



Bathgate Local Area Committee

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

17 November 2021

A meeting of the **Bathgate Local Area Committee** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **MS Teams Virtual Meeting Room** on **Monday 22 November 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. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting of the Committee held on 23 August 2021 (herewith).
5. Police Ward Report - report by Police Scotland (herewith).
6. Fire Service Ward Report - report by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (herewith).
7. Anti-Poverty Service Update - report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith).

8. Service Update - NETS, Land and Countryside - report by Head of Operational Services (herewith).
9. Housing, Customer and Building Services - report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
10. Report on Economic Development and Regeneration Activity - report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith).
11. Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund Allocations 2021/22 - report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith).
12. Workplan (herewith).

NOTE **For further information please contact Lorraine McGrorty on 01506 281609 or email lorraine.mcgrorty@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 BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 23 AUGUST 2021.

Present – Councillors Harry Cartmill (Chair), Charles Kennedy and John McGinty

Absent – Councillor Willie Boyle

In attendance -

Carol Johnston, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council
Nairn Pearson, BID & Town Centre Manager, West Lothian Council
Sergeant Keith Jack, Police Scotland
Gordon McCaig, Local Authority Liaison Officer, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Paul Harvey, Local Authority Liaison Officer, Scottish Fire & Rescue Services
Andy Johnston, Service Manager, West Lothian Council
Lorraine Donnelly, Housing Manager, West Lothian Council
Ronnie Fisher, Network Manager, West Lothian Council
John MacDonald, Bathgate Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kennedy declared an interest in agenda Item 10 as he was a Trustee of the Korean War Memorial Board.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair ruled in terms of Standing Order 11 to bring forward agenda Item 9, Bathgate Water Regeneration Project, and hear it immediately after following consideration of the minute to allow John MacDonald to participate in the item prior to leaving for another commitment.

3. MINUTE

The Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 14 June 2021. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. BATHGATE WATER REGENERATION PROJECT

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

It was recommended that the committee notes the report and supports the proposal:

- for the funding of the project;
- for the formation of Bathgate Water partnership and project board; and

- to take a report to the next meeting of Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. POLICE WARD REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Scotland which provided an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period to 4th July 2021.

The Committee was invited to note the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. FIRE SERVICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire & Rescue Service providing an update on activity across the ward to 30 June 2021.

The committee was asked to note and provide comment on the Bathgate Multi-Member Ward Performance Report.

Decision

To note the content of the report

7. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of the service activities within Bathgate ward for the period Quarter 1 - 1st April to 30 June 2021.

The committee was invited to note the service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period 1st April to 30 June 2021.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE FOR BATHGATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on general services capital investment in the ward during 2020/21 and planned investment for the seven year period 2021/22 to 2027/28.

It was recommended that committee notes:-

1. The progress made in delivering the approved general services capital programme within the Bathgate ward in 2020/21;
2. The approved capital projects planned for the ward in 2021/22 to 2027/28;
3. That detailed allocations of block budgets for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 to specific projects attributable to individual wards would not be undertaken until 2022;
4. Progress in delivery of the 2021/22 programme would be reported to Council Executive following detailed budget monitoring exercises during the course of the year;
5. An updated capital investment programme would be presented to Council for approval in February 2022.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising members of the recent activity of the NET's, Land and Countryside teams for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021.

It was recommended that the Committee:

1. Notes the work carried out by the service within the local area; and
2. Advise of any areas that required further information or investigation.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration which provided an update on regeneration and related partners activities

within the Bathgate ward.

It was recommended that committee note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the content of the report

11. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

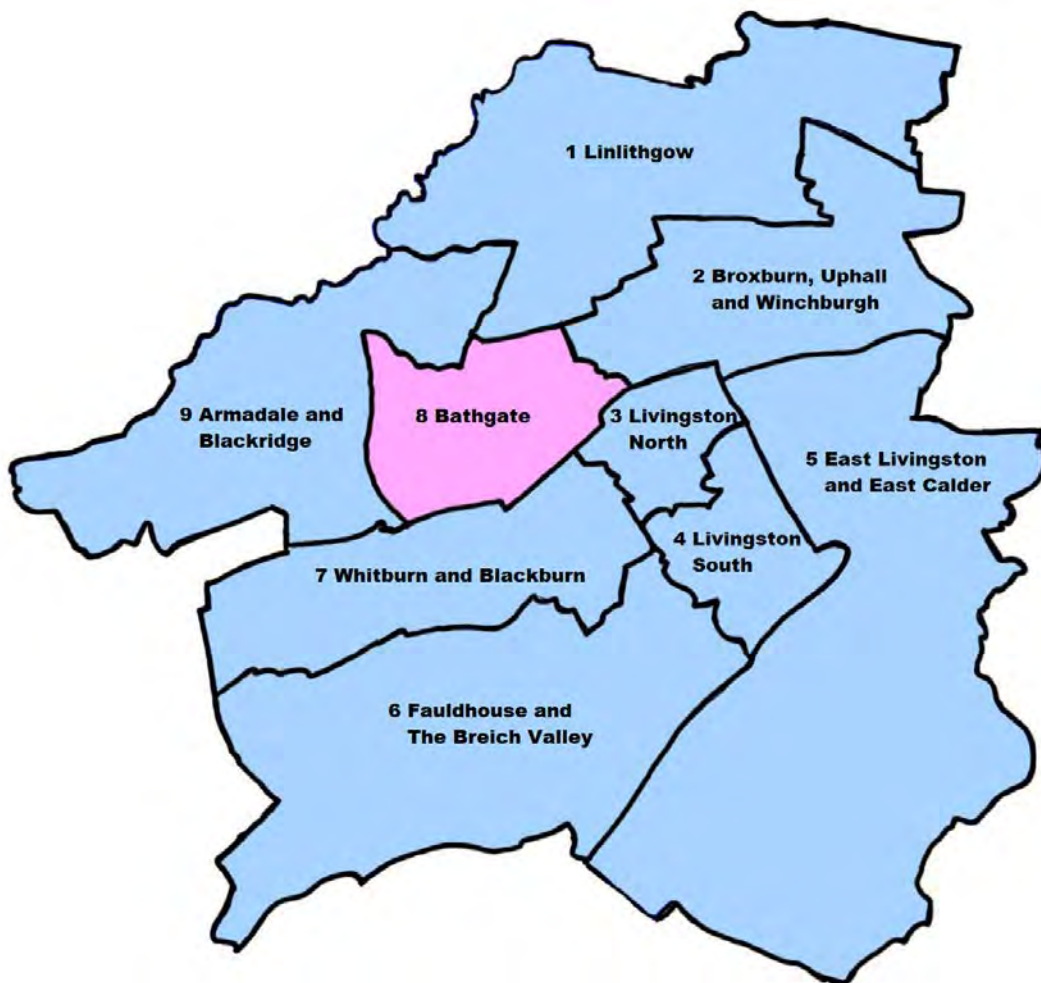
To note the Workplan.

OFFICIAL



West Lothian Area Command

Lothian and Scottish Borders



Ward 8 Bathgate Multi Member Ward Report Quarter 2 – 2021/2022

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an update on performance, activities and issues across the Ward for the period up to 3rd October 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

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

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; and working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Performance relative to the same period in 2020 set out in the report.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger; we take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive society
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII	Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

OFFICIAL

Introduction:

This document is intended to provide a summary of the performance of West Lothian Area Command for the reporting period of Quarter 2 2021/2022. The report references the police priorities within the Local Police Plan for West Lothian 2020-2023, namely:

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

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

Bathgate Community Engagement Priorities:

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

Bathgate Community Officers

PC Sean Henderson

PC Francis Sinnet

Executive Summary:

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

- **Protecting the most vulnerable people**

Domestic abuse crimes is an area of focus in terms of providing confidence to report, undertaking professional investigations, providing victim support, pursuing perpetrators and managing offenders. Although West Lothian has an increased number of domestic incidents reported, strong links have been established with both internal and external partners allowing increased confidence to report along with excellent support services for victims.

During Q2, Medics Against Violence, in partnership with Police provided further online ASC (Ask Support Care) online training sessions to major employers within West Lothian in conjunction with DAPDG. At the time of writing, over 100 individuals have been trained allowing additional support and guidance to be given to victims of crime, complementing the response from officers. All major employers in West Lothian have been made aware of this training and the uptake has been positive. Further training sessions are being planned.

As has been described in previous papers, our officers have had cause to deal with an increasing number of people who have been experiencing mental health crisis. With thanks to our partners in NHS Lothian, since 2020 we agreed protocols allowing operational officers to access the Acute Care and Support Team (ACAST) in West Lothian, a Mental Health Community Triage System. The ACAST system frees up capacity at A&E/Out of Hours, whilst ensuring that those people who met the criteria, receive the most appropriate support at

source. During this process, officers remain with the individuals ensuring support is provided throughout. In Q2, ACAST was utilised over 59 times by officers.

The Herbert protocol has been rolled out within West Lothian with officers being made aware of this initiative and the benefit of it. We have now part of the pilot scheme for the Autism Protocol which is a further development to ensure that police are focused on protecting vulnerable people.

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

Recent patterns relating to Anti-Social Behaviour continue with incidents of Vandalism and Fireraising - continue to fall following the 5 year average.

Through the work of the West Lothian Community Safety Partnership, (Police, SFRS, WLC SNT, Housing, WLYAP and Criminal Justice) we identify emerging trends, problematic areas, repeat ASB locations and establish strategies to deal with issues. This frequently involves joint visits and follow up disclosures to enable partner interventions, ASBO applications etc.

In identifying problematic areas, officers are tasked with high visibility patrols to provide reassurance to the local community. We have also ran a series of "pop-up" engagement events which allow communities the opportunity to approach and engage with officers about any concerns they have in their communities. Further "pop-up" events are planned over the next few months.

There continues to concerns raised about the use of off-road bikes in both urban and rural settings. This is an issue across the whole of Scotland. This is being assessed at the Community Safety Partnership to identify an overall partnership approach to address the issue. There has been a number of media requests to identify those responsible however there has been very little community intelligence coming through naming the persons involved.

There has been significant work with partners in relation to Bonfire season with SFRS taking the lead. This includes joint patrols between SFRS / Police and policing plan for the weeks running up to the 5th November and close links to various other WLC depts. And other agencies.

Since West Lothian schools returned after the summer break, School Link Officers have positively engaged with pupils at Whitburn, St Kents, St Margarets, Inveralmond and the Inclusion and Support services. These officers delivered various prevention inputs including knife crime, drugs and alcohol. The funding for these posts comes direct from each of the schools.

Police are working closely with WLC Housing and SNT in relation to several addresses in the ward area where there are repeat incidents of ASB. This has included joint intervention visits and disclosures to enable further action to be considered by the local authority under ASBO legislation.

- **Reducing Acquisitive Crime**

Dealing with Acquisitive Crime to Protect People by reducing the financial and personal pressure on individuals and communities remains a priority.

Recently, there has been numerous Housebreakings reported with various high powered vehicles stolen. Local and National resources have been investigating and a number of arrests have been made. We have utilised social media to highlight this type of crime and to share preventative messages.

Rural Crime - West Lothian Partnership against Rural Crime (WLPARC), in conjunction with Police Scotland and West Lothian PSYV, held an information event at Beecraigs Country

Park to highlight rural crime, partnership approaches and reporting methods in relation to suspicious activities within rural and urban areas. This was extremely well received and WLPARC will be developing their remit further over the coming months.

West Lothian Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV), have assisted in providing prevention advice across West Lothian. The young people completed 168 hours of voluntary work assisting in various activities including letter drops in relation to off-road bikes, inconsiderate parking, rural crime, delivering Keep Safe packs and working alongside WLPARC. An application process for new youth volunteers members has now closed with multiple applicants.

The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is increasing in numbers with 1400 members. Police Scotland continue to utilise social media to encourage members of the community to sign up for regular updates. <http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk/>. Police Scotland provide regular updates for the online alerts, to highlight crime trends and local issues.

During Q2, our Prevention and Intervention Officer conducted 7 Crime Prevention Surveys to victims of crime providing advice and guidance on keeping themselves and their property safe. Officers have also been working in conjunction with the WLPARC to share information and identify prevention opportunities.

- **Improving Road Safety**

Road safety is a priority for the police and local authority. Officers in West Lothian work in partnership with the council address road safety issues and educate the public to prevent incidents from occurring.

Officers in the West Lothian area work closely with partners to prevent collisions from occurring. During Q2, Roads Policing officers continued with Local and National Campaigns including National Motorcycle Safety Campaign, National Speeding Campaign and National Drug Driving Campaign. Preparations have also commenced for the yearly festive Drink Drive Campaign.

Between July and September 2021, Road policing officers undertook proactive speed checks in 27 locations, resulting in 32 offences detected, including 41 warnings in relation to manner of driving and construction and use defects.

Consultation is continuing with partner agencies regarding the delivery of Westdrive 2021, however due to Covid restrictions, final decisions are still to be made as to what format this may take.

In relation to 20 mph speed limits, Police Scotland will continue to monitor this trial with WLC. Such limits should be 'self-enforcing' and sustainable, either as a result of the current road layout, existing vehicle speed data or through the addition of appropriate physical speed reduction measures. Deployment of resources must prioritise sites which represent the greatest risk and should only be undertaken where considered necessary and in the interests of casualty reduction.

There is no data around pre/post 20 mph in relation to accident statistics or enforcement, however Roads Policing officers work closely with the highways department to identify "hotspots" for them to consider road engineering solutions to improve safety.

- **Tackling Serious and Organised Crime**

Reducing Drug supply, Production and Cultivation linked to Organised Crime is a policing priority for the West Lothian local authority area and the wider Lothian & Scottish Borders Division of Police Scotland.

During Q2, 25 General evidence / Misuse of Drugs Act Warrants were executed which resulted in multiple drugs seizures and a substantial amount of money recovered. Seized cash usually forms part of criminal cases and further investigation under Proceeds of Crime legislation to disrupt organised crime. If applicable, police will disclose information with registered social landlords in relation to MDA enforcement action at their properties to enable follow up in relation to breaches of tenancies.

Operation Phantom (OCG disruption) executed simultaneous warrants at two West Lothian addresses in relation to the supply of controlled drugs. During this, two West Lothian males were arrested and charged with MDA offences. Nearly £37,000 worth of drugs were seized along with a quantity of cash.

Any drug supply/possession offences are due to proactive police work which is greatly assisted by intelligence from local residents. This can be reported to the police via 101 or anonymously via the charity "Crimestoppers" on 0800 111 555.

During Q2, officers working on Operation Hutchen commenced an enquiry into recent Transit van thefts in both Lothian and Scottish Borders and Forth Valley Divisions. During this enquiry, a 26 year old male was identified as being responsible. This was due to excellent forensic work by detectives and resulted in him being reported for 24 vehicle related offences.

We continue to focus our activity on disrupting Organised Crime groups, particularly referencing drugs supply, larger scale cultivations and class A drugs.

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

Reporting Period April 2021 – September 2021			
Bathgate	Recorded		
Crime Type	YTD	LYTD	% Diff
Robbery	8	5	+60.0%
Serious Assault	12	7	+71.4%
Sexual Crimes	56	27	+107.4%
Housebreaking dwelling	12	9	+33.3%
Housebreaking non-dwelling (sheds/garages)	1	5	-80.0%
Housebreaking Other Premises	5	7	-28.5%
Theft of motor vehicle	9	19	-52.6%
Theft from motor vehicle (OLP)	15	7	+114.2%
Vandalism	95	109	-12.8%
Total drugs supply	6	5	+20.0%
Possession of Drugs	43	27	+59.2%
Common Assault	158	146	+8.2%
Common Assault - emergency worker	11	13	-15.3%
Total Crimes and Other Offences	1221	1089	+12.1%

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

Together we can increase community resilience and prevent crime.

Data Label: Public



West Lothian
Council

BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

BATHGATE MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

REPORT BY SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Bathgate Local Area Committee on the activity within Bathgate Multi-Member Ward for the period up to 30th September 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

That Committee Members are invited to note and provide comment on the Bathgate Multi-member Ward Performance Report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being honest, open and accountable• Focusing on our customers' needs• Making best use of our resources• Working in partnership
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Quarterly reports on the Multi-member Ward Operational Plans are being produced to ensure delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan, which is a statutory requirement of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	WL CPP SOA Performance indicators.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	SOA1304_13 Number of deliberate fires per 100,000 population SOA1304_14 Number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The council contributes to directly and in partnership to the delivery of the Ward Plan
VII Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII Consultations	West Lothian Citizen's Panel Survey, July 2014.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

Quarterly reports on the Multi-Member Ward Operational Plans have been produced by SFRS to ensure delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2018, which is a requirement under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Section 41E.

D.2 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS Bathgate Multi-member Ward Quarterly Report

Following the publication of the Bathgate Multi-member Ward Operational Plan, the Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian has produced a Performance Report detailing activity against the key priorities.

The seven key priorities within the Bathgate Ward area are as follows:

Continuous Priority

- Local Risk Management and Preparedness.

High Priority

- Reduction of Dwelling Fires
- Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties
- Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

Medium Priority

- Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting
- Reduction of Fires in Non-Domestic Property
- Reduction in Casualties from Special Services (excluding RTC's)
- Reduction in RTC Fatalities and Casualties

E. CONCLUSION

The Bathgate Multi-member Ward Performance Report aligns to the key priorities of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2018, the West Lothian Strategic Assessment of Community Safety and continues with the excellent partnership working on Community Safety, which is evident in West Lothian.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Gordon McGuire

Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

October 2021

Appendix 1 - Bathgate Multi-Member Ward Performance Report



West Lothian Council Area

Ward Performance Report

Quarter 2 2021

Bathgate

DISCLAIMER

The figures included in this report are provisional and subject to change as a result of quality assurance and review. The statistics quoted are internal management information published in the interests of transparency and openness.

The Scottish government publishes Official Statistics each year which allow for comparisons to be made over longer periods of time.

Please ensure any external partners in receipt of these reports are aware of this.

Introduction

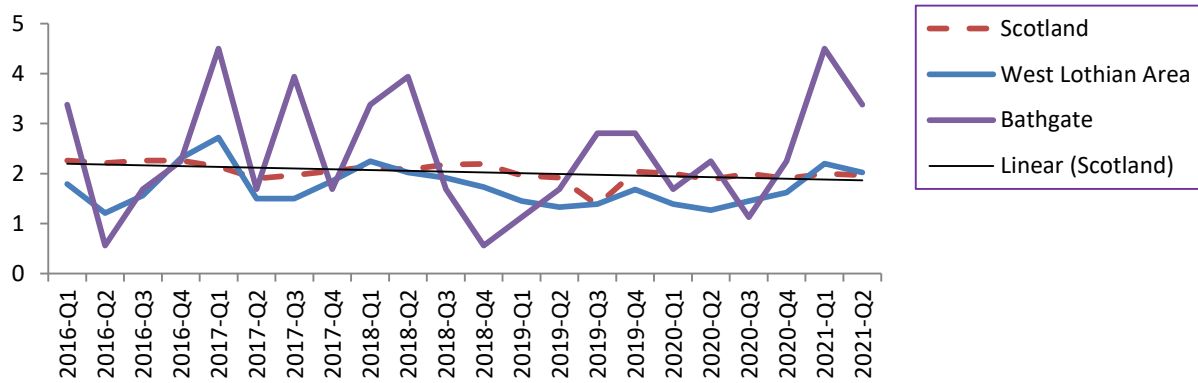
Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Ward Performance Report. This performance report is designed to provide citizens, stakeholders and partners with information relating to ward based activity undertaken by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

In addition to historical ward based activity, this performance report provides information on the historic activity in the West Lothian Council area and Scotland. To allow benchmarking to be undertaken, the units of measurement in the performance graphs in the report are based on incidents/events per head of population.

Whilst using historic statistical benchmarking data, consideration must be taken of the somewhat random nature of fire related incidents and events, and how this can pose difficulties in interpreting emerging patterns and trends. This is of specific relevance where ward level data is analysed due to the relatively small number of actual incidents/events that occur in ward areas.

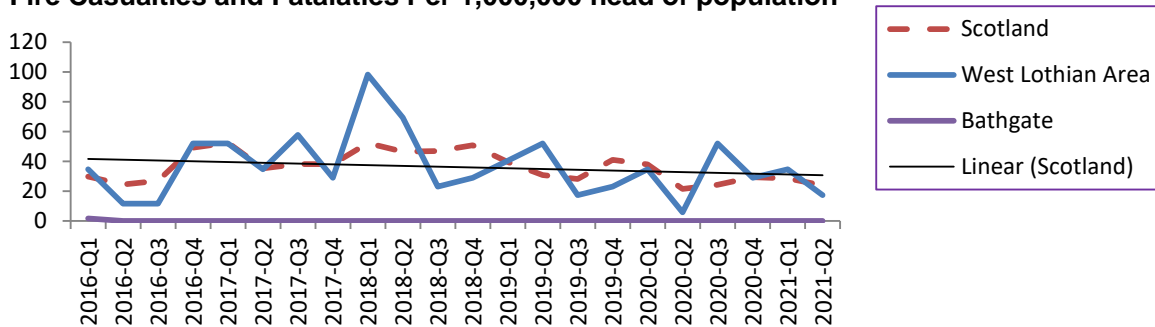
However, regardless of statistical anomalies, emerging patterns and trends in fire related incidents and events can assist the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Community Planning Partners plan and implement preventative intervention initiatives to target reducing fire related incidents and events.

Accidental Dwelling Fires Per 10,000 head of population



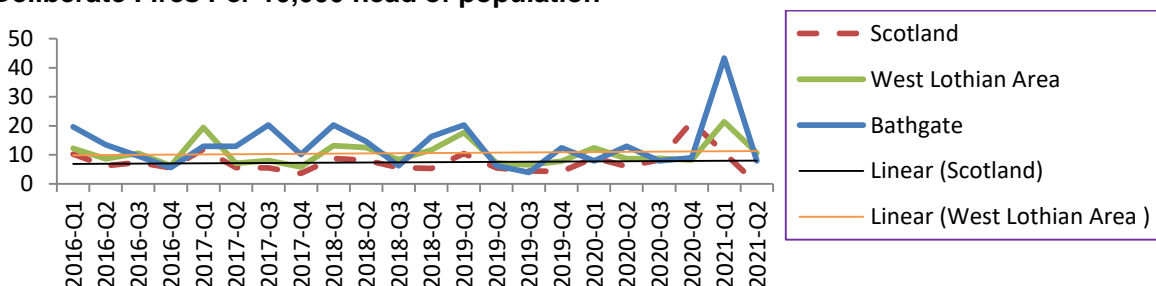
During the 2021-22 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 6 accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 4 during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

Fire Casualties and Fatalities Per 1,000,000 head of population



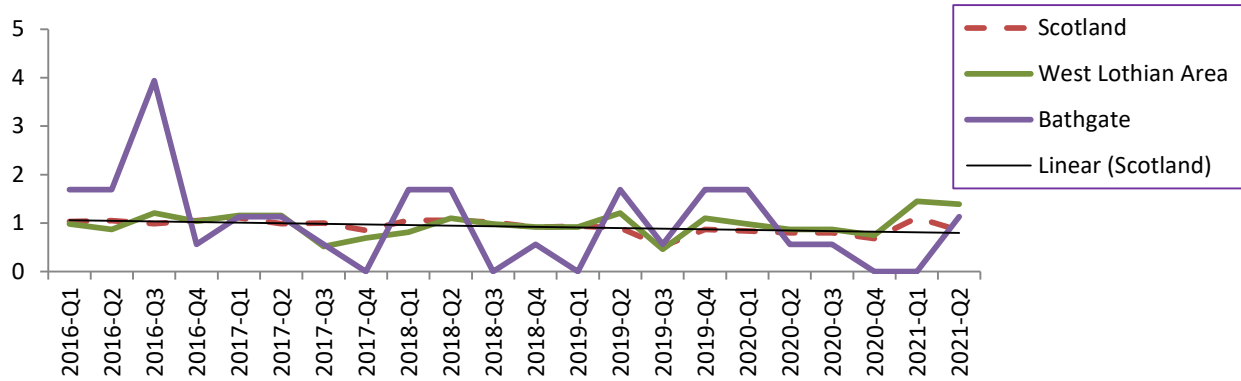
During the 2021-22 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 0 Casualties and Fatalities due to fire in comparison to 0 Casualties and Fatalities during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

Deliberate Fires Per 10,000 head of population



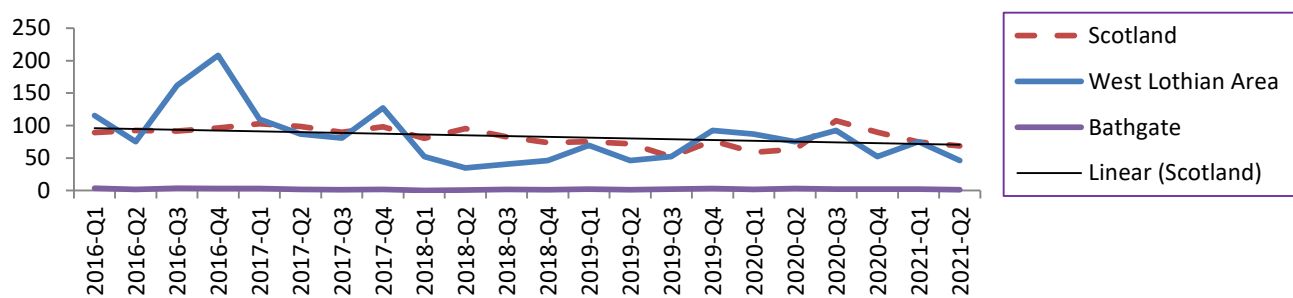
SFRS have dealt with 14 Deliberate fire incidents during 2021-22 year to date reporting period in comparison to 23 during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

Fires In Non Domestic Property Per 10,000 head of population



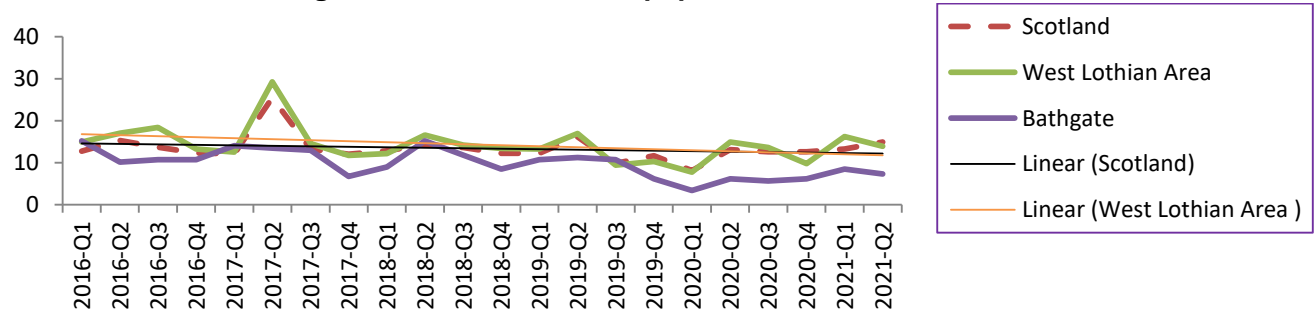
SFRS have dealt with 1 non domestic fire incidents during 2021-22 year to date reporting period in comparison to 2 during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

Special Services Casualties (excluding RTC's) Per 1,000,000 head of population



SFRS have dealt with 0 casualties from Special Services during 2021-22 year to date reporting period in comparison to 5 casualties during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Per 10,000 head of population

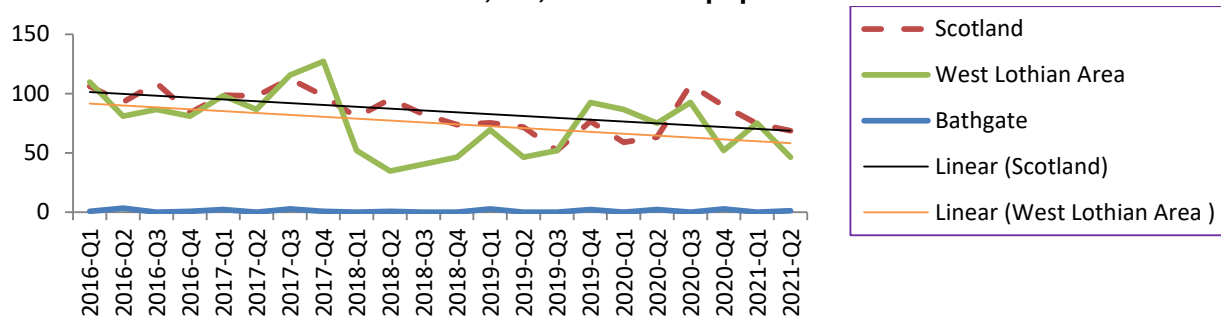


SFRS have dealt with 10 UFAS incidents during 2021-22 year to date reporting period in comparison to 12 during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

Additional Comments

SFRS is committed to 'Working Together for a Safer Scotland' and to engage with business partners to reduce demand from Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS).

RTC Casualties and Fatalities Per 1,000,000 head of population



During the 2021-22 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 2 Casualties and 0 Fatalities from RTC's in comparison to 4 Casualties and 0 Fatalities during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

ANTI-POVERTY SERVICE UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform the Local Area Committee of the work undertaken by the Anti-Poverty Service from April 2020-March 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes:

1. The Anti-Poverty Service provision in the ward; and,
2. The impact provision is having in terms of supporting the outcomes of the Community Planning Partnership's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018-23.

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)	None.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	The activity contained in the report contributes to service KPIs.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<p>We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities.</p> <p>We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.</p> <p>We have tackled significant inequalities in West Lothian society.</p>

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Activities delivered from approved budgets supplemented by external funding from Macmillan Cancer Support, European Social Fund and Scottish Legal Aid Board.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII	Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The Anti-Poverty Service provides services to help the most vulnerable households in West Lothian. The service contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan priority "Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality" by providing comprehensive advice, support and assistance to people in West Lothian who are:

- Without work or in low paid work
- Are poor and / or fuel poor
- Have money / debt issues
- Have been affected by cancer or other long term conditions
- In crisis
- In receipt of benefits and /or have an entitlement to payments managed by the service
- Being assessed for social care services

The service aims to help these groups increase their disposable income, manage their debt, improve their budgeting skills, remain in their home and to appeal decisions made by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The service also utilises the skills and knowledge of volunteers who provide a valuable role in supporting customers to access services and provide a listening ear which can offer a network of support and information.

The service is responsible for the administration of Housing Benefit, the Council Tax reduction scheme and the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF). It also has the responsibility of administering and improving the uptake of free school meals, school clothing grants, education maintenance allowance and blue badges. It provides a front-line service to recipients of benefits, which includes assessing eligibility, processing claims, assessing benefits, processing discretionary housing payments, self-isolation grants as well as other payments to claimants.

All activity across the service is informed and prioritised by the Community Planning Partnership Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018 to 2023. The overall purpose of this strategy is to reduce the inequalities gap and tackle the causes of inequality to ensure that people are not financially excluded and minimises the impact of poverty on the people of West Lothian.

D.2 Provision

Over the past year the service has:

- Fully supported customers throughout the covid-19 pandemic through using pro-active and reactive measures and successfully adapting to challenges and restrictions ensuring all customers who required support received this.

- Digitalisation of areas of the service, improving efficiencies and offering more choice to customers at a time which suits them. This has included online forms, self-help tools and video conferencing software adding a new service delivery channel increasing accessibility to the service.
- Developed and implemented new software to improve accessibility and processing timescales for Blue Badges.
- Worked with Housing, Customer and Building Services to implement the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan particularly focussing on preventions and early intervention.
- Introduced PayPoint as a cash pay-out service for SWF Grants which significantly improved reach and reduced traveling costs for vulnerable customers.
- Implementation of the FORT referral and tracking system to allow internal and external services and organisations to easily refer customers ensuring customers receive the support required at the earliest point. 48 partners are currently using the system which resulted in 3910 referrals being received in the 2020/21 period.
- The service recorded our best ever Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction performance with new housing benefit claims being processed on average within 11 days against a Scottish average of 17 days.
- Completed implementation of a revised Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction verification policy and the ability for customers to provide evidence in support of applications digitally.
- Developed and implemented processes to improve uptake on Free School Meals and Milk, Clothing Grants and Education Maintenance Allowance.
- Payment of an additional School Clothing Grant in January 2021 totalling £622,080 and supporting 7,776 children.
- Application for Education Maintenance Allowance was fully digitalised with all applications made online.
- Supported 436 households experiencing fuel poverty by paying £48,650 in grants.
- Working with customers and partners to increase uptake of the Discretionary Housing Payment. This supported 180 households with payments amounting to £119,011.
- Development and introduction of the Improving the Cancer Journey service offering a holistic service to those affected by cancer alongside the Macmillan@WestLothian and Macmillan Benefits teams.

We continue to embed services into the local community and to support customers to help mitigate poverty, to enable and empower people and work collaboratively with partners to maximise the benefits of our service at a customer's time of need.

Local Provision

The below section shows the number of people the Anti-Poverty service has worked with over the last year in the Bathgate area and further information on the Anti-Poverty Service.

The Advice Shop has helped 2,119 customers to manage their money and to resolve benefit problems within the Bathgate ward. This is a 9% increase from the previous year and resulted in 11,715 additional enquiries and contacts from these customers. As a result, customers have a better understanding of their situation and options available to them. Feedback shows this has a positive impact on individuals by increasing knowledge and understanding and ultimately improving the customer journey and empowering customers.

Anti-Poverty Service

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic West Lothian Council's Anti-Poverty Service has continued to offer help and support to constituents across West Lothian. The service has pro-actively adapted to the current situation to maximise the help and support on offer to individuals and the information and results of this support is detailed below;

Advice Shop

In 2020/21 The Advice Shop has supported 14,258 individuals resulting in 72,540 additional enquiries and contacts from these customers, covering money and debt, energy, housing and welfare benefits. This is a 4% increase from the previous year.

The Advice Shop generated £30,026,258 in extra income and successfully managed £5,334,196 in debt.

163 appeals were lodged to help customers appeal a DWP benefit decision. 88% of appeals had their decisions overturned. This is a 63% decrease in the number of appeals compared to the previous year.

83% of money advice customers debt was successfully managed in 2020/21 which is a 10% increase on the previous year. Total debt amounted to over £4.1million.

1,707 customers were provided money and energy advice to help improve household income. This is a 14% increase from the previous year. 17% of these customers were aged 60 years and over.

A range of targeted support and campaigns have been delivered over the period to support self-employed, those who may have been entitled to Discretionary Housing Payment, increasing uptake in new Social Security Scotland payments and, help and advice relating to energy. Advisors were able to support customers to engage with charities and third sector organisations which had received additional, one-off funding to help the most vulnerable as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; this included access to white goods, one off payments for energy or transport costs.

Service delivery has also had to adjust to the current restrictions and new requirements. Implementation of new digital outreach sessions and appointments have been well received by customers and staff.

Improved processes and system digitalisation has also meant that we have managed to continue to fully support customers. This includes the benefit check and budgeting calculator which is freely available to customers. Self-help guides and information continues to be developed and publicised by the service which information such as the West Lothian Food Map. The service has continued to provide face to face appointments where alternative options are not suitable.

Benefits

In 2020/21, 1,103 Housing Benefit applications have been received and 18,362 change of circumstance notifications. Despite the demand, performance remains high and within the target, new housing benefit claims were processed within 11 days and change of circumstances within three days.

There were 4,623 applications received for Council Tax Reduction and 38,385 change of circumstance notifications. Again, despite the demand performance remains within the target with new Council Tax Reduction claims processed within 10 days and change in circumstances within 3 days.

Scottish Welfare Fund

In 2020/21 there was a significant increase in the number of Crisis Grant applications received compared to pre Covid-19 levels. There were 12,789 crisis grant application received between 1 April 20 and 31 March 21, compared to the 8,647 in 2019/20. The total financial support provided via Crisis Grants for this period in 2020/21 is £1,022,126 compared to £375,801 in 2019/20. There is a significant increase in the cost of the grants due to households requiring increased grant amounts to cover the impact on the loss of household income due to furlough and redundancies.

2,872 Community Care Grant applications were received during the same period which resulted in £1,084,269 in Community Care Grant payments.

Self-Isolation Grant

This grant was introduced on 12 October 2020 to provide financial assistance to individuals who are required to self-isolate. Individuals are awarded a £500 payment if they are working, unable to work from home during self-isolation and will lose income as a result. Individuals also have to be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. In 2020/21 from mid-October to 31 March 2021, 1,409 applications were received and 404 individuals awarded a grant.

In 2021/22 from 1 April to 22 October 21, which covers roughly the same number of months as the analysis for 2020/21, 2,461 applications have been made to the fund with 997 individuals awarded a grant.

School Clothing Grants/Meals

In 2020/21, over 4,943 children were awarded free school meals and school clothing grants were awarded to 8,594 pupils.

Children eligible for Free School Meals have also benefited from financial support during the school holidays. In the summer of 2021/22, a total of £729,570 was paid to parents to help with the purchase of food during school holidays and in the October school break, a total of £92,070 was paid. In total 3,303,482 was paid throughout the 2020/21 period.

Discretionary Housing Payments

In 2020/21 the service has made 6,105 awards for discretionary housing payments amounting to £3,411,751.

1146 awards amounting to £632,989 were awarded for financial hardship and 4,959 awards amounting to £2,778,762 for under occupancy.

Family Pandemic Payments

The service administered the Scottish Government Family Pandemic Payments of £100 per child paid in December 2020 to children in receipt of Free School Meals based on low income. This resulted in payment amounting to £608,200

Priorities 2021/22

The Anti-Poverty Service has identified the following priorities for development over the 2021/22 year, which are:

- Continuing to work with partners and customers to mitigate the effects of the Covid 19-Pandemic for customers, including targeted advice and support to those who have been affected in areas such as furlough, redundancy and Cancer.
- Supporting customers affected by debt through Improving the Debt Journey to improve understanding and maximise tailored support for long term benefits.
- Supporting the roll out of the Child Disability and Adult Payment.
- Supporting payments for the Tenants Grant Fund.
- Payment of Scottish Governments Low income Pandemic payment of £130 to approximately 16,000 eligible households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or qualifying Council Tax exemption.
- Retain Scottish National Standards for Information Advice Providers.
- Meal payments during school holiday periods with payments already made in the summer and October 2021 amounting to £1,042,625
- Payment of the Scottish Government Family Pandemic Payment of £100 per child.
- Automation of Education Benefits starting with School Clothing Grants and Free School Meals followed by Education Maintenance Allowance.
- Introduction of a new operating system by the National Entitlement Card Production Office.
- New Under 22 travel scheme for all those with a Young Scot card.

E. CONCLUSION

The report summarises the work of the Anti-Poverty service in the Bathgate ward area and provide an overview of the service as a whole. The Local Area Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and to consider how the service could better target its resources in this area. It is the intention to report on activity in the ward area on an annual basis.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: None.

Contact Person: Elaine Nisbet, Anti-Poverty and Welfare Advice Manager

Tel: 01506 282921 Email: Elaine.Nisbet@westlothian.gov.uk

Donald Forrest

Head of Finance and Property Services

Date of meeting: 22nd November 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise members of the recent activity of the NET's, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to:

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

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Relates to items 9 - We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger & 12 – We value and enjoy our built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII	Other consultations	None

D1 Terms of Report

The report covers the activity for the period 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021.

D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works

Grounds staff have completed 10 grass cycles up to 30 September 2021 and will complete one further cut in October before the end of the cutting season.

Weed Spraying will cease mid-October with two cycles having been successfully completed within the ward.

One off cuts and garden tidy ups for Housing Services are on course to be completed.

Enquiries and Councillors request are being dealt with on a daily basis.

We have recently recruited three new Apprentices Horticulturists/Gardeners on a three-year contract.

Grounds Maintenance Enquiries

In total 67 ground maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Bench or Seat Enquiries	1	2
Complaint Grounds Maintenance	3	1
Enforcement Officer Enquiries	0	3
Fencing Enquiries	0	2
Flower Bed or Bulb Displays	1	0
Grass Area Damaged	0	1
Grass Cutting Enquiries	13	12
Grass Cutting Missed Not Cut	4	3
Grass Highway Verges	1	0
Ground Ownership Enquiries	0	3
Grounds Property Vandalised	1	4
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	3	5
Neighbourhood Env. Teams	1	0
Public Park Enquiries	2	2
Shrub Bed Enquiries	1	6
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	18	9
Shrub Beds Not Maintained	1	1
Weeds General Enquiries	13	3
Weeds on Paths or Roads	4	3
Total	67	60

Garden Maintenance Routine Works

The Garden Maintenance Scheme will meet their target of eleven cuts.

Garden Maintenance Enquiries

In total there were 33 garden maintenance enquiries received and dealt with during this period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Complaint Garden Maintenance	0	4
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	9	7
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut	20	30
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting	1	3
Garden Maintenance No Longer Required	1	0
Garden Maintenance Standard Of Cut	2	7
Total	33	51

D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

During this period staff have continued to empty street litter and dog waste bins on a regular basis and carry out routine works in the area. Also, litter picking footpaths/ open spaces and road verges and dealing with enquiries as they arise. The street orderly has also continued with their duties over the period clearing litter and emptying litter bins in and around the town centre.

The compact mechanical street sweeper has continued to sweep footpaths and kerb edges and we have two HGV sweepers that are used to clean roads and channels during this time. Resources have also been deployed to tackle excessive leaf fall.

We continue to have lots of volunteer's litter picking in the Ward and we have assisted with the uplift of bags and debris that have been collected.

There has also been additional funding granted to recruit more personnel to assist the NETs team in bulky uplift collections, fly tipping removal and lifting bags of waste collected by volunteers.

Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 87 cleaner communities enquiries were received and dealt with during this period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Complaint Street Cleansing	2	0
Dead Animals	3	5
Dog Bin New Request for Bin	2	1
Dog Bin Overflowing	0	4
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	0	2
Dog Fouled Kids Play Area	0	1
Dog Fouling on Paths Roads	6	12
Dog No Fouling Sign Request	1	0
Fly Posting	2	0
Fly Tipping Dumping	29	45
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	3	2
Graffiti Non-Offensive	0	1
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	3	1
Litter Bin Burnt Damaged	1	0
Litter Bin New Request For Bin	2	1
Litter Bin Overflowing	2	2
Litter General Enquiries	7	1

Litter Grass Open Space	1	0
Litter Paths Roads Verges	4	16
Needles/Syringes Abandoned	2	0
Street Sweeping Enquiries	3	8
Trolleys Abandoned/Dumped	2	1
Vehicles Abandoned	12	11
Total	87	114

Fly Tipping Enquiries (January-December)

	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	201	161	149	151	154

Environmental Community Action

Officers continue to deal with enquiries relating to fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and general enquiries. There have been 29 enquiries in relation to fly tipping for the period compared to 45 for the same period in 2020.

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

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

There has been an increase in the amount of equipment supplied to facilitate litter picking volunteers, which has increased in line with activity.

There were two Fixed Penalty Notices issued in Ward 8 for the period of 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021 for fly tipping only. For the same period in 2020, there were also two Fixed Penalty Notices issued within the Ward for fly tipping only.

Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021

Fly tipping is covered by the NETs teams who also carry out other non-routine works for Grounds. We are unable to split costs over specific ward areas or from the other works they carry out, but can give the yearly cost for the NETs teams with an estimate of their time spent on fly tipping which we currently estimate as 60% of their time. For 2020 the estimate was 80% of their time.

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

Fly tipping costs:

1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021	59.8 tonnes
Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	£39,406.41
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL	£39,406.41

The number of enquiries received between 1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021 for the Ward was 29 out of 525 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 5.5% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 8.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the Ward of £2,167.35 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 July 2021 and 30 September 2021 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team).

Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 July 2020 – 30 September 2020

1 July 2020 – 30 September 2020	83.88 tonne
Cost of disposal including estimated costs for NETs team/vehicles	£55,274.40
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL	£55,274.40

The number of enquiries received between 1 July 2020 – 30 September 2020 for the Ward was 45 out of 613 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 7.3% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 8.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the ward of £4,035.03 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 July 2020 and 30 September 2020 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team).

D5 Parks and Woodland

Parks and Woodland Enquiries

In total there were 33 Tree and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period.

	2021	2020
Tree Advice or Consultations	9	9
Tree Affecting Public Utility	0	1
Tree Blocking Light	1	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	9	6
Tree Broken Damaged or Dead	1	1
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	0	1
Tree Enquiries General	11	13
Tree Felling Work Unauthorised	1	0
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	1	0
Total	33	32

	2021	2020
Access Rights Way Core Paths	0	1
Total	0	1

Ranger Service Update

No. Rights of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	16.5
No. Access Enquiries	2

Two Assistant Rangers and two Assistant Operatives have been employed from 28th June 2021, funded by NatureScot as part of their Better Places Green Recovery Fund. The Assistant Rangers have carried out patrols in hotspot areas, run pop-up events engaging the public on a range of access related issues, SOAC (Scottish Outdoor Access Code) and responsible dog walking behaviour. They have also been running activity sessions for schools across West Lothian.

The Ranger Service put a post out on the council's Facebook page about the fire risk, after a couple of abandoned campfires were found smouldering at Beecraigs and Witchcraig. The post was seen by 21,000 people, with active engagement from 1,300 people.

The Ranger Service had a virtual meeting with Yellow Book Ltd, at the recommendation of Economic Development team, to provide information from an access and capacity perspective for their report on the economic potential of the Bathgate Hills. Officers advised them to contact NFU Scotland (National Farmers Union) to canvass their opinion for their report.

The Ranger Service had a second meeting with the Lyme Resource Centre, to discuss how we can collaborate on a tick/Lyme Disease awareness-raising project in the new year, and to report back on progress so far. Officers put the new tick awareness posters in every notice board in the three country parks, and the Assistant Rangers have incorporated tick awareness into their public engagement 'pop up' events across West Lothian. More than 300 people have been directly spoken to about ticks so far at these events. Officers have also spoken to Media about supporting the collaboration when there is something to share.

Officers attended the quarterly West Lothian Cycle Forum, updating from an access perspective on district-wide issues.

Officers attended the Forth & Borders Ranger meet up (virtual) to discuss Rangering during Covid and our recovery plans, the challenges land managers and ranger services are facing, and different ways of tackling issues seen on sites across the wider countryside.

The Ranger Service have also been assisting Green Action Trust (GAT) by reviewing their map of potential 'missing link' habitat sites across the district and providing additional biodiversity / access information.

Hannah Crow left the Ranger Service at the end of September to work in one of the new Biodiversity and Ecology Officer posts within West Lothian Council. Her ranger position will be advertised in late October but until it is filled, the service will be reduced from four rangers to three, with Hannah's responsibilities and outstanding projects distributed around the remaining team.

Access

An enquiry was received regarding maintenance of the path between Puir Wifes Brae and Marchmont Crescent. This land is owned by West Lothian Council, but the farmland is tenanted out to a local farmer. Property are contacting the tenant to see if maintenance can be carried out on this route. The Ranger Service will also rescore this path and schedule an upgrade of this whole path, including gates and signage in the next few years (external funding will need to be sought).

Ecology and Biodiversity

A new team has been developed to address growing biodiversity and climate change issues across West Lothian. Becky Plunkett and Hannah Crow have recently been appointed as Ecology and Biodiversity Officers, with a third person to be recruited this autumn.

More information on the officers' roles and responsibilities will follow, and updates will be regularly provided in the local area committee reports.

D6 Open Space and Cemeteries

Balbardie Park - Work on the pumptrack will start in early November. It should be complete by Christmas 2021.

The Open Space Officer is working with Bathgate Community Development Trust to identify potentially suitable land for a new allotment site.

Open Space Enquiries

There were six Open Space enquiries for this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Childrens Play Enquiries	6	17
Glass or Litter In Play Areas	0	2
Play Area Property Vandalised	0	1
Safety Issues In Play Areas	0	1
Total	6	21

Cemeteries Routine Works

Routine grass cutting and weed control tasks have been completed. Seasonal maintenance works and lair reinstatement and burial duties are ongoing across the cemetery estates.

Cemeteries Enquires

There were 120 Cemeteries enquiries for this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Cemeteries General Enquiries	10	8
Complaint Cemeteries & Burials	1	0
Lair Enquiries	5	9
Lair Sunken or Uneven	1	3
Memorial/ Headstone Works	41	48
New Interment Booking	42	43
Purchase of Interment Lair	20	18
Total	120	129

E CONCLUSION

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

A new team has been developed to address growing biodiversity and climate change issues across West Lothian.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: none

Contact Person:

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Jim Jack

Head of Operational Services

22 November 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the service activities within Bathgate ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Services activity as detailed in the ward report for the period Quarter 2 – 1st July to 30th September 2021.

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)	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There is no impact
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	There are positive impacts on the following SOA indicators: SOA4 – we live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities SOA8 – we make the most 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 Yes

VIII Other consultations N/A

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1. Housing Performance Information

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the activities of Housing, Customer and Building Services, specific to the Bathgate Ward.

To ensure that our properties are being re-let and that we were meeting our duty under homeless legislation, the Housing Team has continued throughout the Covid19 pandemic to prioritise resources to complete the letting process for both temporary and mainstream properties.

Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies

Void Period	July 2021	%	Aug 2021	%	Sept 2021	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	2	22.2%	0	0%	0	0%	55%
2-4 wks	2	22.2%	3	42.9%	0	0%	30%
4+ wks	5	55.6%	4	57.1%	9	100%	15%
Total Lets	9	100%	7	100%	9	100%	100%

Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies

Void Period	July 2021	%	Aug 2021	%	Sept 2021	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	1	33.3%	0	0%	0	0%	80%
2-4 wks	1	33.3%	2	50%	3	75%	15%
4+ wks	1	33.3%	2	50%	1	25%	5%
Total Lets	3	100%	4	100%	4	100%	100%

Delays in re-letting can occur for a variety of reasons - the type or location of the property, the completion of void work or the identification of additional works not visible during the initial inspection. Ensuring that vulnerable persons are appropriately supported through the viewing and sign up process can also add to timeframes. Some of our applicants have specific support requirements which require detailed planning and co-ordination by both social work and housing services prior to tenancy commencement.

There were 18 policy voids in the ward for this period, 6 more than the last reporting period.

Void period	Number of properties	PV reasons
<4 weeks	3	3 - upgrades
4 – 12 weeks	8	1 – ceiling renewal 3 – upgrades 1 – buyback 1 – held for legal purposes 2 – wood rot
13 – 16 weeks	2	1 – bathroom upgrade 1 – held for decant
26+ weeks	5	2 - Health & Care Committee, surplus to long term requirements 1 – held for decant 2 – upgrades

D2 Rent Arrears

For the Bathgate ward the collection rate for the YTD in Q2 remains excellent at 96.1%. Bathgate has collected £4,460,243 vs a charge of £4,642,381.

The overall increased arrears in comparison to last year are as a result of Full-Service Universal Credit being introduced in West Lothian from May 2018, along with other Welfare Benefit reforms and the current economic climate.

In the same week last year Bathgate ward had 345 Universal Credit (UC) households in arrears. Since then the number of UC households in arrears has increased by 13.6%.

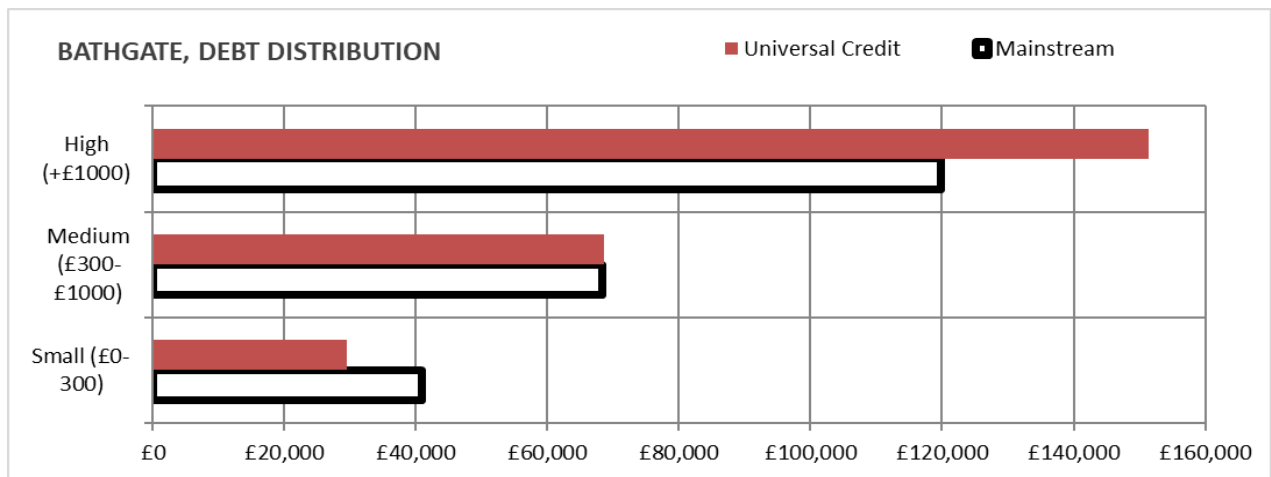
The number of tenancies in arrears in this ward has increased by 29 since last year. Small debt cases (£300 or less), account for 60.3% of households.

There are 105 serious arrears cases (+£1000 in arrears). These cases are 11.7% of all households in arrears in this area, containing 56.6% of the debt.

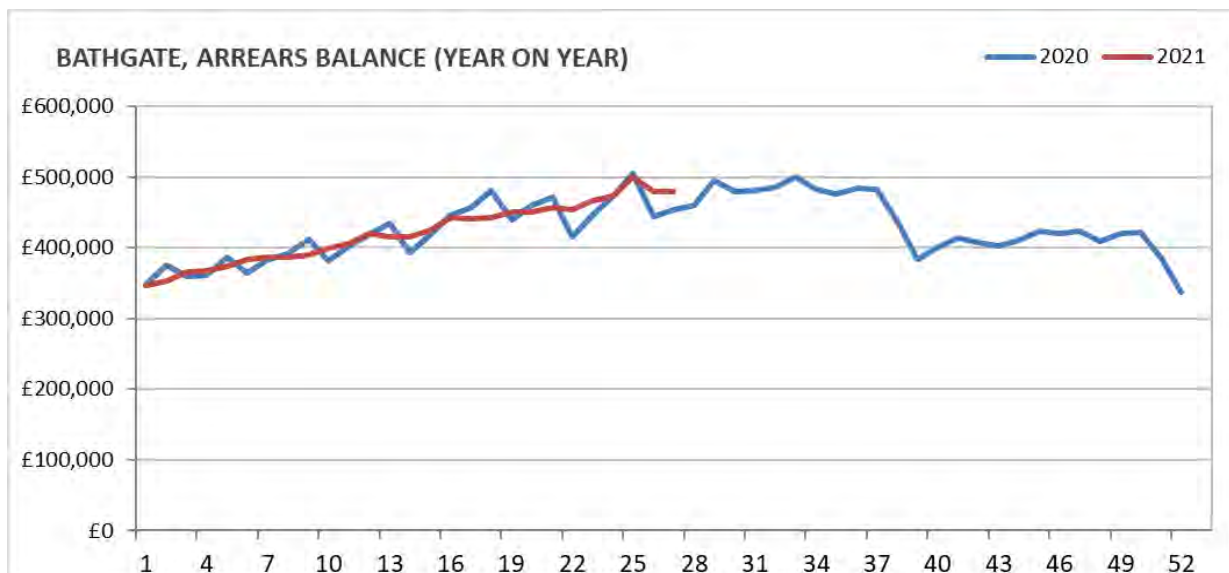
The arrears position for Bathgate Q2 is £478,706. This is an increase of £34,175 on last year's position. The West Lothian overall position is currently £4,150,768.

During the course of this year we plan to focus on the following:

- Making best use of resources by considering communicating more with customers through SMS, email and telephone
- Benchmarking with other local authorities to ensure we identify and consider implementing any best practise
- Performance monitoring and reporting will be reviewed and where appropriate streamlined to ensure information is meaningful and robust to assist with improving rent arrears due
- Promote alternative payment methods, particularly the Tenant's Self-Service Portal



Arrears Banding	2020/21 (WK26)				2021/22 (WK26)			
	Mainstream		UC		Mainstream		UC	
	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases
£0.01 to £99.99	£8,207	182	£2,566	49	£6,535	154	£4,584	74
£100.00 to £299.99	£31,861	174	£18,086	92	£34,423	185	£24,979	128
£300.00 to £499.99	£22,178	57	£24,239	60	£22,202	56	£29,369	74
£500.00 to £749.99	£21,972	36	£33,195	55	£24,671	41	£17,844	30
£750.00 to £999.99	£16,377	19	£13,918	16	£21,533	25	£21,451	25
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£50,834	35	£72,395	52	£29,827	22	£46,197	33
£2000+	£64,921	20	£63,780	21	£89,925	22	£105,165	28
Group Total	£216,351	523	£228,179	345	£229,116	505	£249,589	392
Movement					(+)£12,765	(-) 18	(+)£21,410	(+) 47
Overall Total			£444,530	868			£478,706	897
Overall Movement							(+)£34,175	(+) 29



D3. Bathgate Area Team Activity

Officers in the team continue to work from home as a result of Covid 19 lockdown measures, to safeguard staff and tenants. However, essential housing management tasks are being prioritised and Duty Officers ensure that these are being completed timeously in accordance with health and safety measures, risk assessments and safe operating procedures. This has been a challenging time for the service and we have worked with our Health & Safety advisor and Trade Unions to ensure we have safe operating systems, risk assessments and personal protection equipment so that we are safe guarding our staff whilst undertaking key essential tasks at this time.

The focus on rent arrears activity has continued to be a weekly priority task for the team and will continue to work with all our tenants in offering the support, advice and assistance. Such assistance includes referrals for money and debt advice, benefit health checks, completion of income and expenditure to help set up a sustainable payment plan and where appropriate, assist with applications for Discretionary Housing Payments. Officers have also been doing targetted work to encourage tenants to update their universal credit journals as many have not updated their housing costs in April 2021 following the rent increase meaning they are losing out on money they are entitled to.

Officers have also been working to resolve disputes between tenants, tenancy management issues and providing assistance and support to help tenants sustain their tenancies.

D4. Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing

Local New Build Update

WLC completions 141

WLC New Build Activity	Site	No of units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Completion
WLC	Standhill	22	Jan-20	0	Dec-21
WLC	Hopetoun Street (Conversion of former Newlands House)	4	Apr-21	0	Dec-21
WLC	Marjoribanks Street	6	TBC	0	TBC
WLC	Mid Street	5	TBC	0	TBC
RSL Build Activity	Site	No of units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Completion
West Lothian Housing Partnership	Jarvey Street	42	Mar-17	0	Dec-21

Street	Works	Update
Race Road and Glasgow Road	Roof & roughcast	Complete

D5. Tenant Participation Update

The TP Team continued to carry out the schedule of meetings with tenants using online resources to ensure Tenant Participation remains high on the services agenda. The tenants take a well-earned rest during July and come back in August refreshed and ready to scrutinise service performance and share their views on service delivery.

Tenants Panel

Tenant members take part in monthly meetings with senior managers and the Head of Service, discussing service improvements and developments as well as receiving updates from each service area on any changes to service delivery. Members have also been involved in performance and financial scrutiny, questioning information on spend, budgets, performance targets and results.

Capital & Repairs Working Group (CAR's)

Managers from Building Services and the Strategy & Development Team met with tenant members to discuss major improvement works, update them on the various projects being carried out and share benchmark information. Members were updated on Capital Programme projects and spend, the launch of HCBS Community Choices within the west of the county and updates on various projects including the Central Voids Team and Estates Management.

Tenant Participation Development Working Group (TPDWG)

Members meet to ensure TP stays high on the services agenda, looking at ways of engaging with more tenants. They continue to review the current TP Strategy with an emphasise on digital engagement and inclusion. They have recently received updates from the new CX Team on tenant engagement and how the team ensure they promote traditional tenant participation, with the aim of encouraging more tenants to get involved.

Editorial Panel

Members are in the process of producing the Annual Landlord Report and the winter edition of Tenants News. With the use of Adobe Reader, members are now able to review publications and propose changes online prior to meeting up to finalise all articles.

TP Facebook Group

The FB Group Page has around 360 members. The TP Officer posts useful information from various sources such as Scottish Government, NHS and the Council's Corporate websites as well as HCBS information and consultation matters. Recently, the TPDWG has committed to review the FB content at regular meetings and propose articles of interest to post, thus keeping tenants well informed.

Learning & Development Sessions for customers

Tenants and service users continue to meet online to hear about various topics in our learning and development sessions. Within this period, senior managers and staff have given presentations on changes to the Scheme of Assistance (Tenement Management Scheme). Tenants were also asked to share their views and contribute to the consultation from the Scottish Government on the Scottish Social Housing Charter review.

D6. Safer Neighbourhood Team

The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) officers continue to work across the nine multi member ward areas as an integral part of the Community Safety Unit. The working remit of the team is to engage with customers and work with partner services and agencies to reduce noise and antisocial behaviour (ASB) within our communities.

During the Covid restrictions, officers have been working a blended model carrying out some home working as well as office and community-based work for enquiries and to engage with customers. From home, officers have been providing a telephone service to complainers and alleged perpetrators as well as corresponding with written letters and e-mails. They have provided advice and assistance, telephone mediation, issued warning letters where there was evidence to do so and continue with our partnership working.

Partnership working involves the local housing team, council officers with the SNT and officers from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service all working together to tackle antisocial behaviour. When necessary, the partners will liaise with colleagues from the voluntary organisations including West Lothian Youth Action Project, Mental Health advisory workers and private landlords in order to reduce antisocial behaviour and support members of our community who have been affected.

Outcomes

The outcomes that officers still managed to achieve throughout the period for Quarter 2 – July, August and September 2021 are detailed below:

Warnings	A 1 st stage warning was issued to a tenant in Boghall as a follow up enquiry after noise calls and noise witnessed by SNT. No further complaints received.
Warnings	Report of loud music from a property in Bathgate was received. Excessive noise was witnessed by SNT officers and a first warning served accordingly. No further reports received.
Warnings	A 1 st warning has been issued after the Police supplied information about a neighbour dispute with corroborating statements from the initial complainer.
Warnings	Report of noise disturbances/parties at property in Bathgate were received. A Letter drop was carried out and other neighbours contacted. This resulted in a First warning being served. No further reports received.
Environmental Health	Officers attended a number of noise calls on behalf of Environmental Health and witnessed loud music emitting from commercial premises. A report was passed to Environmental Health for follow up enquiry. Further calls relating to living noise regarding ongoing neighbour disputes.
Living Noise	Further calls relating to living noise regarding ongoing neighbour disputes have been received, none of which constitutes ASB.
Meeting	SNT attended a virtual meeting with Housing and Police to discuss ASB issues in the ward.

Bathgate Ward Data

Table 1: The following tables set out details of the number of new cases opened each month, overall number of active cases; number of cases resolved. Not all incidents become a case and officers will open a case where further investigations are necessary

<i>Cases and Incidents</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>
Incidents Reported to SNT	105	59	105	95	42	84						
Number of new cases	6	3	10	6	0	6						
Number of Active Cases	12	10	23	17	11	7						
Number of resolved cases	0	5	5	1	6	3						

Table 2: The following table provides an overview of the types of incidents that are being reported to the SNT.

Incident Types	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>
ASB Part 2 Complaint	66	31	61	58	24	31						
ASB Part 5 Noise Complaint	25	17	34	30	12	34						
Dog Barking	0	0	0	0	1	0						
ENV Health Complaint	0	5	1	2	2	3						
Non ASB Noise Complaint	7	1	4	2	0	0						
SST Section 3 Tenancy Management	6	5	5	3	3	16						
Youth Disorder	1	0	0	0	0	0						
Unauthorised Encampment	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Grand Total	105	59	105	95	42	84						

Table 3: The following table provides numbers of ASBO that are current in ward and compared to all of West Lothian.

ASBO	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of ASBO's current	0	3*		
All of West Lothian	12	12		
Age of perpetrator	-	46yrs		

*

- One is a current Interim ASBO
- The other two are for persons at the same property but are no longer living there so the ASBOs will require to go back to Legal Services to be revoked

Table 4: The following table provides number of all active cases and total number of incidents for West Lothian

West Lothian	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>	<i>Oct</i>	<i>Nov</i>	<i>Dec</i>	<i>Jan</i>	<i>Feb</i>	<i>Mar</i>
Total Number of Active Cases	73	72	121	104	83	68						
Total Number of Incidents	484	402	456	448	461	441						

E. CONCLUSION

Housing staff are now well adapted to working from home and have embraced new ways of working and continued to support vulnerable customers in our communities. In addition, officers have continued to provide advice and support on a range of issues such as anti-social behaviour, moving into new homes and financial issues.

Officers have continued to work with colleagues in other service areas to ensure that service delivery has continued as far as possible.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:
None

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Marjorie Mackie
Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services
22nd November 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

REPORT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION ACTIVITY

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the economic development, regeneration and local partners activities within the Bathgate ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes the report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Appropriate assessments will be carried out as required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	The paper supports the delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement and other plans, in particular the Economic Recovery Plan.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Various funding sources support many of the activities.
VII Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII Other consultations	None.

D TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The report updates the committee on the work of the Economic Development and Regeneration Team and its partners to support communities in Bathgate one of 13 areas covered by the local plans required by the Scottish Government as part of their Community Empowerment approach and reported through the Community Planning Partnership.

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

D.2 Enterprise Bathgate

Enterprising Bathgate the Bathgate Business Improvement District (BID) continues to financially support, through their commitment within the approved Business Plan 2018-23, the monitoring and management of the town centre CCTV system. Working alongside Economic Development and Regeneration officers this important local infrastructure continues to help reassure and support our local businesses (and wider community) through the ongoing recovery into 2022.

A partnership working group, consisting of Enterprising Bathgate, Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Service and the external CCTV suppliers meet on a regular basis, between 6-8 weeks, to discuss recent activities and share intelligence. At the most recent meeting during October 2021, representatives of Police Scotland were able to attend and this welcome participation should lead to further strengthening of the partnership arrangement, as wider activities start to re-emerge in particular an increase in associated night-time economy consumers.

D.3 Bathgate Partnership Centre

Bathgate Partnership Centre is now starting to re-open fully but a restricted and appointment system for some services within the building remains, such as Customer Information Services, Registration and the Advice Shop.

The payment office remains open for customers to continue to make payments to their rent and council tax, although it was encouraged that customers used other methods to make payments: for example, either online or over the telephone. In the period from 1 July 2021 to 31 October 2021, 6,898 transactions made equating to £764,26.11 in income collected.

Simpson Library is now fully open and offers customers the opportunity to sit in and read a newspaper or book, along with browsing for books or using the public access PCs, or use the library for some study time.

A self-service day is in operation from 8.30am-8pm where customers can use the self-service terminal for issuing and returning books. Photocopying or customer printing can be done by a member of staff. Digital Resources are still available to customers

The Simpson Library had 36 new borrowers in July 2021, 79 in August, 81 in September and 81 in October 2021. Bookbug sessions have now started back up, during COVID they were delivered online. Class visits are now taking place from our local primary schools and schools are keen on participating in activities within the Library. The Library also promoted Book Week Scotland between the 15th and 21st November 2021 with various activities taking place in the library.

Bathgate Community Centre within Bathgate Partnership Centre are continuing to see more groups returning and there are a few new groups, another Yoga group and a baby massage group. Bathgate Playgroup continue to provide morning sessions to under 3-year olds from Monday to Friday.

Bathgate Registration Office continue to offer an appointment system for customers, this is only for customers to sign/pick up registration certificates. Other Registration Services take place over the phone.

The Advice Shop are continuing to offer their Services over the phone and have introduced MacMillan Cancer Appointments and PIP/DLA Appointments within Bathgate Partnership Centre.

Adult Learning are now operating classes within Bathgate Partnership Centre, some take place during the day and some are in the evening.

A significant number of Council staff who would normally be based upstairs within the Bathgate Partnership Centre continue to work from home, in accordance with Council guidance, so the building is not as yet operating at its potential capacity.

D.4 Reconnect Regal Theatre

As previously reported the Council Executive in June 2021 supported the submission of a Stage 1 application to Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund to support a range of significant building improvements. Unfortunately, this was unsuccessful in making it to Stage 2, as part of a process that saw in excess of 90 applications received by the Scottish Government. Officers are continuing to work with Reconnect to explore other future funding opportunities, which has included the UK Government Community Ownership Fund as well as the Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) for years 2022 and beyond.

D.5 Boghall Drop In Centre

Boghall Drop In Centre (BDIC) continue to support the community in Boghall. Some of the recent and planned activity is listed below:

- Open Day – there was a large selection of bouncy castles and other inflatables. These were free for BDIC members to help plan numbers and ensure costs were kept to a minimum. Membership of £1 could be purchased on the day. There was a toy tombola and afternoon tea.
- VOSCARS – The annual volunteer celebration thanked the ongoing support of local people helping with meals each weekend from January until May 2021 and those who assisted with summer and weekly services.
- Youth Clubs - resumed with four classes: Three on a Monday for primary age and one for secondary on a Friday. Numbers attending are high.
- Big Deals 19 Community Shop - continues to work with people across West Lothian with an active membership. Sales from the shop pay for the annual Fareshare membership and allow people to access food with dignity. Food is available for covid help and emergency food for vulnerable people.
- Bike Club – Supports children with learning to cycle safely around their community. Due to a bereavement this has ceased until other volunteers can be trained.

- Halloween Discos -held for the first time since pre-Covid. There were inflatables and goody bags with four discos for babies to S6.
- Trick or Treat Event - A free trick or treat event allowed children and young people a safe stop when out guising. Goody bags were available.
- Elderly Luncheon - To encourage the elderly to visit the Drop-In a series of free lunches were held. Numbers were limited for the comfort and safety of the elderly participating. This was used to gauge the feasibility of holding a Christmas Pensioner event in the building but highlighted this would not be an option this year.
- October STEM Week - this was a small focused provision that worked with engineering, science and building. There were 12 registered children who completed and received a Hi5 award for the course.
- Hi5 Awards - The Summer and October week Hi5 workbooks were submitted to Youth Scotland and 45 Awards were approved. This was for a total of 1687 hours between the young people of structured activities.
- Little Monsters – The under-fives groups have resumed. Each session is full and the waiting list has 18 children at present.
- Volunteers helped to arrange the poppy display on site in commemoration of Remembrance Day.

D.6 Employability Support

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

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

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

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

	West Lothian	Bathgate Ward
Number of new registrations to the service	392	58
Number of clients supported into employment education or training	194	24

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

The service was also successful in securing 200 Chromebooks and internet connections to give to unemployment clients seeking work that currently did not have any digital connectivity.

D.7 Business Gateway Support

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

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

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

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

New Business Starts Bathgate Ward	New Business Starts West Lothian
20	146
Businesses engaged with in Bathgate Ward	Businesses engaged with in West Lothian
63 (including 2 Social Enterprises)	412 inc. 42 Social Enterprises (19 operate across WL)

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

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

Billion per annum. While these businesses employ over 8,300 staff, it is only 11% of total jobs in West Lothian. However, they account for more than 30% of the annual gross value add (GVA) of the West Lothian economy.

With the end of the furlough scheme at the end of September and higher unemployment than pre-pandemic, we have focused on creating demand among local firms for additional staff. Our "Volume Job Grant" is funded with £1 million approved by Council Executive in June 2021. <https://www.investinwestlothian.com/business-support/develop-your-business/job-creation-fund/> Support is targeted at viable local firms. Success will be the creation of at least 300 new jobs. Each new role must be permanent and pay a starting salary of approximately £21k+ pa. The new recruits must be currently unemployed and aged 25+. Support for our younger people aged 16-24 will see an additional 100 places offered as part of the successful Steps N2 Work programme.

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

D.8 Town Centre Capital Fund 2019/20 and 20/21

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

D.9 Bathgate Town Centre

The Council facilitated Bathgate Town Centre Management Group has met virtually on a monthly basis since August 2020, having ceased face to face meetings in March 2020 due to COVID restrictions. The group met most recently in October 2021 to discuss town centre related matters and seek to develop projects that will utilise the Council's Town Centre Improvement Fund. This forms part of Council's 5-year capital expenditure programme running to 2022/23.

The agreed focus is currently on the identification of potential capital projects and wider town centre improvements for implementation. To help inform this process an online Bathgate town centre user/community survey has been undertaken. The closing date for making views known was the end of October 2021 and is currently being analysed for discussion at the November meeting. The main purpose of this survey is to gauge local perceptions of Bathgate town centre and from there what potential improvements or additional services people would like to see provided.

Bathgate town centre acts as a community focal point for local services, amenities and employment. The town centre is subject to a quarterly occupancy survey as one measure of its relative vitality and viability. In October 2021, the vacancy rate was 7.5%, although this does not take account of properties subject to refurbishment at the time of survey. The figures have also taken account of any COVID-19 temporary restrictions that may remain in force at that time of survey. To provide some context this is an improvement from the Bathgate recent peak vacancy of 9% in July 2019.

D.10 Enhanced Vaccination Drop-In

As reported at the last meeting, Community Planning and Regeneration had been working with our partners in Health to promote additional local drop-in vaccination programmes in areas with identified hot spots.

There were two additional sessions held in the ward at Boghall Drop-In and The Partnership Centre with 113 (57 and 56) local residents attending to receive either their first or second vaccination. Across West Lothian a total of 962 attended similar sessions. These were residents that were unlikely to have received the vaccination without the additional promotion and sessions.

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

D.11 Community Council Elections 2021

The Community Planning and Regeneration Team has also been supporting the delivery of the inaugural meetings of the newly elected Community Council's across West Lothian including Bathgate.

D.12. Other Ward Activity

Floral Enhancements – The Town Centre Manager has been working alongside volunteers from Bathgate in Bloom, and more latterly the Bathgate Hills Venture Project on implementing floral enhancements and displays across the town centre. The Venture project is now developing ideas for the possible creation of a sensory garden area, additional landscaped seating and better interpretation display (with QR codes), to help raise awareness and use of this peaceful and attractive spot.

Wester Inch Community Association - In late September 2021, it was confirmed that the Chairs of the Wester Inch Community Association (WICA) were stepping aside in favour of a new interim Committee following ten years supporting the growth and development of the community in Wester Inch. Officers continue to provide support to the WICA group.

HRA Tenants Environmental Improvement Projects - Regeneration has been supporting the promotion of West Lothian Community Choices process in relation to the Council's HRA Tenant's Environmental Improvement Projects budget for Bathgate, Whitburn and Blackburn for 2022/23. This provides an opportunity for residents to influence and shape decision making in relation to local capital investments. The deadline for the first stage (project generation) ended on 1 November 2021, with 5 proposed projects based in Bathgate having been submitted for consideration. Economic Development & Regeneration officers will continue to support the process as proposals are assessed and progressed.

E. CONCLUSION

The Committee is asked to note the range of activities taking place across the Bathgate ward, by the Council's Economic Development and Regeneration service and local partners.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments: none

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Craig McCorriston

Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

22 November 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2021/22

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Area Committee of the final allocations that were made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2021-22 to groups in the Bathgate Ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups. The committee is asked to note the continuing impact that COVID – 19 has had on the application and allocation process regarding the fund. The Local Area Committee is also asked to note that applicants were offered, as they were in 2020, an additional option of a pre-prepared meal as an alternative to a direct grant award.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the committee notes:

1. The effect of COVID-19 on the arrangements regarding the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund in 2021-22
2. The continued inclusion of a pre-prepared meal option and
3. Seven groups in Bathgate Ward are being supported through the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2021-22

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 report does not raise any health or risk assessment issues. No strategic environmental assessment is required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Services has the delegated authority to make the final allocations and payments.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	This will be reported against indicator EDR061_9b.1b; Number of community organisations funded or supported through funding managed or administered by Community Planning and Regeneration.

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£29,000 agreed by the Council with £1,945.90 allocated to groups in the Bathgate Ward.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated annually.
VIII	Other consultations	A similar report will be made to all Local Area Committees

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

Each year the Council approves the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund. In 2021-22 the total fund amounts to £29,000 which is allocated through an application process. Funding is paid out on the basis of a pro-rata allocation based on the beneficiary numbers identified by the applicants. In 2020/21 this saw 6 organisations and 272 beneficiaries supported with an allocation of £8.64 per head.

D.2 2021 and the ongoing effect of COVID-19

In 2021, as was the case in 2020, due to ongoing effect of COVID-19, many groups will not be delivering support in the same manner as usual if at all, at Christmas 2021.

In 2020, the council in partnership with the West Lothian Food Network, offered applicants the option of a pre-prepared chilled Christmas meal as an alternative to a direct grant award as a contribution towards the costs an event or activity, this option was offered again to applicants in 2021.

The meal will be prepared and delivered to groups with support from the Council's Anti-Poverty Service. The meal will be delivered to groups to deliver to their members. The value of the meal is equivalent to the amount that groups receive per capita in a grant payment.

D.3 Applications 2021/22

Officers contacted all previous recipients of the fund in Bathgate Ward, Livingston Wide and West Lothian Wide by email or phone to ask if they were intending to provide a service this year and if so would they be interested in the provision of a pre-prepared meal or would they prefer a direct grant payment.

Nine groups in total were contacted in Bathgate Ward. When contacted, two groups declined to apply to the fund including Boghall Pensioners Fund and Rosemount Jane Place Tenants Association. Two further groups, Boghall Drop In Centre and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Whitburn Conference) when contacted, indicated that they deliver to beneficiaries across multiple wards. The two groups have been moved from their respective wards to the West Lothian Wide list.

As a result of this work:

Bathgate Ward

- Nine groups in Bathgate Ward were contacted and seven applied to the fund
- Two groups declined funding
- Six Bathgate groups that applied to the fund requested a grant payment
- One Bathgate group that applied to the fund requested the meal option

Livingston Wide

- One Livingston Wide group was contacted and applied to the fund
- The group requested a grant payment

West Lothian Wide

- Two West Lothian Wide groups were contacted and applied to the fund
- Both groups requested a grant payment
- Two groups were added to the West Lothian Wide list
- One of the additional groups requested a grant payment
- One of the additional groups requested both a grant payment and a meal option to be delivered to the groups they support across two wards

All applicants will be supported.

As in previous years the fund is divided equally by the total number of beneficiaries of the fund, which in 2021-22 will see £6.71 per head allocated to recipients in the Bathgate Ward, Livingston Wide and West Lothian Wide.

Appendix 1 shows the overall breakdown by ward, Livingston Wide and West Lothian Wide.

Letters and e-mails were issued to groups advising them of the amount of funding they are to receive in a grant payment or its equivalent in the form of a pre-prepared meal. Payments will be made to the bank accounts of groups via Pecos or BACs for those groups not on PECOS.

This also advised that they must follow Scottish Government guidelines with regard to the delivery of hampers, gift packs and / or meals, for example, around minimising contact with individuals, car sharing, shopping and visiting care homes etc. and that if they were unable to follow guidelines they would be required to return all funding received to the council.

E CONCLUSION

The report asks the committee to note the continuing effect of COVID-19 on the uptake and allocation of the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund in 2021-22 and the continued inclusion of the pre-prepared chilled meal option this year.

The report advises of the allocations that will be made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2021-22 to groups in the Bathgate Ward, Livingston Wide and West Lothian Wide.

Letters and e-mails were issued to groups advising them of the amount of funding they will receive in a grant payment or its equivalent in the form of a pre-prepared meal. Payments will be made to the bank accounts of groups via Pecos or BACs for those groups not on PECOS.

A satisfaction survey will be conducted with applicants in January 2022.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 Pensioners Groups Christmas Fund Allocations 2021-22

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Craig McCorriston
Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

22 November 2021

BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2021/22

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Appendix 1: 2021/22 Allocations to groups in the Bathgate Ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

Bathgate Ward Organisations

Group	Provision	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount Awarded
Acredale House	Grant Payment	<u>27</u>	£181.17
Bathgate Stroke Support Group	Grant Payment	19	£127.49
Carron Court Tenants Group	Grant Payment	31	£208.01
Hanover Close Social Club	Grant Payment	<u>30</u>	£201.30
Norvell Lodge Social Club	Grant Payment	<u>29</u>	£194.59
Royal British Legion Scotland Bathgate Branch Club		140	£939.40
St Marys & St Columbas 60s Club		14	£93.94
Totals		290	£1,945.90

Livingston-Wide Organisations

Group	Provision	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount Awarded
Braid House Day Centre	Grant Payment	67	£449.57
Total		67	£449.57

West Lothian-Wide Organisations

Group	Provision	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount Awarded
Boghall Drop-In Centre	Grant Payment	200	£1,342.00
Society of St Vincent De (Paul (Whitburn Conference))	Grant Payment and Meal Option	135	£905.85
West Lothian 50+ Network	Grant Payment	388	£2,603.48
West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network	Grant Payment	100	£671.00
Total		823	£5,522.33

Notes: Nine groups in Bathgate Ward were contacted and invited to apply to the fund. Seven groups applied to the fund. Two groups declined funding. One Livingston Wide group was contacted and applied to the fund. Two West Lothian Wide groups were contacted and applied to the fund. Two groups that indicated that they delivered a service across multiple wards applied to the fund and were moved from their respective wards to the West Lothian Wide List.

BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

	Agenda Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Date
1	Police Scotland Report	Quarterly update	Sgt Keith Jack	November 2021
2	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Report	Quarterly update	Paul Harvey	November 2021
3	Housing Ward Report	Quarterly update	Lorraine Donnelly/Graeme McKee	November 2021
4	NETS Land and Countryside Services Ward Update	Quarterly update	Tony Fleming	November 2021
5	Economic Development & Regeneration Ward Update	Quarterly update	Nairn Pearson	November 2021
6	Anti-Poverty Service Ward Update	Annual update	Christopher Nelson	November 2021
7	Pensioners Groups Christmas Fund	Annual update	Nairn Pearson	November 2021
8	Workplan	Update on forward reports	Nairn Pearson	November 2021
1	Police Scotland Report	Quarterly update	Sgt Keith Jack	March 2022
2	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Report	Quarterly update	Paul Harvey	March 2022
3	Housing Ward Report	Quarterly update	Graeme McKee	March 2022
4	NETS Land and Countryside Services Ward Update	Quarterly update	Tony Fleming	March 2022
5	Economic Development & Regeneration Ward Update	Quarterly update	Nairn Pearson	March 2022
6	Bathgate Secondary School Presentation	Annual update	Headteachers	March 2022

7	Workplan	Update on forward reports	Nairn Pearson	March 2022
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