, income maximisation, employability, housing and education. Much of the Anchor Institution work will rely on partnerships with key community planning partners and, in some instances, the action might be better led by either the Health and Social Care Partnership or West Lothian Council. NHS Lothian is committed to playing a full part in the wider community wealth building approach in West Lothian.

Among the initial themes being considered for action in West Lothian are

- Extending the scope of community benefit clauses beyond construction programmes e.g. public health partnership teams can facilitate local intelligence from community and voluntary partners to inform NHS Lothian procurement lists that are approved on the NSS Community Benefits portal.
- Sustainable funding for welfare rights and income maximisation service provision at NHS Lothian hospitals.

² Allen M., et al, *Anchors in a Storm: Lessons from anchor action during Covid-19*. 2021, The Health Foundation: London.

- Ensure NHS Lothian's employability programmes provide entry level opportunities and development prospects across the whole organisation.

Section 2: An overview of child poverty in West Lothian

The Anti-Poverty Strategy is supported by a scorecard, the most recent of which is provided in Appendix 1.

The sections that follow highlight data that continues to inform our approach to tackling child poverty in West Lothian and the future actions planned.

Headline anti-poverty figures show that:

- 12% of the West Lothian population is income deprived³
- Almost 25% of children experience relative poverty⁴
- 74.6% of working age adults are in work⁵
- 13.5% of workers earn below the Living Wage⁶
- 19% of residents experience fuel poverty (fuel bill >10% of income after housing)⁷
- 9% of residents experience extreme fuel poverty (fuel bill >20% of income after housing)⁷

2.1 Child Poverty

Latest estimates indicate that 24.6% (n= 8740) of children in West Lothian were in relative poverty in 2019/20, compared to 24.3% in Scotland. This is the largest proportion of children living in relative poverty since 2014/15 and represents a 3.3% increase in the 5-year period between 2015 – 2020 (see Chart 1 below).⁸

³ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

⁴ End Child Poverty Campaign 2019/20

⁵ Office of National Statistics Annual Population Survey 2020

⁶ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2020

⁷ Energy Savings Trust Home Analytics v3.7 (February 2021)

⁸ End Child Poverty. Child poverty in your area 2014/15-2019/20. <https://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20/> (accessed July 2021).

Local Child Poverty Action Report 2020-21

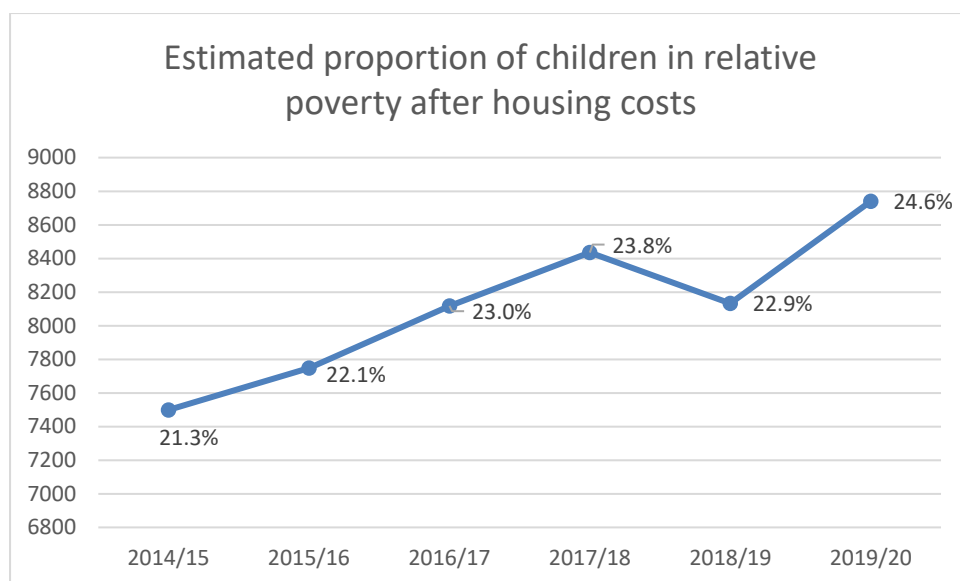


Chart 1: Proportion of children in relative poverty after housing costs

It is important to note that the latest child poverty data covers the period prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Latest estimates show that the prevalence of child poverty was already on the increase, even before taking account of the financial impact of the pandemic.

2.2 Educational Attainment

Table 2 below shows the percentage of primary and secondary school pupils achieving in the literacy domain in 2020/21. Whilst improvement has been seen over time in relation to achievement of milestones, there are still clear inequalities in this area with pupils from the most deprived areas doing less well than pupils in the least deprived. For example, there is a 22.2 percentage point difference between the most and least deprived, in relation to achievement of expected literacy milestones in primary 7.

	% pupils achieving West Lothian	% pupils achieving quintile 1 (most deprived)	% pupils achieving quintile 5 (least deprived)
P1	77.70	70.03	89.83
P4	75.02	66.76	87.27
P7	76.04	64.83	87.07
S3 Third Level	93.81	86.12	98.30
S3 Fourth Level	61.31	42.78	79.37

Table 2: Percentage of pupils achieving in the literacy domain 2020/21

2.3 Claimant Count

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent measures imposed to restrict the spread of the virus had a significant economic impact in the 2020/21 period. The claimant count for out of work benefits more than doubled from 2.9% in February 2020 to 6% at the peak in August 2020.

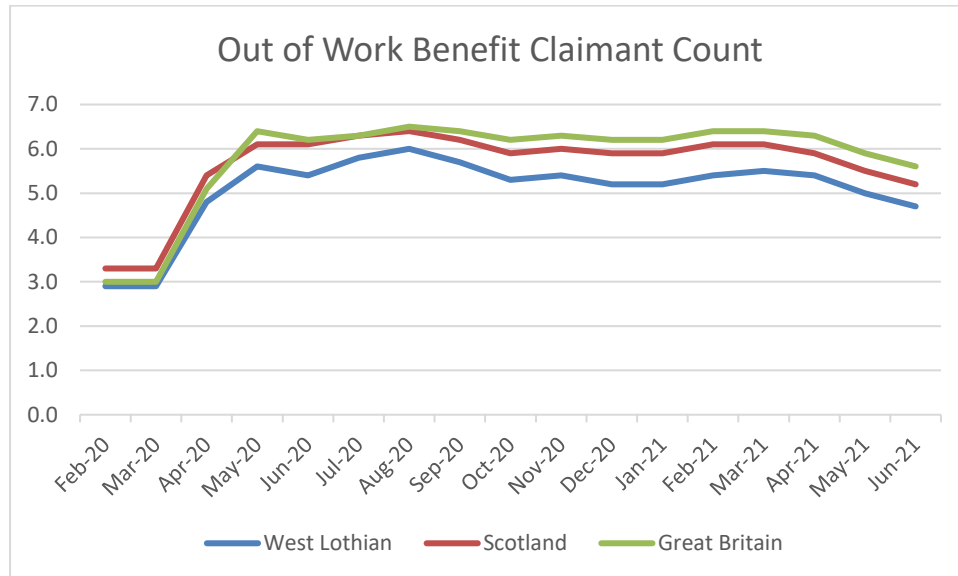


Chart 2: Out of work benefit claimant count

The claimant rate has started to decrease but has still not returned to pre-pandemic levels⁹.

Feb 2020		April 2021		May 2021		June 2021		% Change	
Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Feb 20- June 21	May 21- June 21
3,425	2.9	6,345	5.4	5,915	5.0	5,490	4.7	60	-7

Table 3: Claimant count and percent change over time

In term of claimants who are young people aged 18-24 years, chart 3 below shows that claimant figures levelled off between November 2020 and February 2021, likely due to an increase in availability of seasonal work over this period. The latest increase in claimant count is attributable to the end of the seasonal period. During the Covid-19 pandemic, job losses in sectors such as hospitality and retail are likely to have affected young people most significantly. In March 2021, 9.8% of those 18-24 years in West Lothian were claiming out of work

⁹ Office for National Statistics. Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics.
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157436/report.aspx> (accessed July 2021).

benefits (8.6% in Scotland) compared to 4.6% in January 2020. Youth unemployment has been consistently higher in West Lothian than Scotland for many years.

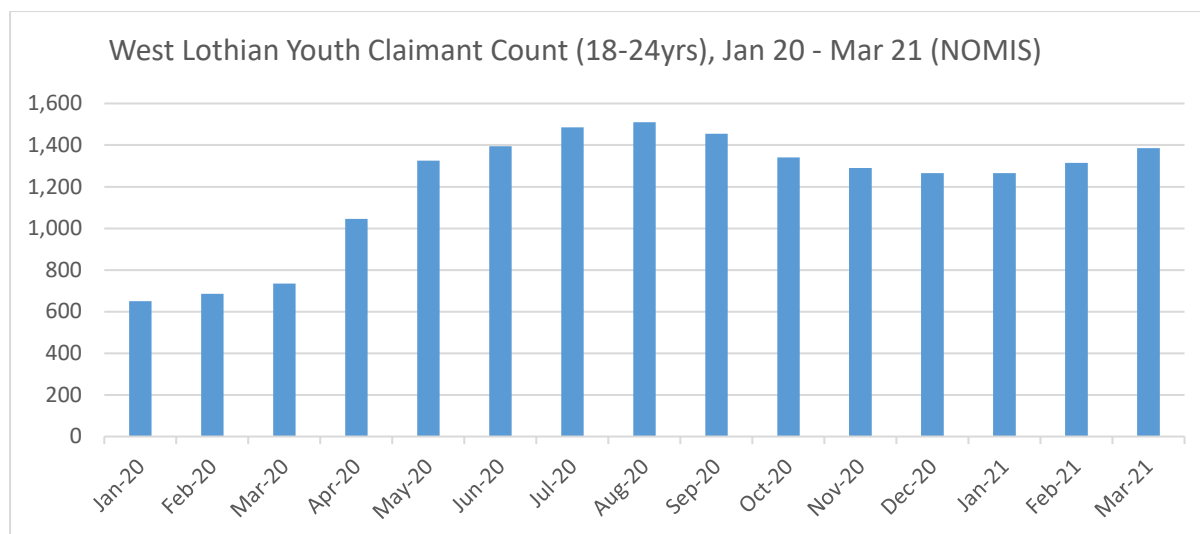


Chart 3: West Lothian Youth Claimant Count

As at February 2021, 11,917 West Lothian households had Universal Credit in payment.

Forty percent of households with Universal Credit in payment have dependent children with a higher proportion of lone parents than couples with children.¹⁰

	Number	Percentage
Single with child dependent(s)	3,373	28.3
Couple with child dependent(s)	1,395	11.7
Single no child dependent	6,681	56.1
Couple no child dependent	468	3.9

Table 4: Universal credit payments

Several new benefits have been introduced for Scottish claimants, administered by Social Security Scotland. The claimant count and value of payments in West Lothian are shown below in table 5.¹¹

¹⁰ Universal Credit Official Statistics. Universal Credit: Households. <https://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=8560a06de0f2430ab71505772163e8b4> (accessed July 2021).

¹¹ Scottish Government. Social Security Scotland statistics: publications. <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/> (accessed July 2021).

Benefit	Applications Received	Approval Rate (%)	Total Value of Payments
Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods	9720	70	£2,017,550
Scottish Child Payment	3865	92	£122,080
Young Carer Grant	225	70	£46,393
Job Start Payment	95	29	£7,300
Child Winter Heating Allowance	555	100	£110,000

Table 5: Social Security Scotland benefit payments

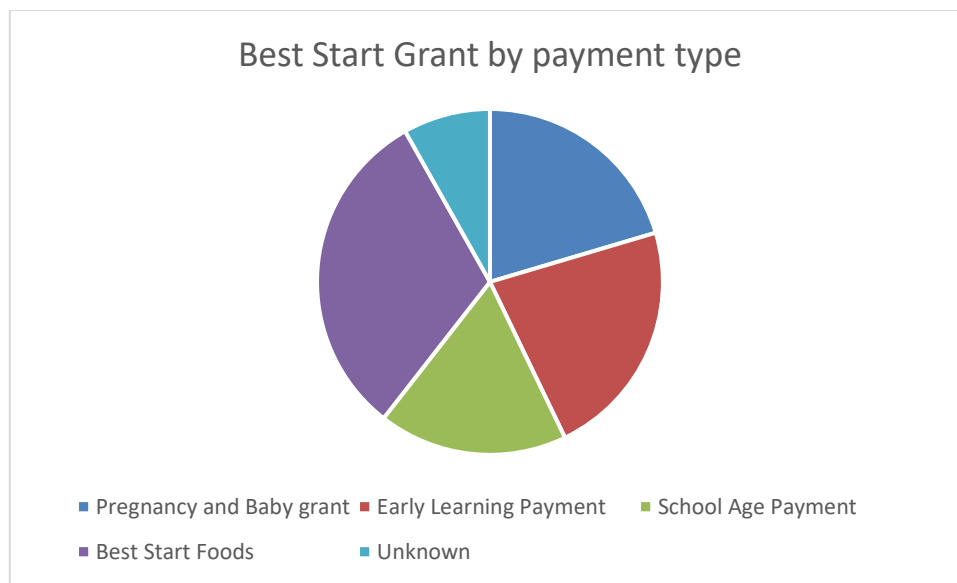


Chart 4: Best Start Grant payment type

Representatives from Social Security Scotland have joined the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Task Force, Child Poverty Reference Group and Practitioners Network and are committed to taking forward actions to raise awareness of, and support access to, the benefits available to West Lothian residents.

In the 2020/21 academic year, 7,921 clothing grants were provided. This is an increase from 2019/20 of 886 grants. The eligibility criteria for clothing grants was extended to include those receiving council tax reduction, increasing the number of children eligible for the grant. This is likely to have contributed to increased the uptake.

2.4 Antenatal Data

More women were pregnant in 2020/21 than the previous year (see Table 6). West Lothian women accounted for 21% of all antenatal booking appointments in Lothian (an increase from 19% in 2019/20).

Issues relating to financial wellbeing are explored at the antenatal booking appointment. Of the 445 women in Lothian in need of financial advice in 2020/21, 24% were from West Lothian.

The number of women living in temporary housing at the time of antenatal booking increased from 66 in 2019/20 to 80 in 2020/21. The proportion of West Lothian women living in temporary housing at the time of antenatal booking increased to 4.2% in 2020/21 (compared to 4% across Lothian as a whole).

	2019/20		2020/21	
	West Lothian	Lothian	West Lothian	Lothian
Total pregnancies	1760	9030	1902	9136
In temporary housing	66	331	80	371

Table 6: Total antenatal booking appointments and temporary housing status (Source: LAS, 2021)

The proportion of women in West Lothian in need of further advice on finances, benefits or housing issues decreased in 2020/21 but remained higher than elsewhere in Lothian (see Table 7).

	East Lothian	Edinburgh	Midlothian	West Lothian	Lothian
2019/20	4.3	4.9	5.6	9.5	5.8
2020/21	5.4	4.5	4.6	5.7	4.9

Table 7: Antenatal booking: in need of further advice on finances, benefits, or housing issues (Source: LAS, 2021)

Thirteen percent of pregnant women in West Lothian qualified for Best Start Foods payments, compared to 11% in Lothian overall. Twenty-six percent of pregnant women living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1) qualified for Best Start Foods payments.

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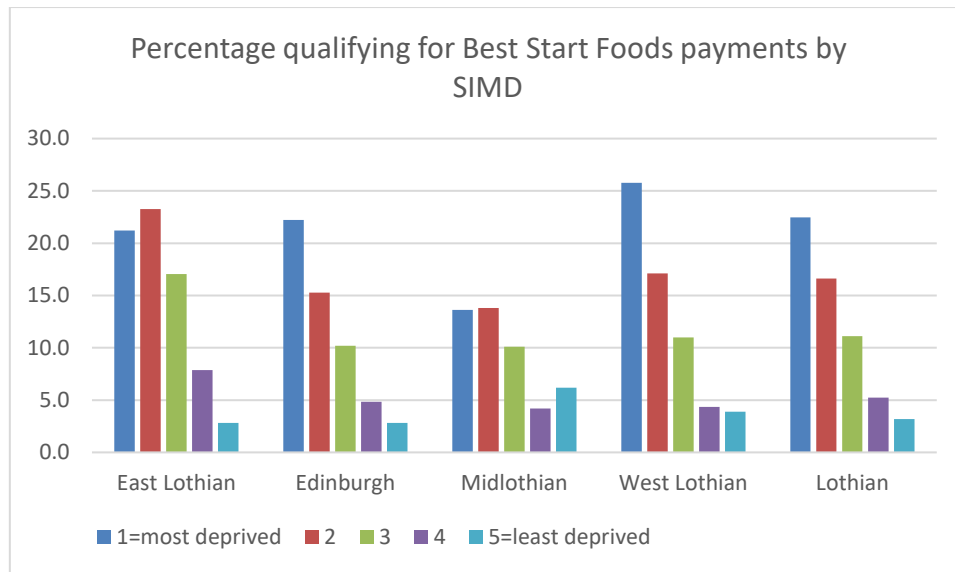


Chart 5: Percentage qualifying for Best Start Foods payments by SIMD

Chart 6 below illustrates the need for financial support during pregnancy for women in Lothian, and in particular West Lothian. In 2020/21, 4% (n=74) of West Lothian women were referred to income maximisation services at the time of antenatal booking, 3% (n=60) required money and debt advice, and 3% (n=52) needed financial capability support.

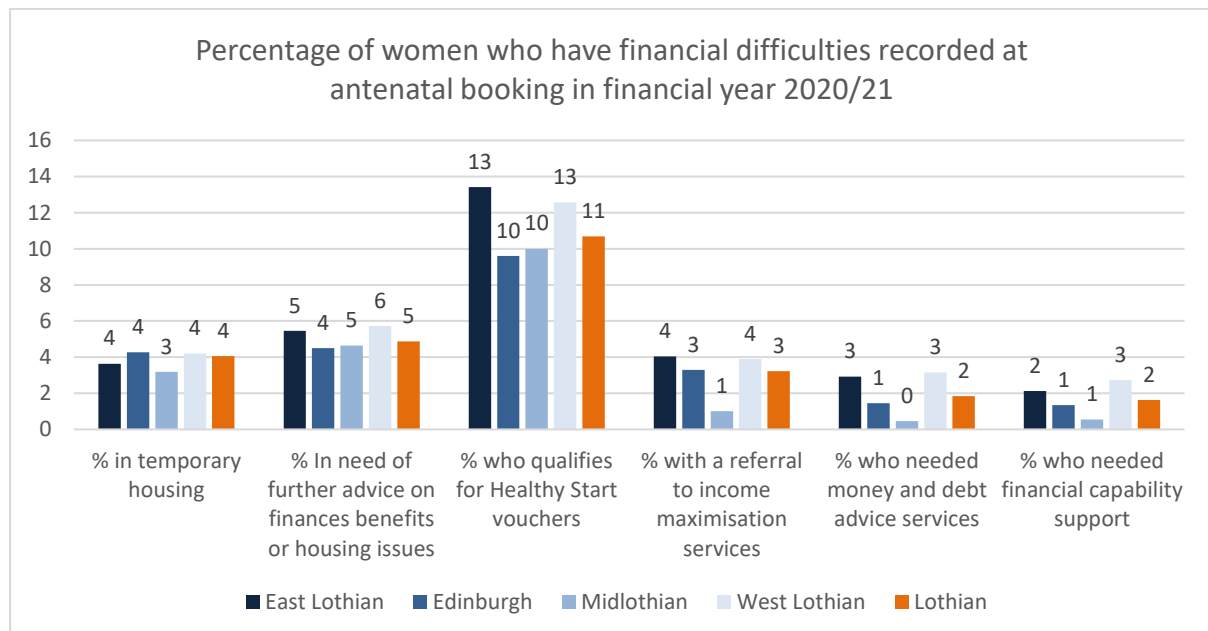


Chart 6: Percentage of women who have financial difficulties recorded at antenatal booking

2.5 Food insecurity

The Poverty and Inequality Commission commissioned the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) to undertake research to identify and share good practice and learning around providing free school meals. A range of 'promising practice case studies' gathered before and during the pandemic have been considered and the report makes a number of recommendations for schools and authorities looking to increase their free school meal uptake.

There has been an increase in the total number of children receiving free school meals in West Lothian. In the academic year 2020/21, 6,373 free school meals were provided, compared to 5,637 in 2019/20. This increases to 6,843 if universal P1-3 school meals are included.

West Lothian Food Network provided meals for 1,630 children over a 77-week period: averaging 7 meals per week for each child. This equates to 878,570 meals to children during the pandemic. This demand is likely to continue whilst we recover from the economic impact of the pandemic.

West Lothian Foodbank fulfilled 5,271 vouchers during 2020/21 (compared to 3,498 in 2019/20). Of the total number of vouchers, almost a fifth (19%) were distributed in Whitburn and Blackburn. These vouchers supported 6,659 adults and 3,481 children with emergency food aid (4.6% and 8.8% of the West Lothian adult and child population respectively). See table 8 below.

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	No. vouchers	Adults	% adult popn.	Children	% child popn.	Total	% total ward popn.
Armadale & Blackridge	519	686	5.6	396	10.9	1082	6.9
Bathgate	910	1111	6.1	567	10.5	1678	7.1
Broxburn, Uphall & Winchburgh	496	641	4.1	376	9.3	1017	5.2
East Livingston & East Calder	486	654	3.7	349	7.9	1003	4.6
Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	492	634	4.9	353	10.9	987	6.1
Linlithgow	147	185	1.4	83	2.4	268	1.6
Livingston North	417	526	2.9	307	5.9	833	3.6
Livingston South	554	697	3.7	310	5.7	1007	4.2
Whitburn & Blackburn	1004	1244	7.2	654	14.2	1898	8.7
West Lothian	5271	6659	4.6	3481	8.8	10140	5.5

Table 8: West Lothian Food Bank Vouchers

Section 3: Activity Impacting Drivers of Poverty 2020-21

The tables and narrative below set out progress against actions in 2020/21 to tackle the drivers of child poverty. Whilst good progress has been made across the community planning partnership, it should be emphasised that local work alone will not result in the transformational change required to reduce and prevent child poverty at the pace and scale required. Action is required at Scotland and UK Government levels to support children and families, including but not limited to, support for those transitioning from furlough arrangements, mitigating the impact of proposed reductions to Universal Credit payments and rising fuel costs, and expediting increases to Scottish child payments.

3.1 Income from employment

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
Employability support is provided to individuals affected by the economic impact of COVID-19.	Tailored support provided to young people and those who have been made redundant, had their hours reduced or find their current work unsuitable.	<p>All delivery of Access2Employment workshops and training programmes has been conducted virtually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed and delivered 41 employment based virtual workshops to 161 clients. Courses include Interview Skills, Customer Service, LinkedIn, and Effective Job Search & CV's • A new Wellbeing Workshop was developed for pre-employability clients and has been delivered 7 times to 45 clients • Women N2 Work, a six-week programme aimed to improve women's confidence and employability skills, has been completed 7 times

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 4-week Men N2 Work programme was launched at the start of the year and has been delivered once <p>The service has continued to support young people through No One left Behind as well as the Steps N2 Work programme and new delivery of Kickstart and Youth Guarantee.</p> <p>A vacancy bulletin was created to help clients, particularly those unemployed and furloughed. The bulletin highlights local vacancies, training, and relevant support available on a weekly basis using an easily accessible format. It reaches over 850 clients and 150 stakeholders.</p>
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3.1.1 Access2Employment Service

The Access2Employment service offers tailored support to help its clients secure new or better employment, training, or educational opportunities. Since March 2020, the service has been delivered remotely, via telephone, email, and video conferencing. The service has continued to provide various forms of interaction to clients such as one-on-one support, workshops and short-term courses based on client's employment needs.

The WomenN2Work course was first delivered remotely in August 2020 and was delivered a further four times during the year. The six-week programme is aimed at women that are considering entering or returning to the labour market. The personal development aspect of the course is delivered by the Wellbeing Team and covers topics such

as emotional and physical wellbeing, setting healthy boundaries, identifying unhelpful thinking and negative stories, creating healthy routines, goal setting, action planning and motivation. Once the personal development part of the course is completed it moves onto employability sessions. This part of the course covers topics such as job searching, preparing a CV and covering letter, completing application forms, and interview preparation and techniques.

The programme is extremely valuable to parents that are considering looking for work but lacking confidence in their abilities. In 2020/21, fourteen parents attended the course and the personal development aspects allowed them to identify their transferable skills and provided them with a feeling of worth before focusing on employability skills.

In 2021, Access2Employment launched an additional offer to employed and unemployed parents that identified under one of the following six client groups - lone parent, family where a member of the household is disabled, family with three or more children, minority ethnic family, family where the youngest child is under one, and family where parents are under 25 years. In 2020/21 the parental employment support service registered 17 eligible parents who are all being provided with intensive employment support. The support is voluntary and offered on a one-to-one basis online and via telephone. Delivery is person-centred and includes a personalised action plan based on the clients wants and needs. Assistance to parents includes all aspects of employability support, funding towards training and upskilling, workshops, group support, barrier removal and help finding affordable childcare and in-work support.

In 2021/22 the Parental Employment Support Team will deliver a targeted approach within the Whitburn area as this has been identified as having the highest levels of child deprivation in West Lothian. This will be delivered by creating links with the schools in the area and with external partners that have a significant presence.

2020/21 also saw the introduction of the intensive family support offer to the Access2Employment service. This service is delivered in conjunction with the Families Together Team within Social Policy. The programme targets the hardest to reach families that are engaging with the Families Together Team and provides employability support. This support is

provided to clients as a long term offer and takes into consideration that many of the clients will be extremely far removed from the labour market and will need intensive ongoing support to find work, training or education that suits them and their family. This is also the first time that the service has offered a full family approach and has begun working with children in the family to encourage a positive outlook with regards employability and what is required to pursue their chosen career.

3.2 Cost of living

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
Ensure that individuals in crisis can access appropriate, affordable solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All children entitled to free school meals will be able to collect a packed lunch or takeaway hot meal as well as breakfast cereal or a cereal bar daily throughout the duration of coronavirus lockdown and during summer Parents of children eligible for free school meals will receive a payment of £10 per child per week until end of July 2020 to help ease financial strain Early School Clothing Grant payments will be paid automatically to all parents/carers who received a payment in the 2019/20 academic year to ease financial pressure caused by coronavirus Increase uptake of school clothing grant by amending criteria to include council tax reduction 	<p>Takeaway hot meals, packed lunches and cereal bars were available from schools throughout lockdown.</p> <p>During the 2020 summer holiday, the service was accessible via 7 secondary schools and 34 primary schools, with an additional 5 primary schools continuing to distribute packed lunches only. Delivery arrangements continued for vulnerable children identified by Social Policy and Additional Support Needs (ASN) for Education. The uptake was 42% of those eligible and 2,400 meals were provided daily.</p> <p>In addition to this service, meal deliveries were made to Additional Support Needs (ASN) children with around 90 meals being delivered daily to 57 families.</p> <p>Payments were made to parents of children eligible for free school meals and on a low</p>

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		<p>income. In total, £794,240 was paid in respect of 5637 children.</p> <p>Early payment of School Clothing Grant was made automatically to parents and carers who qualified in the 2019-20 academic year to help toward the costs of home learning. In total £534,820 was paid in respect of 4114 children.</p> <p>For new Clothing Grant applications, the qualifying criteria was amended to include Council Tax Reduction entitlement resulting in an additional 247 awards made on these criteria only.</p> <p>One off grant for energy costs and other expenses were made in respect of 809 households securing payments worth £54,104.</p>
Families have access to tools and resources to improve their financial wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with West Calder High School and local partners to develop a family support hub with a focus on financial capability. • Implement a further phase of Connecting Scotland programme to provide devices and connectivity for school pupils. 	<p>Money Advice Scotland delivered 2 digital workshops for students covering a range of financial wellbeing topics including banking and bills and credit and borrowing. Feedback from students and teachers has been positive and has led to the development of a Citizenship and Tenancy qualification for young people including a personal finance module to be taken forward in 2021/22.</p>

3.2.1 Tackling food insecurity

The West Lothian Food Network has been developed by West Lothian Council and is led by West Lothian Foodbank SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). West Lothian Food Network aims to connect people and communities, reduce hunger and isolation, and alleviate poverty.

The Food Network's first annual action plan was delivered during the 2020/21 period with much of the network activity informed by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

During 2020/21, the Food Network has grown from 26 to 37 organisations. Working in partnership, network members fed an average of 4,094 people per week through food parcels, cooked meals, community pantries and community fridges, diverting 127 tons of food from landfill.

In the last year, 7 new community food pantries and 1 new community fridge have been set up in local communities with support from the Food Network. Service users can now access fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, dairy, baked goods, ambient food, frozen food, baby goods, toiletries, cleaning products and sanitary products in every council ward.

In addition, all network organisations are signposting service users to local advice agencies for checks on eligibility for benefits and grants, to improve household income.

3.2.2 Cost of the School Day

The Schoolbank West Lothian is a volunteer led charity that aims to help West Lothian families experiencing financial hardship by providing brand new school uniforms and other clothing items and equipment required for the school day.

During the pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools, the Schoolbank experienced a sudden drop in referrals. It became apparent that there was a need for continued support for children from families experiencing financial hardship. The Schoolbank worked with local schools and partner organisations including Carers West Lothian, Bridge Community Project, Homestart and West Lothian Women's Aid to address the additional costs of living associated with families spending significantly more time at home.

The Schoolbank West Lothian secured £2,000 from STV Children's Appeal Community Well-being Fund and worked with local schools and partners to provide 250 basic stationery packs to support children in their home schooling including several maths sets and calculators. Activity packs were also distributed, including a range of arts and crafts materials and games equipment.

The Schoolbank and partners also identified a need to provide supermarket vouchers to children and families due to some families falling into poverty and others experiencing additional expenses for food needed whilst spending more time at home. The Scottish Government Community Winter Support Fund awarded West Lothian £5,150 and then a further £2,000, allowing the Schoolbank and partners to support 143 families by providing £50 Aldi vouchers.

When schools resumed in-person teaching, further work was undertaken to provide necessary resources for outdoor learning. The Schoolbank collaborated with Head Teachers at two local schools to provide waterproof clothing which allowed them to take more of their learning outdoors. Funding was secured from both the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and Community Funding Scotmid, allowing the Schoolbank to provide approximately 140 children in the Fauldhouse and Breich Valley area with waterproof trousers and jackets.

3.3 Income from social security

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
Embed advice, support, and advocacy to improve early intervention and prevent poverty and focus on those who have been affected by COVID-19.	<p>Monitor developments in the rollout plan for devolved Scottish Social Security benefits, particularly Scottish Child Payment which is expected in early 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver media take-up campaign following rollout of new Scottish benefits • Work with key partners to raise awareness of new benefits and encourage referrals through the FORT system for help to claim • Provide support and assistance to clients with the claim process <p>Develop close links with Access2 Employment to make onward referrals</p>	<p>Several new benefits delivered by Social Security Scotland have been introduced in the 2020/21 period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Start Payment for 16-24 year olds • Scottish Child Payment for eligible families with children under 6 years old • Child Winter Heating Assistance, an automatic payment for eligible families with a child in receipt of highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance <p>Best Start Grant has also continued to be delivered with payments available to eligible families at key life stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy and maternity • Early years • School age <p>Awareness raising has been primarily digital during 2020/21 due to Covid restrictions. Social media posts during the reporting period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Start Grant – 2 posts; shared 42 times • Scottish Child Payment – 3 posts; shared 110 times

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Start Payment – 1 post; shared 30 times <p>An article was also published in the WLC Bulletin to all households to promote the Scottish Child Payment and Child Winter Heating Allowance.</p> <p>The Fast Online Referral Tracking system has been used to promote active referrals from key partners who work with families. Referrals from partners including Signpost, Access2Employment, Family Support Workers and the Schoolbank West Lothian are made to a dedicated adviser to provide advice and support to claim.</p>
Families with low income are aware of and are supported to access financial support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase uptake of school clothing grant by extending eligibility criteria to include Council Tax Reduction Scheme • Improve accessibility of Education Maintenance Allowance through the development of an online claim form • Promote the NEC card/ Young Scot card across a range of channels • Parents with children eligible for 2-year old early learning and childcare provision are offered a referral for financial advice • Work with Family Assessment and Support Services screening group to provide income maximisation for at-risk families 	<p>The qualifying criteria for School Clothing Grant applications has been amended to include Council Tax Reduction entitlement resulting in an additional 247 awards made on these criteria only.</p> <p>Online applications for Education Maintenance Allowance have been available since June 2020. This option has been widely promoted alongside digital access to make applications for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants easier. Social media promotion has been delivered at key points in the year, in July, September and January</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looked after young people are offered one-to-one support to develop budgeting skills and become financially included 	<p>to encourage maximum uptake and posts have been shared over 350 times.</p> <p>Referral mechanism implemented in June 2020 for at-risk families through the Family Assessment and Support Service resulting in 43 referrals for income maximisation advice and support.</p>
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Overall:

- Additional income of **£31,665,005** was gained for West Lothian residents following engagement with income maximisation advice services
- Local debt advice agencies managed **£7,402,707** worth of debt
- Following energy efficiency advice, **£445,691** worth of savings was made on gas and electricity costs

3.3.1 Financial support for families impacted by the pandemic

Many families were affected financially by the pandemic; with low-income households often disproportionately affected. An unprecedented level of financial support for families was provided during 2020/21 to mitigate the impact on families at highest risk of poverty:

- Hot takeaway meals, packed lunches and cereal bars were available to be picked up from schools during lockdown and through the summer holiday with 2,400 meals provided daily. In addition, delivery arrangements were put in place for vulnerable children and an additional 90 meals were delivered daily to 57 families.

- Payments of £10 per week per child were made to families in receipt of free school meals with a total of £794,240 paid to 5,637 children up to the end of July 2020.
- Payments of £15 per week per child have since been made to families of eligible children on low incomes in receipt of free school meals starting in Autumn 2020. A total of £1,381,159 has been paid to families during school holidays or periods of school closures. This money has reached over 6,800 children.
- Early payment of School Clothing Grants was automatically made to parents and carers who qualified in the previous academic year to help toward the cost of home learning. In total £534,820 was paid to 4,114 children.
- There have been several one-off payments to those eligible for free school meals on a low income: winter and spring hardship payments were administered on behalf of the Scottish Government totalling £1,291,300. An additional winter clothing payment of £80 was paid in January 2021 to 7,776 children totalling £622,080.

Financial support to address the ongoing impact of the pandemic will continue into the 2021/22 period. Payments of £3 per day will be awarded to families of children who cannot attend school because they or their class are self-isolating.

3.3.2 The One2One Project

The One2One Project works with the most vulnerable residents of West Lothian, who are affected by severe and enduring mental ill health and have difficulties with engaging effectively with services. Our key target groups are lone parents, families in low income employment and workless households.

The project also aims to support where there are additional barriers to accessing services and support, such as having a physical disability, being a care leaver or a young parent without support. All our customers are offered intensive support with benefits, housing, debt, and energy issues.

During the 2020-21 period, the One2One project worked with a total of 98 families with dependent children. All these families had a household member with a physical or mental health disability, or both. In addition to this nine of these families were led by a lone parent, a further nine were from a minority ethnic background.

The One2One project worked closely with local partner organisations to ensure families in need can access relevant help and support.

3.3.3 Royal Hospital for Children and Young People Welfare Advice Service

In Lothian, the Scottish Government Healthier Wealthier Children Fund has been used to establish a hospital-based welfare advice service at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) in Edinburgh. The service benefits families experiencing poverty across the four local authority areas within Lothian and complements the existing welfare advice provision within the adult hospitals. Having a hospital-based service promotes access for those families who may struggle to engage with community-based services and/or who may find they are experiencing financial difficulties because of their child's illness or hospital stay.

The service offers free, independent, confidential, and non-judgemental advice across the hospital (inpatient and outpatients) and includes support on issues such as income maximisation, benefit entitlement, debt, employment, and housing. This not only supports vulnerable families at a time when they may be experiencing additional stress with a child in hospital, but also supports the work of clinical teams.

NHS Lothian is working in partnership with the Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI) to provide this service.

The intention had been for the welfare advice service to be fully embedded within the RHCYP and for the project worker to have a physical presence in the hospital. Unfortunately given the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions from March 2020, the welfare adviser has not been able to work from the hospital and has

been operating remotely offering telephone-based support. This has impacted CHAI's ability to fully develop the project, but every effort has been made to raise awareness of the service and encourage referrals.

Thirty-two families across Lothian have received advice and support from the project and to date financial gains of £46,369 have been recorded (this will increase over time as further financial gains for this period accumulate). During this period, 160 appointments were offered to families across Lothian and various types of follow-up work completed. Non-financial gains for the period included suitable alternative housing being attained for one family whilst others received clothing and school uniforms. The adviser has provided support and advice on a range of issues including supporting a family with welfare advice issues relating to bereavement.

The project worker continues to promote the service and build referral pathways and contacts across the hospital. The adviser now attends regular multiagency meetings with RHCYP clinicians and as a result, more hospital departments are becoming aware of the service and referrals are gradually increasing.

3.4 Workforce development

3.4.1 Poverty Awareness Training for Education Settings

Latest estimates from the End Child Poverty coalition show that child poverty is a significant issue. Poverty rates have increased across all Scottish local authorities and almost a quarter of children in West Lothian now experience relative poverty.

In response to this, a poverty awareness training module was developed for education settings. In 2020, poverty awareness training was offered to Family Support Workers and Early Learning and Childcare practitioners with a view to improving understanding of poverty related issues and how best to help and support families experiencing financial difficulty.

The training aimed to raise awareness of the impact of poverty on families living on a low income and reduce the stigma related to talking about money worries by discussing the following topics:

- What is poverty?
- How does poverty affect people locally?
- How to spot the signs of poverty or deprivation
- How to start a conversation about money troubles
- How to support families in financial difficulty
- Where and how to refer for further help and support

Attendees were also given a demonstration of the Fast Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system which allows secure online referrals to be made to a wide range of local advice and support agencies as well as an overview of the financial self-help tools available to families.

In total, 31 practitioners from early years settings and nine Family Support Workers attended training between April and May 2020. Feedback from the training has been very positive with all participants indicating that the content was relevant to their job role and giving an average overall rating of 3.4 on a scale of 1 to 4.

One practitioner described how the course had been of use:

I've often wondered how we could support families and what was available to us in the way of providing support, so this was very helpful.

When asked what practitioner would do with the learning gained, the following examples were given:

I have spoken to all staff within my setting and let them know about relevant websites and places around us within the community which provide our families with help and support financially.

I will be more observant now and I will add this to my newsletter as well as personally direct any parents when the time should arise for help and advice.

The training was well received, and more active referrals have been made via the FORT system from Family Support Workers, who have access to the system. FORT access will be rolled out to all Early Learning and Childcare settings in August 2021 to allow more active referrals to be made, both quickly and securely.

There are still over 50 practitioners who require training in Early Learning and Childcare. The training sessions will be recorded to increase accessibility to staff across establishments.

3.5 The views of those with lived experience

3.5.1 Young People's Anti-Poverty Consultation

It is important that the voices of children and young people are heard and that they are able to not only influence actions to reduce the cost of the school day, but are also able to talk about the impact of poverty in other areas of their lives. The council's Community Learning and Development (CLD) Youth Services Team worked with a group of eight teenagers from the Armadale Youth Forum to find out more about young people's lived experience of poverty. This initial group took part in poverty awareness training and one youth ambassador took on a role in co-delivering training in youth clubs across West Lothian. This consultation project ran from October 2019 to January 2020 engaging with a total of 164 young people to hear their views and gather information to inform the ongoing direction of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The consultation focused on young people's experiences of poverty and deprivation outside of school and 91% said that a lack of money made it difficult for them to take part in activities which led to feelings of isolation and exclusion amongst peers. Socialisation was

identified as the main part of life affected by poverty for young people in West Lothian. Following the consultation period, a short video was filmed with three young people from the Armadale Youth Forum to present the findings and reflect on the approach to the consultation. The young people involved have identified three key words to use going forward when engaging with young people about social issues: Learn, Think, Speak. The next stage was to involve young people in becoming peer advisors to help and support young people to have someone to talk to about issues relating to low income which were affecting them and their families and to help them access help and support.

A follow up survey was carried out online in partnership with Young Scot to explore how the pandemic was affecting young people in terms of their lived experience relating to accessing education, their financial circumstances, and how this was impacting on their feelings. The survey was carried out in May 2021 and was completed by 363 young people. Following on from the survey, the opportunity to become an Anti-Poverty Champion will be offered to young people across West Lothian. This role will involve young people, after receiving training from the Anti-Poverty Team, offering peer support to young people at local youth club level who are experiencing difficulties with poverty or money, either themselves or within their families. The young people who are trained as Anti-Poverty Champions will also form a steering group which will form part of the Youth Participation Strategy within the CLD Youth Services Team.

Section 4: Forward Planning 2021-23

The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a major shift in the landscape of poverty. Necessary measures imposed to control the spread of the virus has led to a significant economic impact, the full scale of which is not yet clear. Moving forward, measures implemented to relieve some of the financial strain caused by the crisis will come to an end including the furlough job retention scheme and the temporary uplift to Universal Credit rates. This could lead to increased financial pressure for many families and it has been estimated that the removal of the Universal Credit uplift alone could cause 50,000 people to fall into poverty, including 10,000 children across Scotland¹².

In West Lothian, anti-poverty activity will have a continued focus on Covid response and recovery, targeting action at a local level that we believe will impact positively against drivers of poverty for key target groups. A two-year child poverty action plan has been produced with cognisance of the interim target milestone as set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 which aims to reduce the number of children in relative poverty to no more than 18% by 2022/23.

4.1 Income from employment

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Parental Employment Support Fund will support families experiencing or at risk of poverty to access employment or progress in work.	Access2Employment	Scottish Government resources, 2020/21 – £241,000 2021/22 – £241,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has several performance indicators aligned to delivery including number of parents engaged and the outcomes achieved for each client 	September 2022

¹² The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe). [Removing the Universal Credit uplift: what will be the effect on Scottish households? – SPICe Spotlight | Solas air](https://www.spice.scot/spotlight/solas-air) (accessed 05 October 2021).

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Young people claiming Universal Credit will be able to access 6 months paid employment and employability support through the DWP Kick Start scheme.	DWP Economic Development & Regeneration West Lothian CAB	DWP resources are provided for each Kick Start place to cover salary and training costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of places created and the sustainability of the places after the Kick Start support ends 	December 2021
To support the creation of employment opportunities for unemployed residents in West Lothian. Opportunities will be created for all ages at Living Wage.	Economic Development and Regeneration Jobs Task Force	<p>£1 million – West Lothian Council</p> <p>£1.7 million – Scottish Government Young Person's guarantee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of opportunities created at real living wage Sustainability of the opportunities 	December 2022
Deliver More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) to support young people move into a positive destination.	CLD Youth Services	More Choices More Chances Keyworker service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the percentage of MCMC young people achieving a positive destination and sustaining for 6 months 	Ongoing
Support positive destinations for care experienced young people.	Inclusion & Support Service (ISS)	ISS resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the percentage of care experienced young people achieving a positive destination 	Ongoing

4.2 Cost of living

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Develop and deliver new SQA modules including tenancy awareness and personal finance award for identified young people.	Education Housing Anti-Poverty Service	£80,000 (1WTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of young people receiving the accreditation Ongoing evaluation pre, during and post course 	March 2023
Financial support options are available for families struggling with the cost of the school day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £3 meal payments will be made to children in receipt of free school meal entitlement if they cannot attend school due to self-isolation up to the end of the academic year. £6 will be paid to S1 to S6 children who will not attend school on two additional in-service days. £100 pandemic payments to be paid in summer and winter to those children who are eligible for free school meals and on a low income. Freeze/reduce the cost of free school meals and make 	Anti-Poverty Service	Funded through Scottish Government/West Lothian Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National programme as part of Covid response 	March 2023

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payments to eligible families during school holiday periods.				
Development of a new West Lothian model for school holiday activity clubs to embed support for the most vulnerable children and young people in line with Scottish Government guidance.	Education Third sector partners	CLD Youth Services practitioners WLC Holiday Provision Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An effective identification and referral system to the programme is in place A revised model of targeted summer activities to support vulnerable children and young people is established 	April 2022
Promote uptake of places for eligible 2-year olds and consider discretionary places for vulnerable families who do not meet the eligibility criteria, including families from the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP). <i>Expansion of early learning and childcare hours to 1140 hours across all settings for 3- and 4-year olds and eligible 2's implemented April 2021.</i>	Education Family Assessment and Support Screening (FASS) Group FNP	Funded ELC places including providing snack and lunches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of discretionary places allocated Number of families from FNP 	June 2022
Continue to provide the Primary Schools 'Junior Squirrels' and	Schools	Schools Co-ordinator (16 hours/week)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of students (new and existing) 	June 2022

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Secondary Schools Credit Union Saving Scheme to encourage savings habit in students.	West Lothian Credit Union/Prior Communities Charity Robertson Trust (Part Funders)	through Prior Communities and school (parent) volunteers.	saving in credit union <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value of savings accrued in accounts 	
Cost of the school day.	Education	Varies per school but may include: Up to 3% (£180,254) of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) Budget (if schools choose to focus on cost of the school day as part of participatory budgeting) Contributions from school budget Fundraising contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing action in Poverty Proofing Statements Financial impact plans PEF plans Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives 	Sep 2021 – Jun 2022
Provide support to schools for PEF planning, monitoring, and evaluation e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings Targeted support Provision of supportive resources Identification/delivery of training 	Education	Weekly commitment from Quality Improvement Officer (PEF) Attainment Advisor – Education Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Headteachers Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives 	Sep 2021 – Jun 2022

4.3 Income from social security

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Income maximisation advice and support for families will be embedded in school settings.	Anti-Poverty Service Education	£240,000 (3WTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial gains through income maximisation and debt managed for the families supported and additional support accessed Customer evaluations forms 	March 2023
Income maximisation advice and financial capability support is provided for young people facing homelessness to become financially resilient.	Anti-Poverty Service Housing	£80,000 (1WTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial gains through income maximisation, housing outcomes achieved, and debt managed for the young people supported Reduction in the number of young people leaving their tenancy 	March 2023
Individuals with health concerns will be supported through the implementation of new health	Anti-Poverty Service Macmillan Cancer Support WL HSCP	£40,000 (1WTE for 1year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of hubs and the number of people supported through the hubs 	March 2022

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hubs and the Improving the Cancer Journey project.			and the additional support accessed	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer evaluations 	
Families struggling with debt or financial capability concerns will have access to a range of support.	West Lothian Debt Advice Forum West Lothian CAB	£160,000 (2 FTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement with debt advice • Improved financial confidence 	March 2023
Raise awareness of, and reduce barriers to, new benefits delivered by Social Security Scotland including Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment as these become available for West Lothian families.	Social Security Scotland Anti-Poverty Service Practitioners Network Food Network West Lothian CAB	Within existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and numbers attending training events • Number of people taking up the new Social Security Scotland benefits 	March 2023
Implementation of the Social Security Scotland Local Delivery Advisory Service in West Lothian	Social Security Scotland Anti-Poverty Service Child Poverty Reference Group	National delivery partner and local resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of Social Security Scotland benefits across communities and groups • Number of people taking up the new Social Security Scotland benefits • Improved joint working between Social Security 	November 2021

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			Scotland and West Lothian anti-poverty partners	
Provide a range of financial support options to support families to remain in their homes, which includes, income maximisation and affordability advice and sources of financial assistance such as discretionary housing payments.	Anti-Poverty Service	Within existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial gains through income maximisation. Number of people who have received affordability advice and support and accessed sources of financial assistance Ongoing customer evaluations will be undertaken 	March 2023
Develop and deliver financial wellbeing pathways, training, referral system and data capture across midwifery and health visiting services to increase identification of, and support to, those in need.	Public health Midwifery Health visiting Anti-poverty service	Within existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of women referred for financial wellbeing support Proportion of women taking up Best Start Foods Financial gain 	Development complete March 2022 Implementation of pathways and systems December 2022
Provide welfare advice in GP practices	CAB NHS Lothian Public Health Anti-Poverty Service	£30k Health Improvement Funding (funds CAB 0.8WTE) 1WTE Anti-poverty Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of referrals Client financial gain Debt management for customers Customer and partner evaluations 	March 2022

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Continue to deliver welfare advice in the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People	NHS Lothian Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI)	£34,040 from Scottish Government Healthier, Wealthier Children Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Appointments • Client financial gain • Staff awareness of the project • Client feedback 	March 2022
Deliver the Prevention and Intervention Money Advice Project (PIMAP)	West Lothian CAB NHS Lothian Anti-Poverty partners	£15,000 (funds CAB 0.5WTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Client financial gain • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 	March 2022
Deliver the 'Money Talks' project, a Scottish Government sponsored scheme which aims to maximise income to families or any other low-income household.	West Lothian CAB Anti-poverty partners	£15,000 (funds CAB 0.5WTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Client financial gain • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 	March 2022
Mapping of income maximisation services to inform future provision and communication to front-line staff and services.	NHS Lothian Public Health Anti-Poverty Service Child Poverty Reference Group	Within existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping complete and used to inform development of money advice services across West Lothian 	March 2022

4.4 Lived experience

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Collate results from young people's survey and identify young people to become Anti-Poverty Champions. Once identified, the champions will receive training and follow up support to link in with a youth club to carry out their role. The young people will also form a steering group which will be supported as part of the Participation Strategy within CLD Youth Services.	CLD Youth Services Anti-Poverty Service	Work with Young People Team - Youth Participation Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity of anti-poverty champions training for young people is established • Number of young people completing Anti-Poverty Champions Training and contributing in the community in this role 	December 2022

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

PERIOD DIGNITY: PERIOD PRODUCTS (FREE PROVISION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2021

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform Council Executive on the approach to the implementation of the Period Products Act and the approach to free provision of period products across West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Agrees the proposed approach as set out in the report, and
2. Agree that officers should provide annual updates to the Partnership and Resources PDSP.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Improving access to period products may impact on a number of performance indicators
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	West Lothian Council has been allocated £173,000 for 2021/22.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Reports on period poverty were considered at Partnership and Resources PDSP on 19 January 2018 and Council Executive on 23

April 2019

VIII Other consultations

Anti-Poverty Experts by Experience Panel, Anti-Poverty Practitioners Group and West Lothian Council Community Regeneration team.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 places a duty on local authorities to provide access to period products for all those who might need them. This universal provision is not based on economic need. The Act will come into force in its entirety by December 2022.

The Act builds on the existing voluntary provision in education and community settings funded by the Scottish Government since 2018/19. The Act states that “everyone in Scotland who menstruates” should have reasonably convenient access to period products, free of charge, as and when they are required. This includes visitors to Scotland for the duration of their stay. In West Lothian, period products have been available in schools and community settings since 2019.

Currently all period products are purchased from a social enterprise company called Hey Girls. Hey Girls supply environmentally friendly products which use 100% certified organic cotton, sustainable bamboo and chemical-free products. All of their products are biodegradable or recyclable with a long-term goal of being carbon neutral.

D.2 The Act

There are three sections to the Act:

Section one of the Act places a duty on Local Authorities to make period products obtainable free of charge for anyone who needs to use them.

Section two of the Act places a duty on education providers to make period products obtainable free of charge on their premises for pupils and students during term time.

Section three of the Act allows Scottish Ministers to specify public service bodies who have to make period products obtainable free of charge to people on their premises (to date no bodies have been so specified).

D.3 Funding, Monitoring and Evaluation

The full cost of delivering universal access is currently unknown both within West Lothian and across Scotland. COSLA has a working group where this is being explored. Monitoring data will be requested from all local authorities associated with the delivery of access to free period products during 2021/22. The data collected will include total cost of delivery, including products (disposable and reusable) and administration and total number of products purchased split into disposable and reusable. Full funding will be provided in order to ensure that local authorities will be able to deliver the requirements of the Act. West Lothian Council has been allocated £173,000 for 2021/22.

There will be an independent evaluation between 2022/23 and 2025/26 with both

process and impact evaluations being conducted between May to September 2025. It will cover the three-year period from 2022/23 (when commencement of the substantive duties is expected) to 2025/26. It is proposed that the evaluation will capture information from communities as well as councils to provide a full understanding of the impact.

D.4 Guidance

Guidance was published for responsible bodies under section five of the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 about the exercise of the functions conferred on them by the Act. There are a number of duties/tasks the council needs to undertake in advance of the full implementation of the Act, which include the following:

Undertaking an open public consultation that seeks the views of individuals who meet the following criteria:

- Those who currently use sanitary products.
- Those who will use sanitary products in the future.
- Those who collect sanitary products on behalf of others.

The consultation needs to cover:

- Premises where people want the products to be made available.
- Where in these premises products should be made available.
- Ways in which the products can be obtained.

The guidance also specifies that all responsible bodies must produce a Statement of Exercise of their functions that details the arrangements they will put in place to meet the duty. As noted in the guidance, the Act specifies the particular requirements of local authorities which includes the following:

- That all products are easy to obtain
- That a reasonable choice of products be offered. This will include re-usable and single use products.
- That due consideration is given to respect and dignity in the approach (including gender equality)
- That due consideration is given to those who may face additional barriers, for example, those who are disabled, homeless, gypsy/travellers, victims of domestic abuse or those who have cultural barriers.

D.5 West Lothian Approach

Prior to the Act, provision for free period products was undertaken by Education Services for schools and the Anti-Poverty service for community provision to ensure those who experienced period poverty had access to products which was both free non-stigmatising and dignified.

In consultation with pupils in individual secondary schools, products are available in a variety of locations. In primary schools they are available from the school office.

Community provision is available in a variety of council and partner locations: partnership centres, community centres, Xcite leisure venues, country parks, GP surgeries and community shops. During Covid-19 lockdown, boxes of assorted period products were available to pick up from Bathgate Partnership Centre and Arrochar House and a range of single use products continued to be

stocked at local community shops and pantries and country parks. In addition, reusable period products have been offered via free home delivery since November 2020 with over 1500 reusable products delivered to date across West Lothian.

Given the requirements of the Act, West Lothian Council's Community Regeneration team will lead on the future development of access to free period products. A steering group will be set up to support the implementation of the Act. The group will have representation from a number of council services, community planning partners and the third sector. It is anticipated that membership of the steering group will grow in the coming months as the consultation is undertaken and work is undertaken towards producing a Statement of Exercise.

The steering group will be responsible for undertaking the consultation and producing the Statement of Exercise. It will build on the current arrangements already in place and will work towards ensuring that a range of period products are available across the county in both schools and public places. The steering group will ensure that appropriate monitoring system including financial and performance are in place to manage the process and to satisfy the monitoring and evaluation requirements.

E

CONCLUSION

West Lothian Council and its partners are well placed to respond to the duties contained in the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021. Both schools and community partners have offered free products for some time. The Community Regeneration team is best placed to lead the steering group to ensure there is good representation from across community planning partners, the third sector and other interested parties to ensure that access is both dignified and responsive to local needs.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

[Period Products \(Free Provision\) \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#)

[Guidance to responsible bodies September 2021](#)

Appendices/Attachments: None.

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Donald Forrest
Head of Finance and Property Services
26 October 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

**SITE SELECTION FOR SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN WEST
LOTHIAN**

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the provision of supported housing for young people at the proposed site adjacent to Almondvale Stadium, Livingston.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive;

1. Notes progress on selecting a site for supported housing for young people, and;
2. Approves the site adjacent to Almondvale Stadium, Livingston site for supported housing for young people.

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 Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended and in accordance with the Homelessness (etc) Act 2003. Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014, Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	N/A
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Reduce expenditure on additional homeless services. Reduce use and length of stay in B&B accommodation.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£4million has been allocated in the General Services Capital Programme to address homelessness. Scottish Government funding of up to £944,000 may be available to support up to 16 mainstream units.

VII Consideration at PDSP

None

VIII Other consultations

Consultation has taken place with Scottish Government More Homes Division, Planning Services and Finance and Property Services.

D TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

In February 2018 as part of the General Fund Capital Programme, £4million was approved to develop a new build 36 single person unit for people requiring supported and temporary accommodation. The new unit was to include the replacement of existing supported provision for young people at Newlands House, Bathgate as well as providing additional accommodation for young people requiring temporary accommodation.

On 17 December 2019 Council Executive approved a change in approach to focus on the requirement to address the pressing need for more accommodation for young homeless people. It was agreed that a supported accommodation unit consisting of 12 x one-bedroom studio flats and up to 16 x one-bedroom mainstream flats could be developed with the preferred location being in Livingston. The site selected for the development was at Nellburn Road, Livingston.

During 2019 and 2020 a design was developed and a planning application submitted in October 2020 with community engagement carried out prior to the Planning Application being submitted. The council's Development Management Committee refused the application on 17th March 2021. A decision is therefore required on an alternative site to enable the accommodation requirements of young people to be met.

D.2 Demand

The requirement for supported accommodation for young people in West Lothian continues with the table below demonstrating an increase in Youth homeless presentations since the unit was approved on the 17 December 2019.

West Lothian has the second highest rate of youth homelessness in Scotland at 19.2 per 1,000 households, and has a history of significant numbers of homeless presentations by young people. The table also shows that the percentage of applicants from the 16-24 age group is considerably higher than the national average.

Year	West Lothian Applicants 16-24	West Lothian % of Homeless Applicants 16-25	National % of Homeless Applicants 16-25
2018/19	472	31.1%	24.3
2019/20	478	32.4%	23.7
2020/21	528	36%	25.2
2021/22	119 (Q1)	36.1 %(Q1)	Not known

D.3 Options for Supported Housing for Young People

Following the refusal of planning consent at Nellburn Road a review of the potential sites was carried out. Three sites in Livingston were identified as being suitable and available for the purpose of the development. These are;

- Site adjacent to Almondvale Stadium
- Nellburn Road, Deans
- The Trim Track

The main considerations are location, local amenities, timescale for development, community and planning considerations. The site appraisal is noted at Appendix 1 with the preferred site being Option 1.

Option 1: Almondvale Stadium site, Livingston

This option could deliver supported housing by early 2023. The site is available immediately and in a priority area for the project. The size of the site would be sufficient for the development of the proposed 28 units plus a future affordable housing programme. It is integrated to adjacent council housing at Almondvale Stadium. Environmental Health do not consider the football Stadium presents significant noise issues for tenants of adjacent housing.

There would be a loss of some parking for council staff. There is no site investigation information and ground conditions could be a risk although there is existing new housing development on the site adjacent. There could be issues with Scottish Water and a flood risk assessment will be required as well as site investigations. The site is allocated in the Local Development Plan for mixed use development and is the preferred site for development. A site location plan can be found at Appendix 2.

Option 2: Existing Site at Nellburn Road, Deans, Livingston

This option would require reduced capacity to 20 units (8 x one-bedroom studio flats and 12 x one-bedroom mainstream flats). The key issues identified as a result of the refusal of the planning application would have to be addressed, notably identifying a suitable site for the gala day and securing agreement with the Gala Day committee and other interested parties.

No suitable locations have been identified for the relocation of the gala day and it is likely that there would continue to be community opposition to a development of this nature in this location. The issue of car parking at the football club would require to be addressed and there is currently no funding allocation for additional parking in the current budget.

This site is no longer considered suitable for the development due to the planning considerations and lack of alternative for the Gala Day.

Option 3 Trim-Track site Almondvale, Livingston

The site is available immediately. It is centrally located and close to local amenities including West Lothian College and it is allocated in the Local Development Plan for housing.

The size of the site would be sufficient for the development of 28 units required for the supported accommodation development plus a future affordable housing programme. Site investigations were completed for the previous council proposed development for 36 homes.

It is worth noting that Environmental Health has identified an issue with noise from nightclub. The noise would be both from the club itself and from people leaving it late at night. Planning have commented that, if a noise impact assessment was undertaken, even with a closed window test, it is unlikely that the site would be suitable for residential use, including temporary accommodation. This is a major consideration and restricts development on this site. The road junction may also need to be reconfigured with an estimated cost of £500,000.

Due to Environmental Health and Planning considerations along with the possible cost of the road junction this site is not considered to be suitable for the development.

D.4 Next Steps

Following a review of the sites available, Almondvale Stadium is considered to be the preferred site. If approved by Council Executive, the next steps are outlined in the table below.

Action	Start	Complete
Community Engagement and Planning Process	1 November 2021	31 January 2022
Tender Process	1 February 2022	28 March 2022
New Build Construction	9 May 2022	13 March 2023

There will be engagement with the football club and adjacent residents prior to the submission of the planning application. There is an opportunity for the club to promote the benefits of football as an activity to support health and well-being to young people who will live in the development.

E. CONCLUSION

The provision of supported accommodation for young people is urgently required to meet the needs of the young people of West Lothian. The three options outlined within the report provide alternative solutions for the delivery of the project. The Almondvale Stadium option is the preferred site to meet this need as it is the most viable option in terms of planning and site constraints as well as being in a good location for access to local services and amenities.

F BACKGROUND PAPERS

- West Lothian Council Executive 17 December 2019 New Build Temporary Accommodation in West Lothian.
- West Lothian Council Executive West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2020/21 update.

Appendices/Attachments: 2

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Marjory Mackie
Interim Head of Housing Customer and Building Services
26 October 2021

Data Label: OFFICIAL Public

Appendix 1 - SUPPORTED HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE Site Appraisal October 2021

Option 1: Almondvale Stadium site (Almondvale, Livingston)

Recommendation – to be approved

Timeline

Report to Council Executive: 26th October 2021

Site Start: May 2022

Site Completion: March 2023

Advantages/benefits	Disadvantages/risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available immediately and in a priority area for the project Centrally located close to amenities and services. The size of the site would be sufficient for the unit Close proximity to West Lothian college, St John's Hospital and Arrochar House Links to football club Well integrated to adjacent council housing at Almondvale Stadium. Environmental Health do not have any major concerns about siting housing adjacent to the football stadium. There is adjacent housing nearby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of parking No site investigation information – ground conditions could be a risk (although housing development adjacent) May be issues with Scottish Water Need a flood risk assessment.

Option 2: Existing Site at Nellburn Road, Deans, Livingston with reduced capacity

Recommendation – this site cannot proceed as there is no alternative site for the gala day.

Advantages/benefits	Disadvantages/risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is in a priority area for the development close to amenities, services as well as part of a residential/community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning has been recently refused with on-going community opposition likely due to loss of amenity land due and impact of the development Site allocated in the LDP for 5 large units.

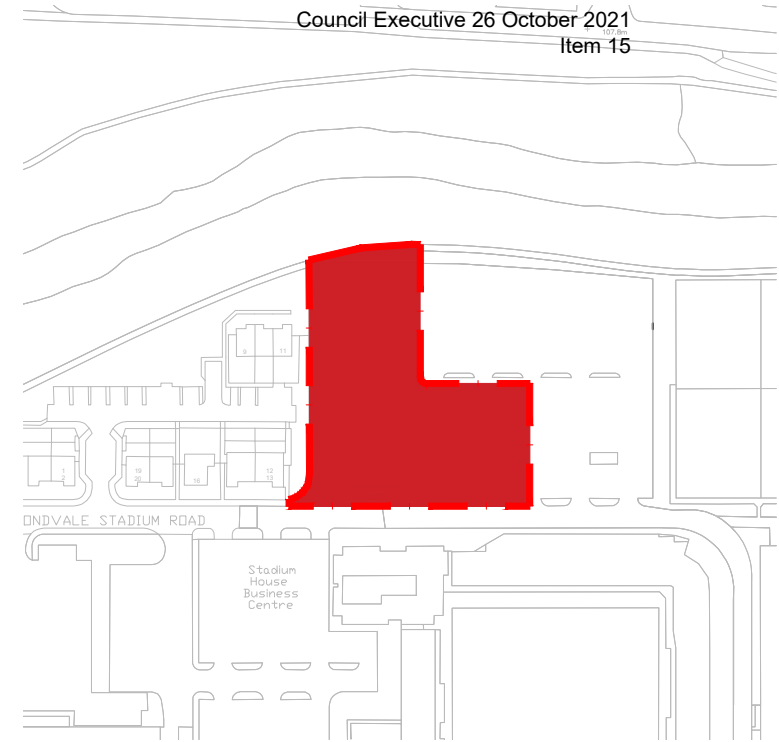
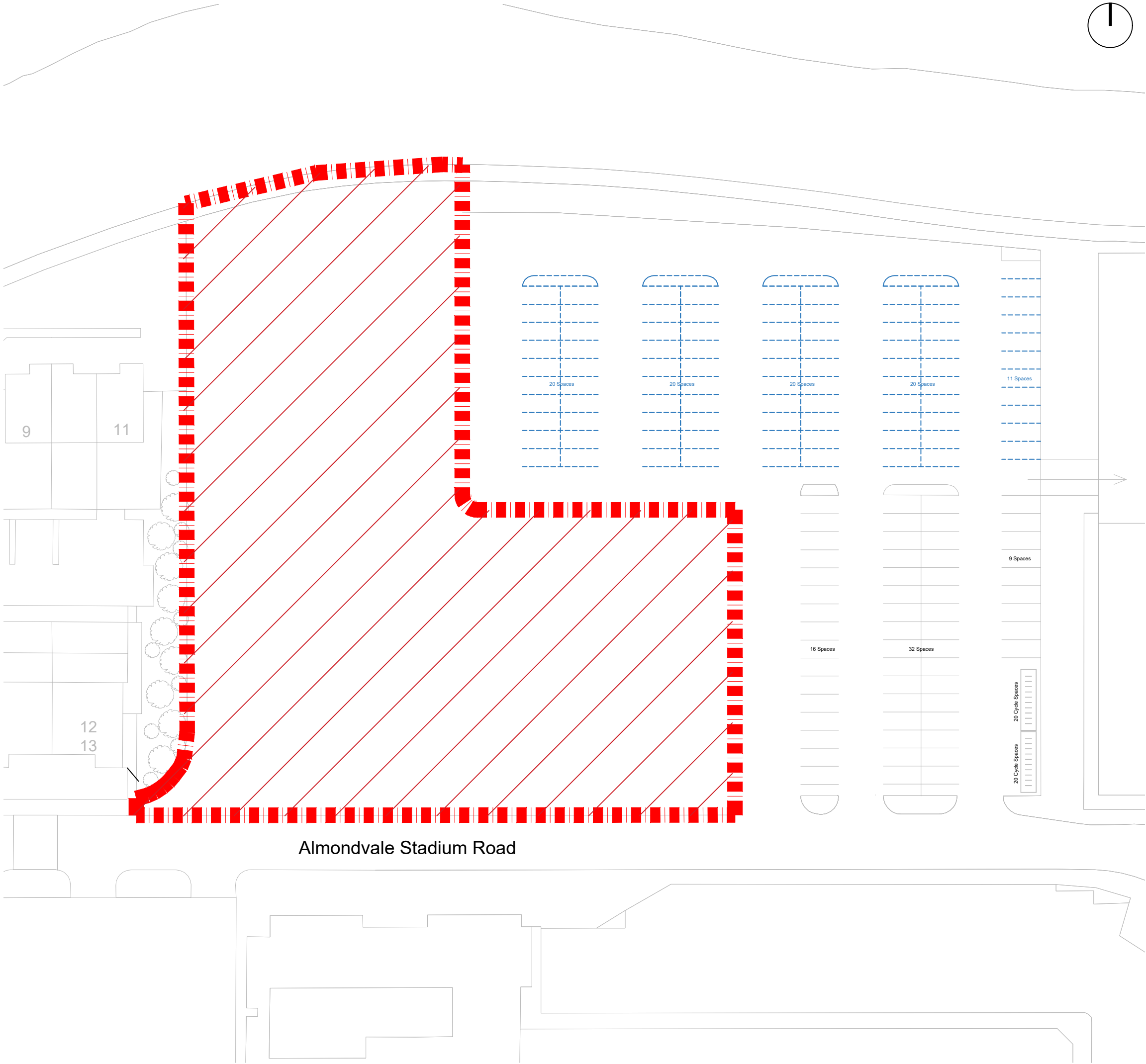
Data Label: OFFICIAL Public

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a full design established that could be flexible to reduce the capacity of both the unit (from 12 to 8 studio flats) and the self-contained flats (from 16 to 12) • Site investigations have been done. • Land is zoned for housing on the LDP • Could reduce the height of the supported unit to two storeys (8 units) to assist with planning • Reduce the cluster to three buildings (12 units) • Potential for relationship to be developed with the football club to support young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alternative site for the Deans Gala day would have to be found and no suitable locations have been identified for the relocation. • Loss of capacity as would have to be reduced by 8 units (to 20 units). • Livingston United will move to a new league system which will require upgrade to facilities and potential car parking requirements. • Informal arrangement for car parking at present on land adjacent to the site may require to be formalised and likely to reduce parking spaces with the costs of the new car parking spaces within the leased area would be around £300,000 for 30 spaces. • Football matches every other Saturday August to June and mid-week training
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Option 3: Trim Track site Almondvale, Livingston

Recommendation – This site is unlikely to be supported by Planning due to the noise issues from the adjacent night club.

Advantages/benefits	Disadvantages/risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available immediately and in priority area for the project • Centrally located close to local amenities and established town centre residential development • Allocated in the Local Plan for housing • The size of the site would be sufficient for the 28 units required for the supported accommodation development plus a future affordable housing programme • Site investigations were done for the previous council Lovell development for 36 homes. • Opportunity for further development as part of the Affordable Housing Supply Programme with additional SG grant for more units. • Well integrated within the local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise issue with nightclub and high risk of planning consent not being granted due to environmental impacts. • Road junction will need to be reconfigured. Possibly up to £500,000 • Site levels and made ground across the site



Location Plan

Parking Numbers

Existing Parking Spaces: 144no

Retained Spaces: 57no

New Spaces: 99no (Coloured Blue)

Total Current Spaces: 156no

Cycle Spaces: 40no

Site Area: 3982 sqm

**Trees drawn are indicative only*

PO3 Oct21 General Amends			
PO2 Oct21 Boundary Added			
Rev	date	details	A3 sheet
Status INFORMATION			
 West Lothian Council			
*all dimensions to be checked on site *do not scale from drawings			
Construction & Design			
Finance & Property Services			
West Lothian Civic Centre			
Howden South Road, Livingston EH54 6FF			
Project			
Young Persons Supported Accommodation			
Deans			
Livingston			
**			
Drawing			
Almondvale Stadium Option			
'L' Shaped Option			
date	03.08.21	scale(s)	1:500
drawn	JD	check	AM
project no.	CS17055	drawing no.	Rev
		P03	

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



CONCIL EXECUTIVE

RENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform council executive of the proposed tenant engagement process on the current Rent Strategy by Housing, Customer and Building Services for year 2022/23, and to seek approval from Council Executive to begin the annual consultation.

B. RECOMMENDATION

That members note the service plans to commence engagement with tenants on the continued implementation of the approved rent strategy and approve the proposed consultation with tenants.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; Being honest, open and accountable; and Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (as amended) HCBS Tenant Participation Strategy
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	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)	None.
VII Consideration at PDSP	13/02/2018 – Council Executive 11/12/2018 – Services for the Community PDSP 19/10/2021 – SftC PDSP

VIII Other consultations

Tenants Panel and service staff.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

- D.1** The council's Tenant Participation Strategy and best practice places an obligation on the council as a local authority landlord to consult with our tenants on rent setting. The Tenant Participation Strategy also provides that the minimum period of consultation is two months.

At the Council meeting on 13th February 2018, the Council agreed a 5-year rent strategy based on an annual rent increase of 3% for the remainder of the agreed strategy period to 2022/23.

Taking into account these requirements, and Covid related restrictions on face to face meeting activities, engagement with tenants will take place largely digitally, and will begin in October. This engagement will include presentations to Housing Networks, The Financial Scrutiny meeting of the Tenants Panel, and via social media channels and online publications.

These activities are scheduled to be undertaken between October 2021 and January 2022.

E. CONCLUSION

If approved by Council Executive, the planned tenant engagement by HCBS on the final year of the 5-year rent strategy will begin in October 2021 and will run until January 2022.

This activity will allow the council to discharge its obligations as set out in the 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act, and a commitment within WLC Tenant Participation strategy in terms of ensuring appropriate consultation is undertaken with tenants on matters relating to potential changes to the level of rent that they pay.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: none

Contact Person: sarah.kelly@westlothian.gov.uk Tel No: 01506 281877.

MARJORY MACKIE

INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

Date of Meeting: 26th OCTOBER 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

THE QUEEN'S GREEN CANOPY: "PROPOSAL FOR CALDERWOOD, MID CALDER TO BE PUT FORWARD FOR NOMINATION IN THE "ANCIENT WOODLAND" CATEGORY"

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to make Council Executive further aware of the "Queen's Green Canopy" initiative and to seek agreement to put forward Calderwood, an important ancient woodland site, owned and managed by the Council, to the Queen's Green Canopy Board. From a long list of nominations from throughout the UK the Board will nominate 70 Ancient Woodland Sites across the UK to draw attention to these rare and special woods.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Executive:

1. notes the contents of the "Queen's Green Canopy" initiative for her platinum jubilee;
2. delegates authority of the Head of Operational Services to arrange for Calderwood, Mid Calder, to be put forward to the QGC Board for consideration as one of the 70 ancient woodlands to be dedicated as part of this initiative; and
3. Agrees that if selected by the Board that the Council will assist with publicity to raise public awareness of this special habitat.

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)	<p>Policies: West Lothian Local Development Plan (2018) ENV 1 - 5 support biodiversity, nature conservation and enhancement, while Policies ENV 9 & 10 promote woodlands, forestry and protection of urban woodland.</p> <p>There are no legal, equality, health, SEA or risk assessment issues associated with this report.</p>

III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	SOA: 8 We have the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Costs involved are minimal. Operational staff and Media will be involved
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Due to the timescale involved this has not been possible. Nominations to be received by end October 2021.
VIII	Other consultations	NatureScot staff were contacted

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Introduction

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a UK-wide initiative to encourage new planting and also to raise awareness and celebrate the importance of individual ancient trees and ancient woodland sites.

As previously reported, this was launched in mid-May 2021. In addition to inviting the planting of new trees, the QGC will dedicate a network of 70 woodlands across the UK and identify 70 ancient trees to celebrate the Queen's 70 years of public service. The QGC is partnered with several charities and social enterprises including; Cool Earth, The Woodland Trust, The Royal Horticultural Society and Trees for Cities.

Templates for plaques will be available from the QGC, for a small cost, to designate the site.

D2 POTENTIAL WEST LOTHIAN ANCIENT WOODLAND NOMINATION

Calderwood, Mid Calder, is one of the largest Ancient Woodlands in the Central Belt of Scotland. It is designated, by NatureScot, as an Ancient Woodland of Semi-Natural Origin (ASNW) and also as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It is considered to be one of the few Ancient Woodland SSSIs to be in "favourable" condition, has a rich history and is accessible to the public.

The site is managed by the Parks & Woodland Team and an Urban Woodland Management Plan has been prepared with Woods In and Around Towns funding from Scottish Forestry.

As per the previous report, a list of significant individual ancient trees is also being drawn up and authority was delegated to the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to identify and agree with landowners, if necessary, a suitable ancient tree in West Lothian to also mark the Platinum Jubilee.

Head of Operational Services will work with the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to present nominations for Calderwood as a candidate in the Ancient Woodland category and 1 or 2 ancient trees (yet to be selected) to the QGC Board.

E. CONCLUSION

Calderwood is a suitable candidate site for dedication as an ancient woodland site within West Lothian and the QGC initiative will help in encouraging the public to value such special places.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Queen's Green Canopy website: <https://queensgreencanopy.org/>

Contact Person: Eirwen Hopwood, Parks & Woodland Manager Eirwen.hopwood@westlothian.gov.uk

Jim Jack
Head of Planning, Operational Services

14 October 2021

DATA LABEL: OFFICIAL - PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

BUS PARTNERSHIP FUND UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Council Executive of the outcome of the regional application to the Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) and to agree the local application compiled by the West Lothian Bus Alliance for submission to Transport Scotland.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive;

1. Note the award of £3.03 million allocated to South East Scotland City Region Deal partnership by Transport Scotland following the April 2021 submission;
2. Note that the purpose of the October submission by West Lothian Council, as lead authority, on behalf of the West Lothian Bus Alliance is an application for funding from Transport Scotland to complete an options appraisal and Business Case Outlines for projects within West Lothian;
3. Note the analysis of problems and opportunities within the West Lothian road and bus network undertaken by the West Lothian Bus Alliance;
4. Note that, subject to a successful application, submission of future proposals based on the Outline Business Case analysis would be agreed by Council Executive;
5. Agree to the ratification of the application form contained within Appendix 1 to Transport Scotland for the Bus Partnership Fund.

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

The Bus Partnership Fund will complement the powers in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019.

Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)		
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The council has a target PI for Public Transport of having 90% of residents with access to an hourly or better daytime service Monday to Saturday. It is possible that changes in the commercial and subsidised network could impact this PI.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The local bus network contributes to a number of outcomes by connecting communities with services and employment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The West Lothian Bus Alliance is seeking £761,250 from Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund to complete a strategic business case and outline business case appraisal. No additional capital or revenue funding is being sought from the council.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	The report has been circulated to Development & Transport PDSP members for consideration and a verbal update will be provided on all comments received.
VIII	Other consultations	Systra Ltd

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

As part of its response to the climate emergency, the Scottish Government has announced a £500M fund for large-scale capital bus priority infrastructure projects, which aims to reduce the negative impacts of congestion on bus services and address the decline in bus patronage. This fund was originally due to be launched by Scottish Government in March 2020, but was delayed until November 2020 as a consequence of Covid-19.

The Bus Partnership Fund (BPF) will complement the powers in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, enabling local authorities to work in partnership with bus operators, to develop and deliver ambitious schemes that incorporate bus priority measures. The Fund will focus on the evidence of how bus services will be improved by addressing congestion, but the partnership approach is also expected to leverage other bus service improvements to help tackle the climate emergency, reduce private car use and increase bus patronage by making bus more attractive and improving services for passengers.

The fund encourages ambitious proposals, including park and ride where it can be demonstrated to have a clear benefit in effecting modal shift, but all proposals will be considered in light of the evidence provided and how successful the interventions are expected to be in achieving the targeted outcomes of the fund.

The first round of bidding for the BPF will facilitate feasibility studies to further develop business cases and proposals.

It was reported to Council Executive in June 2021 that the council is represented on a regional South East Scotland Partnership which comprises of the six City Region Deal Councils, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk councils together with officer representatives from the Regional Transport Partnership, SEStran, looking at strategic corridors into Edinburgh and packages of interventions for bus improvements that cross local authority boundaries. It was confirmed that a bid was submitted to Transport Scotland in April 2021.

It was also reported that a local West Lothian Bus Alliance (WLBA) had been established with representation from council officers, SEStran, Lothian Country, First Bus, Stage Coach, Scottish Citylink, E&M Horsburgh, SD Travel, Prentice Westwood and is independently chaired by Bus Users Scotland with a view to submitting a bid for the later October deadline. This report provides an update on both applications.

D.2 South East Scotland City Region Deal Partnership Bid

The Edinburgh and South East Scotland Joint Committee approved a report on 5 March 2021 which authorised the Transport Appraisal Board to prepare a collective South East of Scotland regional bid for submission to Transport Scotland's Bus Partnership Fund (BPF). The bid preparation was led by City of Edinburgh Council officers, supported by the consultants Jacobs, in collaboration with the constituent authorities of the City Region, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk, with input from SEStran and key bus operators. The £204m BPF bid was submitted on 16 April. On 22 June, ESESCR Deal were informed that it had been awarded £3.03m:

- £1.45 million for the delivery of quick win measures (over financial years 21/22 & 22/23);
- £1.4 million for the development of a South East Region Strategic Appraisal and outline business cases for the North, West and Orbital corridors / routes;
- £180,000 to support a full time Project Manager (for the first three years of the programme).

It is anticipated that further funding will be offered following submission, to Transport Scotland, of a Strategic Appraisal and outline business cases for the North, West and Orbital corridors/routes. It should also be noted that the scope of the Strategic Appraisal will be finalised in further discussion with Transport Scotland.

A sub group of the City Regional Deal Transport Appraisal Board is being established to focus on BPF work and will be led by those with experience of public transport on a day-to-day basis within the local authorities and SEStran and importantly public transport operators would be invited to be members of the sub-group.

In addition, work is ongoing through the West Edinburgh Transport Improvement Plan (WTETIP) which includes consideration of a Park and Ride, bus lanes and active travel routes through the Broxburn to West Edinburgh corridor. Project teams for both strategic projects will work in liaison to ensure that duplication is avoided and the cohesive offer in terms of both regional and local transport needs is maximised.

D.3 Local West Lothian Partnership Bid

Since June, the West Lothian Bus Alliance has continued to meet on a 2 weekly basis to develop proposals for bus priority interventions within the West Lothian area with a view to submitting a bid by the October deadline.

Transport Consultants, Systra Ltd, were contracted to assist in the analysis and identification of problem areas within the network and specifically where road congestion is particularly problematic for bus. The alliance, supported by Systra, then assessed the suitability of various bus priority measures against identified problem areas in order to compile an application for funding. The proposed application is contained within Appendix 1.

The submission sets out the following:

- approach and governance of project and the basis of developing Bus Service Improvement Partnerships;
- high level proposals including estimated costs;
- funds required to secure consultancy resources to deliver the required Outline Business Cases for developed proposals.

It is intended that the improvements proposed in the local bid will complement those major strategic projects from the regional SES bid, by enhancing additional sections of the A89 corridor and the A71 corridor. This creates an opportunity to provide more attractive services not only within West Lothian, but from many parts of West Lothian towards Edinburgh, with the benefits of these West Lothian improvements compounding with the improvements proposed for the City Deal region.

D.3.1 Analysis of Problems

The initial study analysed the problems and opportunities across West Lothian through a review of relevant bus performance data from the bus operators, INRIX road speed data and bus network maps and timetables as well as reviewing and considering policy, strategy and planning documents from National to Local Level.

Section 3 of the application outlines an analysis of the problems identified; these can be summarised at a high level as follows:

- Evidence of delays on the road network across West Lothian;
- Changes in travel behaviours related to COVID 19 have a negative impact on public transport patronage including bus travel;
- Evidence of delays to bus journeys within West Lothian;
- Transport in West Lothian is contributing to global greenhouse gas emissions and poor air quality;
- Limited North-South connectivity within the West Lothian area; and
- New developments could increase congestion and increase car mode use if there is not modal shift to sustainable models.

While each of the above problems can impact on the bus network, delays on the bus network and the subsequent delays to bus journeys are most relevant to the Bus Partnership Fund bid. Addressing these problems directly will in turn help to address problems of low patronage, air quality and car dependency and connectivity.

Table 2 in Appendix 1 provides a summary of the specific areas and corridors within West Lothian experiencing delays on bus routes.

D.3.2 Options and Opportunities

A number of options have emerged which have the potential to address the problems identified and meet the objectives outlined in section 4 of the application.

The options which are directly relevant to the Bus Partnership Fund can be grouped in to 5 categories:

- Physical bus priority;
- Bus priority signaling;
- Bus stop modifications;
- Junction modification; and
- Parking and other traffic control measures.

Further detail on each of these measures can be found in section 5 of the application.

An initial assessment of the twenty corridors identified as experiencing bus journey delays has taken place to identify the category of intervention which could be beneficial within the specific location. Table 3 provides an indicative potential journey time savings at each location and the number of routes and services which would be likely to be impacted.

The application to the Bus Partnership Fund outlines these conceptual measures with a request for funding to progress to a Strategic Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) appraisal process and Outline Business Case (OBC) and Final Business Case (FBC) stages.

D.4 Further Consultation

It is acknowledged that public consultation and wider stakeholder engagement would be required should the WLBA submission result in the successful award of funding. This would be necessary at case for change, preliminary and detailed appraisal stages. Further tailored consultation would then be completed for schemes that move forward to the OBC and FBC stages.

This consultation will allow any further problems, opportunities or specific location improvements to be identified and included in the later appraisal process.

D.5 Future Funding Bids and Reporting

If successful in the first round of bidding, funding will be provided by Transport Scotland to facilitate feasibility studies to further develop business cases and proposals. The outcome of appraisal and business case stages will be reported through the council's committee process with recommendations on specific proposals based on the feasibility studies and consultation with key stakeholders.

Further funding would then be released by Transport Scotland following the delivery of the initial appraisal work and the successful progression of an associated gateway review process.

D.6 Resources

Section 6 of the application outlines the resources requested from Transport Scotland to develop the proposals and the estimate of the total cost of the proposed infrastructure improvements. The total figure being sought by the WLBA for strategic and outline business case works is £761,250.

The implementation of bus priority measures has been estimated at £35,712,000 as a high-level consideration. If the application for initial resources is successful, a more detailed costing exercise will be undertaken as part of the outline business case process.

Section 6 also provides a summary of the 'match in kind' investment considered by the members of the bus alliance. This resource is complimentary to the bid.

D.7 Approval and Submission of Application

It is a stipulation of the Fund that applications must be from official partnerships working towards Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP) status. As such, the Alliance has worked in partnership to develop proposals for submission to Transport Scotland.

The application also requires that the Chief Executive and Council Leader of the Lead Authority sign the application form with members of the alliance providing a letter of support confirming agreement and support of the bid and the wider objectives. These will be appended to the application form before submission.

The West Lothian Bus Alliance finalised the draft application for submission at its meeting on 12 October 2021 and requires to submit the application by 15 October 2021. In order to allow the submission to be considered at Council Executive, Transport Scotland has permitted either the ratification or removal of the application to be confirmed after the Council Executive meeting on 26 October 2021.

D.8 Consideration at PDSP

The report has been circulated to Development & Transport PDSP members for consideration and a verbal update will be provided on all comments received.

E. CONCLUSION

Scottish Government has announced a £500M fund for large-scale capital bus priority infrastructure projects, for which formalised partnerships are required to be in place prior to submitting bids. The South East Scotland City Region Deal was awarded £3.03 million for the initial bid submitted in April to develop proposals and progress to Business Case Outline stage. The West Lothian Bus Alliance has worked in liaison with transport consultants to develop an application for local interventions for submission to the 15 October 2021 deadline.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Bus Partnership Fund – Report by Head of Operational Services to Council Executive on 8 June 2021

ESESCR Deal Transport Appraisal Bid into the Bus Partnership Fund – report to ESESCR Deal Joint Committee on 5 March 2021

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – West Lothian Bus Alliance – October Application

Contact Person: Nicola Gill, Interim Public Transport Manager, Tel: 01506 282317

Email: nicola.gill@westlothian.gov.uk

Jim Jack

Head of Operational Services

26 October 2021

Appendix 1 – West Lothian Bus Alliance October Application

Bus Partnership Fund Application Form



Phase 1 – Capacity Funding

1. Applicant Details

Lead local authority	West Lothian Council
Partners to the proposal	West Lothian Bus Alliance, comprising members from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus Users' Forum;• West Lothian Council;• SEStran;• First Bus;• Stagecoach;• Scottish Citylink;• Lothian Buses;• E&M Horsburgh;• SD Travel; and• Prentice Westwood.
Contact name and job title	Nicola Gill, Passenger Transport Manager
Contact email	nicola.gill@westlothian.gov.uk
Contact telephone number	01506 282317

2. Geography and Demographics

Max 1000 words, excluding maps

Describe the geography of the partnership and specifically that which will be impacted by the proposal, using maps to specify the area. Provide basic population information, to indicate the likely travel habits and therefore how people will be affected by the proposed development.

The partnership covers the West Lothian Council area, with a population of around 183,820 (2020 mid-year estimate¹), spread across 428km² of Scotland's central belt. The main population centre² is Livingston (~57,000 people), followed by Bathgate (~23,000), Broxburn (~15,500), Armadale (~12,500) and Whitburn (~11,000) with numerous smaller towns and villages across the area.

Urban-Rural Context and Population

Using the Scottish Government six-fold urban-rural classification, 57.5% of West Lothian's area is classed as *accessible rural*; however, this only accounts for 7.5% of the population of the area (using 2020 mid-year estimates). A significant majority of the population (81.8%) live in urban areas of 10,000 people or more, which accounts for 34.1% of the area. The remainder (8.4% area, 10.7% population) is classified as accessible small towns. West Lothian's existing public transport strategy³ highlights the importance in ensuring connectivity from the rural areas and small towns to the larger settlements, as well as between and within the various larger settlements. West Lothian Council had intended to update the public transport strategy during the financial year 2019-20, however this was not possible due to the impacts of Covid-19. It is the Council's intention to update this as soon as possible.

Projections (2018-based) indicate that the population of West Lothian will grow faster than the Scottish average in coming years, with an increase of around 10% expected from 2018 to 2038. While the number of children is expected to decrease, the population of pension age and above is expected to increase considerably, by 38% from 2018 to 2038, faster than the Scottish average of 22%. The population of West Lothian aged 75 and over is expected to increase by 79% over the same period. The 2020 Scottish Transport Statistics indicate that the current older age groups are less likely to hold a full driving licence (43% of over 80s, compared to 82% of those in their 40s), and less likely to drive at least three times a week (27% of over 80s, compared to 72% of those in their 40s). While this will in part be due to generational factors which may lead to these figures changing over time, it is still

¹ National Records of Scotland, [Mid-2020 Population Estimate Scotland](#), Last Updated 25th June 2021

² Estimated populations of localities, from National Records of Scotland, [Mid-2016 Population Estimates for Settlements and Localities in Scotland](#), Last Updated 2018.

³ West Lothian Council, West Lothian Public Transport Strategy, provided as Appendix 1 of the [28th June 2019 committee report](#)

reasonable to expect the increase in the older population will lead to a larger group who are less willing or able to rely on car travel as their main mode of transport.

House Prices

Latest Scottish Government statistics⁴ show that as of 2018 the median house price in West Lothian was £144,000, below the Scottish median of £152,500. As can be seen in Figure 1, the median by data zone varies considerably across the Local Authority. A number of the more urban zones have median values under £100,000, with a minimum of £68,525 in central Whitburn. Higher values of over £200,000 can be seen in areas on the outskirts of the main settlements, with a maximum of nearly £400,000 on the edge of Linlithgow. This gives some indication of socio-economic variance across the authority area, as expanded below with the consideration of deprivation.

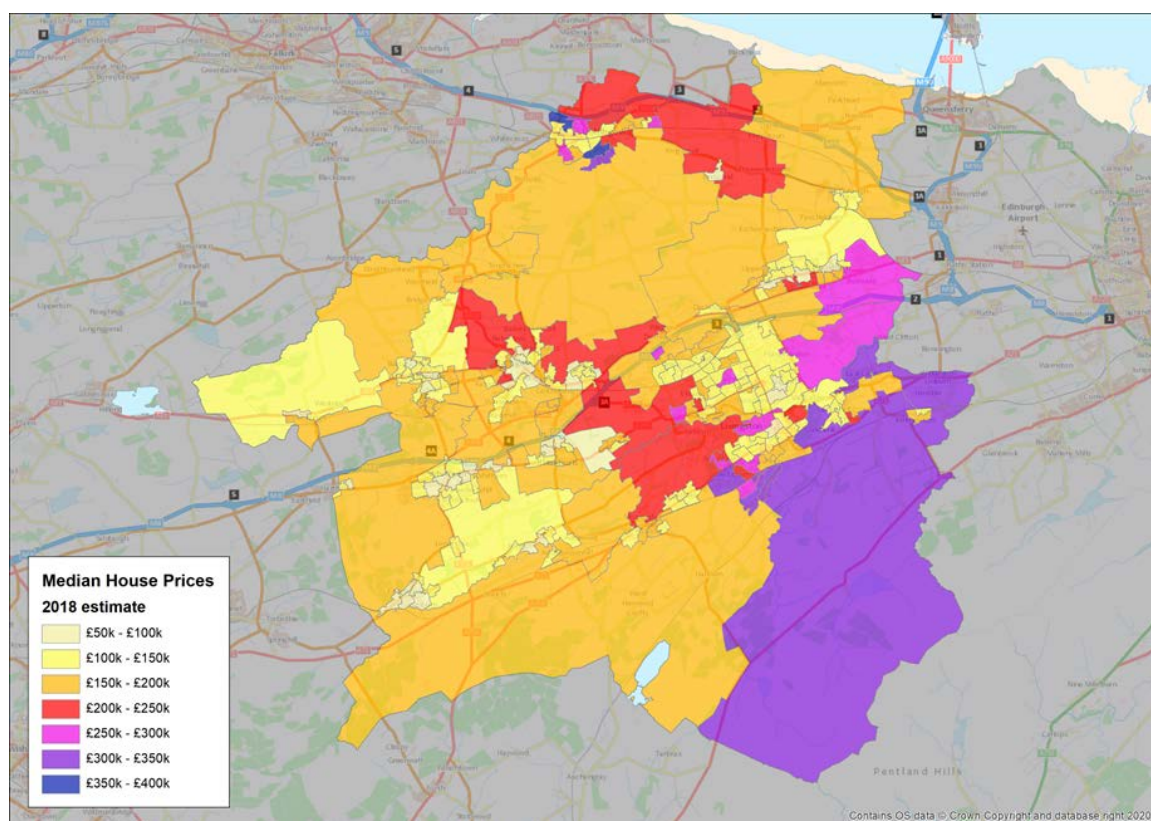


Figure 1: Median house price by data zone, 2018 estimate

Deprivation

Data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) for 2020 is shown in Figures 2a and 2b. Only 5% of West Lothian's data zones (11 zones) are within the most deprived 10% across the country – these are spread across a number of settlements. Meanwhile, 26 zones (11% of West Lothian) lie within the least

⁴ Scottish Government Statistics, House Prices: Value of residential property transactions, 2018

deprived decile of the country, with these zones being located mainly in Linlithgow and more outlying areas of Livingston.

Public transport access is particularly important in areas of high deprivation. The 2020 Scottish Transport Statistics (STS)⁵ estimated that only 49% of over-16s living in the most deprived 20% of areas held a full driving licence, compared to 86% of those in the least deprived 20% of areas. For travel to work, the STS show that 37% of employees living in the most deprived 20% of areas use public or active travel modes, compared to 28% of those in the least deprived 20% of areas.

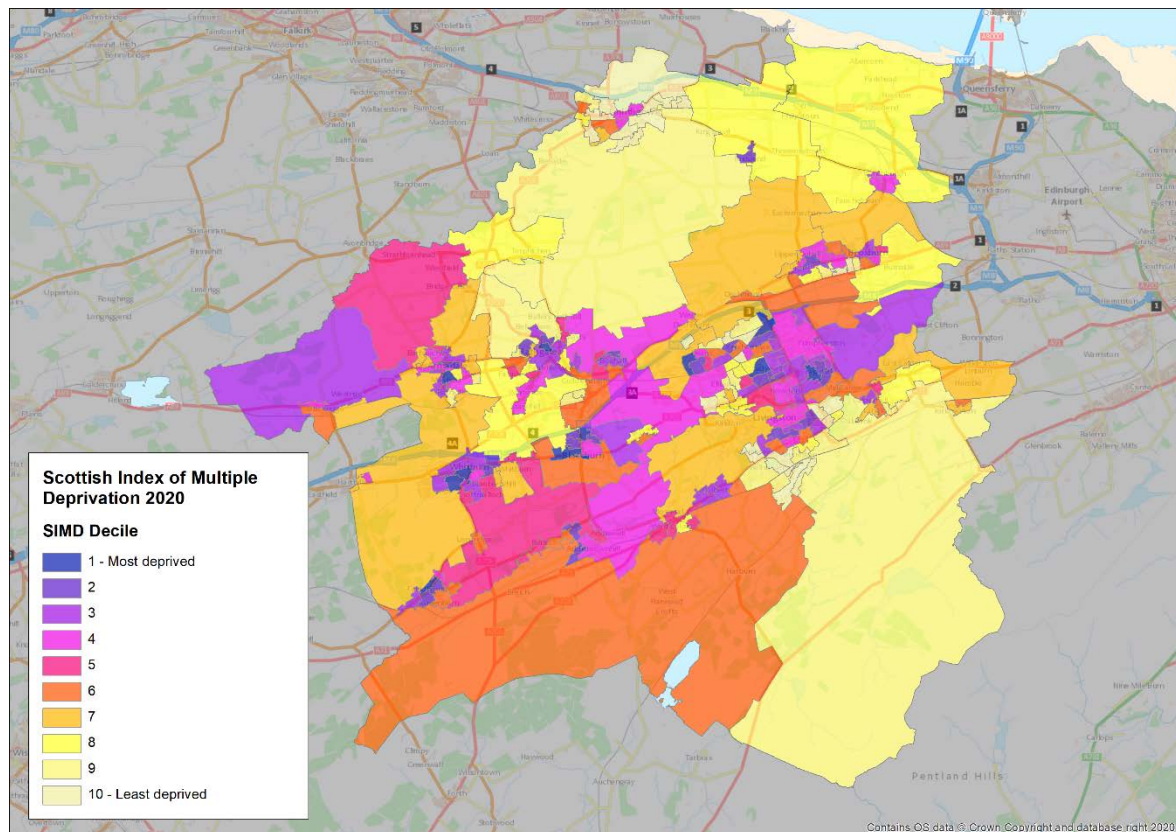


Figure 2a: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 decile by data zone

⁵ Transport Scotland, Scottish Transport Statistics No. 39 2020 Edition, 2021

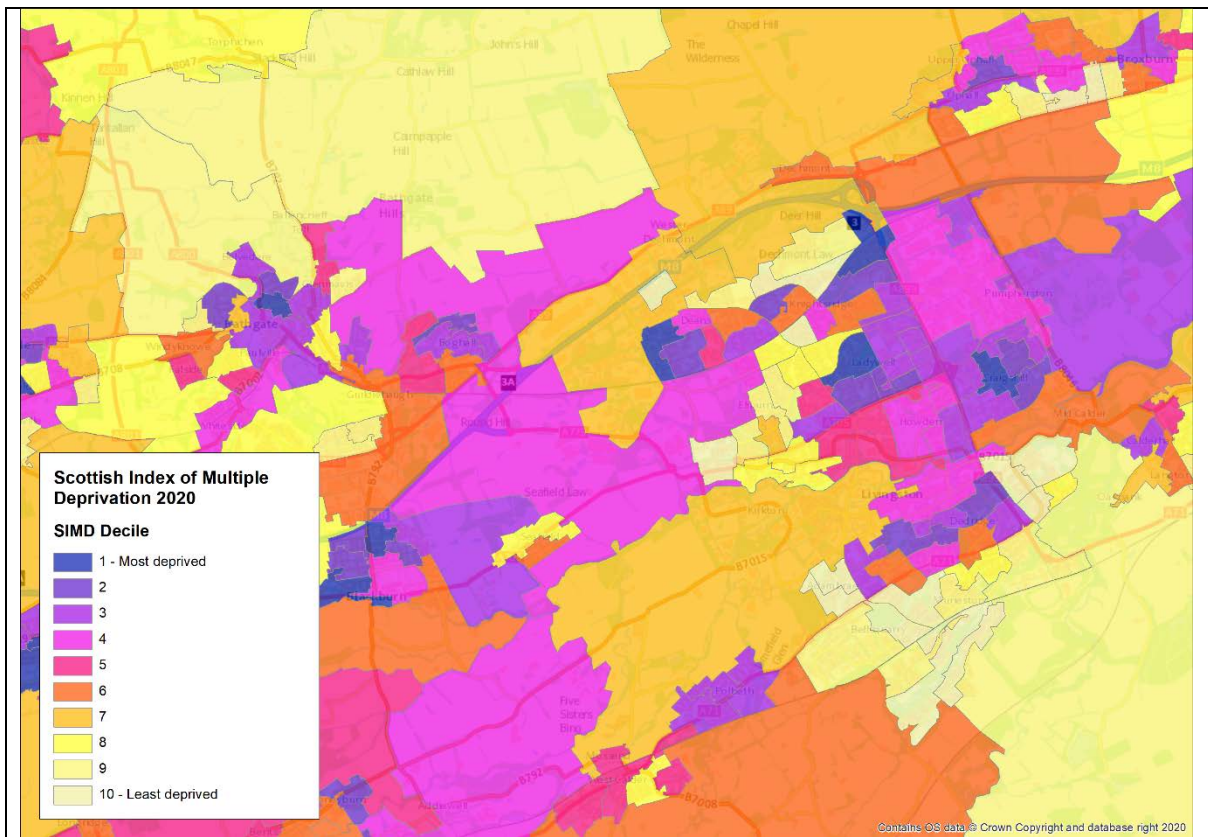


Figure 2b: SIMD 2020 decile by data zone, Livingston and Bathgate area

Mode shares

Scottish Government statistics⁶ indicate that West Lothian is currently a relatively car dependent area. 2019 estimates are that 74% of those who travel to work do so by car (compared to 68% nationally), while only 6% travel to work by bus (10% nationally) and 10% on foot (12% nationally). Given the indications of future high levels of population growth in West Lothian, these figures demonstrate the importance of taking modal shift away from the private car and on to sustainable travel, in order to avert further significant increases in road traffic which would exacerbate current levels of congestion.

Scottish Census data shows a more detailed breakdown of mode shares for travel to work and study for those living in West Lothian (note that this includes school children as well as adults in education, and so is not directly comparable with the 2019 statistics). Figures 3 to 6 show the breakdown of these by data zone.

At the time of the Census, car travel accounted for 64% of work and study travel in West Lothian (56% across Scotland). Figure 3 shows that this ranged from under 50% in parts of Livingston and Linlithgow, to over 70% mainly in rural areas, but also in Blackridge, outer parts of Bathgate, and Livingston Village.

⁶ Scottish Government Statistics, Travel to Work and Other Purposes, 2019

Bus travel to work and study was reported in the Census as 12% across West Lothian (15% across Scotland). Figure 4 shows that this ranged from under 10% in rural areas as well as much of Armadale, Livingston and Linlithgow, to over 20% in Fauldhouse, East Calder and Winchburgh.

Walking accounted for 17% of travel to work or study across West Lothian (21% across Scotland) at the time of the census. Figure 5 shows that this varied considerably, from under 10% in rural areas, to over 40% in part of Linlithgow and in central Livingston.

'Other' modes of travel, as shown in Figure 6, were highest in Linlithgow, at over 12%. This was most likely due to a high number of rail commuters in this area.

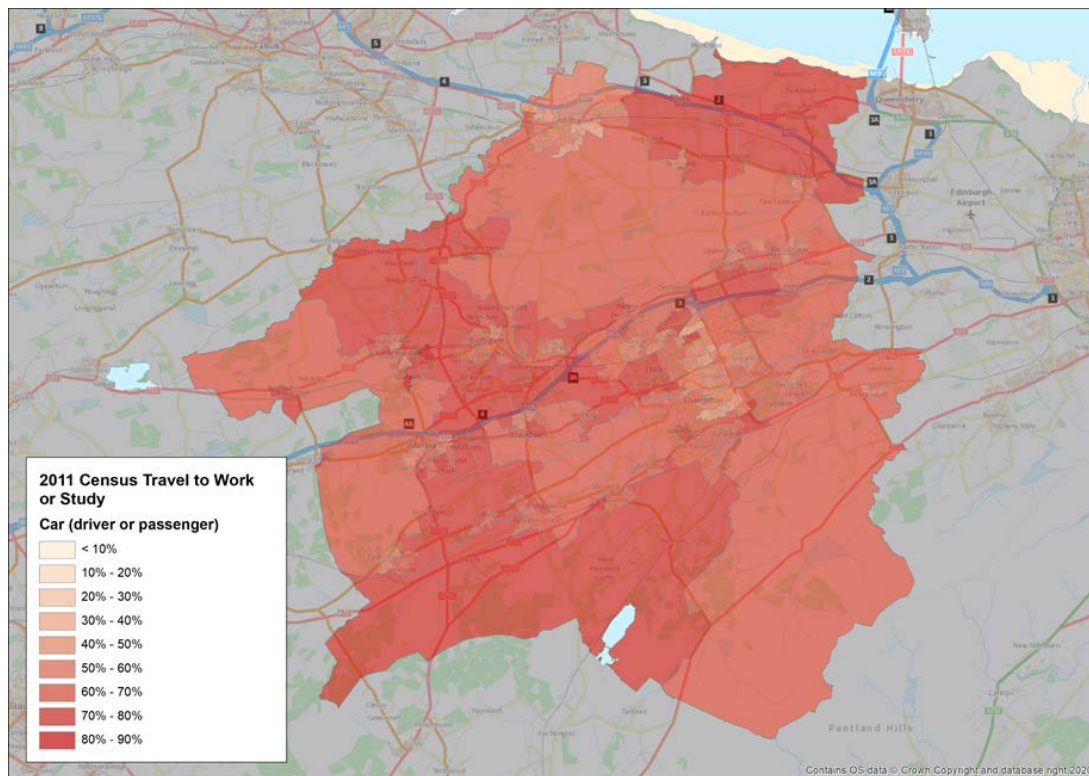


Figure 3: 2011 Census car mode share of Travel to Work or Study

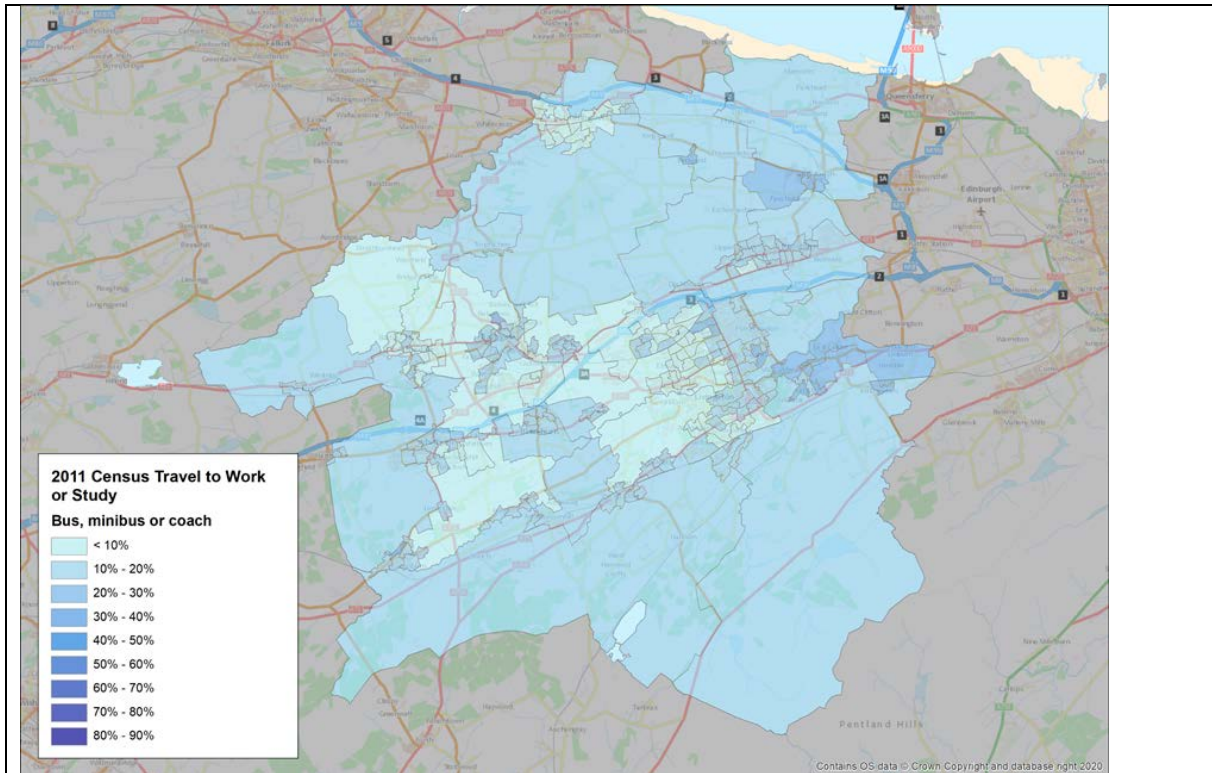


Figure 4: 2011 Census bus mode share of Travel to Work or Study

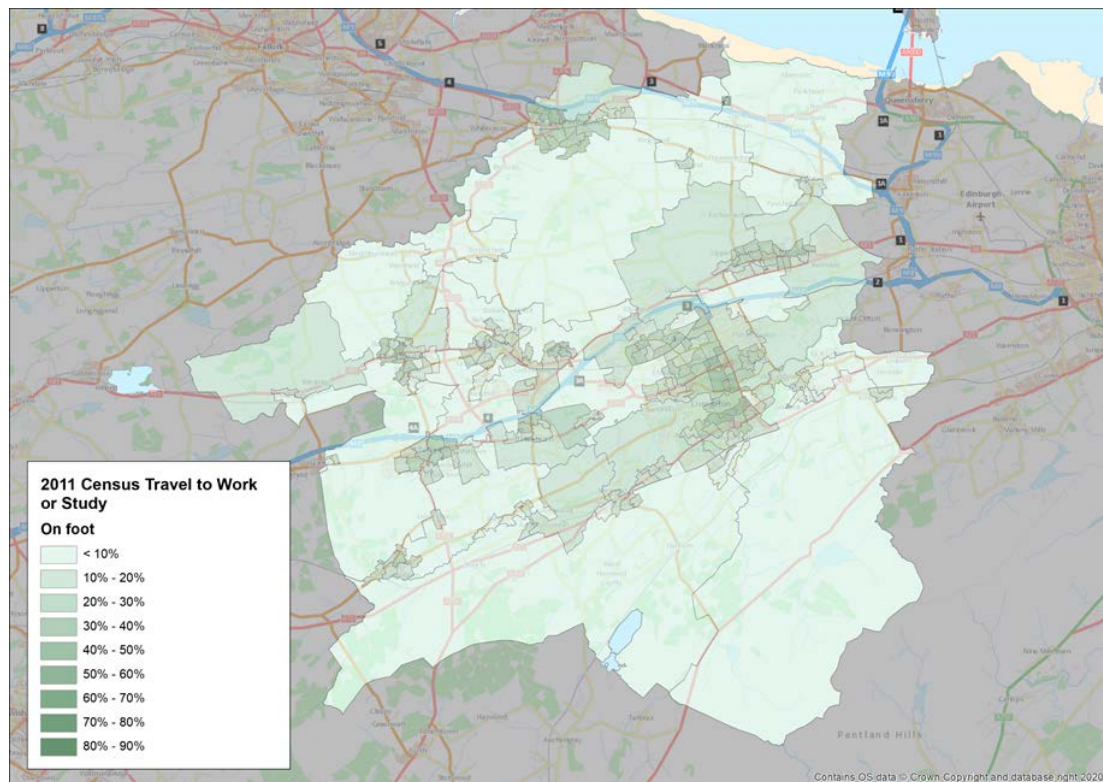
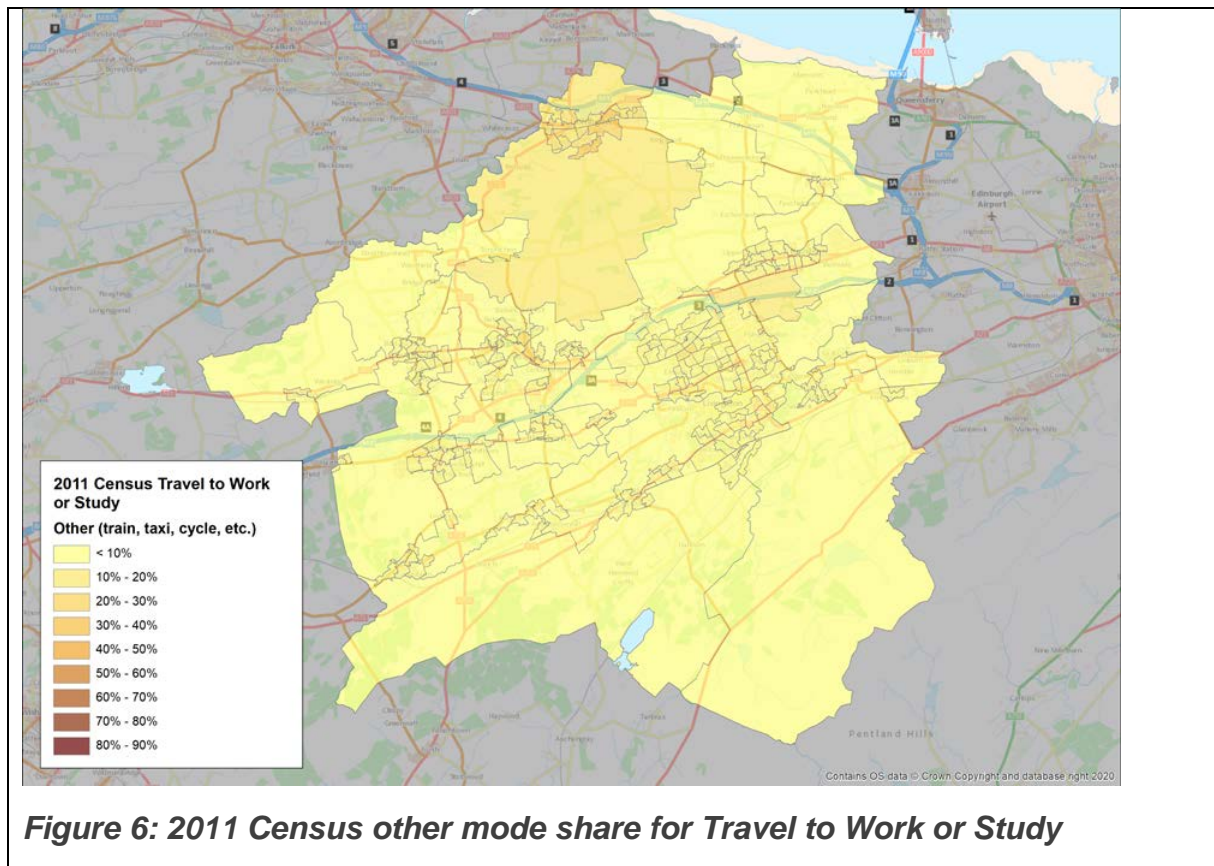


Figure 5: 2011 Census walk mode share of Travel to Work or Study



3. Analysis of Problems and Opportunities

Max 3000 words, excluding diagrams and chartsⁱ

Outline the problems (to the extent you are able at this stage), evidencing areas where road congestion is particularly problematic for bus. The opportunities should relate to bus priority developments, which are the focus of the Bus Partnership Fundⁱⁱ, as part of a multi-modal approach to sustainable future mobility provision.

Introduction

The problems and opportunities highlighted in the preparation of this bid have been summarised at a high level below, followed by a detailed description and consideration of those which directly relate to road congestion and traffic, and the impact this has on the bus travel. One of the primary aims of this fund is to improve bus priority and related infrastructure in order to have a positive impact on journey times and reliability for bus passengers. There would also be a positive impact on the environment, through modal shift away from private car usage, and an increase in bus patronage.

The problems and opportunities across West Lothian have been analysed through:

- A review of policy, strategy and planning documents from National to Local level;
- A review of relevant bus performance data from bus operators, INRIX road speed data, and bus network maps and timetables; and
- Regular engagement with the West Lothian Bus Alliance, West Lothian Council, and Bus Users UK.

Summary of the Problems

Problem 1: Evidence of delays on the road network across West Lothian.

Areas of West Lothian are subject to high levels of traffic during the daytime, and at peak times in particular. Certain areas where this causes notable disruption to journey speeds are well known locally and have been described in detail by members of the West Lothian Bus Alliance. In addition, available data across the Authority area has been analysed in order to evidence and quantify the level of disruption at these known locations, and to identify any other locations where road speeds are impacted throughout the day.

Analysis of INRIX speed data has been carried out, highlighting the differences in peak-time and off-peak speeds. Figures 4 and 5 show the areas where traffic slows discernibly in the AM and PM peaks compared to the off-peak period, for data taken in September 2021.

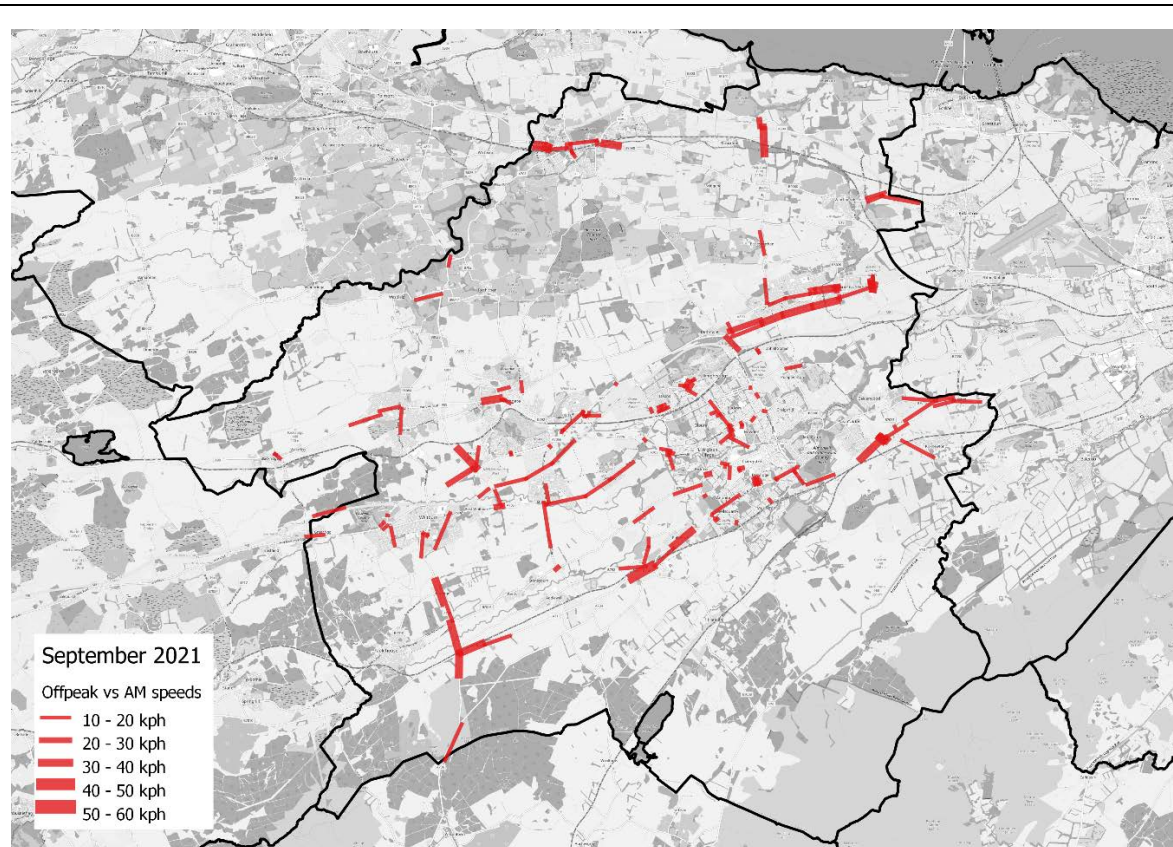


Figure 4: INRIX speed data - off-peak compared to AM peak, September 2021

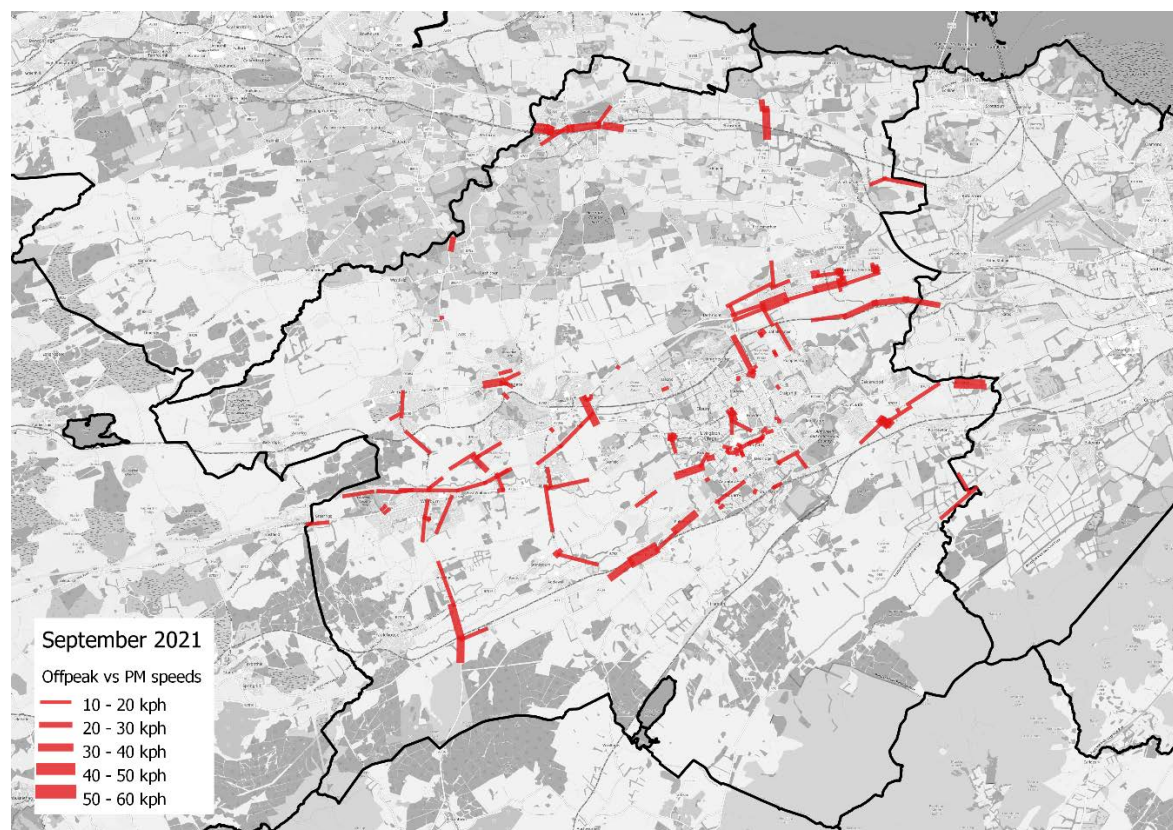


Figure 5: INRIX speed data - off-peak compared to PM peak, September 2021

The maps highlight a number of areas and corridors which experience significant speed reductions at peak times. The key areas which support the observations of the Bus Alliance are the delays shown on parts of the A89 corridor (particularly through Bathgate and the Boghall Roundabout, and in the Broxburn area) and the A71 corridor (particularly at Breich, and through West Calder and Livingston and towards Edinburgh). Delays can also be seen in urban areas, particularly in parts of Livingston and through Linlithgow, but also for example Uphall and Broxburn, Blackburn, Whitburn and Armadale.

It should be noted that these delays are being seen even while there is still a proportion of people working from home. If return to office work increases in coming months, and assuming the modal shift towards car use during the pandemic (see Problem 2 below) does not change, then this congestion is likely to increase severely.

Problem 2: Changes in travel behaviours related to COVID-19 have a negative impact on public transport patronage including bus travel

Passenger data from First Bus, Lothian Buses and Stagecoach highlight a decline in bus patronage between 2019 and 2021. Aggregated patronage data across these operators indicates that for the period of November 2020 to March 2021, patronage on the network was at 46% compared to the previous year (i.e. the period immediately before the pandemic lockdown was declared). Year-to-date figures for 2021 (January to August) show that patronage has only increased by 9% on the first eight months of 2020, indicating that passenger numbers have been relatively slow to recover so far.

Looking at the figures for Scotland as a whole⁷, a similar story can be seen for private versus public transport use. Compared to the pre-COVID-19 pandemic, for the period 30th August to the 5th September 2021 the following mode share changes were observed:

- Walking journeys down by 40%;
- Cycling journeys up by 10%;
- Concessionary bus journeys down by 35%;
- Rail journeys down by 50%;
- Ferry journeys up by 10%;
- Air journeys down by 45%; and
- Car journeys are consistent with pre-pandemic level.

Noting the decline of sustainable transport modes (other than cycling), but the recovery of car journeys – this highlights the importance of re-growing bus patronage as part of a package of sustainable transport options as people begin to travel more frequently. Failure to do so may exacerbate issues around car dominance in West Lothian and lead to a spiral of decline for bus. This spiral of decline can begin when patronage and revenue reduce (or in this instance remain low) leading to services become commercially unviable and facing the risk of removal without support. This, in turn, can make bus services less attractive,

⁷ Transport Scotland, COVID-19 Transport Trend Data - 30 August - 5 September 2021, 2021

potentially further reducing patronage and increasing the number of car journeys, thereby making services less commercially viable and less attractive due to delays, and so on.

Problem 3: Evidence of delays to bus journeys within West Lothian

Bus journey time data for the first week in August 2021 was analysed. This data was broken down for weekdays into two-hour blocks, and the maximum journey time for each two-hour period calculated. The lowest of the maximum journey time values across the 8am-8pm period was then determined, to serve as a benchmark for a realistic best-case daytime journey time. This benchmark was then compared against the maximum journey time in each of the time periods to determine the areas which saw the greatest increase at peak times, with peak time periods being defined as 8am-10am for the AM peak and 4pm-6pm for the PM peak. The maps in Figures 7 and 8 below show these increases, as factors of the daytime benchmark journey time, for the AM and PM peaks respectively.

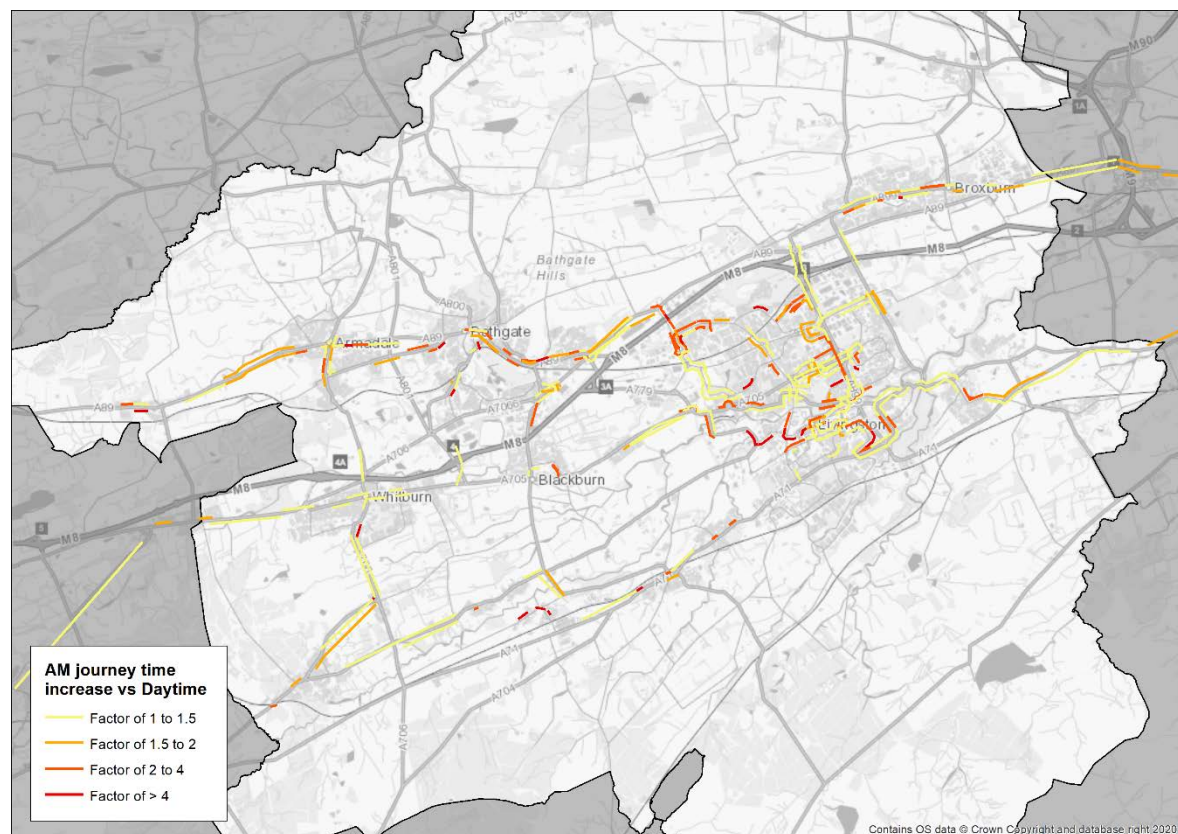




Figure 7: Bus journey time in PM peak compared to daytime benchmark

These plots highlight a number of areas of delay, particularly around multiple areas of Livingston, but also through other settlements such as Bathgate, Armadale, Broxburn and Whitburn. While some delays seem to be concentrated along corridors, others are concentrated around junctions such as the Boghall Roundabout east of Bathgate, and the Greendykes Junction in Broxburn.

Delays at these locations can have knock-on effects on the punctuality of a service for the rest of the route. Sections further along the route may have no particular delay issues and may have a reasonably predictable journey time, but may on the other hand offer little opportunity for the bus to make up time from previous delays. Even if the potential delays are factored into the service schedule, this will create longer journey times and make for less efficient operation by increasing the resource requirements. According to research by Greener Journeys⁸, a 10% decrease in operating speed leads to an 8% increase in operating costs and a 10% decline in patronage. This highlights the importance of faster and more reliable services to both operators and passengers.

Problem 4: Transport in West Lothian is contributing to global greenhouse gas emissions and poor air quality

West Lothian is currently a relatively car dependent area, with car ownership higher than the Scottish average. Table 1 shows the results of the 2011 Census

⁸ Greener Journeys, The Impact of Congestion on Bus Passengers, 2017

for the five most populous settlements in West Lothian, and the area as a whole. It can be seen that of the five towns, only Whitburn has a lower rate of car availability (67.2%) than the Scottish average (69.5%), while Livingston shows a particularly high rate (76.7%), greater than the average for West Lothian overall (75.6%).

Table 1: Car or van availability by household (2011 Census)

Town or Area	Number of Households	% with at least one car/van available
Livingston	26,024	76.7%
Bathgate	11,419	71.9%
Broxburn	6,500	74.2%
Whitburn	5,273	67.2%
Armadale	5,030	74.5%
West Lothian	73,398	75.6%
Scotland	2,372,777	69.5%

The high car ownership and car dependency can be linked to an increase in vehicle kilometres travelled in West Lothian, as shown in Table 2. There was an increase of almost 10.7% between 2014 and 2019, which is higher than the increases across the SEStran area (7.4%) and Scotland (8.7%). This increase is against national to local policy, in particular the need to reduce car kilometres travelled by 20% by 2030.

Table 2: Traffic in Vehicle Kilometres (Millions of km, all roads)⁹

Area	2014	2019	Change
West Lothian	1,763	1,952	+10.7%
SEStran Area	11,342	12,184	+7.4%
Scotland	44,789	48,714	+8.7%

While zero emission vehicles are becoming more common, the large majority of vehicles on the road are still using petrol and diesel as a fuel source. This means that as traffic levels have risen, consumption of fuel has also increased, as shown

⁹ Transport Scotland & the DfT, Scottish *Transport Statistics No. 34 2015 Edition and 39, 2020 Edition*

in Table 3. It can be seen that consumption has increased by 6.3% in West Lothian, which is higher than the increases in the SEStran Area (4.7%) and Scotland (5.1%).

Table 3: Petrol and Diesel Consumption of Road Vehicles (Thousands of tonnes, all vehicles)¹⁰

Area	2013	2018	Change
West Lothian	120.3	127.9	+6.3%
SEStran Area	771.9	808.3	+4.7%
Scotland	3,124.2	3,284.0	+5.1%

Related to this, we can see that West Lothian has a higher than average CO₂ emissions per capita from transport, compared to both the SEStran region and Scotland as a whole. It produced approximately 14.5% of the region's CO₂ from transport in 2019, despite having around 11.4% of the region's population. This is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: CO₂ Emissions from Transport in 2019 by Local Authority in the SEStran Region

	Mid-Year Population 2019	Territorial CO ₂ Emissions (kt)	Per capita CO ₂ Emissions (t)	Proportion of SEStran Population	Proportion of SEStran CO ₂ Emissions
Falkirk	160,890	357	2.2	10.0%	13.3%
West Lothian	183,100	388	2.1	11.4%	14.5%
Scottish Borders	115,510	243	2.1	7.2%	9.1%
East Lothian	107,090	204	1.9	6.7%	7.6%
Fife	373,550	586	1.6	23.2%	21.9%
Midlothian	92,460	137	1.5	5.7%	5.1%
Clackmannanshire	51,540	73	1.4	3.2%	2.7%
City of Edinburgh	524,930	690	1.3	32.6%	25.8%
SEStran Region	1,609,070	2,679	1.7	-	-
Scotland	5,463,300	10,161	1.9	-	-

In addition to carbon emissions, local air quality is also a problem in the area, with three areas in West Lothian currently declared as Air Quality Management Areas

¹⁰ Transport Scotland & the DfT, Scottish *Transport Statistics No. 34 2015 Edition and 39, 2020 Edition*

(AQMA)¹¹ due to high levels of pollutants, namely Particulate Matter < 10 µm (PM₁₀) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂). These include areas in:

- Broxburn for PM₁₀ and NO₂;
- Linlithgow for PM₁₀ and NO₂; and
- Newton for PM₁₀.

The Newton AQMA has been declared in relation to background and domestic fuel consumption; however the Broxburn and Linlithgow AQMAs relate to pollutants which are typically associated with transport emissions. To address these issues, decarbonisation of the transport system, in particular a shift towards non car-based travel behaviours is a priority.

Problem 5: Limited North-South connectivity within the West Lothian area

According to the West Lothian LDP Main Issues Report (MIR), east-west connectivity is generally good by rail, road and bus. This is true both within and to places outwith West Lothian, with three major rail lines and several major roads including the M8 and M9 providing connectivity. However, the MIR notes that “connectivity for all modes of transport is poor between the areas north of the Bathgate Hills and the main centres of population and employment around Bathgate, Livingston and Uphall/Broxburn”. Better direct public transport connections between the north of West Lothian and the south and southwest is needed to ensure the effective connection of new and adjoining neighbourhoods and to promote access to local facilities and employment.

Problem 6: New developments could increase congestion and increase car mode use if there is not modal shift to sustainable modes.

The Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan 2015 identified three Core Development Areas (CDAs) which were to be the focus of major new developments across the West Lothian in coming years including Armadale, Livingston and the Almond Valley and Winchburgh / East Broxburn / Uphall. Travel demands resulting from new developments should be met by sustainable forms of transport including public transport providing efficient bus services and creating active links such as footpaths and cycle routes to adjacent facilities and between communities. Traffic and congestion are likely to increase further if new development – which will produce a greater demand for travel in West Lothian – continues to deliver similar, highly car focused modal split patterns in the future.

Problems identified by Location

While each of the above problems can impact on the bus network, those most directly relevant to this Bus Partnership Fund bid are:

- Problem 1: Evidence of delays on the road network; and
- Problem 3: Evidence of delays to bus journeys.

¹¹ Scottish Government, *Air Quality Management Areas, 2021*, [Air Quality Management Areas - Air Quality in Scotland](#)

Addressing these problems directly will in turn help to address problems of low patronage (by making bus travel more attractive), air quality and car dependency (by encouraging modal shift), and connectivity (by freeing operator resources which can be invested back into network development).

From the journey time data available, a number of areas, corridors and junctions have been identified as contributing to the problem of delays to bus journeys. These are identified in Table 5 and the maps in Figures 8 to 10 below.

Table 5: Areas and Corridors experiencing delays on bus routes

No.	Area / Corridor	Description
1	Alderstone Road	Delays are experienced between Peel Roundabout and Almondvale, including junctions with Eilburn Road and with Kirkton North Road.
2	Almondvale Boulevard / Almondvale Avenue	Delays experienced in areas around the Bus Terminus are due to slow moving traffic towards College Roundabout. Additional disruption is caused by vehicles queuing back from McDonald's drive-through, which can impact the southern exit of Bubbles Roundabout.
3	Deans	Deans N Road and Knightsridge West Road, including the junctions of these. Movement is slower through the residential areas of these at peak times.
4	Knightsridge	Knightsridge West Road, Knightsridge East Road, and Ladywell East Road. Movement is slower through the residential areas of these at peak times.
5	Ladywell	Movement is slower through residential areas here at peak times, and there are delays crossing Cousland Road and at St John's Hospital.
6	Craigshill	Movement is slower through residential area here at peak times, and there are delays through the interchange at Livingston Road (A899).
7	Dedridge	Dedridge East Road – movement is slower through the residential areas at peak times.
8	Civic Centre junction	Delays occur at the roundabout at the intersection of Howden East Road and Howden South Road at peak times.
9	Kirkton Campus	Movement is slower westbound at peak times along Simpson Parkway.
10	A705	Delays are particularly problematic eastbound during the AM peak, including at Mill Roundabout and Toll Roundabout.
11	Bathgate Town Centre	This is part of the A89 corridor through Bathgate, including North Bridge Street junctions, Guildiehaugh Roundabout,

	and Boghall Roundabout	and Boghall Roundabout. Delays experienced due to high traffic levels and multiple conflicting vehicle movements.
12	A89 west of Bathgate	Delays are experienced at peak times between Blackridge and Bathgate via Armadale, including at Armadale Cross.
13	Harthill / Whitburn corridor	There are delays on the B7066/B7069 between Harthill and East Whitburn, including Whitburn Crossroads, especially in the PM peak.
14	Blackburn	Delays are especially problematic in the PM peak in Blackburn town centre, including West Main Street, and the bus routing around Ash Grove.
15	A7066/B792 interchange	There are notable delays at Easter Inch and Leyland Roundabouts on the B792.
16	Uphall and Broxburn Main Streets	There are delays on each major road in the area, including the junction with Station Road (Uphall) and Greendykes Junction. Causes for this include high volume of traffic, parked cars and right-turning vehicles.
17	East Calder	There are delays in the proximity of the mini-roundabout on Langton Road at the junction with Redcraig Road.
18	West Calder and Polbeth	There are delays along the A71 corridor, including West Calder Main Street around the Kirkgate and A792 junctions, and through Polbeth.
19	Addiewell	There are delays around Church Street / Addiebrowhill junction especially in AM peak, possibly related to nearby schools.
20	Fauldhouse / Longridge	There are delays around Fauldhouse Main Street / Sheephousehill junction, and along B7010 towards Longridge.

These locations are shown across three maps:

- Figure 8: Areas 1 to 10 are within the Livingston area;
- Figure 9: Areas 11 to 15 are within the western part of West Lothian, around Armadale, Whitburn, Blackburn and Bathgate; and
- Figure 10: Areas 16-20 are in the wider West Lothian area.

Note that the data points to an area of delay on Deans Road, indicated by a grey shaded area on the Livingston area map (Figure 8). Following discussion with bus operators, who reported no known issues with delays here, it was determined that the data was being skewed by the presence of a driver change location. Therefore, this area has not been progressed as a “problem”.

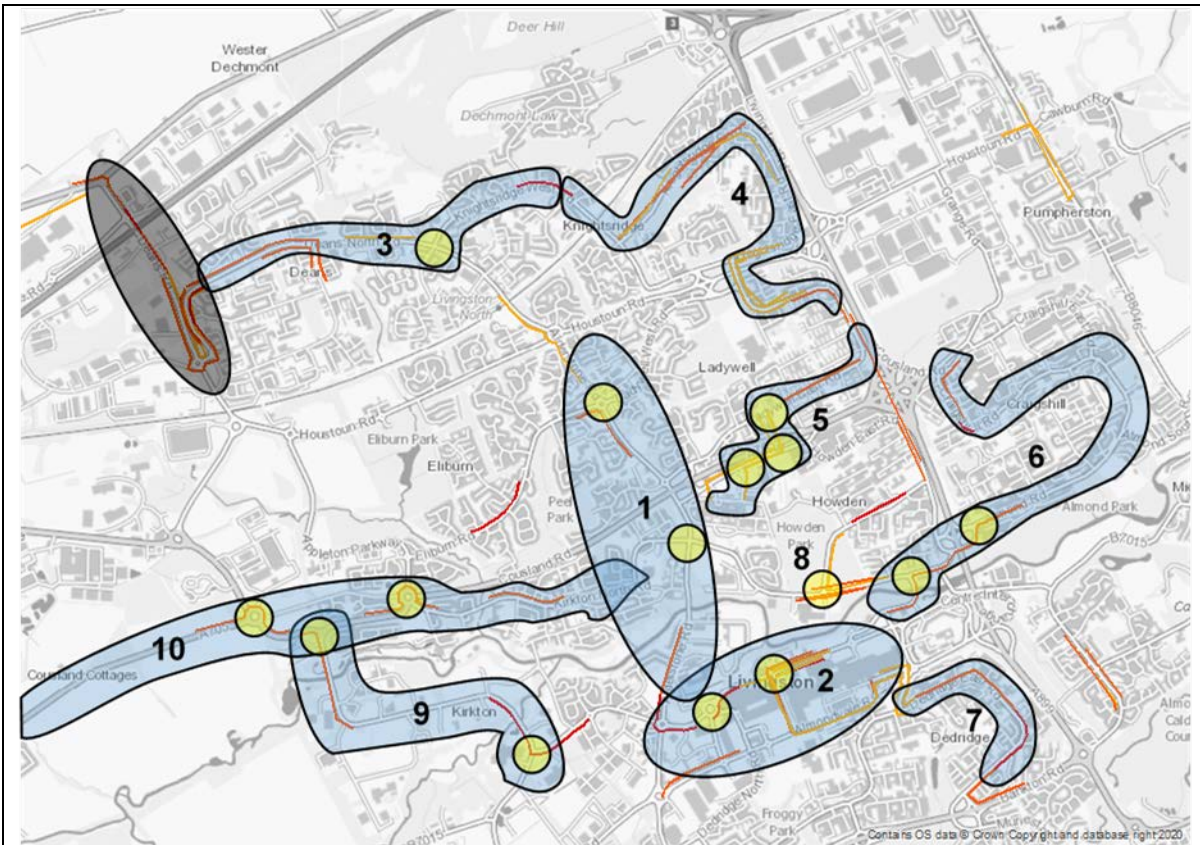


Figure 8: Bus delay locations and corridors – Livingston area

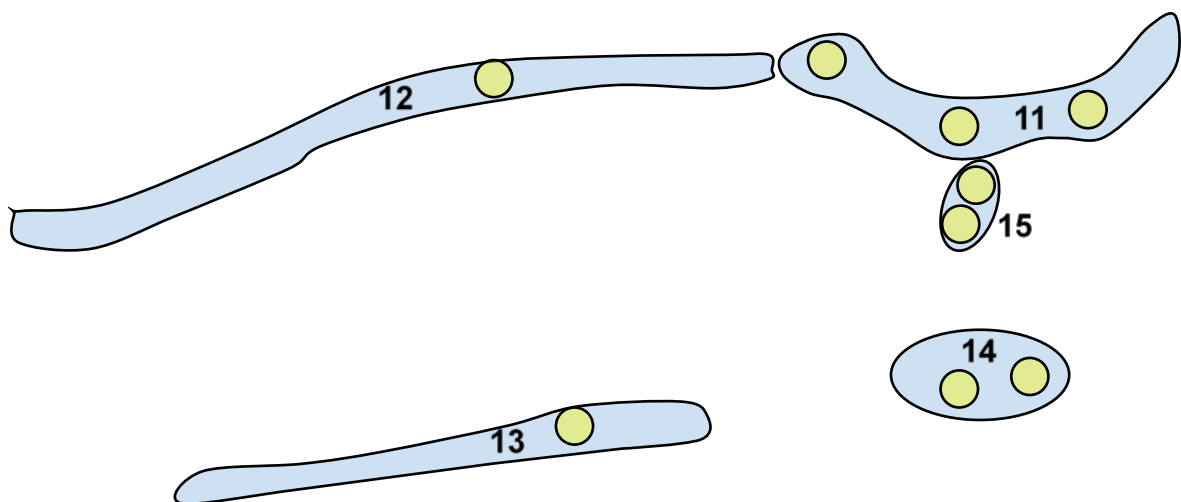


Figure 9: Bus delay locations and corridors – western West Lothian area

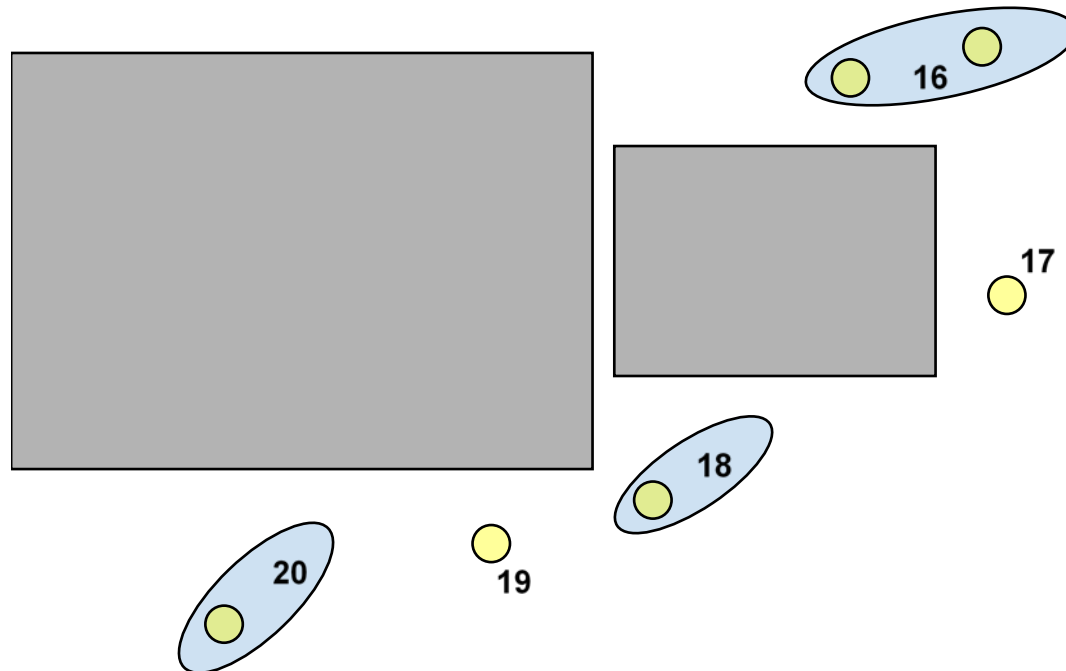


Figure 10: Bus delay locations and corridors – wider West Lothian area

Summary of the Opportunities

The consideration of the transport network has also raised a number of opportunities that are relevant to the Bus Partnership Fund as well as to a wider public transport strategy. These include the opportunity to explore new bus priority measures in the area, including:

- Bus lanes;
- Bus gates;
- Bus advance areas;
- Bus priority signalling;
- A review of the layout or positioning of stops;
- A review of the location of stops.

More broadly, there is an opportunity to ensure the provision of high-quality bus services, which will be fast, frequent, direct, integrated and affordable. Such a network would encourage users to move from private car transport to bus travel, helping to address congestion and emissions concerns.

Combining these opportunities with a wider strategy of promoting the bus network creates the potential to arrest the cycle of decline which has been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and instead create a virtuous cycle of recovery and growth of the bus network.

4. Desired Outcomes

Max 1000 words

Describe the desired outcomes from the proposed bus priority developments. How do you plan to evaluate the achievement of these outcomes?

Objectives have been developed based on the analysis of problems and opportunities discussed above, and incorporating policy and strategy at local, regional and national levels. Draft objectives were reviewed with the West Lothian Bus Alliance to ensure that these are consistent with the stated aims of the Alliance.

These objectives have been developed with the intention that they can be refined and made SMART as the appraisal process progresses, i.e.:

- Specific;
- Measurable;
- Attainable;
- Relevant; and
- Timed.

It is noted at this early stage the objectives may not fully satisfy all of these criteria.

The objectives developed were as follows:

1. Improve bus journey times, punctuality, and reliability;
2. Improve public transport connectivity to key locations, including employment, education, healthcare, and retail;
3. Grow patronage on the network, as part of a post-COVID recovery and beyond;
4. Improve the quality of bus services, information, and infrastructure to increase their attractiveness;
5. Reduce congestion and emissions by increasing the share for sustainable modes;
6. Ensure provision for sustainable transport options at new developments;
7. Deliver parking strategies which promote modal shift from single occupancy private vehicles to sustainable modes;
8. Deliver a safer, more attractive environment for active travel including integration with public transport.
9. For the Alliance to provide a platform for the future development of a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP).

Objective 1 is the most directly related to the problems described above, although reducing congestion (Objective 5) and promoting modal shift (Objective 7) will also feed improvements in journey times and journey time reliability for buses. More generally, each of these objectives tie in with broader strategic goals of reducing inequalities, taking climate actions, helping deliver inclusive economic growth, and improving health and wellbeing.

The success in achieving these objectives can be measured by monitoring a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). As with the objectives themselves,

these KPIs should be reviewed as appraisal is carried out in more detail and refined where necessary. Initial proposed KPIs, which can be refined in later stages of study, are as follows:

1. Increased bus speeds on the corridors / junctions selected for improvement, and on the network in general;
2. Improved punctuality (compliance to timetable) and reliability (reduced lost mileage) of bus services operating on the corridors / through junctions selected for improvement;
3. Reduced time lost to delay by buses on the corridors / through junctions selected for improvement, and on the wider network;
4. Improved journey time / reduced time lost to delay for all vehicles on the network in general;
5. Increased accessibility to key facilities, in terms of proportion of the population with access by sustainable modes and in terms of journey times;
6. Increased passenger numbers using bus services;
7. Increased passenger satisfaction of bus services;
8. Increased mode share for sustainable transport modes;
9. Reduction in monitored emissions from transport-related pollutants (PM₁₀ and NO₂);
10. Reduction in recorded accidents involving active travel users.

In order to monitor these KPIs, data can be collected from various sources including bus operators and Transport Scotland, and by undertaking accessibility analysis e.g. using TRACC software. This can be done both before delivery and over a period after to evaluate the anticipated improvements in the metrics. Note that data sources will be identified through the Business Case development and may complement the following data provided by the operators:

- Timing data, using the Automatic Vehicle Locations (AVL) transponder systems, to measure speeds, punctuality and delays;
- Ticketing data, to monitor passenger numbers and travel patterns;
- Customer surveys and feedback, to measure satisfaction and opinion.

In further stages of appraisal, the following steps are proposed to evaluate the potential options:

- Completion of a Case for Change report, building on the work undertaken for this bid document and to act as a foundation of the business case. This will incorporate engagement on how people use the transport system;
- A STAG Preliminary Appraisal to evaluate and sift options at a high-level, utilising largely qualitative analysis other than where readily quantitative analysis is possible. It should be noted that emerging updated guidance for STAG suggests that it may be possible to progress directly to Detailed Appraisal, should a small number of options be taken forward following early option sifting;
- A STAG Detailed Appraisal to further develop the sifted options and evaluate these to a level consistent with a Strategic Business Case (SBC), and including STAG Option Summary Tables for each;
- Outline Business Cases(s) (OBC) related to the progressed options; and
- Final Business Case(s) (FBCs) related to the progressed options.

Note that at the OBC and FBC stages it may appropriate to group certain measures to be considered as part of a corridor and to leave other measures to be considered as separate scheme, depending on the options progressed through the STAG process. Whether some options can be delivered as 'quick wins' should also be considered at an early stage.

5. Potential Options

Max 3000 words

Outline the ideas the partnership has for developing bus priority measures and an outline timescale for their delivery. Describe any quick wins i.e. developments which could be implemented by the end of the financial year 2022/23ⁱⁱⁱ. Outline how you plan to work in partnership. Describe what consultation has taken place (if any) to arrive at these high-level options^{iv}.

Options Under Consideration

A number of options have emerged which have the potential to address the problems identified and meet the objectives discussed in the preceding sections. Those options which are directly relevant to the Bus Partnership Fund, can be grouped into five categories, although it is likely that a mixture of these will be most effective in meeting the requirements in the area. The categories are as follows:

- Physical bus priority;
- Bus priority signalling;
- Bus stop modifications;
- Junction modifications; and
- Parking and other traffic control measures.

These measures are described below, and the potential for their implementation in West Lothian outlined later in this section.

Physical Bus Priority

Physical measures can allow buses to bypass traffic queues, reducing the effects of congestion on journey times. By reducing the effects of congestion, the journey times become more reliable, helping to achieve one of the key desired outcomes from this process. By prioritising buses ahead of general traffic, these measures also increase the attractiveness of bus travel relative to other modes, which will help achieve the objective of growing patronage.

There are two main forms of physical bus priority which have been identified as potential options here:

- Bus lanes, which may be appropriate on wider roads or where the road can be widened. Even in cases where a bus lane cannot be accommodated at a junction, a measure to allow buses to bypass heavy traffic until close to the junction can still be of considerable benefit. However, a number of the corridors identified as problem areas are single lane with the potential to widen the carriageway restricted by bridges, level changes, or buildings.
- Bus advance areas, which allow buses to bypass general traffic, which is held at a set of traffic lights. Often these are at the end of a bus lane to allow effective merging of buses into mixed traffic lanes. This would be appropriate at locations where traffic is likely to queue, particularly at or near a junction. Depending on the likely length of the traffic queue, this

measure may not need a wider carriageway for as long a section as a full bus lane.

Bus Priority Signalling

Linking to the onboard Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems / transponders, and integrated with overall Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) systems, priority signalling allows buses to be detected on approach to a junction and to prevent them being delayed by a red signal. A number of junctions in the area have been identified as having significant wait times at lights for bus movements, which adds additional time to the duration of the journey. If these delays can be reduced, this will help meet the objectives of improving overall journey time, punctuality and reliability, and improving the attractiveness of the bus services.

Bus Stop Modifications

It is possible that circumstances at the bus stops themselves may be impeding the performance of the bus services. For example, at locations where the bus stop is located in a layby, there may be delays re-entering the traffic stream. Making changes at the stops to reduce delays will decrease journey times and increase journey time reliability, as well as improving the perception of the services. The types of options which may be relevant in this area are:

- Reviewing the location of stops, which may not be ideally situated due to the proximity of a junction or other facilities, or in cases where a number of stops are located very near to each other on the same route.
- Modify the positioning of stops at their current location. In particular, this may involve the removal of the layby, which can cause delays for buses both in terms of having to manoeuvre into the layby to access the stop and then to filter back into the lane of traffic. Note however this may not always be the most appropriate option and in, for example, the case of a layby shortly before a junction, an alternative of extending the layby into an additional approach lane (or bus lane) to the junction may prove preferable in an appraisal. Laybys may also be appropriate for timing points on routes.
- Review of stop layout with a view to making improvements which would assist boarding and alighting. This may be appropriate on corridors where bus speeds are influenced less by the traffic volumes and more by the passengers boarding and alighting at certain stops at peak times. An example of this might be to provide level boarding, which can benefit mobility impaired and wheelchair users, families with children and pushchairs, and older users. Any small modifications may accrue a small benefit, but if this is done at multiple stops along the corridor then these benefits would accumulate along the route.

Junction Modifications

As well as options to specifically target bus journey times and give public transport more priority over general traffic, there are a number of potential options which may improve the general flow of traffic while also inferring benefit to bus. More general modifications at junctions where congestion occurs may be able to reduce

this congestion and allow vehicles, including buses, to move more freely. These options are as follows:

- Increasing the stacking capacity of approach lanes to junctions, either by lengthening the lanes back, or by increasing the road width to incorporate an additional lane for a specific movement. The benefit of this will depend on understanding the dominant movements at the junction, and redesigning the road layout appropriately;
- Signalisation of a junction. This can be done in cases where a dominant movement from one approach is preventing traffic from other approaches accessing the junction. Note that this can be combined with signal bus priority and, where space permits, this could be done in conjunction with implementation of a bus advance area to further reduce bus delays.
- More wholesale junction changes, such as removal of a roundabout and replacing with a signalised junction. This would likely prove a more expensive option but can be considered and appraised to determine whether the likely benefit would justify this; and
- Resequencing of traffic signals at a junction or in a linked manner along a corridor, or introducing a more dynamic element to the signal operation. This could allow improved throughput at the junction for all traffic, and reduce delays experienced by the bus. This can also be done in conjunction with bus priority signalling.

Other junction modifications to benefit bus include those such as banning certain turns, providing turning lanes, and yellow boxes to keep key turning movements free of obstruction.

Parking and Car Park Control Measures

Parking provision and other measures to control the movement and behaviour of traffic can be modified in order to reduce the disruption caused to buses. This may particularly be the case in main streets through town centres, where there is a high volume of traffic making multiple competing movements. In addition these areas may see disruptions from vehicles making deliveries to local businesses, which may obstruct the movement of buses even more so than they do general traffic. Simplifying the traffic behaviour through these areas could improve bus journey times and journey time reliability. Some of these options may also fit with the objective of encouraging modal shift through delivery of alternative parking strategies. The options in this category comprise:

- Review of parking layout and restrictions in order to reduce congestion caused by vehicles accessing parking bays; and
- Review of car park circulation in car park areas in order to prevent overspill onto the main carriageway. This would be particularly applicable at Almondvale Avenue, where traffic is known to tail back and block access from the nearby Bubbles Roundabout.

Key to the success of any of these measures will be enforcement of new parking restrictions. This may be particularly important early after implementation, as some road users may otherwise be slow to change their behaviour to adapt to the new

rules. Failure to adequately enforce any measures may see the same bad habits continuing, and so negate any benefits the measures may have generated.

Options by Location

Twenty corridors and junctions have been identified for further investigation in a detailed appraisal. Table 6 below identifies these locations and indicates the category of intervention which it has been determined could be beneficial there. The table also shows indicative potential journey time savings at each location, and the number of routes and services which would be likely to be impacted.

Table 6: Potential options for areas and corridors with delays on bus routes

No.	Area / Corridor	Description including junctions	Issues	Potential Options					Potential Bus Journey Time Impacts (per journey)	Number of Services / Journeys affected
				Physical Priority (Bus Lanes, Advance areas)	Bus Priority Signals	Revised Bus Stop layouts / Stop improvements	Junction modifications	Parking controls		
1	Alderstone Road	Between Peel Rdbt and Almondvale, including Eilburn Rd and Kirkton N Road junctions	Delays at junctions along route	✓	✓	✓	✓		up to 7mins 15s	Number of routes: 14 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 76 PM peak: 80 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 402 Total across week: 4110
2	Almondvale	Area around Bus Terminus, including Almondvale Boulevard and Almondvale Avenue, and College Roundabout	Slow-moving traffic to College Roundabout; queuing traffic from McDonald's can impact Bubbles Roundabout.	✓			✓	✓	up to 7mins 15s	Number of routes: 22 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 126 PM peak: 124 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 611 Total across week: 6103
3	Deans	Deans N Road and Knightsridge W Road, including junction of these	Slower through residential area at peak times	✓		✓	✓	✓	up to 5mins	Number of routes: 7 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 57 PM peak: 53 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 262 Total across week: 2604
4	Knightsridge	Knightsridge W Road, Knightsridge E Road, and Ladywell E Road	Slower through residential area at peak times			✓			up to 7mins	Number of routes: 5 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 31 PM peak: 31 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 143 Total across week: 1466
5	Ladywell	Ladywell E Road, junctions at crossing of Couland Rd (A705) between Ladywell E Road and Howden E Road, and entrance/exit of St John's Hospital	Slower through residential area at peak times, and delays crossing Cousland Road and at Hospital			✓	✓		up to 3mins 15s	Number of routes: 12 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 65 PM peak: 68 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 326 Total across week: 3339

No.	Area / Corridor	Description including junctions	Issues	Potential Options					Potential Bus Journey Time Impacts (per journey)	Number of Services / Journeys affected
				Physical Priority (Bus Lanes, Advance areas)	Bus Priority Signals	Revised Bus Stop layouts / Stop improvements	Junction modifications	Parking controls		
6	Craigshill	Junctions of Howden S Road and Almond Link Road, and Almond Link Road and Almond Road, and along Almond Road and Craigshill E Road	Slower through residential area at peak times, and delays through interchange at Livingston Road (A899)			✓			up to 8mins 30s	Number of routes: 5 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 26 PM peak: 25 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 123 Total across week: 1401
7	Dedridge	Dedridge E Road	Slower through residential area at peak times			✓			up to 3mins 30s	Number of routes: 9 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 40 PM peak: 40 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 200 Total across week: 2141
8	Civic Centre	Roundabout at junction of Howden E Road and Howden S Road, at Civic Centre entrance	Delays at junction at peak times				✓		up to 2mins 30s	Number of routes: 8 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 48 PM peak: 43 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 209 Total across week: 2216
9	Kirkton Campus	Simpson Parkway, from Kirkton S Road junction to A705 junction	Slower westbound at peak times		✓	✓	✓		up to 5mins 15s	Number of routes: 2 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 9 PM peak: 8 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 41 Total across week: 413
10	A705	Kirkton N Road past Livingston Village to A705, and A705 toward Seafield, including Mill Rdbt and Toll Rdbt	Delays particularly Eastbound at the AM peak	✓	✓	✓	✓		up to 6mins 30s	Number of routes: 3 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 28 PM peak: 24 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 123 Total across week: 1274
11	Bathgate / Boghall	Part of A89 corridor through Bathgate, including North Bridge Street junctions,	Delays experienced due to high traffic levels and multiple	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	up to 10mins 45s	Number of routes: 16 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 88

No.	Area / Corridor	Description including junctions	Issues	Potential Options					Potential Bus Journey Time Impacts (per journey)	Number of Services / Journeys affected
				Physical Priority (Bus Lanes, Advance areas)	Bus Priority Signals	Revised Bus Stop layouts / Stop improvements	Junction modifications	Parking controls		
		Guildiehaugh Roundabout, and Boghall Roundabout	conflicting vehicle movements.							PM peak: 87 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 439 Total across week: 4355
12	A89 west of Bathgate	From Blackridge through Armadale to Bathgate, including Armadale Cross	Delays both directions especially in morning peak. Ties in with eastern A89 corridor in SES bid.		✓			✓	up to 12mins 15s	Number of routes: 6 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 42 PM peak: 40 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 207 Total across week: 2166
13	Harthill / Whitburn	B7066/B7069 between Harthill and East Whitburn, including Whitburn Crossroads	Delays in PM peak		✓	✓		✓	up to 4mins 45s	Number of routes: 5 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 36 PM peak: 34 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 170 Total across week: 1770
14	Blackburn	Blackburn town centre - W Main Street and route round Ash Grove, including E Main Street junctions with Blackburn Road and Elm Grove	Delays both directions especially in PM peak		✓		✓		up to 3mins 30s	Number of routes: 4 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 36 PM peak: 32 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 163 Total across week: 1665
15	A7066/B792 interchange	Easter Inch and Leyland Roundabouts	Delays at roundabouts on B792 at peak times				✓		up to 4mins	Number of routes: 3 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 24 PM peak: 24 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 120 Total across week: 1157
16	Uphall / Broxburn	Main streets through Uphall and Broxburn, including junction with Station Road (Uphall) and Greendykes Junction	Delays due to high volume of traffic, parked cars and right-turning vehicles		✓	✓	✓	✓	up to 7mins 15s	Number of routes: 9 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 54 PM peak: 53 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 267 Total across week: 2701

No.	Area / Corridor	Description including junctions	Issues	Potential Options					Potential Bus Journey Time Impacts (per journey)	Number of Services / Journeys affected
				Physical Priority (Bus Lanes, Advance areas)	Bus Priority Signals	Revised Bus Stop layouts / Stop improvements	Junction modifications	Parking controls		
17	East Calder	Langton Road around junction with Redcraig Road	Delays around mini roundabout peak times				✓		up to 2mins 30s	Number of routes: 4 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 21 PM peak: 17 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 89 Total across week: 1004
18	West Calder and Polbeth	A71, including West Calder Main Street around Kirkgate and A792 junctions, and through Polbeth	Delays, particularly in PM peak		✓			✓	up to 4mins 30s	Number of routes: 3 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 24 PM peak: 25 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 122 Total across week: 1170
19	Addiewell	Around Church Street / Addiebrowhill junction	Delays especially in AM peak (possibly related to nearby schools)					✓	up to 4mins	Number of routes: 3 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 24 PM peak: 25 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 122 Total across week: 1170
20	Fauldhouse / Longridge	Around Fauldhouse Main Street / Sheephousehill junction, and along B7010 towards Longridge	Delays at peak times					✓	up to 4mins 15s	Number of routes: 2 Number of journeys in: AM peak: 16 PM peak: 16 Total weekday daytime (8am-8pm): 81 Total across week: 804

Taking into consideration the numbers of journeys operating through each of these areas at different times of the week, it is possible to estimate the potential total benefit of these options to the bus network. Assuming an appropriate proportion of the maximum benefit to be experienced at the different times of the week, this can be approximated¹² at around 55,800 minutes (around 930 hours) per week.

Considering the areas individually, it can be seen from the table that the longer sections of the A89 – both west of Bathgate, and through Bathgate and Boghall – may offer the greatest potential for reducing the maximum journey times. However, it should also be considered that almost every service operating in West Lothian intersects multiple sections of delay (one service as many as 9 of the areas identified), and that therefore addressing a number of these areas will have cumulative benefits along several routes.

Consideration has also been given to Bus Partnership Fund bids for neighbouring areas, and in particular that for the South East Scotland (SES) City Region Deal group. Focussing on improving links into and out of Edinburgh, this bid has proposed improvement on the A89 corridor around the West Lothian border, between Broxburn and Newbridge, and on the A71 corridor around Kirknewton and Wilkieston and at Lizzie Brice's Roundabout in south Livingston where the A71 meets the A899. Improvements proposed in this Bid will complement those from the SES bid, by enhancing additional sections of the A89 corridor (the Uphall / Broxburn, Bathgate and Boghall, and A89 west areas) and the A71 corridor (East and West Calder, Addiewell, and Fauldhouse). This creates an opportunity to provide more attractive services not only within West Lothian, but from many parts of West Lothian towards Edinburgh, with the benefits of these West Lothian improvements compounding with the improvements proposed for the City Deal region.

Wider Supporting Measures

A number of supporting measures have been identified as being of likely benefit in the area. These measures would work in conjunction with any bus priority measures implemented to ensure maximum possible benefit to the bus network and its users. These additional measures include:

- Improvement of bus stop infrastructure and stop information, including Real Time Information (RTI) systems. It is known that in West Lothian a number of shelters are in need of upgrade, and the RTI and other information is not provided at a substantial number of stops. This creates a barrier for bus users, and especially to infrequent or new users. Addressing this would fit the objectives of improving the quality of the network, and by making the network more accessible could help increase patronage.
- Improvement of the bus fleet, including investment in lower carbon vehicles. This would increase the quality of the network as well as reducing vehicle emissions.

¹² Assuming journeys at peak times on weekdays will on average experience half the maximum benefit, and that buses across the weekday inter-peak period and on Saturdays will on average experience 25% of the maximum benefit.

- Marketing and publicity, especially in relation to the corridors and routes which have been improved. This can be arranged both by operators, in the form of on-bus advertising, leafleting, as well as using social media, and by the Council in the form of raising awareness through the various channels.
- Ticketing improvements, such as further investment in smart ticketing, or multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing in the area. Promotions could also be given by the operators to encourage non-regular users to try the bus service. By making ticketing easier and potentially cheaper, this may help achieve the aim of encouraging modal shift towards sustainable transport options. Simplified ticketing can also improve bus boarding times.
- Parking policies and strategies which will support the measures under appraisal. This would include the volume and price of parking, and a review of enforcement of parking restrictions to ensure illegal or obstructive parking is addressed effectively. By doing this in conjunction with bus improvement measures, this allows public transport to become a viable alternative to single-occupancy vehicles, in line with the objectives.
- Improved active travel provision, including integration where possible with the bus network, to ensure as wide as possible access to the improved network. This would help provide a multi-modal alternative to private vehicle usage, and serve both the objectives of increasing bus patronage and increasing active travel usage in a safe manner.
- Other on-road improvements such as line painting or traffic light renewal. By ensuring markings at junctions or parking bays are clear this may reduce driver confusion and allow vehicle manoeuvres to be completed more efficiently. As a result, the number and duration of vehicles obstructing bus travel can be reduced.

Bus Partnership

The West Lothian Bus Alliance comprises representatives of West Lothian Council, the South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran), the Bus Users' Forum, and bus operators running services within West Lothian. The Alliance has been formed to provide a platform to develop a Bus Service Improvement Partnership (BSIP), and to work together to access funding opportunities to improve bus infrastructure (and hence bus transport more generally) in the West Lothian area.

Assuming a successful Bus Partnership Fund bid, the West Lothian Bus Alliance would continue to oversee the development of proposals through the STAG and subsequent Business Case stages. The Terms of Reference of the West Lothian Bus Alliance, which is included in the Appendix to this bid document, sets out the purpose and aims of the Alliance. The Mission Statement is that:

West Lothian Bus Alliance seeks to create a smarter, more successful set of bus services that maximises the potential of the sector in the West Lothian area for the benefit of the area's people.

The production of this bid document has involved significant engagement from the stakeholders within the West Lothian Bus Alliance. Meetings have been held weekly, with emerging results being presented to the group for discussion and

feedback. Minutes of meetings and the Terms of Reference for the Alliance are provided in the Appendix to this document.

Adjacent Bids and Joint Working

This proposal is adjacent to funded proposals led by the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). Ongoing, positive collaboration between officers, WLBA's consultants SYSTRA and CEC consultants Jacobs has ensured there is no risk of duplication of effort or funded activity, with proposals in particular for the A89 Broxburn corridor being seen as complementary.

WLBA is also aware of the Forth Valley Bus Alliance successful bid, and the Midlothian Bus Alliance emerging bid. Again, these are seen as complementary.

West Lothian Council (providing oversight for the proposals) and WLBA will continue to work in partnership with all adjoining bids to ensure alignment, through regular reporting to SEStran Board and to the City Region Deal Transport Appraisal Board, with information sharing facilitated by partners, Councils and SEStran.

Further consultation

It is expected that public consultation and wider stakeholder engagement would be required should this bid result in the successful award of funding. This would be necessary in building the Strategic Business Case (SBC), including the case for change, and preliminary and detailed appraisal stages, in line with STAG. Further tailored consultation would then be required for schemes that move forward to the Outline Business Case (OBC) and Final Business Case (FBC) stages.

Timescale for Delivery

Each of the options presented above has the potential to address the problems previously identified, and to build on the opportunities discussed. Should this bid be successful the options will be developed further as part of the STAG appraisal process. Progressed options would then continue to the OBC and FBC stages as appropriate.

The timescales for this are dependent on the following:

- Completion of the SBC (STAG appraisal process);
- Completion of the OBC and FBC stages;
- Securing land where necessary;
- Completion of necessary statutory process, such as Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), detailed designs, and planning permission;
- Identifying and securing funds; and
- Final delivery of the schemes.

It is expected that the SBC will be completed within 12 months. The timescales for completion of the OBC(s) will be determined on completion of the SBC; however, it is expected that these would be completed within 24 months and delivered thereafter, subject to funding.

6. Resources Required

<p>What resources is the partnership requesting from Transport Scotland to develop the proposals^v?</p>	<p>The West Lothian Bus Alliance is requesting the following funding to undertake appraisal studies of the areas identified:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Strategic Business Case</td><td>£231,250</td></tr> <tr> <td>Outline Business Case(s)</td><td>£493,750</td></tr> <tr> <td>Project Management Cost</td><td>£36,250</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£761,250</td></tr> </table> <p>A more detailed breakdown of these cost and associated assumptions can be found in the Appendix to this submission.</p>	Strategic Business Case	£231,250	Outline Business Case(s)	£493,750	Project Management Cost	£36,250	Total	£761,250
Strategic Business Case	£231,250								
Outline Business Case(s)	£493,750								
Project Management Cost	£36,250								
Total	£761,250								
<p>What is the estimated total cost of the proposed infrastructure developments?</p>	<p>Implementation of Bus Priority measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £24,800,000 excluding Optimism Bias; • £35,712,000 including Optimism Bias of 44%. <p>These are high-level estimates only and are not derived from a detailed costing exercise. These costings have been estimated using an assumed £1m cost per kilometre along with a factoring process to account for the scale and number of interventions considered.</p> <p>These costs have been provided for use in the application to the Bus Partnership Fund only, in order to indicate the potential scale of costs associated with the measures considered. These should not be used for any other purpose and future stages of study should consider cost estimates independently from these. An allowance for optimism bias of 44% has been quoted.</p> <p>A summary of the assumptions made is provided in the Appendix.</p>								
<p>What – if any - is the nature and extent of investment to be made by partners^{vi}?</p>	<p>Discussions have been undertaken within the West Lothian Bus Alliance to determine what can be contributed by each of the partners in order to increase the success of any measures implemented. In particular, it is clear that some of the Wider Supporting Measures identified above can be progressed by some or all of the Alliance partners.</p>								

	<p>The following potential investments have been put forward by the Bus Operators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To invest in improved ticketing systems, such as introduction of contactless and/or smart cards, and to explore integrated ticketing between operators or modes. • To invest in publicity for the improved corridors and for the partnership area in general. This would take the form of advertising space on vehicles, social media, and leafleting. • To invest in promotional fares or tickets, to encourage infrequent or non-users towards bus travel. • To improve customer information to make bus travel a simpler experience. This would include improved timetable and fare information, and a review of online information and operator apps. • To reinvest savings made as a result of the improvement measures, be these resource savings (for example a reduced Peak Vehicle Requirement) or cost savings, into improving services elsewhere in the West Lothian area. • To invest in fleet improvements, to ensure vehicles continue to provide safety and comfort for passengers, and have low carbon emissions. • To work with other operators, under co-ordination from West Lothian Council, to provide better co-ordinated service frequencies and customer information. <p>The following potential investments have been put forward by West Lothian Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To invest in bus stop improvements, including shelters and increasing the provision of Real Time Information (RTI) displays. • To support smaller operators with ticketing developments. • To work with operators in the marketing of corridor improvements. This will include an increase in promotion of public transport options to the public from the various Council departments. • To work with operators to provide better co-ordinated service frequencies and customer information. • To work with operators to minimise disruptions due to road closures. • To carry out a review of Livingston Bus Terminus, and to consider stop location changes across the
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	<p>network more generally if these are shown to be necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review parking restrictions and enforcement within the area, and to ensure suitable enforcement of bus priority corridors. • To review Active Travel provision across West Lothian. • To invest in general road improvements as necessary, such as line painting, traffic light renewals, etc. <p>Subject to funding, SEStran have proposed the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support further upgrades to Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) systems and provide more facilities at key sites / locations within West Lothian. • To continue work on development of a journey planning app which will specifically improve the accessibility of the bus network for people with a wide range of mobility and sensory impairments. • To progress trials of a tech-enabled rural Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service in West Lothian, to increase connectivity for areas currently without a scheduled bus service. • To work with West Lothian Council to improve active travel and modal integration by identifying suitable Go e-Bike sites. • To work with West Lothian Council and other WLBA members, as well as Sustrans Scotland, to align the development of active travel routes with that of the bus priority corridors. A number of projects are already in development, such as from Addiewell to Livingston South, and Threemiletown / Ecclesmachan to Livingston North.
<p>What – if any – other sources of investment will be available for the proposed developments^{vii}?</p>	<p>To be developed as part of the appraisal process.</p>

7. Commitment of Partners

The proposal should be signed by the Chair and CEO of the local authority leading the proposal. Partners (including RTPs and bus operators, as appropriate) may indicate their support to the proposal through appended letters of intent or additional signatures below.

Organisation	Name	Job title	Signature
[Lead local authority]		Lead Councillor	
[Lead local authority]		CEO	

8. Submission of Proposals

Proposals should be submitted to buspartnershipfund@transport.gov.scot by 12 noon on Friday 15th October 2021.

9. Guidance Notes

ⁱ Relevant appendices or links to documents may be added, in addition to the word limits. For example, the partnership may wish to include links to community plans, transport strategies, STAG reports etc.

ⁱⁱ Partnerships should look to the STAG pre-appraisal phase, as a guide on the level of information required. It is recognised that you may not have all of the data at this stage but you should outline how you are going to produce the more detailed data – including forecast data - through the Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. If you require resources to carry out even a pre-appraisal level of analysis, please state that here and estimate the requirements in section 6.

ⁱⁱⁱ Quick wins should be sustainable and fit with the longer-term, transformational developments proposed.

^{iv} Full details of the long-listing process are not required at this stage, as successful partnerships will have the opportunity to develop, evaluate and refine the options through the OBC stage. Where

appraisals have already been carried out (for example, through city deals) partnerships should consider how these fit the future and the changes they will need to make to transport.

^v Support from Transport Scotland will be to fund the specialist resources required to develop an appraisal, as defined by the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guide (STAG), and Outline Business Case (OBC). This will be required to access further infrastructure funding from the Bus Partnership Fund.

We recognise that some partnerships may have already conducted an appraisal and may be at Outline Business Case stage or even further with proposals. We also uphold the STAG principle that the level of appraisal required should be proportionate. Capacity funding will therefore take into account the stage the partnership is at and will be based on a proportionate view of what further appraisals and business cases are required to justify the infrastructure funding.

We also recognise that some options may have been appraised and are ready to implement as quick wins: if so, that should be stated here and relevant evidence attached.

Partnerships are reminded that staff costs may be capitalised in considering the request for funding. All justifiable bids will be considered, including funding for early quick wins, which may already have been appraised.

^{vi} This may include investment in other measures, which will contribute to the holistic transformation of the bus service e.g. ultra-low or zero emission buses.

^{vii} Include sources and amounts of investment already secured or expected to be secured before the development projects commence. This may include in-kind investment, as well as finance, and should take account of contributions from bus operators and other partners, as well as local authorities.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME AND COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to set out proposals for the delivery and operation of the Place Based Investment Capital Grant 2021/22 of £1,302,000 which has been allocated to the council from Scottish Government.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive

1. Notes that twelve applications have been received for projects within West Lothian;
2. Notes that a panel was established to advise the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration;
3. Agrees to award funding as set out in the report, including funding conditions outlined in Appendix 1; and
4. Notes the terms and conditions associated to the awarding of grants as set out in 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)	<p>Placed Based Investment and Community wealth Building are Scottish Government initiatives.</p> <p>The projects recommended for support do not raise any SEA, Equality Health or Risk Assessments.</p>
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Approaches to Community Wealth Building have the potential to increase positive outcomes across a range of indicators.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Relevant to all outcomes

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	West Lothian's allocation of the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme Funding 2021/22 is £1,302,000.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Not Applicable.
VIII	Other consultations	A panel comprised of representatives from the Voluntary Sector, Regeneration, and Asset Management were consulted on 15 September 2021 on the suitability and merit of the applications.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

In late June 2021, Council Executive approved recommendations in a report by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration to take forward the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme on a thematic basis around Community Wealth Building. The West Lothian allocation for 2021/22 is £1,302,000. The grant is for capital expenditure.

In early September 2021, the Scottish Government announced the Plan for Government 2021/22, in which plans are laid out to;

"Progress a Community Wealth Building Bill in this Parliament, helping create and protect jobs and enable greater community and third sector ownership of assets."

This report sets out proposals to allocate these funds to eligible projects that focus on Community Wealth Building. The report also provides members with further information on the suitability of the applications received and their reasons for recommendation.

D.2 Process for Considering Applications

The timescale for rolling out the fund was presented to the meeting of Council Executive in 22 June 2021. Since then, the fund has been launched and promoted and applications were received by the closing date of 31 August. Following this, a meeting of an assessment panel was held to which representatives from the Voluntary Sector, Regeneration, and Asset Management were invited.

The panel meeting, for which the purpose was to advise and provide feedback on the applications received and make initial proposed allocations to the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, was attended by all representatives on 15 September 2021.

D.3 Projects Recommended for Funding

Following the application deadline, a careful analysis of all 12 applications was undertaken, assessing the projects including an assessment against the 5 principles of Community Wealth Building:

- Plural ownership of the economy
- Making financial power work for local places

- Fair employment and just labour markets
- Progressive procurement of goods and service
- Socially productive use of land and property

Against this criterion, the panel, chaired by the head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration met to discuss and advise on the applications received. The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration sets out the following recommendations for the allocation of the funds based on that advice:

1. Craigsfarm Community Development Project

This project seeks to renovate existing land and property, which will increase community access to services and improve quality of existing facilities. Funding will go towards better security of the whole campus, allowing the project to continue work that benefits the wider community of the East Livingston & East Calder ward. In addition to attracting new users, the project aims to keep existing users happy by providing facilities and services for use of the local community. This project covers the principles of plural ownership of the economy, and socially productive use of land and property.

A full award of £129,602 is recommended.

2. West Calder HUB

The West Calder HUB project seeks to renovate and improve the existing facilities. Funding for this project will see improvements and additions to both indoor and outdoor facilities of the HUB. Through an asset, jobs for local people will be protected and created, with growth in potential and plan to make the centre community-owned. The facilities will become safer and of better quality, allowing the project to deliver on their commitment to educational use. These actions will contribute toward a safer and more aesthetically pleasing space for the communities with the Fauldhouse & Breich Valley ward. This project covers the principles of plural ownership of the economy, fair employment and just labour market, and socially productive use of land and property.

A full award of £140,265 is recommended.

3. West Lothian College

This project seeks to build an Eco-House education and training centre which will have positive impacts by; providing rewarding careers, meeting industry workforce challenges, ensuring the region is core to sustainable developments, and driving towards a zero-carbon economy. The Eco House will allow for the development of skills in smart technologies, ensuring efficient and effective sustainable living in the home whilst supporting community-based independent living, and engaging West Lothian communities in a sustainable future. This project covers all 5 principles of Community Wealth Building.

A partial award of £493,436 is recommended, this is 90% of the funding for this project.

4. West Lothian Foodbank

The Foodbank's Market Garden project seeks to make their current service

more accessible and sustainable, with impacts throughout West Lothian. Funding for this project will see the purchase of raised beds, polytunnels, and apple trees, as well as improvements to the gravel paths, more accessible parking, and considerable aesthetic improvements to the current land and property. The project will benefit the foodbank network across West Lothian, whilst allowing for the employment of a local young person and providing work placements for college students. This project covers all 5 principles of Community Wealth Building.

A full award of £188,697 is recommended.

5. Crofthead Community Education Association

This project seeks to create new community facilities, as well as improving and growing existing property and services. The development will generate income through lets to businesses, organisations, and community groups where affordability is a barrier to participation. The project is also a carbon-neutral build, and will extend income through its cycle track, renting to local people and community organisations, and extending support for cycling in communities within the Livingston and the wider county. This project covers all 5 principles of Community Wealth Building.

A full award of £350,000 is recommended.

Appendix 1 outlines the applications received and funding requested. Although Crofthead Community Education Association requested £1.1m for 2022/23, there is no guarantee on the success of this funding. Officers will continue to work with all successful applications in order to ensure that phasing of future funding can be met.

E. CONCLUSION

This report details the proposals for the allocation of the Scottish Government's Place Based Investment Programme Funds for 2021/22, to the total allocation of £1,302,000.

This will be an opportunity to build on activity already underway and will support implementation of a more strategic Community Wealth Building approach in West Lothian. Council Executive are asked to agree the recommendations set out in the report

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Council Executive, *Place Based Investment Programme and Community Wealth Building Report*, Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration, 22 June 2021

Council Executive, *Scottish Government Programme for Government 2021/22 Report*, Head of Finance and Property Services, 5 October 2021

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1 – PBIP Application Analysis, with panel recommendations for funding allocations

Contact Person: Alice Mitchell, Economic Development & Regeneration Manager, email alice.mitchell@westlothian.gov.uk

Sophie Brodie, Community Engagement & Wealth Building, email sophie.brodie@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston, Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

Date of meeting: 26 October 2021

Application	Project	Ward	Applied for 21/22	Applied for 22/23	Total Applied for	Beyond
Craigsfarm Community Development Project	Renovations for sustainability and accessibility	East Livingston & East Calder	£129,602.00	£31,600.00	£161,202.00	£8,200.00 for contingency and project management fund
West Calder HUB	Community facility renovation and improvements	Fauldhouse & The Breich Valley	£140,265.00	–	£140,265.00	–
West Lothian College	Eco house education and training centre	Livingston South	£547,000.00	–	£547,000.00	–
West Lothian Foodbank	Market Garden	Bathgate	£188,697.00	–	£188,697.00	–
Crofthead Community Education Association	Community facility creation, improvements, and growth	Livingston South	£350,000.00	£ 1,100,000.00	£ 1,450,000.00	£ 550,000.00

	Partial amount of £493,436 to be offered as this project has capacity to seek funds elsewhere that make up the cost of total project
Total Recommended Award 2021/22	£ 1,302,000.00

Application	Project	Ward	Applied for 21/22	Applied for 22/23	Total Applied for	Beyond
Armada Parish Trust	Renovations for accessibility	Armada & Blackridge	£278,500.00	£355,500.00	£634,000.00	–
Bathgate Hills Venture Group	Interactive walking infrastructure	Bathgate	£107,000.00	£138,000.00	£245,000.00	£147,000.00
Community Moorings Scotland	Eco-mooring canal community	Linlithgow	£17,500.00	£160,000.00	£177,500.00	–
Craigfarm Community Development Project	Renovations for sustainability and accessibility	East Livingston & East Calder	£129,602.00	£31,600.00	£161,202.00	£8,200.00 for contingency and project management fund
Crofthead Community Education Association	Community facility creation, improvement and growth	Livingston South	£350,000.00	£1,100,000.00	£1,450,000.00	£550,000.00 for Phases 3 & 4, if deemed successful enough to apply for more funding
HCL Transport	Purchase of 2 new vehicles	Bathgate/West Lothian-wide	£188,600.00	–	£188,600.00	–
Linlithgow Community Development Trust	Cycle circuit sports facility	Linlithgow	£157,673.00	–	£157,673.00	–
Locavore West Lothian	Market garden and food shop	Linlithgow	£227,000.00	–	£227,000.00	–
Polkemmet Beekeeping Association	Accessible, sustainable, educational preservation centre	Whitburn & Blackburn	£103,373.55	–	£103,373.55	–
West Calder HUB	Community facility renovation and improvements	Fauldhouse & The Breich Valley	£140,265.00	–	£140,265.00	–
West Lothian College	Eco house education and training centre	Livingston South	£547,000.00	–	£547,000.00	–
West Lothian Council Planning Department	Underpass art installations and town centre improvements	Livingston North, Livingston South, East Livingston & East Calder	–	£150,000.00	£150,000.00	–
West Lothian Council Planning Department	Town centre improvements	Livingston North, Livingston South, East Livingston & East Calder	–	£300,000.00	£300,000.00	£300,000.00
West Lothian Foodbank	Market Garden	Bathgate	£188,697.00	–	£188,697.00	–
			£2,435,210.55	£2,235,100.00	£4,670,310.55	£1,005,200.00
			21-22	22-23	TOTAL	BEYOND

	Applications withdrawn
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DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council Executive approval for the publication and implementation of the West Lothian Council Climate Change Strategy 2021-2028.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Note the content of the report and the strategy attached as Appendix 1;
2. Approves the Climate Change Strategy for publication and implementation, and;
3. Notes that officers will report back to the Environment PDSP and Council Executive with any changes required following COP26.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>The council is legally bound to comply with duties for public sector bodies within the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The duties require that the council must, in exercising its functions, act:</p> <p>(a) in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of the targets set in or under Part 1 of the Act;</p> <p>(b) in the way best calculated to help deliver any programme laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 53;</p> <p>(c) in a way that it considers is most sustainable.</p> <p>The strategy does not raise any equality issues.</p>
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There are a number of performance indicators related to climate change, emissions reduction and waste related activities which will be reviewed and updated to reflect the new outcomes and actions set out in the strategy. Emissions are reported to the Scottish Government in November each year.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 4 – We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. Outcome 8 - 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)	The climate emergency response and achieving net-zero will require significant financial support, particularly capital investment, as well as staff resource from services across the council. Potential for emissions reduction projects to also contribute to revenue savings.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	The report was considered at a meeting of the Environment PDSP on 18 October where it was well received by Panel members who were supportive of the actions set out.
VIII	Other consultations	Climate Change & Sustainability Working Group; Operational Services; Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The world is in the midst of a Climate Emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at an international, national and local level in order to safeguard our planet for future generations. As part of the council's response to the global climate emergency, and following on from the council's own Climate Emergency Declaration in September 2019, a new Climate Change Strategy has been developed. The strategy builds on our previous Climate Change Strategy 2015-2020 and provides a framework for the council's actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the unavoidable impacts of changing weather patterns through the period 2021-2028 while also considering the pathway to achieving a net-zero West Lothian by 2045 at the latest.

D.2 Emissions Reduction Progress

The council has already made significant progress in reducing emissions from our activities. Full details of the scope of emissions included in our footprint are provided in Appendix 1 of the strategy, but in summary it includes energy consumption in non-domestic council owned operational buildings, water supply and treatment, different waste streams, transport (including own-use mileage), and all external lighting.

In the council's latest Climate Change Declaration Report 2019/20, overall emissions were 36,635 tonnes CO₂e, a reduction of 24,426 tonnes (40%) from our 2013/14 baseline figure of 61,061. While the report for 2020/21 will be formally presented to the Panel in November, an internal audit of the emissions figure is complete and confirms a figure of 30,748 tonnes CO₂e. It is clear that the figure has been significantly impacted by the effects of the covid-19 pandemic and is, therefore, likely to increase again in 2021/22 as recovery progresses.

Nevertheless, there are a number of direct actions that have contributed to our emissions reductions including the implementation of energy efficiency projects, replacing street lighting with low energy LED equivalents, investing in renewable and low carbon technologies such as biomass boilers and solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and reducing the volume of waste being sent to landfill. Another key driver has been a reduction in the emissions factor for grid electricity. This factor is applied to our consumption figure to establish our emissions and has reduced considerably over time as the carbon intensity of the grid has reduced. This has been a result of the shift from the use of traditional carbon-based fuels such as coal and gas for electricity generation to cleaner sources such as wind and solar, and is the principal motivation for the move away from using fossil fuels to heat our homes and power our vehicles.

In addition to the council's emissions, the strategy also highlights progress made across West Lothian as a whole. Emissions figures published each year by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) show that between 2013 and 2019, emissions per capita reduced from 7.2 to 5.8 tonnes. The data does, however, highlight some of the significant challenges faced in achieving a net-zero West Lothian, particularly in the transport sector.

D.3 Net-zero Targets

Net zero emissions are achieved when the emissions produced are balanced by those removed from the atmosphere. While the council's primary focus should continue to be on reducing our emissions as much as possible, there will inevitably be some areas where we cannot achieve a zero emissions figure. In order to achieve a net zero position, some offsetting will be required and work is underway to quantify the current position and future opportunities for this using council owned land assets through activities such as peatland restoration and tree planting.

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets targets to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040 from a 1990 baseline year. As the council uses a different baseline year from the Scottish Government (2013/14), our interim targets have been re-aligned to reflect that position and are set out in the table below.

Target Year	Reduction Level (from 2013/14 Baseline)	West Lothian Council Target (Tonnes CO ₂ e)
2028	61%	23,813
2030	65%	21,371
2040	86%	8,426
2045	Net-zero	0

There are strong justifications for aligning with the wider national targets, including the development and implementation of the resources, infrastructure and support mechanisms that will be required to drive the transition to net zero. It is possible that the COP26 conference beginning in Glasgow next week will lead to revised national

objectives and priorities. Where that is the case, officers will review, update and realign the council's strategy and associated targets and report back to the panel in early 2022.

The Carbon Management Plan and associated Project Register will also be reviewed and updated to reflect the latest priorities and include information on the level of current and potential carbon sequestration from the council's land assets.

It should be noted that while working towards a net-zero position is an overwhelmingly positive step, the council will still have to adapt to some of the inevitable impacts of climate change. Warmer, drier summers and wetter winters combined with more frequent severe weather events will create challenges for the council, partners, businesses and residents of West Lothian. The degree of these challenges will depend on how successful the global community is in ensuring temperature increases are kept to as low a level as possible.

D.4 Strategy Outcomes

In order to support the pathway to net-zero and ensure that the environment in West Lothian is well adapted to the future challenges of climate change, the strategy sets out six key outcomes. These are:

- **Outcome 1 – Energy:** We will continue to reduce the council's own carbon footprint and encourage and support others in West Lothian to reduce theirs.
- **Outcome 2 – Transport:** We encourage sustainable transport and active travel by implementing measures to help people make smarter, sustainable travel choices, supported by low emission transport networks & infrastructure while further reducing our own fleet emissions.
- **Outcome 3 – Waste:** We encourage householders and businesses to make the right choices when disposing of waste and will support the drive for sustainability, reducing the environmental impact of the residents of West Lothian.
- **Outcome 4 – Adaptation, Resilience & Biodiversity:** We will continue to build a resilient and well adapted West Lothian where natural ecosystems are protected, sustainably used and strengthened while services, communities and places are adapting to cope with climate change impacts (including land use, buildings and infrastructure).
- **Outcome 5 – Land Use and Management:** We understand the scope and benefits of local carbon offsetting and manage our publicly owned land assets in a way that contributes to our path to net-zero.
- **Outcome 6 – Embedding Climate Action:** We embed climate action in our policies and practices across the council and create a culture of sustainability and resource efficiency.

Each of the outcomes has a number of actions which will support their delivery, further details of which are provided in section 5 of the strategy.

E. CONCLUSION

The Climate Change Strategy 2021-28 is an important part of the council's response to the Climate Emergency, identifying key outcomes and setting out a range of actions to support the pathway to net zero emissions and a well-adapted, biodiverse environment. Achieving net zero will require input and action from services across the council and collaboration with our partners, business and residents. The strategy will be reviewed post-COP26 to reflect any revised targets or priorities which are introduced at a national or international level and an update report will be presented to the Environment PDSP and Council Executive early in 2022. Council Executive is asked to approve the strategy for publication and implementation.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019
<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/climate-change-emissions-reduction-target-scotland-bill>

Climate Emergency Working Group Recommendations – West Lothian Council 17 March 2020

Climate Emergency Declaration Motion – West Lothian Council 24 September 2019

Appendices/Attachments: West Lothian Council Climate Change Strategy 2021-2028

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Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration

26 October 2021

DATA LABEL: PRIVATE

Draft Climate Change Strategy

West Lothian Council

Climate Change Strategy

2021-2028

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Climate Change Strategy | 2021-2028

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Foreword

West Lothian Council is committed to improving the quality of life for people in West Lothian, and making this the best possible place to live, work and do business. One of the biggest challenges we have to address in order to deliver this commitment is the impact of climate change.

Following on from the council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in September 2019, this Climate Change Strategy marks a firm commitment by the council to take action on climate change. It provides a framework for the council's actions as a public sector organisation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the unavoidable impacts of changing weather patterns through the period 2021-2028 while also considering the pathway to achieving a net-zero West Lothian by 2045 at the latest.

Efforts to lessen the impact of climate change can also bring opportunities, such as cost savings from reduced energy bills and making better use of our resources, new business and employment opportunities, supporting healthier, more sustainable lifestyles and making our communities more resilient. The strategy aims to make sure West Lothian is best placed to benefit from these opportunities.

No single person or organisation can tackle climate change alone, so we are asking our partners, businesses, community groups and individuals to embrace the changes that must take place. There are many small changes we can all make to reduce our impact on the environment that, together, will help secure a better future for everyone in West Lothian.

1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The world is in the midst of a Climate Emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at an international, national and local level in order to safeguard our planet for future generations.

Scotland's climate is already changing. Our warmest 10 years on record have all been since 1997 and climate projections for the next century indicate that the climate trends observed over the last century will continue and intensify over the coming decades. There has been an increase in rainfall in the past few decades and mean sea level around the UK has risen by approximately 1.4mm/year from the start of the 20th century.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) global climate change reportⁱ published in August 2021 has been seen as a "code red for humanity". The report makes it clear that human activities have unequivocally caused observed increases in greenhouse gas emissions and that we are perilously close to hitting the internationally agreed threshold of 1.5°C of warming, beyond which the impacts of climate change and the measures required to adapt become significantly more challenging.

As well as reducing our emissions (mitigation), we will need to consider how we adjust to the impacts of climate change to reduce negative impacts and exploit any opportunities (adaptation). Our buildings will need to be able to cope with more extremes in summer temperatures, intense rainfall events and potential changes in wind and storm patterns. Our infrastructure systems are likely to be impacted by an increase in disruptive events. Summer droughts may become more frequent and more severe, causing problems for water quality and supply. A warming climate may provide more opportunity to be outdoors and enjoy a healthy and active lifestyle while reducing mortality in winter; however, it could affect patterns of disease and other health issues. Climate change and associated extreme weather may disrupt the lives of individuals and communities, limiting access to vital services and impacting on people's physical and mental health. Emergency services may need to respond to an increased frequency and severity of flooding, landslide and wildfire events.

Climate change will, therefore, have an impact on us all now and for future generations. We all have a part to play to make West Lothian a more sustainable place to live and work.

Building a nature rich future is critical in addressing the causes and impacts of climate change. Climate change and biodiversity are inextricably linked. Our changing climate is accelerating the loss of nature, and at the same time restoring habitats can play a key role in helping us to address climate change and achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

1.2 Key Drivers

The Climate Emergency

The term "Climate Emergency" came in to widespread use in 2019 following global protests to raise awareness of the significant climatic changes which were occurring as a result a warming of the atmosphere from human and natural activities. Defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "*a situation in*

which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it”, over 1,800 local governments in 34 countries have made climate emergency declarations (as of April 2021)ⁱⁱ including West Lothian Council which declared a climate emergency in September 2019. Our declaration states that:

“Council recognises that the world is in the midst of a climate emergency which requires urgent and meaningful action at international, national and local level in order to safeguard our planet for future generations.

Council further agrees that having more environmentally progressive policies can lead to improved health, high quality jobs and more sustainable communities.

Council notes that West Lothian Council signed the Climate Change Declaration in 2007. Council further notes the significant work to date to make West Lothian a more environmentally friendly and sustainable place to live and work, and that the Council's agreed carbon reduction targets are already being exceeded.”

The council has been committed to taking action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change for some time. The council’s first Climate Change Strategy, the West Lothian Climate Change Strategy 2015-2020, provided a framework for change. As reported in November 2020, the council significantly exceeded its emissions reduction target of 20% from our baseline year of 2013/14, achieving an overall decrease of 40%. This new strategy builds on the progress made through the earlier strategy to provide the direction required to achieve our ambition of becoming a net-zero West Lothian by 2045 at the latest while recognising the significant challenges that will need to be overcome to achieve this goal.

A Global Response

The importance of tackling climate change has been recognised globally. Negotiations during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) led to the Paris Agreement, ratified by 191 of the nations participating in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Agreement’s long-term temperature goal is to keep the rise in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels; and to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 °C, recognising that this would substantially reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

Following on from the Paris Agreement, the IPCC was invited to provide a Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Amongst other findings, the report concluded that global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate and that every effort should be made to ensure that temperature increases are limited to 1.5°C. The IPCC’s latest report, published in August 2021 suggests that this threshold will be hit around 2040 and that more urgent action is required to reduce the current rate of warming.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. These were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and each goal has targets and indicators that UN member states are expected to use in setting their agendas over the next 15 years. Climate Change is at the core of how many of these goals can be delivered and as such, tackling climate change is essential for achieving sustainable development for all.



Legal & Policy Drivers

In a drive towards a low carbon future, the Scottish Government set out ambitious emissions reductions targets in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The targets were amended and updated in the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019, with the new goal of reducing Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040. While challenging, these targets present Scotland with significant social and economic opportunities, and require a range of actions across society and the economy.

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places duties on all public bodies to contribute to emission reduction targets, deliver programmes to increase resilience against Climate Change and to act in a 'Sustainable' way. Under the act, the council is identified as a 'Major Player' due to its size and influence and, therefore, must submit a mandatory climate change report to the Scottish Government on an annual basis, detailing our progress in mitigating and adapting to climate change and outlining the actions undertaken and planned to reduce the council's environmental impacts. This updated Climate Change Strategy will be underpinned by a suite of actions which will support delivery and allow for more effective reporting.

In Scotland's latest climate plan - 'Climate Change Plan: Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032 (RPP3)', further expectations are placed on the public sector to increasingly demonstrate how its own operations are driving down emissions. RPP3 sets out the path to a low carbon economy while helping to deliver sustainable economic growth and secure the wider benefits to a greener, fairer and healthier Scotland in 2032.

Scotland's National Performance Framework

This Strategy has been developed in line with the outcomes and values set out in Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF). This Strategy largely relates to NPF outcome: 'Environment - We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment'.



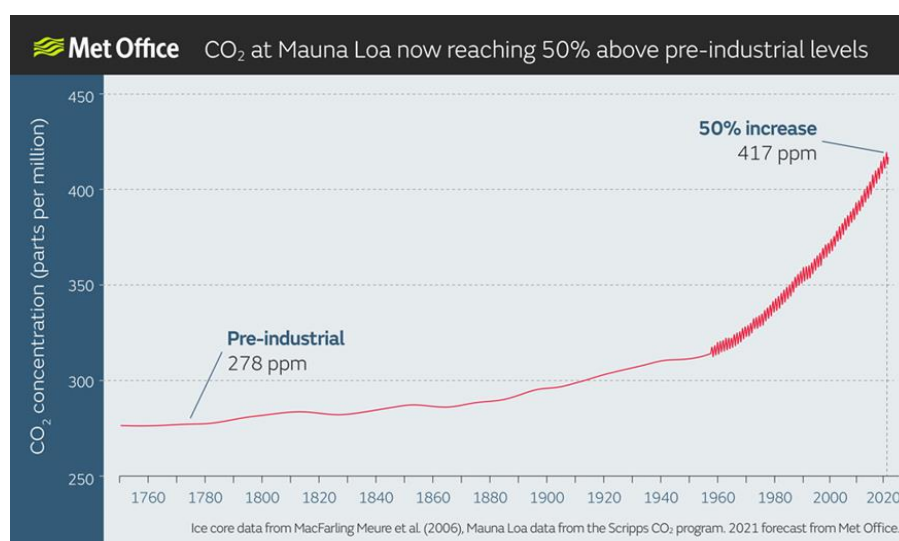
1.3 Science of Climate Change

It is now clear that our climate is changing and that human influence is the key contributing factor. Changes observed over several decades include increases in global average air and ocean temperature, rising global sea levels, widespread reduction of snow and ice cover, and changes in atmospheric and ocean circulation and regional weather patterns, which influence seasonal rainfall conditions.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)ⁱⁱⁱ sets out the following established facts:

- Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.2°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels;
- It is likely that the internationally agreed 1.5°C warming threshold will be hit between 2032 and 2050;
- In 2019, atmospheric CO₂ concentrations were higher than at any time in at least 2 million years. The concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere is directly linked to the average global temperature on Earth;
- The concentration has been rising steadily, and mean global temperatures along with it, since the time of the Industrial Revolution;
- Climate change is already affecting every inhabited region across the globe with human influence contributing to many observed changes in weather and climate extremes; and
- Projected changes in extremes are larger in frequency and intensity with every additional increment of global warming.

The science behind climate change is supported by extensive scientific research performed and reported across the world. Monitoring data from NASA shows that the parts per million (ppm) atmospheric concentration of CO₂ has increased from 380ppm in 2005 to 417ppm in July 2021. In context, concentrations are 48% above pre-industrial levels found in 1850 and the highest historical level recorded from ice cores was 300ppm, recorded 300,000 years ago^{iv}.



At a United Kingdom level, the Met Office published their UK Climate Projections in 2018 (UKCP18)^v. This latest generation of climate projections provides users with the most up to date scientific evidence on predicted changes to our climate using a range of low, medium and high impact scenarios. For Scotland, it is anticipated that:

- Average temperatures will increase across all seasons.

- Weather will remain variable and may become more variable.
- Typical summers will be warmer and drier.
- Typical winters will be milder and wetter.
- Intense, heavy rainfall events will increase in both winter and summer.
- Sea levels will rise.
- There will be reduced frost and snowfalls.

The degree of changes that will be experienced will depend very much on how successful we are in reducing emissions globally.

1.4 Green Recovery

At the same time as actions to address the international Climate Emergency were gathering pace, the unprecedented global impact of the coronavirus pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives. Reduced economic activity during the pandemic resulted in a number of short-term climatic benefits. It is widely recognised that the recovery from the pandemic creates an opportunity to build on these benefits and develop a greener society. In June 2020 the Committee on Climate Change published their annual report to the UK Parliament which included five investment priorities to drive the green recovery from the pandemic. These are:

- Low-carbon retrofits and buildings that are fit for the future.
- Tree planting, peatland restoration, and green infrastructure.
- Energy networks must be strengthened.
- Infrastructure to make it easy for people to walk, cycle, and work remotely.
- Moving towards a circular economy.

The priorities identified align with the outcomes set out in this strategy and support the council's net-zero objectives.

1.5 Developing the Strategy

The Climate Change Strategy has been prepared to ensure that activities to tackle the climate emergency contribute to the achievement of the outcomes identified within the council's Corporate Plan (2018-2023) and the West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) (2013-23). The strategy commits the council and to achieving a number of targets that aim to mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing emissions and ensuring that West Lothian is well adapted and prepared for changing weather patterns brought about by climate change.

The approach adopted in developing this strategy ensures that it provides sound governance and a robust framework for ensuring that Climate Change is addressed in all future relevant council strategies, policies, management and action plans. This will enable the council to turn the aspirations and related actions of this document into reality while creating a framework for supporting others in West Lothian such as communities and businesses to contribute to a net-zero area.

1.6 Scope and Ownership of the Strategy

Due to the wide scope of climate change and the related activities, every service area within the council will need to assist delivery of the strategy outcomes, alongside community planning and other partners. The Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration is the owner of this Climate

Change Strategy and has responsibility for climate change activity at a corporate level. In support of that role, each service area has a lead officer with the following areas of responsibility:

- Setting, monitoring and reviewing the actions and interim targets for mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.
- Reporting the activities of the Climate and Sustainability Working Group to service areas including through management and team meetings.
- Ensuring that climate change and sustainability understanding and action is embedded in all core corporate and business planning processes across the council.
- Prioritising the implementation of climate change actions and projects and removing obstacles to successful implementation.
- Reviewing and championing plans for the financial provision of climate change projects.
- Promoting a culture of low carbon and sustainable behaviour within the council as a whole and amongst staff at all levels.
- Supporting the council's budget strategy through reducing the cost and impact of the council's use of resources, including water, energy, and transport fuel.

Heads of Service have ultimate responsibility for climate change actions and targets within their service area although they may delegate their responsibility to a Service Manager to ensure that day to day management responsibilities are clear and that delegated decision making is undertaken at the appropriate level.

The Climate Change and Sustainability Working Group (CCSWG) has responsibility for identifying and ensuring delivery of the council's climate change outcomes, and assessing, informing and influencing progress on actions and targets. Progress reports from the CCSWG will be provided to the Executive Management Team and Corporate Management Team on a biannual basis to ensure that there is corporate oversight of progress against strategy objectives. The CCSWG also functions as the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) thematic forum and is responsible for taking forward the LOIP actions in relation to the environment. All performance indicators under the environment outcome in the LOIP are governed through the CCSWG. Performance against the outcome is reviewed at meetings, and reported back to the CPP Steering Group by the lead officer. The CPP Board also receive and scrutinise the performance reports. The lead officer for the group is the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration. Further details on governance can be found in Appendix 2.

2 Council Priorities

2.1 Corporate Plan – Transforming Your Council

The council has set eight priorities in the current Corporate Plan (2018/19 to 2022/23) in consultation with the local community, partners, stakeholders and our staff. These priorities represent will help our community to grow and succeed and as a result, will be a focus for council resources in the years ahead as we strive to deliver positive change in each one. Figure 1 below illustrates where the Climate Change Strategy will directly contribute or support the delivery of each council priority or enabler:

Council Priorities	Climate Change Strategy
1. Improving attainment and positive destinations	✓
2. Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years	✓
3. Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality	✓
4. Improving the quality of life for older people	✓
5. Improving the employment position in West Lothian	✓
6. Delivering positive outcomes on health	✓
7. Reducing crime and improving community safety	✓
8. Protecting the built and natural environment	✓

To ensure that the Climate Change Strategy contributes to the council's aim of making West Lothian the best possible place to live, work and do business, six Climate Change Strategy Outcomes (CCS Outcomes) have been identified:

- **Outcome 1 – Energy:** We will continue to reduce the council's own carbon footprint and encourage and support others in West Lothian to reduce theirs.
- **Outcome 2 – Transport:** We encourage sustainable transport and active travel by implementing measures to help people make smarter, sustainable travel choices, supported by low emission transport networks & infrastructure while further reducing our own fleet emissions.
- **Outcome 3 – Waste:** We encourage householders and businesses to make the right choices when disposing of waste and will support the drive for sustainability, reducing the environmental impact of the residents of West Lothian.
- **Outcome 4 – Adaptation, Resilience & Biodiversity:** We will continue to build a resilient and well adapted West Lothian where natural ecosystems are protected, sustainably used and

strengthened while services, communities and places are adapting to cope with climate change impacts (including land use, buildings and infrastructure).

- **Outcome 5 – Land Use and Management:** We understand the scope and benefits of local carbon offsetting and manage our publicly owned land assets in a way that contributes to our path to net-zero.
- **Outcome 6 – Embedding Climate Action:** We embed climate action in our policies and practices across the council and create a culture of sustainability and resource efficiency.

Further details on the CCS outcomes and their associated actions are provided in section five of the strategy.

The council has already demonstrated a significant commitment to tackling the climate emergency by taking action to reduce our impact on the environment and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The strategy outcomes set out how we will build on the progress made to date on climate change related issues and support the council's priorities going forward.

2.2 Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

West Lothian's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2013-2023, 'Achieving Positive Outcomes' commits the council and its partners to work together to make sure that West Lothian is the best place possible to live, work and do business in for everyone.

Helping to achieve Scotland's national outcomes for the environment and building a sustainable West Lothian is a key priority for the Community Planning Partnership. This means valuing and enjoying our built and natural environment, and protecting and enhancing it for future generations. It also involves managing our natural resources in a more sustainable way, and working together to reduce the impact of climate change. The council is committed to working with its partners on mitigating and adapting to climate change and promoting sustainable development and the LOIP includes the outcome "*We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment*".

3 The Path to Net-Zero

3.1 Progress to Date

Council Emissions

In order to develop a pathway to net-zero, it is important to understand our current position. The council has been reporting annual emissions since 2007, originally as a signatory to Scotland's Climate Change Declaration and more recently as part of the Public Bodies Duties set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. This provides us with clear, consistent and comprehensive data on our emissions since our baseline year of 2013/14.

In our 2019/20 report, emissions from our activities totalled 36,635 tonnes CO₂e^{vi}, a reduction of 24,426 (40%) from our baseline footprint of 61,061 tonnes.

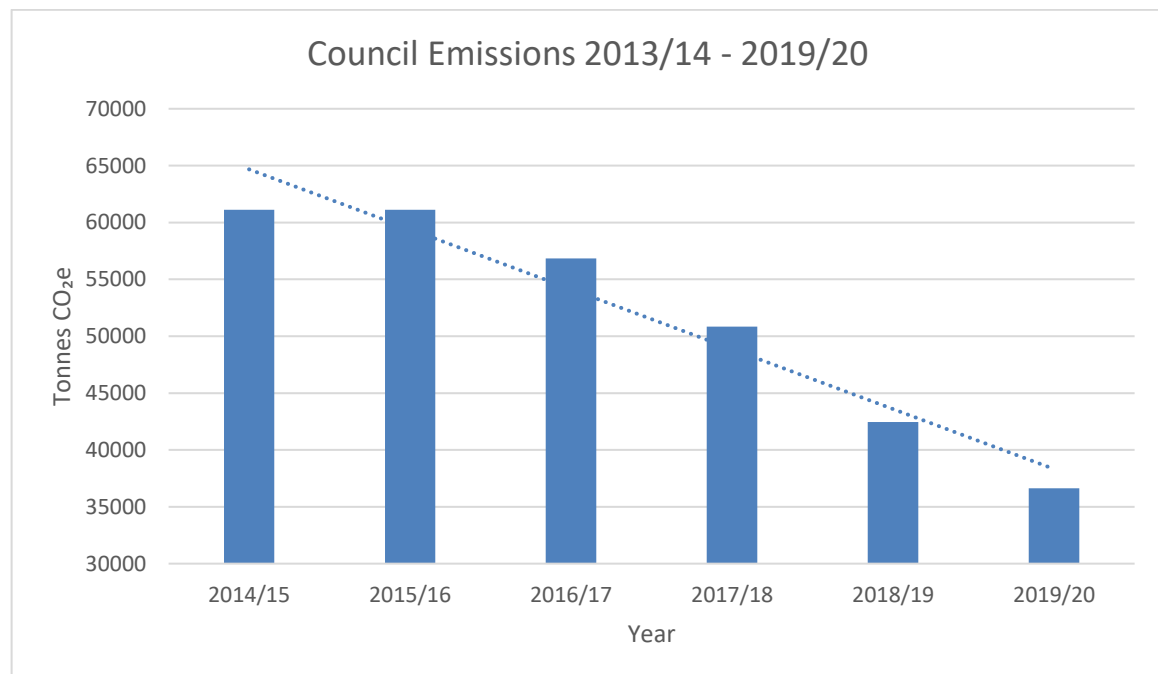


Figure 1 – Council Emissions CO₂e 2013/14 – 2019/20

The scope of the council's carbon footprint includes energy consumption in non-domestic council owned operational buildings, water supply and treatment, different waste streams, transport (including own-use mileage), and all external lighting. As outlined in figure 2, the overall emissions split has not changed considerably over that period, although the three overarching streams (utilities, waste & travel) have all contributed to the overall decrease. Full details of the breakdown of the council's emissions in 2019/20 are provided in Appendix 1.

The council will keep the scope of emissions under review, and will investigate additional scope 3 emissions in future strategy updates.

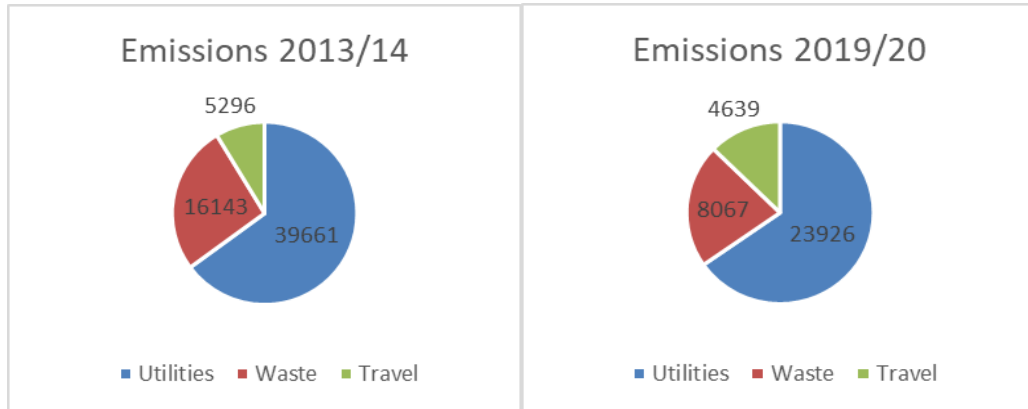


Figure 2 – Council Emissions Comparison – 2013/14 v 2019/20

There are a number of direct actions that have contributed to our emissions reductions including the implementation of energy efficiency projects, replacing street lighting with low energy LED equivalents and investing in renewable and low carbon technologies such as biomass boilers and solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. Another key driver has been a reduction in the emissions factor for grid electricity. This factor is applied to our consumption figure to establish our emissions and has reduced considerably over time as the carbon intensity of the grid has reduced. This has been a result of the shift from the use of traditional carbon-based fuels such as coal and gas for electricity generation to cleaner sources such as wind and solar. It is anticipated that the emissions factor for electricity will continue to reduce, with targets for the national grid to be net-zero carbon by 2050. It is this decarbonisation that is driving the transition from fossil fuels to electricity for heating and transport.

West Lothian Wide Emissions

Statistical data for carbon dioxide emissions at a local authority level is published annually by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)^{vii} and includes estimated emissions from the industrial and commercial sector, domestic emissions including from gas and electricity consumption and emissions from transport. From 2014 the dataset also includes emissions from land use, land-use change and forestry.

West Lothian's per capita emissions have reduced by 1.4 tonnes (19%) since our baseline year of 2013/14, and while this is positive, more will need to be done to accelerate progress. The data highlights some of the key challenges to be faced in achieving a net-zero area in future. As outlined in Table 2 (below), West Lothian has a rapidly growing population and therefore demand for council and private sector services increases. In addition, while every other sector has decreased, transport emissions have actually risen since the baseline year, influenced mainly by road travel and the West Lothian's strategy location within the motorway and 'A' road networks.

Year	Industry Total	Commercial Total	Public Sector Total	Domestic Total	Transport Total	LULUCF Net Emissions	Grand Total	Population ('000s, mid-year estimate)	Per Capita Emissions (t)
2013	219.6	190.5	60.1	384.3	383.3	35.2	1,273.0	176.2	7.2
2014	186.9	149.7	53.3	324.2	384.5	34.0	1,132.6	177.2	6.4
2015	194.3	130.0	51.9	317.3	394.7	33.5	1,121.7	178.6	6.3
2016	195.2	104.2	39.4	302.2	398.1	58.8	1,097.9	180.1	6.1
2017	199.1	101.9	32.0	285.6	405.4	30.3	1,054.4	181.3	5.8
2018	198.3	98.5	33.0	285.2	401.9	29.1	1,046.0	182.1	5.7
2019	210.2	114.3	35.9	279.6	388.4	28.1	1,056.4	183.1	5.8

Figure 3 – West Lothian area emissions by sector

The public sector figure used in Figure 3 consists of emissions from combustion of fuel in public sector buildings, such as schools, hospitals and offices. LULUCF refers to Land use, land use change and forestry. This relates to emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use such as settlements and commercial uses, land-use change, and forestry activities.

3.2 Net Zero Emissions Targets

National Targets

Net zero emissions are achieved when the emissions produced are balanced by those removed from the atmosphere. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets targets to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040 from a 1990 baseline year (with some exceptions using a 1995 baseline)^{viii}. To help ensure delivery of the long-term targets, the legislation also includes annual targets for every year to net-zero.

West Lothian Council Targets

As part of our response to the Climate Emergency, West Lothian Council aims to achieve a net-zero position by 2045 at the latest, in line with Scottish Government targets set out above. While the council uses a different baseline year, it was assumed in our previous Carbon Management Plans that council emissions had broadly followed national reductions and that our original 2020 reduction target of 20% would give us an equivalent reduction of 42% from 1990 levels (equalling the Scottish Governments original interim target). This would put the council's 1990 emissions figure at around 85,700 tonnes CO₂e. On that basis, the revised interim target of 56% by 2020 would equate to a figure of 37,708 tonnes CO₂e from the council's operations. In our last reporting year (2019/20), our actual emissions (rather than net) were 36,635 tonnes.

Based on this information, and in order to align with the wider Scottish Government goals, the council's new emissions targets are:

Target Year	Reduction Level (from 2013/14 Baseline)	West Lothian Council Target (Tonnes CO ₂ e)

Climate Change Strategy | 2021-2028

2028	61%	23,813
2030	65%	21,371
2040	86%	8,426
2045	Net-zero	0

Figure 4: West Lothian Council Net-zero Targets

To achieve this, the council must reduce the emissions generated from its operations to achieve a figure as close to zero as possible, and by 2045 ensure that we remove the same amount of greenhouse gases that we put into the atmosphere. Current levels of carbon offsetting from council owned land will be assessed during 2021/22 and an update provided to the Environment Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel in spring 2022.

The first interim target (2028) of 23,813 tonnes equates to an annual reduction figure of just over 5% per annum from our 2019/20 emissions figure as set out in figure 5 below. Progress against our emissions targets will be reviewed annually as part of our annual Climate Change Report and updated every five years.

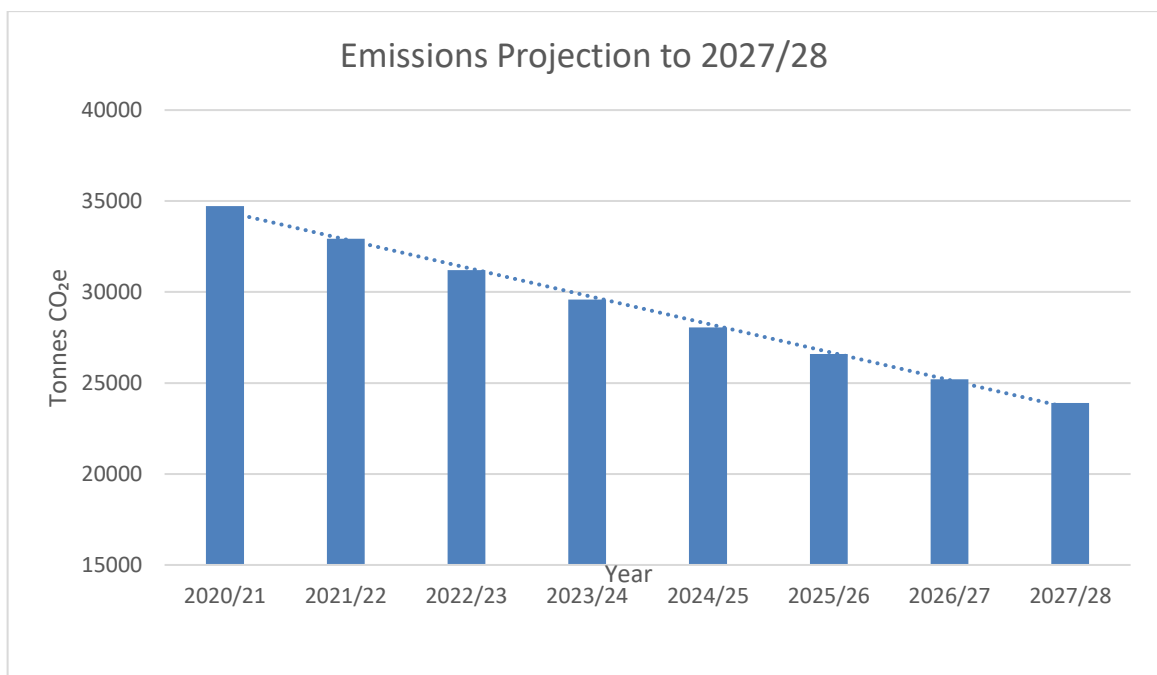


Figure 5: Emissions projection to 2028

Achieving a net zero emissions position will require significant financial, resource and infrastructure support from the Scottish Government and others. The council will continue to work with government, partners and other agencies to quantify the scale of the challenges presented and identify appropriate solutions.

West Lothian Wide Target

The council will encourage and support our partners, residents and businesses throughout West Lothian to reduce their emissions in line with the Scottish Government targets set out above. Achieving a net zero West Lothian will require significant support at a local and national level and will be significantly influenced by policies at a United Kingdom and Scottish Government level, particularly in relation to issues such as transport emissions where significant infrastructure and behavioural changes will be required.

4 Partnership & Community

Community Planning Partnership

It is recognised that a sustained partnership effort is required to achieve our net zero carbon target, involving all public agencies, businesses and communities across West Lothian. It is also important that the response to the Climate Emergency is community-led.

A great deal of work has been carried out to date to engage local partners and communities. The West Lothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board held a meeting themed around the Climate Emergency in September 2019. As a result of this meeting a CPP Climate Change Seminar was held to further discuss the common challenges, opportunities and potential for collaboration and partnership working. The session was facilitated by the Sustainable Scotland Network and was well attended by partners, council services, community councils and local young people. Emerging themes from the discussion included Legislation, Policy and Finance; Partnership and Leadership; Engagement, Awareness-Raising and Communication. A CPP action plan was developed based on these discussions, identifying the short, medium and long-term actions around how partners will work together to tackle the Climate Emergency.

These discussions also fed into development of the CPP's forthcoming revision to the 2013-23 Local Outcomes Improvement Plan. Taking a partnership approach to achieving net zero carbon was identified as a key priority by community planning partners and communities through the LOIP engagement process and will be a key area of focus in the new LOIP.

As part of the council's Climate Emergency Declaration in September 2019, it was recognised that youth engagement and involvement would play a key part in the response to the climate emergency. A climate change survey was carried out with young people in early 2021 with focus groups to follow as a result. The survey had 1,184 respondents and gathered important information around what climate change means to young people, their understanding of climate change and local activities, what changes are required around skills and knowledge, lifestyle, diet, land use and travel and ideas for how the council can support young people and wider communities around climate action. Key findings include:

- There is a good understanding on the global impacts of climate change and most young people appear to have a good understanding of how they can help tackle climate change.
- More education is required (in schools and across the community) to raise awareness of local activities already underway to tackle climate change and how young people and wider communities can make a difference. It was also felt that education should start at a younger age.
- Most respondents felt that climate change is already having a big impact on young people (e.g. in terms of the weather, air quality, worries for the future, not being listened to and pressure on young people to make changes).

West Lothian College held a Sustainability Summit in March 2019 to raise awareness of the Climate Emergency amongst staff and students, to discuss how to combat climate change at West Lothian College and to announce their decision for "no single use plastic" from March onwards. The council's Energy & Climate Change Manager and Community Planning Development Officer attended the Summit and delivered a workshop to students and staff, providing an overview of activities that the

council and CPP are undertaking to tackle the Climate Emergency and also to carry out some engagement. An online survey tool was used to gather further information on where climate change ranks in young people's priorities, what are the best ways to raise awareness with young people, what the young people would like to see happening locally to support climate action and how communities could be supported to do more. The information gathered provided valuable insight and will be used to shape the new LOIP and CPP Climate Change Strategy.

All of the above engagement has fed in to the Climate Change Strategy development process.

Wider West Lothian Community

Going forward, the council will improve collaboration with our partners and communities to identify and take forward actions to tackle the climate emergency, improving understanding amongst young people and the wider community on the impact of climate change and what individuals, communities, partners and businesses can do to help achieve net zero carbon.

In order to ensure that the response to the climate emergency is community led, the council will work with local organisations with an interest in climate change to develop a coordinated approach to climate action, sharing information and best practice.

The council's Economic Development & Regeneration Service continues to work with local business on the net zero carbon agenda. In addition to a regular series of free workshops on tackling the issues around the climate emergency, the council are also enabling firms to access expert help from specialist providers. A series of job grants have been developed so that local businesses can employ dedicated net zero Champions while creating higher-value job opportunities. The council will continue to support businesses they will play a critical part in achieving a net-zero West Lothian.

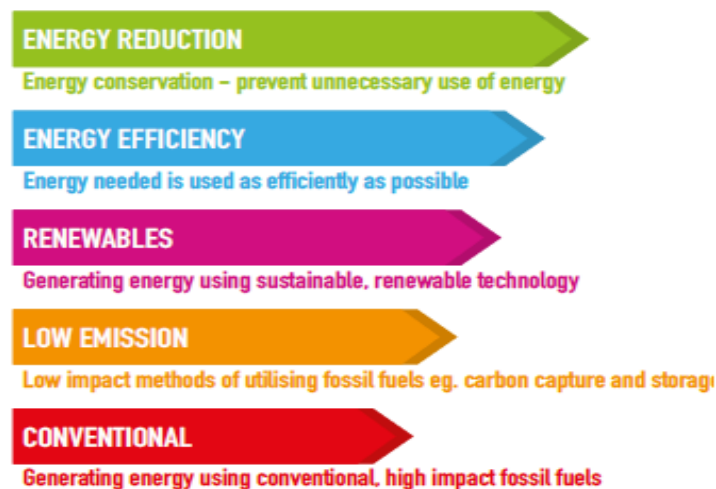
5 Strategy Outcomes

5.1 Outcome 1 – Energy: We continue to reduce the council’s own carbon footprint and encourage and support others in West Lothian to reduce theirs.

The Scottish Government published its Energy Strategy in 2017, setting out a pathway to 2050 and recognising some of the challenges and opportunities presented in developing our future energy systems.

Energy Hierarchy

To ensure that a balanced approach is taken to reducing our energy use, the council follows the general principles developed by the Scottish Government. The fundamental principle is to first reduce the amount of energy used in the first place, often through changing behaviours.



Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES)

At the heart of planning a place based, locally-led and tailored approach will be Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES). Once in place these local strategies will provide a framework for taking an area-based approach to heat and energy efficiency planning and delivery. LHEES will set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving their energy efficiency across an entire local authority area, supporting Scottish Government objectives to have 35% of heat for domestic buildings and 70% of heat and cooling for non-domestic buildings supplied using low carbon heat technologies, where technically feasible by 2032. For each local authority area, the strategies will draw on a consistent, data driven methodology to:

- set out how each segment of the building stock needs to change to meet national objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty;

- identify heat decarbonisation zones, setting out the primary measures for reducing emissions within each zone, with a view to these zones acting as a potential trigger for regulation in the future if required, and;
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

It is proposed by the Scottish Government that the development of a LHEES will become a statutory duty with strategies to be in place by 2023.

ACTION E1: The Council will develop a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy by 2023, building on the experiences from the work undertaken in the phase 2 pilot and in line with Scottish Government guidance.

Energy Use in Council Buildings

Current Energy Use & Carbon Emissions

The council's most recent Climate Change Declaration Report 2019/20, submitted to the Scottish Government in November 2020, highlighted an overall emissions figure for the organisation of 36,635 tonnes CO₂e. Energy consumed in our buildings accounted for 19,925 tonnes (or 54.4%) of the total amount, making our estate the largest contributor to our overall emissions.

Emissions from council buildings have been on a continued downward trend since our emissions baseline year of 2013/14, falling from 30,808 tonnes.

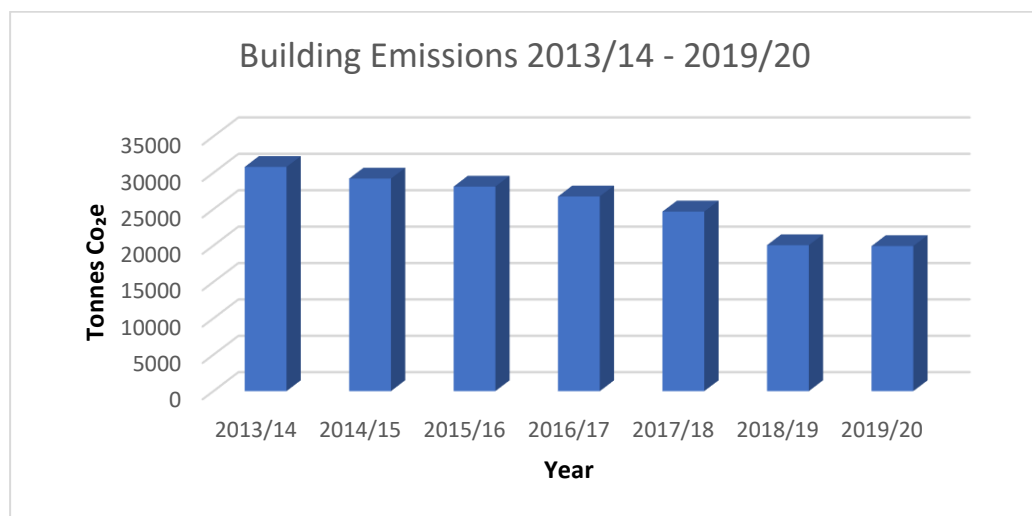


Figure 6: Emissions from buildings 2013/14 - 2019/20

There are a number of direct actions that have contributed to the reductions in our emissions including the implementation of energy efficiency projects and investment in renewable and low carbon technologies such as biomass boilers and solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. Another key driver has been a reduction in the emissions factor for grid electricity as explained in section 3.1. It is anticipated that the emissions factor for electricity will continue to reduce, with targets for the grid to be net-zero carbon by 2050. It is this de-carbonisation that is driving the transition from fossil fuels to electricity for heating and transport.

Improving Energy Efficiency & Decarbonising Existing Buildings

Decarbonising the existing building stock will present significant challenges for the council. It should first be recognised that our existing buildings, at least in the short to medium term, will never reach a zero-carbon position and that we will have to offset some emissions to achieve net-zero. There are a number of factors influencing this including the age of our building stock and the costs & complexity of upgrading. That does not, however, prevent us from striving to reduce our energy consumption and therefore emissions as much as possible.

The most significant challenge will be in managing the transition from current fossil fuelled heating systems to low carbon alternatives.

ACTION E2: The council will continue to invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy and other low carbon solutions to reduce our energy consumption and related emissions. We will reduce our emissions in buildings in line with the net-zero targets set out in section 3.2 of the Strategy.

Improving Energy Efficiency & Decarbonising Future Buildings

The council is already demonstrating a strong commitment to ensuring that our future buildings are as energy efficient as possible. This has been demonstrated recently with the development of the first public Passivhaus^{ix} early learning and childcare facility in Blackridge. Future education buildings will conform with the strict energy efficiency targets set out in the Scottish government's Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) and the BB101 (2018) standards for ventilation, thermal comfort and indoor air quality. The LEIP targets set out a challenging objective of achieving a measurable total energy consumption of 67kWh/m² in operational use, far lower than current averages.



Image 1: Blackridge Early Years facility

In the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 Update published in December 2020, the Scottish Government has also committed to work collaboratively with the public sector to introduce a net-zero public buildings standard and the council will monitor progress on these developments and implement as required.

ACTION E3: The council will, as a minimum, achieve the standards set out in the LEIP and BB101 and will implement new standards for net-zero public buildings when introduced.

West Lothian Council Housing

Existing Stock and the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing post 2020 (EESH2)

The Scottish Government Guidance for Social Landlords on the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) was introduced in March 2014 and encouraged landlords to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. The first milestone for social landlords to meet for social rented homes was 31 December 2020. A second milestone was confirmed in June 2019, for social rented houses to meet by December 2032 (EESH2). Decarbonising the existing housing stock and meeting the EESH2 milestones will present significant challenges for the council. It should be noted that as with the council's non-domestic buildings our existing housing stock, at least in the short to medium term, is unlikely to reach a net zero-carbon position and that we will have to offset some emissions to achieve net-zero.

The council's Capital Programme of works will focus on the elements in the Route Map below to meet the EESH2 standards. As time moves forward and as innovations in technology allow, further solutions may be investigated. Solutions to be explored will be around heat recovery technology, such as waste water, flue gas, and ventilation. Other elements which will be explored include floor insulation, Internal Wall Insulation where technically feasible, and provision of LED light bulbs and lighting.

Year	Lofts	Walls	Heating	Windows & Doors
2025	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system	All are double glazed
2032	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system A – rated boiler or low carbon alternative	Triple glazed windows High performance doors
2040	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system A – rated boiler or low carbon alternative	Triple glazed windows High performance doors

2045	Minimum of 270mm insulation	All cavities filled and all solid walls to have External Wall Insulation (EWI)	Full central heating system – low carbon solution	Triple glazed windows High performance doors
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Energy Standards for New Build Council Housing

Emissions from buildings are responsible for approximately 20% of Scotland's total greenhouse gas emissions. Energy efficient buildings reduce the demand for heat. Regardless of which system supplies a building's heating requirements, it is important that action is taken to limit the amount of energy that needs to be delivered to a new home to meet the heating demand to the best levels practicable. We also have to ensure that demand for heat in our housing stock is as low as possible, to meet our fuel poverty obligations and to protect consumers from high energy costs and cold homes. The Scottish Government are reviewing the energy standards which are included in Building Regulations. These will improve the energy efficiency of new buildings and include measures in support of the move to low carbon and renewable heat.

The council will make a strong commitment to ensuring that our future new build housing stock is as energy efficient as possible. It is proposed that all new build council housing stock are designed and constructed to meet the requirements to achieve an A – Rated Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) in terms of both the building's 'energy efficiency rating', and the building's 'environmental impact rating', which shows the buildings CO₂ emissions. In addition to this it is proposed that all future new build council housing stock should meet all 8 requirements^x to achieve the current Scottish Building Standards "Silver" Standard.

ACTION E4: The council will investigate the implementation of strict energy efficiency standards recommended in The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report "Reducing emissions in Scotland – 2019 Progress Report to Parliament"^{xi} and report our findings in 2022. The standards state that homes must achieve 'ultra-high' levels of energy efficiency consistent with a space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m²/year, a figure similar to the space heating demand of a Passivhaus building.

Alternative Heating Sources for New Build and Existing Stock

Although significant headway has been made in the decarbonisation Scotland's homes and businesses (this figure represents a 24% reduction in emissions from 1990 the base reporting year for carbon dioxide emissions, Scotland cannot meet its legislated climate change targets unless virtually all emissions from heating (and cooling) buildings are eliminated. This means, in effect that by 2045, zero emissions heating will need to be deployed across Scotland's building stock. Through the use of zero direct emissions at point of use heating systems - coupled with very high levels of energy efficiency in new homes – West Lothian Council have the opportunity to greatly reduce our emissions, and move towards our net zero carbon targets.

ACTION E5: The Council will produce a revised and updated Employers Requirements Design Guide for council Housing in 2022/23 as part of the council's pathway to net-zero.

Renewable Energy

Using renewable energy rather than fossil fuels can significantly decrease energy related emissions and will play a key role in achieving net zero. The pace of investment and share of renewable energy as a proportion of the energy we generate and consume in Scotland has increased considerably over the past decade as the cost of technologies fall and efficiencies continue to rise. In 2020, the equivalent of 97.4% of Scotland's electricity use was generated from renewable sources such as solar and wind.

The council has already implemented a range of renewable and low carbon energy projects including the installation of solar panels and heat pumps in non-domestic buildings and council housing and biomass boilers at six sites including West Lothian Civic Centre. There is significant potential to further increase the renewable energy generation using West Lothian Council assets, including larger scale solutions on council owned land. In addition, the integration of technologies such as battery storage can help to ensure that the power generated is used when most required, helping to balance future challenges presented by electric vehicle charging and the decarbonisation of our heating systems.

Action E6: The council will continue to implement renewable and low carbon solutions where technically and financially feasible, will investigate the potential for large scale renewable installations on council owned land and will identify opportunities for the use of new technologies such as battery technology where appropriate.

Summary of Actions

Action E1: The Council will develop a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy by 2023, building on the experiences from the work undertaken in the phase 2 pilot and in line with Scottish government guidance.
Action E2: The council will continue to invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy and other low carbon solutions to reduce our energy consumption and related emissions. We will reduce our emissions in buildings in line with the net-zero targets set out in section 3.2 of the Strategy.
Action E3: The council will, as a minimum, achieve the standards set out in the LEIP and BB101 and will implement new standards for net-zero public buildings when introduced.
Action E4: The council will investigate the implementation of strict energy efficiency standards recommended in The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) report "Reducing emissions in Scotland – 2019 Progress Report to Parliament" and report our findings in 2022. The standards state that homes must achieve 'ultra-high' levels of energy efficiency consistent with a space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m ² /year, a figure similar to the space heating demand of a Passivhaus building.
Action E5: The Council will produce a revised and updated Employers Requirements Design Guide for council Housing in 2022/23 as part of the council's pathway to net-zero.
Action E6: The council will continue to implement renewable and low carbon solutions where technically and financially feasible, will investigate the potential for large scale renewable

installations on council owned land and will identify opportunities for the use of new technologies such as battery technology where appropriate.

5.2 Outcome 2 -Transport: We encourage sustainable transport and active travel by implementing measures to help people make smarter, sustainable travel choices, supported by low emission transport networks & infrastructure while further reducing our own fleet emissions.

Emissions from transport amounts to approximately 37% of the total CO2 emissions for the West Lothian area. As highlighted in section 3.1 of the Strategy, it is also the only major sector where emissions have increased since the council's baseline year. Achieving our emissions targets can only be achieved with modal shift away from petrol/diesel car use, and significant improvements in the transport sector. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-22 sets out national ambitions to remove the majority of diesel buses from public transport by the end of 2023, reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030, decarbonising Scotland's railways by 2035 and phasing out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

West Lothian's strategic location at the heart of the national road and rail network means that a significant proportion of movements between Glasgow and Edinburgh and other parts of the central belt of Scotland travel through the area. A large proportion of the transport related emissions in this area – almost 70% - are generated by national traffic using the 'A' road and motorway networks and are therefore outwith the Council's direct influence. The Council can, however, influence the travel patterns of residents and businesses within our area using a range of positive measures to help encourage a reduction in car use in line with national targets. Measures include improved walking and cycling opportunities, working with bus operators to enhance public transport, expanding the network of Park and Ride facilities and expanding the network of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points. Through these actions, the Council will contribute to the national target of reducing vehicle kilometres by 20% (by 2030).

ACTION T1: The Council will continue its work with partners to develop road and passenger transport infrastructure to reduce car use through mechanisms such as the Edinburgh City Region Deal and Bus Partnership Funds.

Travel Hierarchy

Scotland's National Transport Strategy highlights the importance of the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy in decision making - promoting walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared transport options in preference to single occupancy private car use for the movement of people.



Active Travel

Active travel is primarily defined as making journeys by walking, cycling and wheeling. It can also include horse-riding (and even running and non-motorised water-based transport.) It is an approach to travel and transport that focuses on physical activity as opposed to motorised means and which can lead to improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

The council's current Active Travel Plan (ATP) for West Lothian, 2016-21 "Making Active Connections" is a plan to link people to places by active travel. It is not just about physical connections however - it is also a framework for mainstreaming active travel in West Lothian, and creating a culture where active travel becomes the norm for suitable everyday trips. To achieve this, it is crucial that West Lothian Council works successfully with external partners, schools and local communities, and "joins up" policies and projects delivered by different Services and teams across the Council.

Embedding positive behaviours at an early age is essential, and schools throughout West Lothian encourage pupils to use active travel methods, emphasising the health, wellbeing and environmental benefits.

ACTION T2: The council will develop a new ATP for the period 2022 – 2027 to replace the existing ATP, involving relevant stakeholders in drawing up its objectives. It will seek to continue to design and implement priority active travel schemes arising from the new strategy using the council's capital programme as well as external funding. Non-physical measures will also be pursued.

Public Transport

While the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a negative shift in behaviour and a reduction in the use of public transport, the council is committed to maintaining a public transport network that meets the majority of transport needs within its geographic boundary and provides connections to neighbouring areas. A key council activity is the augmentation of passenger transport services provided by commercial and voluntary sector operators to provide a comprehensive network.

The council's current Passenger Transport Strategy sets the parameters for service provision and the priorities for resourcing services in future. It is intended to allow the development of an affordable network of connections between communities and to optimise service efficiencies so that sustainable transport needs are met. This connectivity is particularly important for communities where alternative methods of transport are more limited.

The council has also established a West Lothian Bus Alliance in partnership with local bus operators, SEStran and Bus Users Scotland which seeks to create a smarter, more successful set of bus services that maximises the potential of the sector in the West Lothian area for the benefit of the area's people.

Action T3: The council will develop a new Passenger Transport Strategy to replace the existing strategy involving relevant stakeholders in drawing up its objectives ensuring that it continues to provide sustainable and affordable public transport options.

Action T4: The council will continue to develop the West Lothian Bus Alliance in partnership with its members outlining climate action as a core priority while also prioritising reducing inequalities, helping to deliver inclusive economic growth, and improving the health and wellbeing of local communities.

Decarbonising the Council's Fleet

Emissions from the council's vehicle fleet in 2019/20 were 4,489 tonnes CO₂e or just over 12% of the overall reported figure of 36,635 tonnes. In order to reduce emissions from fleet operations, the Scottish Government have stated that they will work with public bodies to phase out petrol and diesel cars, as well as phasing out the need for new petrol and diesel light commercial vehicles by 2025. There is an acknowledgement that heavy goods vehicle technologies are less developed but again the government will work with public bodies and the automotive sector to phase out the need for all new petrol and diesel vehicles in the public sector fleet by 2030. The council currently has a fleet asset register of over 1,100 pieces of Fleet and Mechanical Equipment which are used across all services to deliver statutory and discretionary activities across West Lothian.

The council will consider all possible alternatives to our existing fleet including electric and hydrogen powered vehicles. Providing the infrastructure for these alternative options will present significant challenges. There is currently capacity for charging 30 vehicles at sites across West Lothian including twenty standard and one rapid charger at Whitehill Service Centre. To allow for any increase in the electric vehicle fleet a significant amount of additional charging capacity will be needed, which is likely to require the development and upgrade of electric infrastructure capacity.

Reducing the council's Fleet emissions means that we not only need to decarbonise our existing models of transport but also change the ways in which vehicles are used to deliver services across West Lothian. The decarbonising of the council's Fleet should not be limited to a move away from traditional petrol and diesel fuelled vehicles, rather it will need to be supported by a change in traditional ways of working which will see the council able to reduce its Fleet and Mechanical Equipment assets (and in turn emissions) without impacting on service provision. As part of our Covid recovery, the council will look to build on lessons learned from adopting new ways of working during the pandemic, and will look to minimise car travel through a combination of the following:

- Increased use of digital technology such as video conferencing;
- Adopting more flexible working arrangements such as hybrid working (workplace/homeworking), and;
- Implementing a sustainable travel hierarchy

ACTION T5: A short term working group has been established from services across the council. The working group will develop a clear and joined up asset management plan which will consider, amongst other issues, the timing and financial impact of fleet replacement, infrastructure requirements and the impacts on service delivery.

Public Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

Both the Scottish and United Kingdom governments have set target dates for the phasing out of conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2032. This presents a significant challenge in ensuring that there is sufficient charging capacity for the anticipated steep rise in EV ownership. In order to support the transition from petrol and diesel vehicle to low carbon equivalents, the council has developed a network of publicly available electric vehicle (EV) charge points funded by Transport Scotland's Local Authority Infrastructure Programme.

In July 2021, the Scottish Futures Trust published a report which considers the future direction of the financing and delivery of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure in Scotland. In order to ensure that the wider network across West Lothian is developed in a way that maximises the opportunities available while still being sustainable, the council will work with Transport Scotland, SFT and others to develop a plan for future infrastructure developments.

It is important to note, however, that while the council's role in providing charging facilities is key, it should not be seen as solely the council's responsibility. In the rest of the United Kingdom, development of charging networks is being driven by commercial operators who are installing charge points at key locations including service stations and supermarkets. Commercial units which charge for use are already in place in West Lothian and further development of these should be encouraged. The introduction of tariffs to council operated charge points has the potential to create more favourable market conditions for private sector investment in network development. In addition, electric vehicle owners with off-street parking are able to access funding to install their own charge point and should be encouraged to do so where possible.

ACTION T6: The council will continue to signpost individuals and organisations to relevant funding to support the move to electric vehicles and will work with Transport Scotland and others to develop an EV Infrastructure plan for West Lothian which will be published in summer 2022. As part of this plan, the council will consider the introduction of tariffs for EV charging.

Summary of Actions

Action T1: The Council will continue its work with partners to develop road and passenger transport infrastructure to reduce car use through mechanisms such as the Edinburgh City Region Deal and Bus Partnership Funds.
Action T2: The council will develop a new ATP for the period 2022 – 2027 to replace the existing ATP, involving relevant stakeholders in drawing up its objectives. It will seek to continue to design and implement priority active travel schemes arising from the new strategy using the council's capital programme as well as external funding. Non-physical measures will also be pursued.
Action T3: The council will develop a new Passenger Transport Strategy to replace the existing strategy involving relevant stakeholders in drawing up its objectives ensuring that it continues to provide sustainable and affordable public transport options.
Action T4: The council will continue to develop the West Lothian Bus Alliance in partnership with its members outlining climate action as a core priority while also prioritising reducing inequalities, helping to deliver inclusive economic growth, and improving the health and wellbeing of local communities.
Action T5: A short term working group has been established from services across the council. The working group will develop a clear and joined up asset management plan which will consider, amongst other issues, the timing and financial impact of fleet replacement, infrastructure requirements and the impacts on service delivery. The group will report early in 2022

Action T6: The council will continue to signpost individuals and organisations to relevant funding to support the move to electric vehicles and will work with Transport Scotland and others to develop an EV Infrastructure plan for West Lothian which will be published in summer 2022. As part of this plan, the council will consider the introduction of tariffs for EV charging.

5.3 Outcome 3 -Waste: We encourage householders and businesses to make the right choices when disposing of waste and will support the drive for sustainability, reducing the environmental impact of the residents of West Lothian.

Emissions from waste in the council's latest Climate Change Declaration Report were 8,069 tonnes CO₂e, or 22% of the overall emissions for that year. While the council has made significant progress in reducing our waste emissions from our baseline year figure of 14,878 tonnes, waste emissions are still the second largest element of the council's carbon footprint after energy used in our buildings and street lighting.

The Scottish Government has set several ambitious targets for reducing waste and increasing recycling. By 2025, the national aims are to:

- reduce total waste arising in Scotland by 15% against 2011 levels.
- reduce food waste by 33% against 2013 levels.
- recycle 70% of remaining waste.
- send no more than 5% of remaining waste to landfill.

The council is working to support these national objectives, with targets aligned to those set out above.

The Waste Hierarchy

The Scottish Government issued numerous documents to support the introduction of the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Waste Hierarchy forms the cornerstone of the Scottish Government's regulations and the wider zero waste agenda. The hierarchy is shown in the diagram below.



Ideally waste should be prevented at the outset, be it through design or use extra line in reducing consumption. Where this is not possible the aim should be to move waste materials up through the

hierarchy increasing their environmental sustainability. The quality of the waste material is fundamental to ensuring that materials can move up through the hierarchy. This can be achieved through sustainable design, to enhance the ability for material to be repaired, reused or recycled, but it is also achieved through the collection and handling process to keep high quality recyclable materials in a good condition for processing.

Recycling & Waste Services

To increase the amount of waste recycled, the council continues to work towards Scotland's Zero Waste Targets in partnership with our residents. West Lothian signed the national "Household Recycling Charter" at the beginning of 2019 and is working with Zero Waste Scotland to progress the aims of the associated Code of Practice, which will introduce its aims to promote a more consistent household recycling service across Local Authorities, to increase recycling participation, quantity and quality and support the circular economy opportunities in Scotland. West Lothian has reviewed its Service Standards to suit the current service provision and take recognition of the national aims of the charter.

It should be noted, however, that global recycling markets have become more stringent about the quality of sorted materials, leading to reduced demand for low quality recyclates. This has had a knock-on effect over the last 2 years, with papermills in the UK and EU having a ready supply of cleaner paper and card from the market. This makes poor-quality paper and card sorted from the comingled recycle from blue bins unmarketable, so it is sent to energy from waste. The council intends to introduce Twin Stream Recycling collections, as described below, to separate and improve the quality of materials collected from households.

Introduction of Twin Stream Recycling collections

The council has agreed through the committee process to introduce Twin Stream recycling, planned for June 2022 in order to improve the quality and marketability of materials collected from households.

In 2020 65% of material collected from households as comingled recycle was rejected after being sorted as it had been contaminated by other materials such as food and drink. In the first half of 2021, 83% has been rejected. Households are not presenting the appropriate clean and dry materials within the container. The main carrier of food and liquids into the mixed containers is via plastic food containers and plastic bottles containing liquid.

Currently all paper, card, metals and plastics are accepted within the household blue bin, a fully comingled dry mixed recycle collection, collected on an alternate week basis. Twin stream collections will separate paper and card from the plastic, cans and containers stream. Placing them within separate containers for collection should result in dry paper and card and materials that can be separated mechanically, improving the quality and marketability of the materials.

Whilst changing the collection method assists with the drive to improve quality, it is essential that any change is supported by council-wide engagement and awareness raising with householders to demonstrate the impact of the current poor presentation as well as targeted intervention where

required. Engagement and education will use a system seen nationally as a standardised route to improving performance within all Local Authorities. Add an extra line on what it actually is

ACTION W1: The council will implement the Twin Stream Recycling Project by mid-2022 and monitor progress following this to determine impact.

Zero Waste Towns Project

Waste and Recycling Services bid for and received additional internal revenue funding for the 'Zero Waste Towns Intervention Project'.

This will support delivery of the council's emissions reduction targets and also support the Scottish Government revised Code of Practice under the Household Recycling Charter (once complete). The funding will enable the project, trialled in Kirknewton, to be extended throughout West Lothian. The trial had a positive impact on the environment by reducing contamination in blue bins and improving reuse/recycling rates. After using performance data to determine a baseline position in relation to tonnage in waste streams and contamination levels, an additional project officer will actively engage with community representatives to determine what local interventions could improve performance before putting these into place.

ACTION W2: The council will implement the Zero Waste Towns Project from 2022 to 2023 and monitor progress during and after to determine impact.

Summary of Actions

Action W1: The council will implement the Twin Stream Recycling Project by mid-2022 and monitor progress following this to determine impact
Action W2: The council will implement the Zero Waste Towns Project from 2022 to 2023 and monitor progress during and after to determine impact.

5.4 Outcome 4 - Adaptation, Resilience & Biodiversity: We continue to build a resilient and well adapted West Lothian where natural ecosystems are protected, sustainably used and strengthened while services, communities and places are adapting to cope with climate change impacts.

Adaptation & Resilience

A changing climate is likely to pose both threats and opportunities for the economy, environment and communities of West Lothian. Climate adaptation is about enabling our economy, society and natural systems to be resilient to climate impacts and take advantage of any beneficial opportunities.

Adaptation is key to making Services across the council more resilient to the impacts of severe weather events and long-term climatic changes, reducing the impacts on property, service delivery and the wider West Lothian community.

When the council adopted its first Climate Change Strategy in 2015, one of the key actions from the strategy was to prepare a Climate Change Adaption Action Plan. Due to resource issues, and in order to ensure that the Action Plan took account of the most recent available information, consultants SNIFFER (Scotland, Northern Ireland Foundation For Environmental Research) who lead the Scottish Government "Adaptation Scotland" programme, were employed to prepare the Action Plan based on examples from other Scottish local authorities.

A Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) prepared in 2018 found that the council has already experienced a range of adverse impacts on property and services as a result of extreme weather events.

The findings identified that between 2000 and 2015, the council spent approximately £40 million on maintenance and repair costs as either a direct or indirect result of extreme weather events, not accounting for loss of staff time and costs due to impairment of service delivery.

The draft Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan provides a set of common sense, resource efficient actions that will deliver long term benefits for assets, services and communities. It establishes clear adaptation outcomes, actions and allows for monitoring and evaluation of progress on a regular basis.

The Adaptation Action Plan identifies seven adaptation outcomes which the council will work towards through implementing over 70 actions over a 5 year period:

1. Communities;
2. Business & logistics;
3. Built environment;
4. Natural environment;
5. Transport and travel;
6. Partnerships, knowledge and skills; and
7. Strategic planning and investment.

ACTION A1: The draft West Lothian Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan will be updated and refreshed by March 2022 to take account of recent Scottish Government policy and the council's 10 Services Units will be re-engaged with to correlate the original actions proposed with current budgets and operations.

Through adaptation, the council can achieve cost-savings and improved efficiency as well as provide climate ready services to the public enabling more resilient and sustainable built and natural environments, communities and partnerships.

Whilst the challenges faced as a result of the impacts of climate change are significant, good adaptation provides an opportunity to deliver both short term benefits and greater progress against long term council outcomes as well as addressing legislative requirements for public bodies to adapt as mandated by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.

Biodiversity and Climate Change

The Scottish Government announced in December 2020 plans to protect at least 30% of Scotland's land for nature by 2030 – and to examine options to extend this further. A new 'Statement of Intent on Biodiversity', sets out priorities for tackling biodiversity loss as part of a strategy to combat climate change and ecological decline. Currently, 37% of Scotland's marine environment is safeguarded, with 23% of terrestrial land protected for nature.

Other commitments include plans to support new, locally driven projects that aim to improve ecological connectivity and the publication of a new national strategy on biodiversity within 12 months of the international climate change summit in Glasgow, COP26, rescheduled for November 2021.

The current West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) (2009) is over 10 years old and while it is still an important baseline document it does require to be updated. The council has recently recruited three Ecology and Biodiversity Officers who will review and update the LBAP to produce a new 10-year plan. They will also provide effective and efficient oversight on the progress of the associated actions, harnessing community involvement and ensuring areas are developed to reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities who will have a key role to play in conserving and enhancing biodiversity. As the LBAP progresses officers will share opportunities for volunteers and communities to support biodiversity actions across the area. As part of the development of the LBAP, and through allocated funding of £60,000 from the West Lothian Climate Emergency Fund, specialist consultant resource, supported by council officers, will be contracted to prepare a Natural Capital Audit of the council's landholdings that will allow us to identify opportunities for habitat enhancement across West Lothian, identifying ecosystem services that are provided by our natural assets. The Natural Capital Audit will also allow for the identification of the council's carbon baseline in any future carbon sequestration projects.

ACTION A2: The council will engage with relevant stakeholders and prepare a new ten-year West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2022, focusing on protecting and enhancing existing habitats and joining up green networks.

An emphasis on ‘pocket parks’ and other green spaces could help to improve access to nature as part of the ‘20-minute neighbourhood’ approach being developed through the Scottish Government’s National Planning Framework 4 that will also develop “ambitious new proposals which will deliver positive effects for biodiversity from development, without the need for overly complex metrics, and how they can support wider approaches to natural infrastructure.”

Peatland, as stores of carbon, are important in tackling climate change and as the basis of rural farming, sporting, tourism and crofting they are vital to the economy. They also play a role in flood regulation, water quality and support nationally and internationally important biodiversity. Peatlands are one of Scotland’s largest degraded ecosystems. When peatlands are degraded the benefits they bring are lost, and in fact they become sources of carbon instead of sinks – contributing to climate change rather than mitigating it. In West Lothian there are areas of degraded peat along the north slopes of the Pentland Hills and in the Blackridge Heights, although it does contain a major National Nature Reserve at Blawhorn Moss. The council has been committed to restoring and managing peatlands on its land for some considerable time, with notable projects at Easter Inch Moss and Black Moss. The Scottish Government has committed a £250 million ten-year funding package to support peatland restoration, with a target of restoring 250,000 acres of degraded peatland by 2030.

ACTION A3: Through the Natural Capital Audit the council will determine the location and condition of the peatland resource in West Lothian with a view to encouraging landowners to apply for Scottish Government peatland restoration grants that will aid carbon sequestration efforts.

Flood Risk Management

One of the major impacts of our changing climate is increased severe weather events leading to flooding. As required by the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, West Lothian Council works together with its partners in the Forth Estuary Local Plan District (LPD) to manage flood risk in the council's area. The draft Cycle 2 (2022-2028) Flood Risk Management Plans are out for public consultation at the time of publication. The draft Plans propose 10 Objective Target Areas (OTA’s) within West Lothian Council for Cycle 2: Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Blackridge, Broxburn, Fauldhouse, Linlithgow, Livingston and Mid Calder, West Calder and Whitburn.

In each of the target areas, SEPA and the council have set objectives for the management of flood risk. In some locations, the objectives provide a short-term direction that will be reviewed and updated as further information becomes available. In others, they provide long-term direction for the management of flooding within a community. A number of objectives have been established for the area, and these must be considered alongside national principles to manage flood risk. Objectives include:

- Taking a long-term, risk-based approach to flood risk management decisions and one that considers the impacts of, and adaptability to, climate change;
- Delivering co-ordinated and integrated flood risk management by engaging with communities and working in partnership, sharing data, expertise, services and resources, and;
- Considering whole catchments and coastlines and work with natural processes and the environment to deliver multiple outcomes.

ACTION A4: With approved funding mechanisms the council will implement the actions set out for the West Lothian area in the forthcoming Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-28. These actions will consider the current understood impacts of climate change on flood risk, and the development of adaptation planning to manage the long-term impacts of climate change.

Summary of Actions

Action A1: The draft West Lothian Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan will be updated and refreshed by March 2022 to take account of recent Scottish Government policy, and the council's 10 Services Units will be re-engaged with to correlate the original actions proposed with current budgets and operations.

Action A2: The council will engage with relevant stakeholders and prepare a new ten-year West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan in 2022, focusing on protecting and enhancing habitats and joining up green networks.

Action A3: The council will seek specialist consultants help to determine the location and condition of the peatland resource in West Lothian with a view to encouraging private landowners to apply for peatland restoration grants that will aid carbon sequestration efforts.

Action A4: With approved funding mechanisms the council will implement the actions set out for the West Lothian area in the forthcoming Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan 2022-28. These actions will consider the current understood impacts of climate change on flood risk, and the development of adaptation planning to manage the long-term impacts of climate change.

5.5 Outcome 5 – Land Use and Management: We understand the scope and benefits of local carbon offsetting and manage our land assets in a way that contributes to our path to net-zero.

Carbon Offsetting

Carbon offsetting is defined as an action or activity such as the planting of trees that compensates for the emission of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. As noted elsewhere in the strategy, through its operations the council will continue to produce some emissions and it is these that will require to be offset or sequestered to achieve the net-zero targets. While carbon offsetting has a significant role to play in achieving net-zero, it should only be considered where all other avenues to reduce our emissions have been investigated and implemented where feasible. The priority should be to ensure that our overall emissions are reduced to a figure as near to true zero emissions as possible.

The council owns and manages significant land assets including agricultural land managed in-house and leased out to farmers, around 1,000 hectares of woodland, other semi-natural habitats such as grassland and peatland bogs (including at Easter Inch Moss between Blackburn and Seafield and Black Moss, Armadale) as well as thousands of individual trees and shrubs within more formal park areas and along roads and streets. These are already sequestering (locking in) atmospheric CO₂ but as this is a relatively new area of focus the scale of current sequestration and the potential for future enhancement and expansion of offsetting is not clearly understood.

There are a number of available options to maximise the potential of our land assets and offset emissions locally. These include:

- Changing the way we manage public land and water assets to take account of all ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, provision of sustainable products and renewable energy
- Removing emissions from the atmosphere through pro-active management of existing trees and woodland and, where appropriate, more extensive tree planting
- Restoring peatlands
- Significantly expanding existing and creating new wildflower meadows and other semi-natural grassland.

A review of council assets is underway which will consider each of these options to establish how they can best contribute to achieving our net-zero targets. All of the above options also provide additional benefits including improved biodiversity and contributing to climate change adaptation.

There are other offsetting options including involvement in accredited schemes outwith the local area such as investment in national and international renewable energy and afforestation projects. The priority, however, should be developing local projects to maximise the benefits and opportunities within West Lothian. Only once all these options have been exhausted should other initiatives be considered.

ACTION LU1: A Natural Capital Audit of all West Lothian Council landholdings will be undertaken and available by 2022. In association with the new LBAP, this will allow carbon sequestration and habitat improvement projects to be prioritised and progressed with a combination of council capital investment and external grant funding.

Planning Policy & Local Development Plan

Climate Change is impacted through the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for South East Scotland (SESplan), and the Local Development Plan (LDP), both of which help to deliver the spatial strategy and policy set out in the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework (NPF) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). Both the NPF and SPP are currently being reviewed and the SPP will be incorporated within the revised NPF4 that is due to be laid before the Scottish Parliament in autumn/winter 2021.

These are the starting points for making decisions on planning applications through setting policy considerations for development and also statutory Supplementary Guidance, or non-statutory Planning Guidance, which provides further explanatory information or detail on the planning policies or proposals that are within the development plan.

ACTION LU2: The council will review its current Local Development Plan (2018) on the adoption of the National Planning Framework 4 (which will now incorporate Scottish Planning Policy) by the Scottish Government and produce a second Local Development Plan (LDP2) that will focus on sustainable development targeted on brownfield sites close to public transport routes and hubs over new green field land releases.

Planning Guidance

The council has various statutory Supplementary Guidance and non-statutory Planning Guidance that relate to climate change issues

ACTION LU3: The council will update its Supplementary and Planning Guidance that covers climate change issues, with a spatial element, as new guidance emerges from Scottish Government and to combine it with LDP2.

Future Measures related to Planning & Climate Change

Going forward, schemes could be agreed in conjunction with the Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (PED&R) Service and developers for a voluntary planning obligations scheme, such as an agreement by developers to offset carbon reduction from the development site in an alternative means for which the developer could promote the site in conjunction with West Lothian Council as being 'carbon neutral'. A similar type scheme as was previously employed for local apprenticeships and local materials / suppliers in conjunction with businesses and PED&R.

In addition, Planning Guidance for gathering voluntary developers' contributions towards tree planting on WLC sites and landholdings that contribute towards carbon sequestration as part of the West Lothian Climate Forest. Work is already underway via the council's Climate Change Emergency Fund to undertake woodland creation, woodland management and habitat enhancement via the Green Action Trust (GAT - formerly Central Scotland Green Network Trust) to form the "West Lothian

Climate Forest”. Additional woodland initiatives are also under way in West Lothian with the assistance of Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust.

ACTION LU4: The council will continue to work with GAT & E&LGT on progressing woodland creation and management, alongside habitat restoration, on public landholdings across West Lothian and seek to secure external grant funding to allow the continuation of a programme of new sites as part of expanding the West Lothian Climate Forest.

These developer contribution schemes would initially need to be voluntary as to be mandatory there needs to be a relationship to one of the statutory LDP policies and the obligation must be in accordance with Scottish Government current Circular 3/2012 ‘Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements’, as interpreted by emerging case law and amended by subsequent amendments and legislation. The forthcoming review of the NPF4 and the accompanying SPP may hasten change on these climate change related issues.

ACTION LU5: The council will explore voluntary developers’ contributions to offset carbon emissions from developments site and support tree planting on council owned sites and landholdings that contribute towards the West Lothian Climate Forest and carbon sequestration.

There is a need to embed climate action into the future spatial plans developed for villages and towns, shifting away from the current reliance on carbon-intensive developments, services and modes of transport, which requires thinking about planning and development in a more holistic, collective way. These aspects related to West Lothian can be explored spatially in the Regional Spatial Strategy as part of NPF4 and review of the Local Development Plan and its accompanying new planning policies to reflect the desire for a long term, no-carbon future to respond to the impacts of climate change

Summary of Actions

Action LU1: A Natural Capital Audit of all West Lothian Council landholdings will be undertaken and available by 2022. In association with the new LBAP, this will allow carbon sequestration and habitat improvement projects to be prioritised and progressed with a combination of council capital investment and external grant funding.

Action LU2: The council will review its current Local Development Plan (2018) on the adoption of the National Planning Framework 4 (which will now incorporate Scottish Planning Policy) by the Scottish Government and produce a second Local Development Plan (LDP2) that will focus on sustainable development targeted on brownfield sites close to public transport routes and hubs over new green field land releases.

Action LU3: The council will update its Supplementary and Planning Guidance that covers climate change issues, with a spatial element, as new guidance emerges from Scottish Government and to combine it with LDP2.

Action LU4: The council will continue to work with GAT & E&LGT on progressing woodland creation and management, alongside habitat restoration, on public landholdings across West Lothian and seek to secure external grant funding to allow the continuation of a programme of new sites as part of expanding the West Lothian Climate Forest.

Action LU5: The council will explore voluntary developers' contributions to offset carbon emissions from developments site and support tree planting on council owned sites and landholdings that contribute towards the West Lothian Climate Forest and carbon sequestration.

5.6 Outcome 6 - Embedding Climate Action: We embed climate action in our policies and practices across the council and create a culture of sustainability and resource efficiency.

Leadership

Demonstrating climate change leadership will be crucial at all levels, with Heads of Service and Service Managers cascading directions and actions down through each service. The cross-council CCSWG attended by Heads of Service or senior officers will be responsible for delivery of the Climate Change Strategy outcomes.

Action EMB1: The council's committee report template will be revised to include explicit consideration of climate change /sustainability consultations and impacts.

Elected members play a key role in the response to the climate emergency. To ensure that they are best placed to consider climate change in their planning and decision making processes, regular training and awareness raising sessions will be carried out and quarterly updates will be provided to the relevant Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel.

Action EMB2: Council officers will facilitate elected member climate change training and awareness raising sessions. Specific web-based resources and materials will be made available.

The council has a responsibility to ensure that all of our employees understand the impacts of climate change and what they can do to help mitigate their impact both in the workplace and at home. Climate change information and online learning modules provided as part of the corporate induction process will be updated to reflect the latest available information and specific training will be developed and delivered where required.

Action EMB3: Corporate induction information and online learning module will be updated to reflect most recent information and specific training will be developed and delivered where required.

Sustainable Procurement

Public sector procurement is expected to contribute to climate change targets through implementation of the Sustainable Procurement Duty. The sustainable procurement duty, contained in section 9 of the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014, places sustainable and socially responsible purchasing at the heart of procurement activity.

Outcome 5 in the Corporate Procurement Strategy is focused on ensuring that the council is committed to maximising the benefits delivered from Sustainable Procurement through its procurement activities and those contracts awarded to achieve value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits, not only to the procuring organisation, but also to society and the economy, whilst minimising damage to the environment.

Action EMB4: The council will maintain Level 2 within the Scottish Government's Sustainability Framework Assessment and will update the Procurement Board on the requirements of Level 3 early in 2022 in order to agree a future position.

Schools & Education

The council will build on the positive work already underway in our schools to ensure that climate change, sustainability and the environment are considered as widely as possible, educating and empowering our young people while encouraging them to take action on climate change.

ACTION EMB5: Further summits similar to the 2019 session at Howden Park Centre and the Learning for Sustainability conference in September 2021, will be organised by the council and the Community Planning Partnership to gauge the success of various forthcoming climate change related campaigns and seek further views on action.

Summary of Actions

Action EMB1: The council's committee report template will be revised to include explicit consideration of climate change /sustainability consultations and impacts.
Action EMB2: Council officers will facilitate elected member climate change training and awareness raising sessions. Specific web-based resources and materials will be made available.
Action EMB3: Corporate induction information and online learning module will be updated to reflect most recent information and specific training will be developed and delivered where required.
Action EMB4: The council will maintain Level 2 within the Scottish Government's Sustainability Framework Assessment and will update the Procurement Board on the requirements of Level 3 early in 2022 in order to agree a future position.
Action EMB5: Further summits similar to the 2019 session at Howden Park Centre and the Learning for Sustainability conference in September 2021, will be organised by the council and the Community Planning Partnership to gauge the success of various forthcoming climate change related campaigns and seek further views on action.

6 Delivering the Strategy

6.1 Monitoring & Reporting

A suite of performance indicators and actions are in place to monitor progress on climate change objectives and targets. Performance indicators and actions will be regularly reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose to monitor progress on actions for the life span of the strategy. Progress will be reported to and monitored by the Climate Change and Sustainability Working Group, Executive Management Team, Corporate Management Team, Environment PDSP and Council Executive as appropriate. Full governance details are provided in Appendix 2.

The Council's Climate Change Declaration report is submitted annually to the Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) acting on behalf of the Scottish Government. Reporting is a statutory duty under Public Bodies Duties of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and includes a full inventory of the council's emissions for the reporting year along with details of supporting activities for both mitigation and adaptation. Future reports will also include updates on progress against the council's climate change strategy targets.

6.2 Communications

The importance of clear climate change communications is widely recognised and has driven significant changes in public opinion in recent years. A key contributor in this change in public opinion has been a significant focus on the issue through print, broadcast and digital/social media at international, national and local levels.

The council will provide clear, consistent information on climate change, highlighting key council and partner projects and activities and signposting to other information sources, funding and support. A calendar of events produced each year which will be used to plan communication activities. Climate change related web pages will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that users have the most up to date information.

Appendix 1 – West Lothian Council Emissions 2019/20

Emission source	Scope	Consumption data	Units	Emission factor	Units	Emissions (tCO ₂ e)
Grid Electricity (generation)	Scope 2	41,986,267	kWh	0.26	kg CO ₂ e/kWh	10,731.7
Grid Electricity (transmission & distribution losses)	Scope 3	41,986,267	kWh	0.02	kg CO ₂ e/kWh	911.1
Natural Gas	Scope 1	64,317,929	kWh	0.18	kg CO ₂ e/kWh	11,824.9
Biomass (Wood Chips) kWh	Scope 1	3,414,100	kWh	0.02	kg CO ₂ e/kWh	53.4
Biomass (Wood Pellets) kWh	Scope 1	4,986,160	kWh	0.02	kg CO ₂ e/kWh	77.9
Water - Supply	Scope 3	328,117	m ³	0.34	kg CO ₂ e/m ³	112.9
Water - Treatment	Scope 3	303,114	m ³	0.71	kg CO ₂ e/m ³	214.6
Refuse Municipal to Landfill	Scope 3	11,518	tonnes	586.51	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	6,755.5
Refuse Commercial & Industrial to Landfill	Scope 3	3,142	tonnes	99.76	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	313.4
Organic Food & Drink Composting	Scope 3	6,174	tonnes	10.20	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	63.0
Organic Garden Waste Composting	Scope 3	10,336	tonnes	10.20	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	105.5
Paper & Board (Mixed) Recycling	Scope 3	8,574	tonnes	21.35	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	183.1
WEEE (Mixed) Recycling	Scope 3	1,016	tonnes	21.35	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	21.7
Glass Recycling	Scope 3	2,473	tonnes	21.35	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	52.8
Plastics (Average) Recycling	Scope 3	2,459	tonnes	21.35	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	52.5
Metal Cans (Mixed) & Metal Scrap Recycling	Scope 3	3,096	tonnes	21.35	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	66.1
Refuse Municipal /Commercial /Industrial to Combustion	Scope 3	20,218	tonnes	21.35	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	431.7
Construction (Average) Recycling	Scope 3	17,724	tonnes	1.37	kgCO ₂ e/tonne	24.3
Diesel (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	1,655,659	litres	2.59	kg CO ₂ e/litre	4,295.0
Petrol (average biofuel blend)	Scope 1	87,795	litres	2.21	kg CO ₂ e/litre	193.9
Car - diesel (average - unknown engine size) km	Scope 3	867,601	km	0.17	kg CO ₂ e/km	150.4
					#N/A	36,635.3

Scope & Description	Amount (tonnes CO ₂ e)
Scope 1 (Direct emissions): Activities owned or controlled by the council that release emissions straight into the atmosphere. They are direct emissions. Examples of scope 1 emissions include emissions from combustion in owned or controlled boilers, furnaces and vehicles.	16,445
Scope 2 (Energy indirect): Emissions being released into the atmosphere associated with the council's consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. These are indirect emissions that are a consequence of the council's activities but which occur at sources not own or controlled by the organisation.	10,731
Scope 3 (Other indirect): Emissions that are a consequence of the council's actions, which occur at sources which the council does not own or control and which are not classed as scope 2 emissions. Examples of scope 3 emissions are business travel by means not owned or controlled by the organisation, waste disposal, or purchased materials or fuels.	9,459

Appendix 2 – Governance

Lead Officers:

Climate Change Lead Officers	
Area	Responsible Officer
Corporate, Operational and Housing Services	Head of Corporate Services; Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services; Head of Operational Services
Education and Planning Services	Heads of Education; Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration
Community Health and Care Partnership	Head of Social Policy
Finance and Property Services	Head of Finance and Property Services

The governance of the Climate Change Strategy is summarised as follows:

Governance		
Group	Governance/Scrutiny Role	Reporting Frequency
Climate Change and Sustainability Working Group (CCSWG)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Responsibility for the direction and scope of the Climate Change Strategy (CCS) and associated action plans. ■ Monitoring performance on the environment outcome of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP). ■ Monitoring performance and progress on targets and initiatives relating to the CCS. 	Quarterly
Executive & Corporate Management Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review and development of Climate Change Strategy and associated plans ■ Corporate oversight of progress against Strategy objectives 	Biannually
Procurement Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitoring performance on sustainable procurement including progress on the Sustainable Procurement Action Plan. The Corporate Procurement Manager is the council's nominated Sustainable Procurement Champion. 	Quarterly/ As Required
Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Steering Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Responsibility for the direction and scope of the CCS and input to action plans where appropriate. ■ Monitoring performance against the environment outcome of the SOA. 	Quarterly
Capital Asset Management Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Responsibility for the direction and scope of the CCS and associated action plans. 	Annually

Climate Change Strategy | 2021-2028

Governance		
Group	Governance/Scrutiny Role	Reporting Frequency
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the council's progress against the strategy's outcomes, actions and activities and approving the annual review. 	
Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration of the CCS and associated action plans. Consideration of climate change reports including the annual Scottish Climate Change Declaration report. 	Annually/ As Required
Council Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the CCS and associated action plans. Approval of climate change reports including the annual Scottish Climate Change Declaration report. 	Annually/ As Required
CPP Partnership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring performance against the environment outcome of the SOA. 	Annually/ As Required
Scottish Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the council's Climate Change Declaration report. 	Annually

7 Glossary

Adaptation	The adjustment in economic, social or natural systems in response to actual or expected climatic change, to limit harmful consequences and exploit beneficial opportunities.
Carbon footprint	A measure of the carbon emissions produced as a result of an organisation's or service's activities.
Climate Change	Any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide. The most common greenhouse gas contributing to human made climate change.
CO ₂ e	Carbon Dioxide equivalent. A standard unit for measuring carbon impact and includes the six other major greenhouse gases in one unit.
Emissions factor	A measurement of CO ₂ emissions intensity per unit of electricity generation in the grid system.
kWh	Kilowatt Hour. A unit of energy equivalent to one kilowatt of power expended for one hour of time (1,000KWh = 1MWh). Commonly used in energy use.
LULUC	Land use, land use change. Emissions and removals of greenhouse gases resulting from direct human-induced land use such as settlements and commercial uses, land-use change, and forestry activities.
Mitigation	The attempt to lessen future climate change and its social, economic and environmental consequences by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
Net zero CO ₂ emissions	Achieved when CO ₂ emissions are balanced by CO ₂ removals over a specified period. Also referred to as carbon neutrality.

West Lothian Council

Climate Change Strategy 2021-2028

Craig McCorriston

**Head of Planning, Economic Development &
Regeneration**

October 2021

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References

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- ⁱ [IPCC: Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#)
- ⁱⁱ [CEDAMIA List of Global Declarations](#)
- ⁱⁱⁱ [Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report, Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#)
- ^{iv} [NASA Vital Signs of The Planet](#)
- ^v [UK Climate Projections](#)
- ^{vi} CO₂e is a measure used to compare the emissions from various greenhouse gases on the basis of their global-warming potential (GWP), by converting amounts of other gases to the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide with the same global warming potential.
- ^{vii} [Emissions of carbon dioxide for Local Authority areas](#)
- ^{viii} [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- ^{ix} [Passivhaus Trust – What is Passivhaus?](#)
- ^x [Building standards technical handbook 2019: domestic - Sustainability](#)
- ^{xi} [Reducing emissions in Scotland – 2019 Progress Report to Parliament](#)

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS BUDGET 2022/23 – WEST LOTHIAN YOUTH ACTION PROJECT

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Council Executive of the changes to the previously reported timeline for a commissioning process that affected the £190,000 allocation to West Lothian Youth Action Project for the delivery of services in 2022/23. It also asks the Council Executive, in light of this, to agree that for 2022/23 a Service Level Agreement is put in place as an alternative until such time as the commissioning work can be completed.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council Executive:

1. Notes the delay in the commissioning process;
2. Agrees that WYAP move on to a Service Level Agreement (SLA);
3. Notes that the requirement for that SLA will be agreed by services and in place for the start of 2022/23

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, although the report sets out a one-off delegate for the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to approve and disburse grant funding in April 2021.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	CPP's are now required to prepare a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) in place of Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The

proposal does not raise any matters of conflict with the SOA/LOIP.

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Revenue funding of £944,000 is available for 2021/22
VII Consideration at PDSP	PDSP members will be asked for their comments before council executive
VIII Other consultations	Social Policy

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

The Council Executive agreed in 2020 a number of changes to the delivery of the Voluntary Organisations Budget. One area was to move some grant holders onto either a Service Level Agreement or to be part a commissioning process.

One organisation agreed as part of that process was West Lothian Youth Action Project who would be part of a commissioning process led by Social Policy in conjunction with Youth Services and Community Safety. The report stated that this would see the budget allocated through a commissioning process and in place for the start of the 2022/23 financial year.

D.2 Update and proposed change to the timeline and funding for 2022/23

The work on the Children and Families Commissioning Plan is still ongoing and is unlikely to be in place within this timescale and Social Policy has indicated that this is likely to be 2023/24 at the earliest.

As such it is proposed that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is put in place for West Lothian Youth Action to cover that financial year 2022/23. This will bring them in line with the other organisations moving on to an SLA at that point to ensure the Council is clear on what it requires of the provider and that the provider can deliver to those council priorities identified by the appropriate Council Service.

It should be noted that as with all funding through this budget as well as the process will be reviewed each year based on performance, service needs and budgets. At the time of the report budget decisions for 2023/24 and beyond will dictate future arrangements.

E Conclusion

This report asks the Council Executive to agree the request to move West Lothian Youth Action Project on to a Service Level Agreement in 2022/23 given the delay to the commissioning process. This will give some certainty to both West Lothian Youth Action Project and West Lothian Council to continue their support to local young people.

It also notes that the outcomes to be delivered will be agreed as part of finalising the Service Level Agreement.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=46448>

Council Executive, 22 June 2021

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=49008>

Contact Person: Alice Mitchell, Economic Development and Regeneration Manager, email
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Douglas Grierson, Regeneration Team Leader, douglas.grierson@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston, Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

Date of meeting: 26 October 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

COUNCILLORS' LOCAL DISBURSEMENT FUND

REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Council Executive of expenditure from the Councillors' Local Disbursement Fund for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021

B. RECOMMENDATION

To note the expenditure from the Councillors' Local Disbursement Fund for the period 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; and working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>The guidelines for the operation of the Local Members' Disbursement Fund were established by the Policy and Resources Committee in 1996</p> <p>New forms and procedures were introduced as a result of the council's implementation of "Following the Public Pound" in October 2005 and were further revised in 2007</p> <p>The name of the Fund was changed in April 2007</p>
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	None.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The budget for 2021/22 is £98,400.00 divided equally amongst the 33 elected members
VII Consideration at PDSP	Not required
VIII Other consultations	None

D. TERMS OF REPORT

The guidelines for the operation of the Fund include a requirement for a summary report of expenditure from the Fund to be submitted to the Council Executive every six months.

Expenditure for the period from 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021 is shown in the Appendix to this report

The budget for the Fund for 2021/22 is £98,400.00. Each member was allocated an equal share of the fund, amounting to £2,981.81. Members receive regular information about sums they have allocated and the balance remaining for allocation by them. Members can request this information at any time. During the reporting period, following the passing of the late Councillor D King, a By Election took place, resulting in the election of Councillor T Ullathorne. No disbursements had been allocated from the late Councillor King's share of the fund, and the whole budget was therefore made available for disbursement by Councillor Ullathorne.

In order for a disbursement to come within the guidelines for the scheme there should be some evidence in the application of a benefit to the community rather than a benefit only to an individual

E. CONCLUSION

Reporting the spend from the Fund for the first half of the year ensures compliance with the rules governing the scheme.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Policy and Resources Committee - 23 April 1996

Policy Partnership & Resources Committee - 20 June 2001, 25 October 2005, 5 December 2006 and 6 February 2007

Appendices/Attachments: Summary of Councillors Local Disbursement Fund Spending - 1 April 2021 to 30 September 2021

Contact Person: Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor, 01506 281605

Julie Whitelaw

Head of Corporate Services

26 October 2021

APPENDIX

COUNCILLORS LOCAL DISBURSEMENT FUND – SPENDING SUMMARY

1 APRIL 2021 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

WARD AND MEMBER	AMOUNT ALLOCATED
Ward 1 – Linlithgow	
Tom Conn	£650.00
Tom Kerr	£700.00
David Tait	£567.50
Ward 2 – Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh	
Diane Calder	£1632.81
Janet Campbell	£2081.81
Angela Doran - Timson	£1800.00
Chris Horne	£700.00
Ward 3 – Livingston North	
Alison Adamson	£350.00
Robert de Bold	£500.00
Dominic McGuire	£0.00
Andrew Miller	£600.00
Ward 4 – Livingston South	
Lawrence Fitzpatrick	£2,881.81
Peter Heggie	£1,650.00
Maria MacAulay	£2,087.00
Moir Shemilt	£2,450.00

Ward 5 – East Livingston and East Calder

Frank Anderson	£500.00
Carl John	£500.00
Dave King	£0.00
Damian Doran - Timson	£1,900.00
Tom Ullathorne	£500.00

Ward 6 – Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley

David Dodds	£1,470.00
Pauline Clark	£550.00
Cathy Muldoon	£1,020.00

Ward 7 – Whitburn and Blackburn

Jim Dickson	£1,600.00
Bruce Fairbairn	£951.00
George Paul	£750.00
Kirsteen Sullivan	£950.00

Ward 8 - Bathgate

Willie Boyle	£300.00
Harry Cartmill	£1,080.00
Charles Kennedy	£1,000.00
John McGinty	£900.00

Ward 9 – Armadale and Blackridge

Stuart Borrowman	£1,050.00
Sarah King	£2,281.81
Andrew McGuire	£1,900.00

Total Budget for 2021/22	£98,400.00
Amount allocated to 30 September 2021	£37,853.74
Amount remaining for allocation	£60,546.26

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

INTEGRATION SCHEME REVIEW – PHASE 1 CONSULTATION

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP)

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To ensure compliance with the council's duty to carry out a full review of the Integration Scheme for the West Lothian Integration Joint Board and to report the outcome of the first stage of consultation.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the statutory requirement, and the related statutory process, to fully review the Integration Scheme for the West Lothian Integration Joint Board every five years
2. To note that the indicative timeline and process for the review was agreed at Council Executive on 17 August
3. To note that the phase 1 consultation has concluded and to note the responses received
4. To note that responses will be considered and draft amendments to the Integration Scheme will be made before phase 2 consultation is commenced
5. To note that the outcome of phase 2 consultation and a finalised amended Integration Scheme will be reported to Council Executive for approval at its meeting of 7 December.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, sections 44-47; West Lothian Integration Scheme; Annual Governance Statement 2020/21
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	N/A
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	N/A
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	No implications
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Not required
VIII	Other consultations	NHS Lothian; West Lothian Integration Joint Board; Governance Manager

D. TERMS OF REPORT

1 Background

- 1.1 The Public Bodies (Joint Working) Scotland Act 2014 imposed statutory duties on councils and health boards to integrate specified health and social care services. That was to be achieved by formal delegation through an integration scheme of statutory duties by council and health board to an integration authority. The integration authority then has responsibility for making a strategic plan, receiving budget payments from council and health board and directing councils and health boards how to deliver the delegated functions and with what resources. The integration authority has oversight of the delivery of those functions and has to publish a statutory performance report each year.
- 1.2 The council and NHS Lothian (health board) agreed an Integration Scheme which delegated functions for adults and older people and retained children's services and criminal justice services within the council and health board. It was approved at Council Executive in May 2015 and then submitted to the Scottish Ministers for approval. It was duly approved in June 2015 and the West Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) was formally established by the Scottish Parliament in September 2015. It has since then carried out its statutory duties of strategic planning, oversight and direction of the delegated health and social care services.
- 1.3 There is a legal requirement to review the Integration Scheme. This duty lies on the council and the health board. The IJB does not share that duty. The review must be carried out within 5 years of the Ministers giving the Scheme formal approval. The current Scheme was approved by the Ministers on 16 June 2015.
- 1.4 An initial review process was agreed at Council Executive on 21 January 2020 which would have ensured legal compliance. The review was interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. The diversion of resources to tackle the pandemic meant that conducting the review as agreed and within the statutory timescale was impossible. The failure to meet the statutory deadline has incurred no legal penalty and the IJB has continued to operate under the present Scheme.
- 1.5 Council Executive agreed a new process and indicative timeline for the review at its meeting of 17 August 2021. This is attached for information at Appendix 1.
- 1.6 Liaison meetings continue between the health board and the three councils within its geographical area.

2 The statutory review process

2.1 The review process is set out in the 2014 Act. It is carried out by the council and health board and not by the IJB. It is a three-stage process, and in summary:-

2.2 Stage 1:-

- Consultation must take place with the persons and groups specified by the Ministers and with others identified by council and health board
- Council and health board must take account of views expressed before proceeding to decide if changes are required

2.3 Stage 2, if council and health board decide changes are required:-

- Council and health board prepare a revised Scheme
- Council and health board consult again with the same people and groups
- Council and health board must take account of views expressed before proceeding to finalise the Scheme

2.4 Stage 3:-

- Council and health board submit the revised Scheme to the Scottish Ministers for approval
- Once approved, the amended Scheme is republished and the changes take effect

3 Phase 1 Consultation

3.1 Because the statutory duty to review the Scheme lies on council and health board, the consultation is being carried out jointly.

3.2 A public consultation was held and anyone was able to participate and express views. IJB members were also asked to contribute. All views expressed must and will be considered and taken into account during the review process.

3.3 The wording of the consultation was agreed with NHS Lothian colleagues and the consultation was open for two weeks from Tuesday 28 September. This was advertised on social media channels, the health and social care partnership's website and issued to staff, service user, service provider and partner networks. Efforts were made to target all of the statutory consultees.

3.4 Three responses were received and the comments are as follows:

	Comment	Responder
1	<p>I welcome the emphasis on preventative health in the opening statement but wonder if this theme needs to be reinforced and given greater emphasis throughout the document in terms of the IJB's role</p> <p>In the Appendices, Part 2 – delegated services, p 52 – would the bullet point be strengthened by adding</p>	Service Provider

	physical activity and wellbeing i.e. 'physical activity, health improvement and wellbeing services'	
2	The one thing that sticks out for me is oral health – I think that the whole of the oral health service shouldn't be delegated in that the Edinburgh Dental Institute and the acute dental surgery services that are managed through there should not be delegated. This would leave only part of oral health being delegated – the public dental service and the oral health improvement plan.	NHS Lothian staff
3	I received the emails regarding the review of the West Lothian IJB and just wanted to respond to say I appreciate the opportunity to comment thank you. I don't have any specific feedback, but I will look forward to ongoing joint working with colleagues in social care for the benefit of people in West Lothian with a Learning Disability. As with all other services, I think the pressures of the pandemic have made strategic planning more difficult, but I am hopeful that we will be able to undertake more of this in the coming months.	NHS Lothian staff

3.3 The responses will be shared with NHS Lothian and considered during the drafting of any recommended amendments to the Integration Scheme before phase 2 consultation commences.

3.4 Because of the nature of the review process and the need for partnership working with the health board there is a chance that reporting dates may slip. Committee will be informed if there are any substantial changes to these indicative reporting dates and completion of the review process.

E. CONCLUSION

1 Carrying out the statutory review process will ensure compliance with the council's statutory duties and will inform decision-making about amending the Integration Scheme in relation to these duties.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

- 1 West Lothian Integration Scheme - https://westlothianhscp.org.uk/media/44617/Integration-Scheme-between-West-Lothian-Council-and-NHS/pdf/Integration_Scheme_between_West_Lothian_Council_and_NHS_Lothian.pdf?m=637321499590870000
- 2 Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, ss45-47, incorporating ss3-6
- 3 Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Health Professionals and Social Care Professionals) (Scotland) Regulations 2014
- 4 Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Prescribed Consultees) (Scotland) Regulations 2014

- 5 Council Executive, 26 March 2019 and 23 April 2019; 21 January, 20 May and 15 December 2020; 18 May 2021, 17 August 2021

Appendices: 1. Council Executive Timeline

Contact Person: Lorna Kemp, Project Officer – IJB, lorna.kemp@westlothian.gov.uk, 01506 283519

Alison White, Depute Chief Executive

Date of meeting: 26 October 2021

Appendix 1

COUNCIL EXECUTIVE TIMELINE	
Council Executive, 17 August 2021	Authority sought to commence Stage 1 of the consultation process following initial discussions between Chief Executives of council and health board
Council Executive, 26 th October 2021	Close of Stage 1 consultation, report prepared for committee
Early November	Consideration of responses and draft amendments to Integration Scheme
Mid November	Commencement of Stage 2 of the consultation process
Late November	Close of Stage 2 of the consultation process, report prepared for committee
Council Executive, 7 th December 2021	Outcome of review process reported and authority sought for finalised amended Integration Scheme
Late December	Submission of revised Integration Scheme to Scottish Ministers
Date not yet known	Confirmation of approval of revised Scheme by Scottish Ministers and its commencement date