



Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

3 November 2022

A hybrid meeting of the **Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Council Chambers, West Lothian Civic Centre, Livingston** on **Tuesday 8 November 2022 at 9:30am.**

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members must declare any interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda items and the nature of their interests.
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business
4. Confirm Draft Minutes of Meeting of Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday 13 September 2022 (herewith)
5. Visit West Lothian - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
6. Strategic Review of Town Centres - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)
7. Review of the the Planning Enforcement Charter - Report by Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)

8. Community Wealth Building Update - Report by Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development (herewith)
9. Third Sector and West Lothian Council Annual Report - Report by Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development (herewith)
10. Voluntary and Third Sector Funding 2023/24 - Report by Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development (herewith)
11. Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian Update - Report by Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development (herewith)
12. Workplan (herewith)

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



CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (2021)

This form is a reminder and an aid. It is not a substitute for understanding the Code of Conduct and guidance.

Interests must be declared at the meeting, in public.

Look at every item of business and consider if there is a connection.

If you see a connection, decide if it amounts to an interest by applying the objective test.

The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection does not amount to an interest then you have nothing to declare and no reason to withdraw.

If the connection amounts to an interest, declare it as soon as possible and leave the meeting when the agenda item comes up.

When you declare an interest, identify the agenda item and give enough information so that the public understands what it is and why you are declaring it.

Even if the connection does not amount to an interest you can make a statement about it for the purposes of transparency.

More detailed information is on the next page.

Look at each item on the agenda, consider if there is a “connection”, take advice if necessary from appropriate officers in plenty of time. A connection is any link between the item of business and:-

- you
- a person you are associated with (e.g., employer, business partner, domestic partner, family member)
- a body or organisation you are associated with (e.g., outside body, community group, charity)

Anything in your Register of Interests is a connection unless one of the following exceptions applies.

A connection does not exist where:-

- you are a council tax payer, a rate payer, or a council house tenant, including at budget-setting meetings
- services delivered to the public are being considered, including at budget-setting meetings
- councillors’ remuneration, expenses, support services or pensions are being considered
- you are on an outside body through a council appointment or nomination unless it is for regulatory business or you have a personal conflict due to your connections, actions or legal obligations
- you hold a view in advance on a policy issue, have discussed that view, have expressed that view in public, or have asked for support for it

If you see a connection then you have to decide if it is an “interest” by applying the objective test. The objective test is whether or not a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard your connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence your discussion or decision-making.

If the connection amounts to an interest then:-

- declare the interest in enough detail that members of the public will understand what it is
- leave the meeting room (physical or online) when that item is being considered
- do not contact colleagues participating in the item of business

Even if decide your connection is not an interest you can voluntarily make a statement about it for the record and for the purposes of transparency.

The relevant documents are:-

- [Councillors’ Code of Conduct, part 5](#)
- [Standards Commission Guidance, paragraphs 129-166](#)
- [Advice note for councillors on how to declare interests](#)

If you require assistance, contact:-

- James Millar, Interim Monitoring Officer and Governance Manager, 01506 281613, james.millar@westlothian.gov.uk
- Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor and Depute Monitoring Officer, 01506 281626, carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk
- Committee Services Team, 01506 281604, 01506 281621
committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk

January 2022

MINUTE of MEETING of the ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 13 SEPTEMBER 2022.

Present – Councillors Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair), Stuart Borrowman, Tom Conn (substituting for Tony Pearson) Peter Heggie, Andrew Miller, Cathy Muldoon and Sally Pattle

In Attendance – Alan McCloskey (West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway Representative) and Donald Stavert (Joint Forum of Community Councils Representative)

Apologies – Councillor Tony Pearson

Prior to the start of the meeting the Panel observed a two-minute silence in honour of the passing of HM Elizabeth II. The Panel also observed a minute's silence in honour of the passing of Councillor Ann Davidson.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 5 - Councillor Andrew Miller stated a connection in that he was Chair of Firefly Arts; a Trustee of Almond Valley Heritage Trust; a Board Member of Knightsridge Adventure Project; and a volunteer at Knightsridge Community Food Outlet.

Agenda Item 7 - Councillor Andrew Miller stated a connection in that he was a former director of West Lothian Leisure.

Agenda Item 8 - Councillor Peter Heggie stated a connection in that he was a council appointed member to the West Lothian Development Trust.

Agenda Item 8 - Councillor Cathy Muldoon stated a connection in that she was a council appointed member to the West Lothian Development Trust.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE PDSP

The Panel were provided with an overview of the work of the panel which had recently been formed as a result of a review of the existing Policy Development Scrutiny Panel structure recently undertaken by the Council.

The presentation provided details of the areas of responsibility of the panel and also the function of the Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel's in the council's overall decision making structure.

It was to be noted the panel's did not decision-making powers but were there to scrutinise and inform policy development.

The membership of the panel was also explained noting that the West Voluntary Sector Gateway had representation on the panel along with colleagues from the Joint Forum of Community Councils.

Decision

1. To note the content of the overview of the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel; and
2. To agree that a copy of the slides be circulated to all panel members at the conclusion of the meeting.

3. COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive which provided an update on the development of a Community Wealth Building approach in West Lothian.

It was recommended that the Panel :-

1. Notes the findings of the report provided by the Centre for Local Economic Strategy, attached to the report at Appendix 1
2. Notes the eleven recommendation detailed in Section D2 of the report; and
3. Notes the next steps outlined in Section D3 of the report

Decision

1. To note the content of the report and the accompanying report titled "*Advancing Community Wealth Building in West Lothian*".
2. To note that an Action Plan supporting community wealth building in West Lothian was being developed and would be produced for the next meeting of the pane in November; and
3. To request that in developing the Action Plan consultation be undertaken with other key council services such as Property Services and local ward members.

4. BUSINESS SUPPORT UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an overview of the performance of the Business Gateway and the support provided to local businesses.

The presentation by the officer was also accompanied by a short video highlighting the work of "Invest in West Lothian".

The panel was asked to note the updates on the range of impacts made by the Business Gateway team, roll-out of the Invest website, progress of the Jobs Task Force, and closer working with Heriot-Watt University

Decision

To note the content of the report.

5. 2021/22 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - MONTH 12 MONITORING REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing members with an update on the financial performance of the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building portfolio.

The panel was asked to:-

1. Notes the financial performance of the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building portfolio for 2021/22.
2. Notes that the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building portfolio position at month 12 was part of the overall council budget position reported to Council Executive on 21 June 2022.
3. Notes actions required to be taken by Heads of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

Decision

To note the content of the report.

6. WEST LOTHIAN DEVELOPMENT TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the activity and performance of West Lothian Development Trust up to 31 March 2022.

The panel was asked to note :-

1. As of 31 March 2022 a total of £2,367,874.13 had been received in community benefit contributions;
2. As of 31 March 2022 a total of £2,300,879.61 has been paid out to 69 local organisations; and
3. 14 organisations have been awarded new funding in 2021/22.

Decision

To note the content of the report

7. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

VISIT WEST LoTHIAN

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

- A.** To inform and update the Panel of the work by Economic Development associated with Visit West Lothian and advise of future plans.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note progress made on assisting West Lothian tourism focused businesses and to call for a twelve-monthly update to the Panel.

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)	This report does not raise any Strategic Environmental Assessment, equality or health issues.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Good performance against key indicators as the team engages on hybrid basis to support clients.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<p>Outcome 2 - We are better educated and have access to increased and better-quality learning and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Outcome 3 - Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business.</p> <p>Outcome 4 - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.</p>

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	No budget implications.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Not previously considered by this PDSP.
VIII	Other consultations	Economic Development.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

This report focuses on the work carried out by the Tourism team, within the Economic Development service, and in particular the facilitation role for the established destination marketing organisation Visit West Lothian.

D1 Visit West Lothian - Summary

Visit West Lothian (VWL) is the Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for West Lothian. VWL has its own board of directors who oversee the general direction of the organisation. The board are made up of local people with interests in tourism the area, with business representation from attractions and accommodation to accountancy.

Staffing support is provided by West Lothian Council, sitting within the Economic Development Service.

VWL delivers projects and services such as joint marketing initiatives, training, networking events, facilitation and representation of the industry at a local and national level.

The primary method of communication for VWL is to maintain a website www.visitwestlothian.co.uk to provide information on attractions, accommodation, restaurants, shopping, events and more to visitors. The site is well used, with over 120,000 unique visitors per year. During lockdown, the site was used a resource by local residents for information on walking routes.

D2 Activity

VWL has undertaken a range of activity to promote the area to visitors.

West Lothian has several key sites used in the production of the globally popular TV series “Outlander” series and is well placed for visitors to base themselves whilst exploring Outlander locations.

Travel to Scotland to visit the filming locations has increased significantly and had a profound legacy on the locations used.

The “Film on Forth” campaign was delivered in partnership with Falkirk Council to promote these site as well as others where more filming has taken place.

A new micro-site (www.filmmonforth.co.uk) was created with digital itineraries and promoted using paid social media and influencer advertising. The campaign featured Linlithgow Palace, Hopetoun House, Midhope House, Beecraigs Country Park as well as accommodation and restaurants.

The project cost £45,000 and was funded with support from Visit Scotland. The campaign generated 41,157 visits to the micro site and 2,125,959 individual

impressions. The campaign created strong legacy content that will continue to generate interest on an ongoing basis.

West Lothian's Industrial Heritage was the focus of the latest campaign with the creation of a new microsite www.industrialheritage.scot featuring video content and digital itineraries. The campaign was promoted using paid social media and influencer advertising, and focused on The Shale Trail and Union Canal as well as featuring Almondvalley Heritage Centre, The Bennie Museum, Linlithgow Canal Centre and Linlithgow Museum.

The total budget was £56,000 and was completely funded through Visit Scotland grants. The campaign reached nearly 3 million people across the UK.

D3 Membership

VWL relies on membership fees to cover the organisations operating costs. Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 and the subsequent lockdown period, the decision was taken to suspend membership fees to support the sector.

As visitor numbers recover to 2019 levels, membership fees have resumed and currently there are 30 businesses who are active members. Membership fee's start at £57.99 per annum, rising to £87.99 per annum for large businesses.

A new tier, "Friends of Visit West Lothian", was launched in response to interest from West Lothian businesses who are not directly involved in tourism but would like to be involved in promotional activity.

D4 Next Steps

Following the resumption of visitor travel post COVID-19, VWL are in the process of developing a new strategy for activity. The new strategy will follow on from the previous one, 2014-2019, which identified the outcomes

The national tourism strategy, Scotland Outlook 2030, sets the direction for the country's businesses, local authorities, and promotional agencies to follow. The new VWL strategy will align with the national strategy in order to maximise funding opportunities.

Alternative revenue streams are being developed to supplement membership fees, including website sponsorship. This is important to ensure that VWL activity is sustainable in the medium to long term.

Following the success of the *Film on Forth* and *Industrial Heritage* campaigns, VWL is working with members on identifying the next opportunity to apply for external funding to carry out marketing activity.

The resumption of in-person networking events, that were well attended pre-COVID-19, has been identified as desirable by the membership and will form part of the strategy going forward.

E. CONCLUSION

As tourism recovers following the global pandemic and visitors return to West Lothian, VWL continues to actively support businesses in the area to grow and to promote the area through externally funded marketing campaigns. The panel will be updated accordingly.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:

Contact Person:

Stewart Ness, Tourism and Town Centre Manager; stewart.ness@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston
Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration

8 November 2022

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

STRATEGIC REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRES

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform and update the Panel on the proposed work by the Economic Development service associated with town centres, town centre management groups and local partnerships.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note the content of the report and recommendations below

1. Town centre managers will carry out a review exercise, between November 2022 and February 2023, to assess the current economic landscape of town centres.
2. Consider any potential changes to town centre management groups.
3. A further report will be brought back to this PDSP in Spring 2023.

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)	There are no policy and legal (equality, health, SEA or risk assessment) issues associated with this particular report.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Good performance against key indicators as the town centre management team works and engages on hybrid basis to provide support.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 3 - Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business.

Outcome 4 - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	This report raises no implications for existing resourcing and staffing.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Not previously considered by this PDSP.
VIII	Other consultations	Economic Development. Representations have been made by Bathgate Community Council.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

This report sets out the work of the Town Centre Management team, within the Economic Development service, and in particular the facilitation role for the established Town Centre Management Groups.

D1 Context

Vibrant and viable town centres are essential to the economic and social well-being of our communities, individuals and families. Town and village centres provide a wide range of functions including as places to meet, eat and shop, transport hubs, places to visit, locations where services can be accessed, and centres of local employment. This is also a key message to highlight at national level within town and town centre policy.

The image and perception of our town and village centres is important to both West Lothian residents and the area's visitors. West Lothian has had a period of sustained population growth mirrored in the expansion of many towns and villages. Despite the recent pandemic and continuing economic uncertainties, population growth and increases in the size of key settlements is likely to continue into the future.

Local planning policies have been devised to co-ordinate and manage settlement growth and to safeguard and promote the appropriate development of our town and village centres across the County of West Lothian.

It should be recognised however that town and village centres will not automatically flourish as a result of population and settlement growth. The growing population and continued investment in transportation infrastructure, do however also provide opportunities for our town and village centres to attract investment, support a wide range of retail and service outlets and provide for a wider range of leisure, cultural and community activities for established and incoming residents and visitors.

D2 Town Centre Management

Within the Economic Development service, sits the Town Centre Management team. Town Centre Managers provide support to the development of thriving local town centres in the five traditional towns of Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn and Uphall, Linlithgow and Whitburn.

West Lothian's traditional town centres have, over recent years, felt the impact of economic change and changing shopping patterns; further compounded by the unprecedented challenges of the recent pandemic and now the cost of living crisis.

These changes also offer opportunities and Economic Development works closely with Town Centre Management Groups, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Local Trader and Business Associations, individual businesses and sole traders, all of which bring together local stakeholders with the collective aim of creating more vibrant, sustainable and prosperous communities in our traditional town centres.

D3 Town Centre Management Groups

Background

There are well-established Town Centre Management Groups operating within the four traditional towns of Bathgate, Broxburn & Uphall, Linlithgow and Whitburn. There is currently no such group operating within Armadale.

These groups help to co-ordinate or support social, cultural and economic events, and activities within the respective town, and also strive to promote the town as a good place to live, do business, shop, socialise and enjoy.

The current arrangements for Town Centre Management Groups were established prior to the introduction of the Council's Local Area Committee structure.

In light of the cost of living crisis and ongoing pressures on local government, and the West Lothian 2028 Your Council, Your Say consultation agenda, it is crucial that resource including Elected Member, Council officer and partner time is used to maximum effect and duplication of effort is avoided. The planned review will look at the operation and management in our town centres ensuring the effective working relationship with other partners and groups.

Objectives

The key objectives of Town Centre Management Groups should align with those laid out in wider economic and economic development strategies. This recognises the important role town centres play in developing a strong, inclusive and resilient local economy. This includes:

- To improve and promote traditional town centres as retail, leisure, employment and visitor locations
- To attract professional business services to traditional town centres (and to Livingston); and
- To encourage people to come to our retail centres to take advantage of other leisure opportunities provided in the area.

As well as town centre related activities, complementary local services like Business Gateway and Economic Development, here in West Lothian, have the supporting remit to assist new and growing businesses, including those within our town centres.

Role

Town centre management groups, across all traditional town centres, should look to provide a mechanism for partnership working, in particular:

Co-ordination - primary role of the group is to provide a mechanism for developing

joint local strategies and partnership-based initiatives, which the group can support in identifying deliverable projects (for the town centre).

Communication - group meetings provide a local forum for organisations to share information on relevant initiatives, projects and schemes and to share intelligence on town centre issues affecting our town centres.

Consultation – enabling partners to consult each other on plans and activities, and to guide and support wider local community consultation exercises.

Town centre management groups should operate positively and proactively, and promote a “can do culture” enabling new initiatives and solutions to be developed and implemented. Group members are committed to promoting true partnership working, and adhering to an inclusive, open and positive ethos.

In general terms, the Town centre management groups have no specified budget or decision-making powers, with delegated authority through the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair, and this only extending to projects which meet eligibility criteria on town centre spend.

Nonetheless, the groups are able to make recommendations to be considered, and to assist in the identification and prioritising of local projects through the Council's town centre capital expenditure improvement fund. To provide context, the Town Centre Improvement Fund equated to a total of £125,000 in capital funds for each of the five traditional town centres over the 5 period, 2018/19 to 2022/23.

The groups have no specific powers to directly manage any projects, or to apply as a local organisation for external funding. Any project identifying alternative sources of funding would historically be developed through, and in collaboration with, other local organisations and stakeholders.

Meetings

Group meetings are generally held on a monthly basis with dates and timing agreed in advance with the relevant Town Centre Management Group. Each group has a different composition of participation, but would tend to include:

- Elected Members of West Lothian Council (from the local authority ward in which the town is geographically located)
- Representative of the relevant Community Council
- Representative of the relevant Community Development Trust
- Representative of Police Scotland
- Representative of relevant local trader/business/BID groups.
- Representatives from other stakeholders, groups and partner organisations

The groups are each chaired by a local elected member agreed by the Council Administration. Council officer support to the group is available through the relevant Town Centre Manager within Economic Development.

D4.

Key Statistics

Town Centre Occupancy:

West Lothian's traditional town centres continue to act as community focal points and 'hubs' for local employment opportunities, services and amenities. Each of the five town centres is subject to a quarterly occupancy and vacancy survey, carried

out by Town Centre managers, as one measure of its relative vitality and viability. Town Centre managers strive to work with local landlords, property agents, local businesses, investors and individuals, alongside our partners to facilitate and address vacant property units and land, to encourage and support bringing them back into active economic or other use, and business occupation.

Table 1 below shows the average town centre occupancy rates across West Lothian as a whole for the 5 years period, 2017-18 until 2021-22. This indicates that occupancy levels continue to remain favourable compared to national averages.

Table 1: Town Centre Occupancy

Year	West Lothian Average Occupancy
Apr 2021 – March 22	91.9%
Apr 2020 – March 21	91.4%
Apr 2019- March 20	91.9%
Apr 2018- March 19	90.8%
Apr 2017 – March 18	90.5%

Shopfront Improvement:

Shop front improvement grants are available for various businesses across all town centres, towns and villages within West Lothian. These can help cover the costs of external improvements such as painting or new signage. The scheme has been designed to help businesses update and enhance the exterior of their premises. It is envisaged that through increased participation from businesses taking part, that there will be a positive visual impact on the area.

This is a grant-based scheme with individual grants available of up to £750. Funding will be allocated on a first come first served basis subject to individual applications meeting the guidelines which apply to any award of grant. The level of funding available to support the initiative is determined at town level through an agreed allocation via the relevant Town Centre Improvement Fund.

Table 2 below outlines the number of shopfront improvement grants awarded to local businesses within each specified traditional town centre.

Table 2: Shopfront Improvement

<u>Town Centre</u>	<u>Nos. Grants</u>	<u>£ Value of Grant Award</u>	<u>£ Value of Claim Works</u>	<u>Note</u>
Armadaale	27	16,037	29,685	Started in Autumn 2012
Bathgate	9	6,949	12,302	Started in September 2020. EB BID Premises Scheme operated in town centre BID area since 2009.
Broxburn & Uphall	(a)17 (b)1 (c)1	12,315 367 1,100	31,600 636 3,576	Started in 2018. BUTA commenced scheme administration in April 2018: offering (a) shopfront grant, (b) shop safe/security grant; and (c) shop shutter replacement funding.
Linlithgow	39	20,510	25,638	Started in Autumn 2012.
Whitburn	43	25,836	38,797	Started in Autumn 2012

D5 Next Steps

Further to consideration of the report by the Panel, the next step will be a strategic review across West Lothian's town centres, between November 2022 to February 2023. The review will take the form of both digital/online consultation and face to face engagement. This will look at the governance, operation and future priorities. By doing so, they will identify any proposed changes necessary to the Town Centre Management Groups. Pre-consultation representations have been made by Bathgate Community Council.

A further report will be brought back to this PDSP in Spring 2023 to outline the review findings and recommendations.

E. CONCLUSION

The Town Centre Management team, within the Economic Development service, continues to provide pro-active support to the evolving development of thriving local town centres in our five traditional towns located in Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn and Uphall, Linlithgow and Whitburn. This ongoing support extends in particular to the facilitation role for the established Town Centre Management Groups across West Lothian.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:

Contacts:

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Stewart Ness, Tourism and Town Centre Manager; nairn.pearson@westlothian.gov.uk

Craig McCorriston
Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration

8 November 2022

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY PANEL

REVIEW OF THE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT CHARTER

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise the panel of the proposed revisions to the Planning Enforcement Charter. The charter sets out the duties and responsibilities of the planning enforcement service within the Development Management section of Planning Services.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel notes the following recommendations which are intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval after a consultation exercise has been undertaken:

- notes the comments received on the reviewed Enforcement Charter following consultation;
- agrees the responses to the comments received during consultation on the reviewed Enforcement Charter;
- approves the content of the reviewed Enforcement Charter,
- notes that enforcement is a discretionary power and that formal enforcement action should be seen as a last resort in terms of dealing with unauthorised development and activities.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>Enforcement is a discretionary activity delivered within the framework of the Planning Act and related regulations and guidance.</p> <p>The charter does not raise any Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), equality or health risk issues, although these might be considerations in individual enforcement cases.</p>
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations	There are no implications for the Scheme of Delegation to officers.

to Officers

IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Measures about the speed and effectiveness of enforcement activity are part of the annual Planning Performance Framework reporting and KPI monitoring.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<p>Outcome 3 - Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business.</p> <p>Outcome 4 – We live in resilient, safe and cohesive communities</p> <p>Outcome 8 – We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.</p>
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	No specific financial implications for the council are identified.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	This is the first consultations at PDSP of the reviewed Enforcement Charter.
VIII	Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

Planning legislation gives local authorities enforcement powers to deal with a range of unauthorised land use activities. These generally involve the failure to obtain planning consent in advance of carrying out works or changes of use on land or to property, or failure to comply with a condition of a planning consent. The powers also allow the council to respond issues of loss of amenity resulting from with land or property which is in an untidy or derelict state.

D2 The Enforcement Charter

The council is required, under section 158A of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, to produce and distribute an Enforcement Charter, which sets out:

- a statement of the authority's policies for taking enforcement action;
- an account of how members of the public are to bring any suspected breach of planning control to the attention of the council;
- how any complaint to the authority over a suspected breach is to be made; and
- the council's procedures for dealing with any such complaint.

The council's charter was previously reviewed in 2018 and 2021. The Act requires it to be updated and republished regularly and this review discharges that requirement.

No significant changes are proposed to the charter through this review with the changes being:

- Page 4 Non Planning Breaches Bullet 1

“Property ~~Services~~” name updated to “Property Management & Development”.

- Page 5 paragraph 1

“the carrying out development without ~~having~~ first ~~established~~ the requirement for, and then having obtained the necessary planning permission or approvals”

has been amended to

“the carrying out of development without first obtaining the necessary planning permission or approvals for that development”.

- Page 7 paragraph 2

“the Planning Enforcement Team undertake to visit the site of all alleged breaches of planning control within 10 working days of receiving a complaint”

has been amended to

“the Planning Enforcement Team undertake to either visit the site of all alleged breaches of planning control within 10 working days of receiving a complaint or to request additional photographic or other evidence to allow an assessment of the case”

- Page 7 paragraph 3

“An investigation begins with an officer visiting the site to gather information, before a decision is made on how to proceed.”

has been amended to

“An investigation begins with an officer visiting the site to gather information or an officer requesting additional information from the complainant or developer, before a decision is made on how to proceed”

The charter continues to set out the relevant matters which the council can take enforcement action against, those matters which cannot be addressed under the legislation, and the circumstances under which the enforcement service will act. It sets out the enforcement process and indicates the timescales for responses to initial complaints.

During 2021/22, the council received some 425 enforcement related complaints and the reviewed charter, in line with government guidance, sets out the nature of those complaints that will be investigated and those which will not be pursued, having regard to the wider public interest and the impact of a breach of planning control on residential and visual amenity.

Subject to council executive approval, the reviewed Enforcement Charter will be placed on the council's website and a copy will be sent to all elected members, community councils and amenity bodies within West Lothian.

D3 Consultation Arrangements

It is proposed that public consultation on the reviewed Enforcement Charter will be carried out over a six-week period following consideration by the panel.

The reviewed Enforcement Charter will be published on the council's web site and invitations to comment will be issued through social media and to all community councils. Comments will be reported to the Council Executive together with the council's draft responses at a later date.

Further revisions to the Enforcement Charter may of course be identified following consultation with third parties.

E. CONCLUSION

The reviewed Enforcement Charter, which contains no significant changes, sets out a clear route for reporting suspected breaches of planning control and provides an update on service contact details. The charter sets out the actions which can be taken in an attempt to resolve matters in advance of progressing enforcement action. It also sets out the public interest tests that will be applied when deciding if action is warranted.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/pdfs/ukpga_19970008_en.pdf

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/section/44/enacted>

Appendices/Attachments: One

Appendix 1: Enforcement Charter 2023

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8 November 2022

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT CHARTER



2023



West Lothian
Council

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INTRODUCTION

Planning permission is required for all development that takes place in Scotland, but some of it is 'permitted development' and, therefore, does not require a planning application. Sometimes, however, landowners, developers or householders carry out development which does requires planning permission without submitting an application or having their application approved, or fail to keep to the terms of a permission which has been granted.

Councils, as Planning Authorities, have powers to enforce planning controls in such cases, if they consider it is in the public interest to do so. Councils monitor developments to ensure planning controls are being followed but there is also a role for the public in alerting the council to any problems they become aware of.

Enforcement is one of the most complex parts of the planning system and can affect many members of the community. Therefore, it is important that the council's adopted procedures are fair, reasonable, and consistent, and that interested parties are fully aware of the procedures involved in the process, the powers available to the council, and the limits of those powers.

The aim and objectives of the Planning Enforcement Charter are, therefore, as follows:

- To provide a framework for the investigation of alleged breaches of planning control.
- To set out the range of action that can be taken where it is considered appropriate to do so.
- To monitor proactively the implementation of planning permissions.

The council has statutory powers to investigate breaches of planning control and the conditions attached to planning consents, and to take formal action where a satisfactory outcome is not achieved by negotiation. However, enforcement is a discretionary power which means that, even where there is a breach of planning control, the council has to consider if it is in the public interest to take enforcement action. The council is not obliged to take any particular action on a specific breach of planning control and, indeed, can decide that no action is necessary. There is also a right of appeal and the council should have regard to the likelihood of a case being sustained at appeal before it commences such action.

We hope you will find this charter useful. Please let us know if you think it is unclear or have any suggestions about how we could improve the service further.

WHAT IS A BREACH OF PLANNING CONTROL?

PLANNING BREACHES

The majority of planning enforcement investigations involves one of the following alleged breaches:

- Building work or engineering operations carried out without planning permission;
- Unauthorised change of use of land or buildings;
- Development which has not been carried out in accordance with an approved planning permission;
- Failure to comply with a condition or legal agreement attached to a planning permission; or
- Any contravention of permitted development rights, which are set out in the [General Permitted Development Order](#).
- Demolition taking place in conservation areas where permission is required;
- Works carried out to a listed building which affect its historic character or setting, without listed building consent being granted;
- Removal of, or works carried out, to protected trees without consent being granted or proper notification given; and
- The unauthorised display of advertisements. (Please note that the wording and images on an advertisement are not covered by planning control, but by the Advertising Standards Authority, Mid City Place, 71 High Holborn, London WC 1V 6QT. Complaints should be sent to enquiries@asa.org.uk or online at www.asa.org.uk)

NON PLANNING BREACHES

The council regularly receives correspondence about matters which are not breaches of planning control. While the Planning Enforcement Team may not be able to deal with such matters there may be other legislative controls open to a complainant. The most common examples are:

- Neighbour nuisance, boundary and land ownership disputes. These are civil matters rather than planning matters. Further advice can be obtained from a solicitor, or, if the property is owned by the council, [Property Management & Development](#) should be contacted.
- Unauthorised development on the highway, footway or verge that is covered by highway legislation is the responsibility of the council's [Roads and Transportation Service](#).
- [Dangerous structures](#) are investigated by [Building Standards service](#).
- Anti-social behaviour including noise and smell are the remit of the council's [Environmental Health service](#).

These services can also be contacted via the Council's Customer Contact Service on 01506 280000.

If we receive a complaint which involves another council service we will pass it to the relevant service and we will inform you who we have contacted on the matter. If it involves an external agency - an agency out with the council - we will advise you who should be contacted.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD ENFORCEMENT

The council does not condone the carrying out of development without first obtaining the necessary planning permission or approvals for that development. That said, the main purpose of the Planning Enforcement Team is not to punish mistakes but to remedy the undesirable effects of unauthorised development, particularly on the amenity of neighbours, to bring unauthorised activities under control as soon as practicable and to maintain public confidence in the credibility of the planning system. It is important to be aware that planning enforcement is a discretionary power and that it is for the council to take a view on whether or not to exercise that power. In making that decision the council will carefully consider whether the degree of harm the unauthorised development is causing, or is likely to cause, warrants its intervention.

'Harm' can be defined in many different ways but is generally considered to arise through a combination of factors, including;

- Adverse impact on visual amenity due to poor design or inappropriate materials.
- Loss of privacy or overshadowing and loss of natural light.
- Inappropriate development that is harmful to the landscape or the setting of a heritage asset.
- Untidy land and run down or derelict buildings that present a very poor-quality environment and/or prejudice community safety.
- Failure to comply with a condition of a planning permission leading to an adverse impact on amenity.
- Danger and disturbance due to significantly increased traffic flows.
- Loss of protected trees.
- Loss or damage to listed buildings and demolition of buildings in a conservation area.
- Disruption or nuisance arising from the construction or operation of the development.

Harm, for the purposes of planning, does not however include:

- Breaches of title deeds or restrictive covenants.
- Private disputes.
- Competition between businesses.
- Ownership disputes, loss of an individual's view or trespass onto their land.
- Damage to property.
- Reduction in value of land or property.
- Loss of a view.

The council follows these guiding principles in relation to planning enforcement:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>Consistency:</i> | To ensure that similar enforcement activities are dealt with in the same manner. |
| <i>Fairness:</i> | To ensure equitable and fair enforcement. |
| <i>Proportionality:</i> | To ensure that enforcement action relates directly to the degree of breach of planning control. |
| <i>Clarity:</i> | To ensure that any enforcement action taken by the council is easily understood by citizens, organisations and businesses. |
| <i>Equality:</i> | To ensure that any decision is not influenced by the ethnic origin, gender, age, religious or political beliefs or sexual orientation of the offender or interested parties. |

Provided that there is the prospect of an appropriate resolution being achieved, and in a timely manner, the council will first seek to negotiate compliance before pursuing formal enforcement action in all but the most serious cases. Negotiations aim to achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- To have the developer undertake work to comply with the planning permission granted.
- To have the owner / developer apply for retrospective planning permission for the works undertaken, or a variation to the works that are more likely to secure permission.
- To remove an unauthorised development.
- To cease an unauthorised use.
- To remove disruption or nuisance arising from the construction or operation of the development.

However, negotiations will not be allowed to impede or delay whatever formal enforcement action may be required to make the development acceptable in planning terms, or to compel it to stop.

In considering whether to take enforcement action, the decisive issue for the council will be whether the breach of planning control would unacceptably affect amenity. In other words, the council will need to be satisfied that the breach of planning control is causing harm, and that enforcement action to remedy that harm would be in the public interest, and ultimately defensible if the action is appealed or otherwise challenged. The council will not take enforcement action solely to regularise an otherwise acceptable development which is causing no demonstrable harm.

HOW WE INVESTIGATE POSSIBLE BREACHES OF PLANNING CONTROL

Registration

Each new case is recorded on our database and given a unique reference number within three working days. As part of this process the priority will be assessed and a case officer will be allocated. An acknowledgement email or letter will be sent to the complainer.

We encourage people who contact us to give full contact details, as this allows us to provide updates, or to contact them for further information if necessary.

In accordance with the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 we will treat the identity of complainants in confidence. The council will only release information regarding the identity of a complainant where it is in the public interest to do so, as a result of a ruling by the Scottish Information Commissioner or directed to do so by a court of law.

Priorities

The resources available to respond to reports of alleged breaches of planning control are finite and the Planning Enforcement Team must, therefore, ensure that it makes the most

effective use of these by prioritising what it does according to the seriousness and the degree of harm being caused.

Notwithstanding the above, the Planning Enforcement Team undertake to either visit the site of all alleged breaches of planning control within 10 working days of receiving a complaint or to request additional photographic or other evidence to allow an assessment of the case. If it is of a particularly serious nature a visit will be made by an officer on the same day wherever possible.

Investigation

An investigation begins with an officer visiting the site to gather information or an officer requesting additional information from the complainant or developer, before a decision is made on how to proceed. The complainant will be informed of the initial site visit findings and the action proposed or taken.

The service standards relating to these steps, including timescales can be found in Appendix 1. If the council cannot meet this timescale, the complainant will be contacted within the given timescale, informing of the reason(s) for the delay and the likely timescale for a response.

The length of time required to resolve a case or take action can be affected by a number of factors. Progress can be delayed because of the need to gather further evidence, to allow negotiations to take place or for formal procedures to be concluded. Similarly, an application to regularise the breach of control or an appeal against a decision of the planning authority can also delay resolution of the case.

The council recognises that delays can be a source of considerable frustration to those submitting information, particularly if they consider their amenity is affected. Consequently, interested parties will be kept informed of significant stages in the progress of a case and contact details of the officer handling the case will be provided. You may wish to contact the case officer directly for a more regular update.

Closing an enforcement complaint

Complainants will be notified of the outcome of a case within 10 working days of the case being closed, with an account of the outcome provided.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A BREACH IS CONFIRMED?

INITIAL ACTION

Voluntary Compliance through Negotiation

Where it is considered that the breach of planning control is unacceptable, the council will initially attempt to negotiate a solution without recourse to formal enforcement action, unless the breach is causing irreparable harm. Negotiations may involve the reduction or cessation of an unauthorised use or activity, or the modification or removal of unauthorised development.

Retrospective Planning Application

Where a breach of planning control has occurred and any harm being caused might be removed or alleviated by the imposition of conditions on a planning permission, a

retrospective planning application will be sought. If a retrospective application is not submitted and registered within one calendar month of a written request to do so, the council will consider taking formal enforcement action.

No Further Action

Scottish Government Circular 10/2009: Planning Enforcement explains that on conclusion of the initial investigation a council may decide that there has been no breach of planning control or that there is insufficient evidence to pursue the matter further. In situations where there has been a breach, the council may nevertheless come to the view that it is of such a minor nature or so insignificant that it would not be in the wider public interest to take formal action. Generally, the council will not take action against a breach of planning control which does not cause demonstrable harm.

FORMAL ACTION

Enforcement Notice

If development has been carried out without planning permission an Enforcement Notice can be served on all parties with an interest in the land requiring remedial works to be carried out to deal with any harm caused by the breach. Failure to comply with the terms of an Enforcement Notice within the time specified is an offence, and may lead to the imposition of a fine in the Sheriff Court.

There is a right of appeal to the Scottish Government's Planning & Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) against an enforcement notice; if an appeal is lodged the notice will be suspended until the appeal has been determined, and will be actioned if the notice is upheld.

Temporary Stop Notice

These can be issued if the council considers that an unauthorised activity is causing such immediate and serious harm that it should cease immediately. The notice must be displayed on the land to which it relates and ceases to have effect after 28 days. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with its requirements.

Stop Notice

Where a breach of planning control consists of an activity considered to be causing serious harm, a Stop Notice can be served, in conjunction with an enforcement notice. There is no right of appeal against a Stop Notice, and it is a criminal offence to fail to comply with its requirements.

Breach of Condition Notice

If planning permission has been granted subject to conditions and these have not been complied with, a Breach of Condition Notice can be served on the person(s) responsible for carrying out the development, or on the owner of the land, requiring compliance with the condition. There is no right of appeal against a Breach of Condition Notice and it is a criminal offence to fail to comply with its requirements.

Notice requiring an application for planning permission

These can be issued on a landowner, requiring the submission of a planning application to rectify development which has been carried out without permission. Whilst there are no

penalty provisions for failing to comply with this notice it constitutes formal enforcement action under the planning act and leaves it open to the council to pursue further action in terms of an enforcement notice. The notice will also appear on any property enquiry should the owner seek to sell the property.

Notice requiring information as to interests in land

These can be issued on any occupier of land requiring them to confirm in writing their interest in the land along with details of any other party with an interest in land. In addition, it can require information on what the land is being used for, when that use began and the time when any activities being carried out began. It is often used to gather information prior to pursuing enforcement action. It is an offence under Section 272(5) (Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997) to fail to comply with its requirements.

Planning Contravention Notice

This can be served on an owner of land, any person carrying out operations on land, or who is using the land for any purpose. The notice requires the recipients to confirm whether the use or activities alleged in the notice are being carried out, when they began and details of those engaged in the use/activities. The notice also seeks information on any planning permission that may exist for the use/activities, or any reason why permission is not required. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with its requirements.

Amenity Notice

These can be served on anyone with an interest in land where the condition of the land is considered to have an adverse impact on the amenity of an area. There is a right of appeal to the DPEA.

Listed Building Enforcement Notice

This is similar to an Enforcement Notice but relates specifically to unauthorised works affecting the character of a listed building. It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with the requirements of a listed building enforcement notice. There is a right of appeal to the DPEA.

Advertisement Enforcement Notice

This is similar to enforcement notice but relates to unauthorised advertisements. There is a right of appeal to the DPEA.

Advertisement Discontinuance Notice

Where an advertisement enjoys deemed consent under the advertisement regulations (which means it is exempt from having to apply for advertisement consent) but the council requires its removal, a discontinuance notice may be served. This can be appealed to the DPEA.

Replacement Tree Notice

Where a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) is removed, damaged, uprooted or destroyed the planning authority can issue a replacement tree notice requiring the owner of the land to plant a replacement tree or trees. A notice can be appealed to the DPEA.

It is a criminal offence to remove, damage, uproot or destroy a tree protected by a TPO and anyone who carries out such actions can be reported to the Procurator Fiscal for prosecution.

Interdict

The council can apply to the Courts to restrain a breach of planning control and the court may grant an interdict if it is considered appropriate in terms of public interest to prevent the breach.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A NOTICE IS SERVED?

The recipients of a notice/order will respond in one of three ways:

- ☐ Comply fully with the notice/order – at which point the Planning Enforcement Team will close the case.
- ☐ Contest the notice/order by way of an appeal to the Scottish Government's [Planning and Environmental Appeals Division](#).
- ☐ Fail to comply, fully or in part, with the notice.

Where a case goes to appeal there can be a significant delay in reaching a resolution. If the appeal against the notice is allowed and/or planning permission is granted this will normally be the end of the matter. If the appeal is dismissed, or no appeal is made, continued failure to comply with the requirements of the notice/order result in the council pursuing a prosecution.

Fixed Penalty Notice

Where an enforcement or breach of condition notice has not been complied with, the council can issue a fixed penalty notice as an alternative to prosecution. The fixed penalty amounts to £2,000 for each step not complied with in an enforcement notice and £300 for each step not complied with in a breach of condition notice. There is no right of appeal against these notices, although timeous payment prevents the council from reporting the non-compliance with the original notice to the Procurator Fiscal.

Direct Action

Failure to comply with the requirements of an Enforcement Notice, Breach of Condition Notice or an Amenity Notice may result in the council carrying out works required by that notice. Any costs incurred in carrying out such works can be recovered from the landowner.

Prosecution

Most breaches of planning control are not a criminal offence. However, non-compliance with the requirements of a formal notice is a criminal offence and on conviction the person served with the notice could be subject to a fine. Where a transgressor has failed to comply with a formal notice the council may report the matter to the Procurator Fiscal, the body responsible for instigating prosecution proceedings.

A prosecution report will normally only be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal regarding a business or individual, where one or more of the following criteria exists:

- Endangering the health, safety or wellbeing of people.
- Deliberately, negligently or persistently breaching legal obligations likely to cause material loss, harm or nuisance to others.
- Deliberately or persistently failing to act on, or comply with, previously issued formal warnings or notices, having been given reasonable opportunity to do so.

- There is a history of similar breaches and/or previous convictions.
- Assault or obstruction of an enforcement officer in the course of their duties.
- It is considered that the defendant will be unlikely to establish any relevant statutory defences.

A prosecution report will only be prepared when the case has passed both the evidential test and the public interest test.

The principles outlined below apply equally to the other types of enforcement action that are available:

Evidential Test –

- The enforcement officer must be satisfied that there is enough evidence to provide a 'realistic prospect of conviction' against an accused on each charge.
- A 'realistic prospect of conviction' is an objective test that means that the Procurator Fiscal, and ultimately the Sheriff, is more likely than not to convict the accused of the charge/s alleged.

Public Interest Test –

- The public interest must be considered in each case where there is enough evidence to provide a 'realistic prospect of conviction'.
- Before submitting a report to the Procurator Fiscal consideration must be given to balance the factors for and against any proposed report carefully and fairly.
- Public interest factors that can affect the decision to prosecute usually depend on the seriousness of the offence or the circumstances of the accused.
- Some factors may increase the need to submit a report to the Procurator Fiscal but others may suggest that another course of action would be more appropriate.

The decision to prosecute

The decision whether or not to prosecute is one entirely for the Procurator Fiscal (PF). Before proceeding with a case, the PF must be satisfied by way of corroborated evidence

- that the case is within the jurisdiction of the court;
- that an offence has been committed;
- that the alleged offender committed that offence and is therefore liable to prosecution; and
- that there is sufficient evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt both that the offence was committed, and by whom.

The criteria that the FP will consider are explained in the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Prosecution Code. This sets out the criteria for decision making and the range of options available to prosecutors dealing with reports of crime. When reporting agencies send the PF reports of crime, the PF will decide whether to begin criminal proceedings or whether to take alternative action. Such decisions must reflect the values of the department namely:

- impartiality;
- thoroughness;
- integrity;
- sensitivity;
- co-operation;
- professionalism

If any one of these criteria is not met, the case must be marked "no proceedings". The PF may, however, request further information or clarification before reaching a decision. If the PF is satisfied that all four have been met, he or she has a number of options open to them and discretion is very wide. The PF may choose to prosecute and the choice of court is one entirely for the PF.

Even if there is sufficient evidence to justify proceeding the PF can still decide that it is not in the public interest to prosecute

IMMUNITY FROM ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Time Limits

- ☐ For building, engineering, mining or other operations unauthorised development becomes immune from enforcement action four years after the operations are substantially completed.
- ☐ For the change of use of a building, or part of a building, to use as a single dwellinghouse, development becomes immune from enforcement action four years after the change of use first occurred.
- ☐ For all other changes of use and breaches of conditions, development becomes immune from enforcement action ten years from the date the breach of planning control first commenced.

These time limits do not apply where the council considers that the unauthorised development has been deliberately concealed or where the council commences any action within the 4 or 10 year time limits.

Lawful Development Certificates

If owners of land or property consider that a breach of planning control has become immune from enforcement action they may apply for a Certificate of Lawfulness (CLU) for an existing use. The decision to approve or refuse an application for a CLU will be dependent on the applicant submitting sufficient documentation to establish that the existing development has been in place for at least four years (in the case of a building operation) or for at least ten years (for a change of use). In the case of a change of use, evidence of 10 years' continuous use must be submitted.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE THE SUBJECT OF AN INVESTIGATION?

The council understands that in many cases a breach of planning control is not intentional and can be the result of a misunderstanding or a lack of an awareness of planning legislation. Therefore, if you receive a letter from the council or a visit from a Planning Enforcement Officer, the council encourages you to respond positively and provide the information which we need to resolve the matter. It is in the interests of all parties if an identified breach can be addressed at an early stage.

The council has a duty to investigate complaints alleging a breach of planning, even if they prove to be unfounded. If you are contacted about an alleged breach you are entitled to know what the allegation is and to have the opportunity to explain your side of the case. However, please be aware that the council will not disclose the identity of complainants unless it is statutorily or legally required to do so. The matter can be resolved quickly if it is determined that there is no breach. In other cases, a resolution may be negotiated, however this does not mean that you can delay any response or action. The council expects you to respond within the stated timescales and we will pursue prosecutions for failures to respond to formal notices. The council will not allow protracted negotiations to distract it from taking appropriate action.

In many cases, particularly where the development is likely to be acceptable, the council might invite you to submit a retrospective planning application, although this is on the understanding that it will not prejudice any decision the council may take. In cases where planning permission has been obtained and the deviation from the approved plans is minor, you may be entitled to apply for a [non-material variation](#) to your planning permission.

You should be aware that Planning Enforcement Officers have legal rights of entry to land and property in order to investigate alleged breaches of planning or compliance with Enforcement Notices. The Planning Enforcement Officer will make themselves known to the landowner/tenant/developer when they visit a site but will not normally give advance warning of a visit.

The council will use the information gained from a site visit to help assess the harm being caused and what further action, if any, needs to be taken. In addition, you may be served with a Planning Contravention Notice which requires you to provide information concerning the alleged breach, and ownership of the land.

If negotiations are unsuccessful or are not appropriate, Planning Enforcement Officers will explain the implications of any action the council may pursue. Whilst we will endeavour to advise you on the planning merits or otherwise of an unauthorised development, Planning Enforcement Officers will not act as your advisor and cannot make decisions on your behalf.

If you receive a letter or notice from the Planning Enforcement Team, you may wish to consider seeking independent advice from a qualified planning consultant, architect, or another appropriate property or legal professional. Alternatively, there is the option of contacting Planning Aid, a voluntary service offering free independent, professional planning advice.

It is important to be aware that if you decide to try and sell a property which has been subject to unauthorised works or an unauthorised change of use, there is a strong likelihood that you will encounter significant delays and legal difficulties. Potential purchasers who instruct standard property searches will be provided with the details of any notices which have been served on the property and also made aware of any breaches of planning permission. It is, therefore, in the best interests of sellers to ensure that any outstanding planning breaches are satisfactorily resolved before any sale is initiated.

REPORTING BREACHES OF PLANNING CONTROL

Members of the public have a vital role in reporting breaches of control. Any concerns should be raised with the council at the earliest opportunity. The council has an [online interactive complaint form](#) for reporting any suspected breaches of planning control.

The council will do its best to honour requests for confidentiality, including refusing requests for disclosure of the identity of complainers under the Freedom of Information Act. It should be borne in mind; however, that total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if the Information Commissioners Officer requires the release of the information or if the case leads to court proceedings. This is an extremely unlikely outcome in most cases.

Members of the public can have an important role in monitoring conditions placed on planning consents, which are detailed on the decision notice and can be viewed in the case file on the council's website. The council dealt with over 1,000 planning and other applications in 2018 and it is not possible for us to monitor all conditions attached to them. Your involvement is invaluable in providing information where it is believed that conditions attached to a consent are not being complied with. To report conditions which aren't being complied with, please use the enforcement complaint form.

MONITORING MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 was passed by Royal Assent on 25 July 2019 and the implementation of the legislation is to be enacted by early 2021. This includes the requirement for planning authority enforcement charters to include a statement on the authority's monitoring of compliance with planning permission for major developments to be brought into force by Quarter 1 2021, together with guidance on such monitoring.

It is anticipated at this stage that the planning officer handling the major planning application would receive, discharge and monitor conditions for prior and post development and would be the point of contact for the developer.

- If the planning officer is unable to resolve matters for any outstanding conditions, within a reasonable timescale, the planning officer would advise the developer that the matter was being referred to the Planning Enforcement team for further action. The planning officer would notify the Planning Enforcement team and an enforcement case would then be created and investigated.
- If there are specific conditions that the planning officer would like monitored during the course of construction works i.e. landscaping works, external materials, boundary treatment, the planning officer would notify the Planning Enforcement team and an enforcement case would be created and monitored at regular intervals. This may involve site visits being undertaken and in consultation with the planning officer, identifying whether there are any significant changes from the approved drawings.

MAKING A SUGGESTION OR COMPLAINT ABOUT THE ENFORCEMENT SERVICE

The council tries hard to meet customers' expectations and we hope that you will be satisfied with the service you receive. However, if you have any concerns or difficulties, we want to hear from you. We are committed to improving our service and dealing promptly with any failures or shortcomings.

We will consider seriously any complaints made about the way an enforcement enquiry was dealt with. In the first instance, complaints should be discussed with the member of staff involved. If you are still dissatisfied, you can submit a [formal complaint via our website](#).

Written complaints about the enforcement service will be acknowledged and then fully and promptly investigated. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome from the council's complaints process, you have the right to take your complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, at: Freepost SPSO, telephone: 0800 377 7330, or [spsos.org.uk/online-contact](https://www.spsos.org.uk/online-contact)

Generally, you must contact the Ombudsman within 12 months of the date of the complaint.

FURTHER INFORMATION – ENFORCEMENT POWERS

The council's authority to take enforcement action comes from government legislation. Fuller information on the use of enforcement powers can be found in the Scottish Government publication [Planning Circular 10/2009: Planning Enforcement](#).

APPENDIX 1 - PLANNING ENFORCEMENT SERVICE STANDARDS

- Sites which are the subject of a complaint will either be visited by an enforcement officer or additional photographic evidence or information will be sought from the relevant parties within 10 working days.
- A further response, detailing the findings of the initial visit and any action that is proposed or has been taken to remedy the alleged breach, will be sent to the complainer within 5 days of the initial visit. If the alleged breach is not to be the subject of any further action this response will give the reasons for that decision.
- If it proves impossible or impractical to respond within the above timescale, the complainer will be contacted giving information on the reason(s) for the delay and indicating the likely timescale for response.
- The complainer will be notified of the outcome of the case within 10 working days of the case being closed by the case officer, with an account of the outcome.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING UPDATE

REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the panel with an update on the development of a Community Wealth Building approach within West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. notes the action plan, contained in appendix one, including the planned tasks, responsible officers and timescales for delivery;
2. notes the actions to be undertaken in the next six months and;
3. notes the next steps, outlined in section D4.

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 Community Planning (Scotland) Act 2015 places requirements on the CPP. Environmental, equality, risk and health assessments are considered on a project by project basis.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	High relevance to the SOA (LOIP).
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None
VII Consideration at PDSP	Previously considered at Partnership and Resources PDSP

VIII Other consultations

Community Planning Partners

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

In September the Panel were presented with the Centre for Local Economic Strategy (CLES) finalised report 'Advancing Community Wealth Building in West Lothian'. The report highlighted a number of key existing positive actions which have been taken in West Lothian already to support Community Wealth Building and identified 11 recommendations for action in the short, medium and long term, which have been categorised into four themes; West Lothian as a Community Wealth Building place, communities and neighbourhoods, anchor collaboration and galvanising support.

The report provides an update on the activity to date and highlights the key next steps to be undertaken to develop an approach to Community Wealth building in West Lothian.

D.2 Community Wealth Building – Report recommendations

The recommendation presented by the CLES report have been analysed by officers and initial actions been developed for how these the recommendations could be taken forward in West Lothian. Appendix one contains an action plan detailing each recommendation under the four themes. The plan contains the recommendation, the tasks to be undertaken, the timescales and the responsible officer. The plan will continue to be updated as actions within it are progressed and new areas are identified through continual development of activity.

Some actions to be undertaken in the next six months include:

1. Community engagement activities to generate insight and ideas about community regeneration
2. Bringing Community Planning Partnership procurement leads together to map the procedures in place to gain benefits through contacts procedures / identify further opportunities and identifying existing frameworks
3. Revisit the promotion of the Community Asset Transfer Strategy to focus on the pathways to Community Asset Transfers specifically for the most deprived communities
4. Agree target outcomes and metrics to measure progress towards a sustainable and equitable economy in West Lothian
5. Establish a West Lothian peer-learning network for communities to support each other for asset transfer, community energy and local food sector

Meetings are being held with all Heads of Service to look at the recommendations relating to their service area and to identify additional opportunities for community wealth building development within their services. This will also provide the opportunity to identify relevant strategies, as outlined in objective two, where Community Wealth Building outcomes can be incorporated into key strategies.

The role of anchor institutions remains a key element of the development of

Community Wealth Building. Whilst discussions have been taking place with key Community Planning Partners individually like the NHS, the identification of Community Planning partners and opportunities for development will be undertaken as part of the next cycle of meetings.

D.3 Community Wealth Building Conference

Officers attended the first Community Wealth Building conference in Scotland, hosted by North Ayrshire Council, on the 7 October. The conference provided an opportunity to network with other Community Wealth building officers, hear about exemplar projects and community wealth building activity and to get an update on the government's ambitions for Community Wealth Building.

D.4 Next Steps

Over the next three months the development of the Community Wealth building approach will focus on the following activity:

1. Meeting with all Heads of Service, within West Lothian Council, to look at the opportunities for each service area and how the existing identified recommendations align with service delivery. This will be incorporated into the action plan attached in appendix one.
2. The identification of key Community Planning Partners to be actively involved in the including the identification of where they can support in the delivery of activity.
3. The development of a communication plan for Community Wealth building including the development of options to support increased participation and understanding from the community.

An update on the next steps and recommendations for West Lothian's approach to Community Wealth Building will be brought to the next panel in January 2023.

E. CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the current work being undertaken to develop and take forward an approach to Community Wealth Building in West Lothian.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

22.09.13. Community Wealth Building Update – Economy, Community Empowerment and wealth building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
 22.06.21 Community Wealth Building Update – Council Executive
 21.12.21 Community Wealth Building Update – Council Executive

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix one - Development of Community Wealth Building approach in West Lothian

Contact Person: Clare Stewart, Community Wealth Building Manager,
clare.stewart@westlothian.gov.uk

Elaine Cook

Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development

7 November 2022

Appendix one: Development of Community Wealth Building approach in West Lothian recommendations

As part of the CLES report a number of recommendations were set out covering both the short and medium term. The table below summarises these recommendations, sets out potential actions, a suggested high-level timetable and who is the responsible officer or Service area. Whilst the responsible officer had been identified the Community Wealth building team will support the delivery of each of the recommendations.

Theme one: West Lothian as a Community Wealth Building Place

Recommendation	Timescale	Tasks	Responsible officer / Service
Objective 1: Establish Effective Governance and Delivery Structure			
Establish a Community Wealth Building leadership group comprising of West Lothian Council and CPP	End of December 2022	Identify Community Planning partners to engage in the development of Community Wealth Building.	Community Wealth Building Team
Establish a Coordination group – operational and strategic officers with a lead responsible for embedding and delivering Community Wealth Building	End of December 2022	Develop terms of reference and establish group	Community Wealth Building Team
Learning and Knowledge Sharing through a Community of Practice for bi-annual sharing	End of March 2023 established - ongoing	Build a network of learning which will meet twice per year to discuss best practice, issues and opportunities. Initial meeting will be to raise awareness of the West Lothian approach to Community Wealth Building. Establish Learning and Knowledge Sharing networks with other LA's developing an approach to Community Wealth Building.	Community Wealth Building Team to facilitate the network

Objective 2: Embed Community Wealth Building outcomes in strategic planning for WLC and wider partners			
Embed Community Wealth Building into the refresh of WLC Corporate Plan, Community Planning Partnership LOIP, Procurement Strategy and other relevant strategies	Timescales to align with the update of key strategies	Ensure Community Wealth Building is embedded in the refresh of Council and key partner strategies and service delivery plans.	Community Wealth Building Team to co-ordinate and facilitate supported by relevant strategic leads as required and appropriate
Agree target outcomes and metrics to measure progress towards a sustainable and equitable economy	End of June 2023	Baseline data set to be identified with both qualitative and quantitative measures.	Community Wealth Building Team / Community Planning Partnership officers
Objective 3: Commit to Sustaining Resources to Deliver on Community Wealth Building Ambitions			
Dedicate staffing resources to support development and delivery of Community Wealth Building over medium to long-term	Completed	The creation of the Community Wealth Building team.	Depute Chief Executive, West Lothian Council

Theme 2: Communities and Neighbourhoods

Recommendation	Timescale	Tasks	Responsible officer / Service
Objective 4: Create a Community Wealth Building approach to Local Renewable Energy Generation			
Explore opportunities for municipally owned renewable energy schemes, with income ring-fenced to fund home energy improvements	End of June 2023	Work with officers responsible for the delivery of council energy projects and responsible for the councils Climate Change Strategy to review and identify options. What are the projects already planned that could benefit communities and what opportunities are available. Explore home energy improvement schemes within Social Housing.	Energy and Climate Change Manager, West Lothian Council to lead

Community engagement activities to generate insight and ideas about community energy	End of March 2023	Build energy into community engagement activities as part of the Regeneration team activity including the planned engagement on the refreshed Community Planning Partnership LOIP.	Regeneration Team Leader, West Lothian Council to lead
Objective 5: Build a Resilient and Generative Food Sector			
Explore opportunities, with the West Lothian Food Network, to develop commercially viable food supply businesses	End of March 2023	Through Anti-Poverty working group and Economic Development liaise with West Lothian Food Network, to identify viable opportunities.	Economic Development, West Lothian Council to lead
Investigate spending of anchor institutions on food and catering, to identify opportunities to work towards redirecting spend to more local and social providers	End of March 2023	Working with anchor organisations to analyse spend data.	Head of Corporate Services, West Lothian Council to lead with support from Community Wealth Building team
Embed the goal of growing locally owned, generative social food businesses into plans for food and drink in West Lothian	End of June 2023	Identification of opportunities for locally grown food supplies and identify opportunities for bidding for contracts. Work together to create a sustainable food place in West Lothian.	Economic Development, West Lothian Council to lead
Objective 6: Increase Development of Land and Assets by and for the Community			
Establish a West Lothian peer-learning network for communities to support each other for asset transfer, community energy and local food sector	End of March 2023	Options for the establishment of a peer support group to be developed. Existing networks to be utilised.	Regeneration Team, West Lothian Council to lead
Revisit the promotion of the Community Asset Transfer	End of March 2023	Review and refresh approach to supporting deprived communities to engage with	Property Services, West Lothian Council to lead

Strategy to focus on the pathways to Community Asset Transfers specifically for the most deprived communities		Community Asset Transfer particularly where capacity and resource are a challenge. Ensure appropriate promotion of support available.	
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Theme 3: Anchor Collaboration

Recommendation	Timescale	Tasks	Responsible officer / Service
Objective 7: Utilise Anchor Institution Spending on Goods and Services as a Key Tool for Tackling Priority Social, Economic and Environmental Change			
Bring Community Planning Partnership procurement leads together to map existing community benefit procedures / opportunities and existing frameworks	End of March 2023	Review procurement spend and explore the possibility to look at a cross-working community benefit approach with Community Planning partners	Head of Corporate Services, West Lothian Council to Lead with support from the Community Planning Partnership Officer
Identify a core set of community benefit priorities to be embedded across the Community Planning Partnership	End of September 2023	To agree a core set of principles on Community Benefit that all Community Planning Partnership can buy-into and implement.	Head of Corporate Services, West Lothian Council to Lead with support from the Community Planning Partnership Officer
Objective 8: Linking Third Sector with Anchor Suppliers to Achieve Community Benefit Realisation			
Work with the third sector interface, WLC and wider Community Planning Partnership procurement teams and West Lothian Chamber of Commerce to scope out a potential model for a platform to link third sector partners with prospective anchor institution Community Benefit opportunities	End of June 2023	As part of development of the proposed approach to community benefits, how the third sector can access community benefits should be included, as well as identified community needs. City Deal / NHS portal to be explored as a mechanism to join together the community need and opportunities.	Community Wealth Building team to lead

Objective 9: Increase Recruitment by Anchor Institutions from the Most Deprived Neighbourhoods and Communities			
Establish the baseline position in relation to Community Planning Partnership partner recruitment from the regeneration areas, establishing the number of people currently employed and their pay grade	End of June 2023	Analyse data from Community Planning Partnership on their current staffing demographic and their recruitment policies. Identify areas of opportunity and where policies can be aligned including if there are skill shortages that need addressed and are there certain areas under represented	Community Planning Partnership Officer to lead
Identify third sector partners active in these regeneration areas and working on providing employment support	End of March 2023	Liaise with Employability Service to identify third sector partners who work with communities on employability skills, list should link in with anchor organisations.	Economic Development, West Lothian Council to lead
Work with third sector to identify opportunities to test out new approaches to engaging with and providing pre-employment support for prospective candidates	End of August 2023	<p>New engagement processes to be identified through the No One Left behind engagement and the other community engagement activity being undertaken as part of the Community Wealth Building action plan. This will help to identify the most effective way to engage people, needing pre-employment support, and work with the identified third sector partners to have a new way of engaging on support and training.</p> <p>Include within the engagement and support those face precarious employment.</p>	Economic Development, West Lothian Council to lead

Theme 4: Galvanising Support

Recommendation	Timescale	Tasks	Responsible officer / Service
Objective 10: Build Private Sector Engagement in Community Wealth Building			
Work closely with key stakeholder including the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and wider private sector to develop a West Lothian Community Wealth Building charter for business	June 2023 – June 2024	Procurement, Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and Business Gateway to engage with key private sector partners to gather ideas and to develop and Community Wealth Building Business Charter. The charter be part of Economic Development liaison with companies in West Lothian to encourage adoption.	Economic Development Manager, West Lothian Council, to lead
Build on Real Living Wage commitments to incorporate employment and environmental standards into contractual requirements among anchor institutions	June 2023 – June 2024	Review the scope of potential of standard employment and environmental standards, for anchor organisations when commissioning.	Head of Corporate Services. West Lothian Council
Objective 11: Galvanise Active Support of Communities for this Approach			
Identify community ‘organic leaders’ to disseminate messaging and galvanise support. These ‘organic leaders’ may hold no elected position, title or professional roles in community engagement but are well placed within the broader social infrastructure, having the confidence and trust of others in their communities.	June 2023 – December 2023	Engagement with communities through the Regeneration team and other services engaging with the community, to promote the West Lothian approach to Community Wealth Building. Identify members of the community who agree to be “Community Champions” of the ethos of Community Wealth Building and refresh the citizen’s panel. Citizen’s Panel members to help disseminate the Community Wealth Building message.	Community Wealth Building Team

<p>The content of Community Wealth Building messaging should be co-designed, a clear destination must be agreed upon and communicated and framed within a short, medium and long term. This content and destination can be co-developed with the 'organic leaders' who would disseminate the message</p>	<p>End of March 2023</p>	<p>Development of Community Wealth Building approach should be done through engagement with communities and key partner organisations. A number of engagement activities to be designed as part of the development, identifying key themes for communicating as well as identifying key partners to help support implementation.</p>	<p>Community Wealth Building Team</p>
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DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



**ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

THIRD SECTOR AND WEST Lothian COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

**REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present the Annual Report produced with the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian. The report gives an overview of the partnership working including funding, planning groups and other support during the financial year 2021/22 and some information of funding committed in the first part of 2022/23.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that panel:

- Consider and note the contents of the report; and
- Notes the activity undertaken by the Third Sector and West Lothian Council in partnership.

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 of projects will be carried out as required.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None, although the report sets out a one-off delegate for the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to approve and disburse grant funding in April 2021.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	CPP's are now required to prepare a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) in place of Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The proposal does not raise any matters of conflict with the SOA/LOIP.

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Various Council budgets detailed within appendix one.
VII Consideration at PDSP	Regular reports are provided to PDSP on the Vol Orgs budget. This is the first report dealing specifically with the allocation for 2021/22.
VIII Other consultations	Third Sector Working Group

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

As part of the Third Sector Partnership and Voluntary Organisations Budget 2021/22 paper presented to the Panel in September 2020 there was a commitment to producing an Annual Report in partnership with the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian. The annual report would aim to bring together an overview of the partnership work between the Council and Third Sector and articulate the overall financial value of the various methods of support from the partnership. This includes the Council's ongoing investment in the sector, as well as how this work has met the priorities and needs of West Lothian communities.

The annual report brings together a wider picture of the impact as agreed by the Third Sector Working Group. It also aims to provide and present the collective work and investment of the Third Sector and Council in one report rather than being viewed through the work of thematic areas of funding or service delivery in isolation.

Three areas were identified to be highlighted in the report:

- Participation in decision making and planning
- Investment and funding support for the Third Sector
- Third Sector and Volunteering

The first report was presented to the Voluntary Organisations Policy Development Scrutiny Panel in November 2021. This report presents the second joint annual report.

D.2 Annual Report 2021/22

The 2021/22 Annual Report, attached as Appendix 1, presents a wide overview of West Lothian Council's engagement and funding of the Third Sector during 2021/22. The report features case studies from Third Sector organisations which demonstrate the impact of activities on West Lothian communities and residents.

Whilst the report contains additional information from the first annual report, some gaps in information still remain that will be explored by the Third Sector Working Group. One example is the need to better understand the funding drawn into West Lothian by the sector to show the true value the sector brings whether that is funding to match Council support or stand alone projects.

The panel is asked note the content of the report and highlight any areas they would like included in future reports. Future annual reports will be presented to the panel in May each year.

E CONCLUSION

West Lothian Council recognises that the Third Sector plays a hugely important role in the fabric of society in both complimenting and adding values to the work of West Lothian Council in delivering the support our communities need. It is vital that our partnership working is strengthened and further developed. The development of the second joint annual report, that pulls together 12 months of activity, will provide a good opportunity to reflect on as well as highlight the work being done collectively.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Voluntary Organisations PDSP, 24 September 2020

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=46334>

Voluntary Organisations PDSP, 4 November 2021

[West Lothian Council Committee Information - Submission Documents](#)

Appendices/Attachments:

Appendix 1: Annual Report 2021/22

Contact Persons:

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Elaine Cook

Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development

8 November 2022



West Lothian
Council

THE GATEWAY

Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian

Annual Report 2021-22

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Introduction

This is the second annual report produced by West Lothian Council and Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian covering 2021/22. The aim is to provide an overview of how the sector, West Lothian Council and other Community Planning Partners worked together to deliver vital support for communities.

The context of much of the first report was very much shaped by the Covid-19 pandemic and the effect of this over all on our communities, changing the way we work. Unfortunately, that remained the background to the 2021/22 report as West Lothian begins the recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic and the impact on West Lothian communities.

West Lothian Council, Community Planning Partners, Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) and the wider third sector continued to work together positively to provide a coordinated response to provide help and support to vulnerable individuals and communities across the local area. This changing landscape continued the need for new ways of working for many a permanent change to how services are delivered going forward. The partnership adapted quickly to meet changing needs and responded to mitigate the impacts on our communities. This continues to be the way of working that underpins the activity within this report and is highlighted by some of the case studies.

Contained within the report is information on the size and scale of the Third Sector both in terms of the Scottish context and West Lothian. The information highlights the number of organisations, the number of staff employed and the spend in the local economy. The information aims to show the scale and impact of the sector and highlights that the sector within West Lothian is predominantly a locally grown sector.

The report pulls together a wider overview of the overall investment, support and partnership working that takes place across a number of Council Services and other Community Planning partners. It is not meant to be an in-depth analysis, as the detail of the activity is reported and scrutinized within the lead area for delivery, it is however, an attempt to show the range of partnership work that goes on and a wider understanding of the funding that helps support the work in our communities.

It is not a complete picture as links, networks and partnership working take place all the time and is not always captured easily. Similarly, with funding, there is much more investment that supports the Third Sector and Council to deliver than the investment that goes into the third sector through Council. The key importance of how the Third Sector is able to draw down funding from external funders is recognised and how that ability helps to deliver key support to our local communities whether geographically or thematically. This is something that needs to be better understood going forward and something Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) is looking at to provide a clearer picture of the full impact of the sector. The report highlights around £40.5M of funding going into the sector from West Lothian Council and our Health partners in 2021/22 but partners are aware of more investment not captured within the report summary.

Understanding the impact of the sector is also not simply about the ability to attract external funding it is also about what the funding is for, namely how they improve the outcomes for their users in whatever sector they operate. This is something generally recognised and is no doubt captured individually or thematically but not looked at in the round. This is an area of work that both officers and the Third Sector will aim to develop throughout 2022/23 and will begin to report in the next annual report where possible.

West Lothian Council and the Third Sector have worked closer than ever before and strengthened existing processes and relationships. This partnership approach is not just about funding but also about planning strategically to ensure a joined-up approach so that available resources are best targeted to deliver for our communities, including an officer led Third Sector group that continues to support joint working on strategic areas for development. Some other areas of this activity are captured within the report under partnership working and are meant to highlight the breadth of activity but these are only some aspects.

In terms of defining the Third Sector, for the purposes of the report this includes local community-based organisations groups (mainly charities but some unincorporated), West Lothian wide groups, national charities operating within West Lothian, Community Development Trusts and other social enterprise models).

SIZE AND SCALE OF THE SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

This section provides high level information about the size and value of the sector from a national perspective as well as the local context.

Key Figures

46,500

CHARITIES/COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES KNOWN TO BE ACTIVE IN SCOTLAND



This includes 23,800 Scottish charities and over 1,000 UK-wide charities operating in Scotland. • The figure also includes over 20,000 community groups not registered as charities. • For every 10 registered charities there are a further 8 community groups.

89%

OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS ARE LOCAL

35%

OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS ARE BASED IN RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS

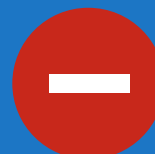
Charities and community groups play a particularly important role in rural areas, with more charities and community groups per head of population than urban areas.

Finances & Growth



SCOTTISH CHARITY INCOME IN 2020/21
£8.5 BILLION

SCOTTISH CHARITY EXPENDITURE IN 2020/21
£7.9 BILLION



**£8.5
BILLION**

TURNOVER OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH CHARITIES £7.2 BILLION
UK-WIDE CHARITIES' SCOTTISH ACTIVITIES £1.3 BILLION

68%

OF CHARITIES SAW INCOMES DECREASE BETWEEN 2020 AND 2021, REFLECTING THAT MANY GROUPS HAD TO CLOSE THEIR DOORS AND PUT A HALT TO ACTIVITIES.

This reflects the fact that during the pandemic many charities were not only able to continue providing services, but adapted and increased activities to meet new demand. Growth was driven by larger charities, particularly those involved in Housing, Social Care, and Community Development. Grant-making bodies also increased spending by £56m.

ON AVERAGE 3 NEW CHARITIES ARE REGISTERED EVERY DAY, WHILE AROUND 2 PER DAY ARE WOUND UP.

Both charity formations and dissolutions appear to be down slightly during the pandemic, although this may simply be due to a time lag.

3
↑

2
↓

1,182,000

FORMAL
VOLUNTEERS
SUPPORTED
ACTIVITIES IN 2020.



28%

OF SCOTTISH CHARITIES
EMPLOY PAID STAFF WHILE THE
REMAINDER RELY ON UNPAID
VOLUNTEERS.

135,000

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF
PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY
CHARITIES AND THE
WIDER VOLUNTARY
SECTOR

118,644

PAID STAFF
EMPLOYED BY
SCOTTISH
CHARITIES IN
2021



46%

OF THE SECTOR'S EMPLOYEES
WORK PART-TIME - THIS IS FAR
HIGHER THAN BOTH THE PUBLIC
(28%) AND PRIVATE SECTOR
(26%).

64.5%

OF THE SECTOR'S WORKFORCE IS
WOMEN - SIMILAR TO THE PUBLIC
SECTOR, BUT FAR HIGHER THAN THE
PRIVATE SECTOR.

SPORTS AND YOUTH/CHILDREN'S
ACTIVITIES SAW A DROP IN
VOLUNTEERING.



HOWEVER, LOCAL
COMMUNITY/NEIGHBOURHOOD
VOLUNTEERING ROSE FROM
22% IN 2019 TO
25% IN 2020



Informal volunteering on the other hand experienced some major shifts in 2020 due to the impact of Covid, with participation rates increasing from **36%** in 2018 to **56%** in 2020, with around **2.5 million adults** providing unpaid help to friends and neighbours. Some types of informal volunteering soared:

- Keeping in touch with someone who is at risk of being lonely increased from 18% in 2018 to 69% in 2020
- Doing shopping, collection pension, collecting benefits or paying bills increased from 12% to 51%



ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

There's no doubt that Scotland's volunteers are valuable. But how can we measure the social and economic value of volunteering?

The results of the 2018 Scottish Household Survey allow us to calculate volunteering effort in Scotland. We estimate that in total volunteers contribute:

£5.5 BILLION to Scotland's economy

*£2.3BN FROM FORMAL VOLUNTEERING AND £3.2BN FROM INFORMAL VOLUNTEERING (NUMBERS HAVE BEEN ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST MILLION OR 1,000,000).



Investing in the Voluntary Sector

There are lots of myths and misconceptions about voluntary sector funding. For example, two thirds of sector income is earned rather than donated.



There is currently no national assessment of the true added value of public investment in the sector, but many individual charities have carried out Social Return on Investment research to highlight the significant benefits of their work. Most recently, Children's Hospices across Scotland reported that its services generated £6.24 in public value in return for every public pound invested.

Despite this, many voluntary organisations delivering public services struggle with short term funding arrangements that make it challenging to plan for the future. As a result, charity managers frequently raise concerns about the amount of time they spend trying to raise money rather than delivering vital services. Some estimates suggest that leaders of small to medium charities spend a quarter of their time chasing funding. Short-term funding also creates stress for staff and beneficiaries.

Scotland's voluntary sector is a major provider of public services, from health and social care to education and housing, with £2bn in income coming from the public sector annually, including:

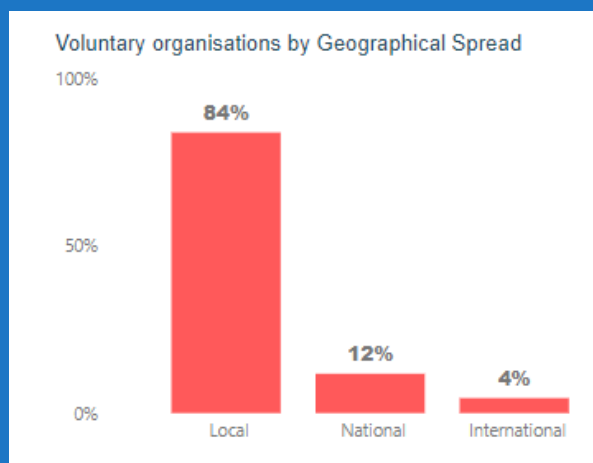


SIZE AND SCALE OF THE SECTOR WEST LoTHIAN

West Lothian Key Facts



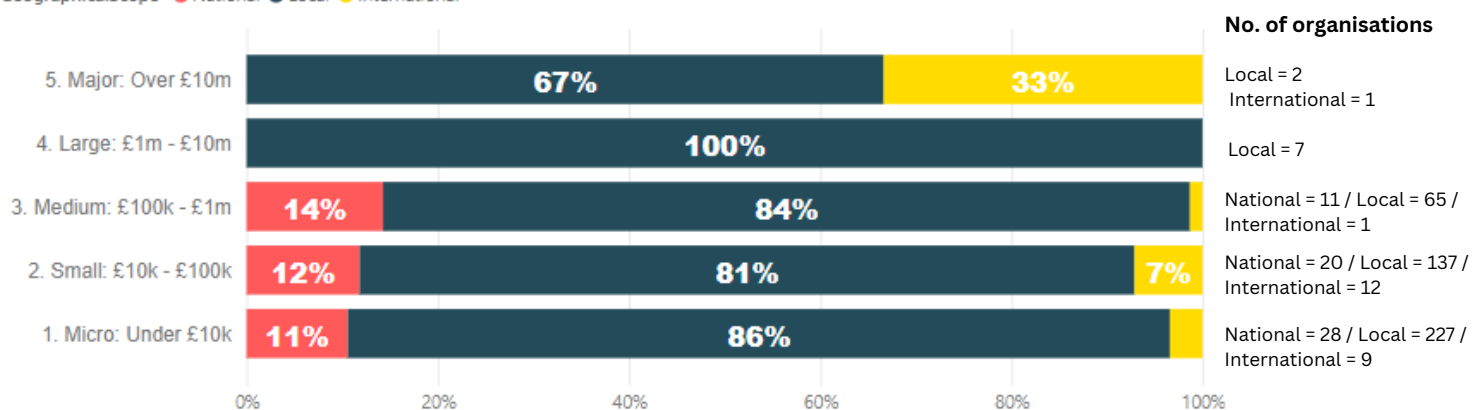
Geographical Reach: Local, national and international



There is a tendency for national and international charities to be larger than local ones, and more likely to be registered as charities. The majority of organisations are small regardless of their geographical scope. Many international charities work in very local areas, eg in a specific region, or with a specific school or orphanage. Similarly many national charities are small, for example those dealing with very specialist interests or rare health issues.

% of charities by size and Geographical Spread

Geographical Scope: National (Red), Local (Dark Blue), International (Yellow)



Source: OSCR 2019 and SCVO 2020

Scottish voluntary sector data by ICNPO area of work

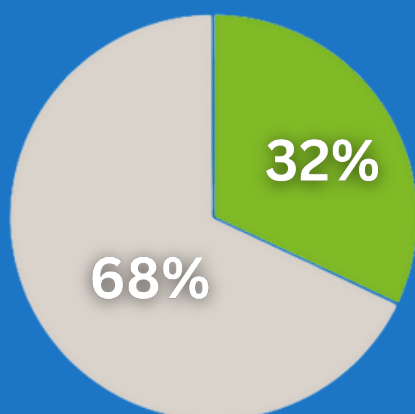
The following table presents the top 5 ICNPO's field of work categories using SCVO's adapted classification system based on the [International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations \(ICNPO\)](#).

ICNPO Field of Work	Number of Organisations	Income 2020/21	Expenditure 2020/21	Paid Staff
Social Care	166	£11,144,605	£9,784,356	391
Culture and Sport	95	£13,864,165	£13,094,181	156
Religious Activities	77	£3,750,528	£3,668,954	79
Community, economic and social development	68	£4,816,639	£3,519,525	91
Education and Research	34	£5,356,309	£4,277,221	59

VOLUNTEERING IN WEST Lothian

THE LATEST STATS FROM THE SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (SHS)

4 year participation rate: West Lothian



32% of adults in West Lothian, an estimated 46,270 people, volunteer formally through an organisation or group. To provide a more robust result, this is calculated on a 4-year average. This is above the national average in 2018 of 26%.

Adults, based: 980 (sum of respondents for last 4 years 2015-2018)

IN WEST Lothian, FORMAL VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED:



**4.1 MILLION HOURS
OF HELP PROVIDING**



**£62.1 MILLION
TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Summary of Annual Report 2021-22

£40,500,000

across all sectors covered in this report

Voluntary Sector Gateway



1200

people signed up to volunteer during the crisis

Approx. **£900,000**

emergency funding provided to Vol Orgs by Scottish Government and West Lothian Council



£570k

Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing funding to support 32 small grassroots community groups delivering local mental health and wellbeing initiatives

Partnership & Strategic Working



Over **40** partners groups involve representatives of third sector organisations.

Housing and Homelessness

£272,000
paid out



£75,000 to Action for Children.

£102,000 to Rock Trust - Nightstop and Housing First Services.

£52,000 to Cyrenians Housing First.

Enviromental

£68,852

Management Fees paid

20 organisations supported to develop food growing or community spaces.

Livingston North Blue Green Network Emergency Fund



£24,762

£31,524 Wyndford Park, Broxburn
Balbardie Park Pump Track, Bathgate **£12,566**

Economic Development & Regeneration

£2,829,561.52
total grants paid out

Voluntary Organisations Budget Split into:

- Service Level Agreements
- Third Sector Community Support Fund
- support from Modernisation & Improvement Fund **£1,154,728.50**



£285,000 (29 Groups) Additional Core Cost Funding

£70,987

Modernisation & Improvement Fund (12 projects)



£808,564

Place Based Investment Fund

Young Persons Guarantee



£200,000

8 Organisations

Community Choices Pilot Blackburn

£25,000

to 9 organisations



Pensioners Xmas 2020/21

£29,000

towards a meal or event



supported **74** social enterprises with business planning and sustainability.

21 organisations have received specialist business support/advice on Community Asset Transfers.



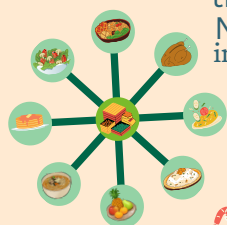
Anti-Poverty Service

£596,831
paid out

West Lothian Food Network grew from 39 to **46** organisations

£596,811 paid to the Food Network in 2021/22

£1,495,452 committed to the Food Network in 2022/23



From May 2020 to June 2022 provided **3,211,008 meals**



Social Policy

£31,654,375
total grants paid out

£21.7 Million

on care and carer support for Adults and Older People.



Children & Families external placements for children, care for children with disabilities, supported accommodation, and other support to families.



£9.9 Million



Supported the national **Winter Protection Fund**

Locally **£5,000** has been awarded from the 'Return of Children to West Lothian' fund.



£145,000 remaining

Education

£4,805,779
paid out

2021/22 CLD Youth Services administered awards to **42** orgs. Including the Summer Programme.

£380,000



Support Playgroups **£20,000**
11 Playgroups supported

Sporting Grants scheme 2021/22

£34,779

15 organisations



Get Into Summer investment. 10 organisations supported to apply

2021/22 West Lothian Leisure awarded:

£4.182 Million



The School Counselling fund

- **£189,000** Wellbeing Scotland – counselling service for all primary school children aged 10 years +
- All secondary schools (including The Skills Centre) have been provided with £25,000 to procure school counselling services. Cedarbank receives £10,000 to procure a specialist therapist for pupils with significant learning needs.

Mental Health Development

£1,720,798
paid out

in 2021/22 **£511,000** was made available for community based mental health services for children, young people, their families and carers. Of which **£325,000** will be used to fund the **PSP, Roots**.

£383,250

has been identified for a Mental Health PSP 'Roots'



Budget

£715,548

for Vulnerable Due to Young Age Public Social Partnership split between all third sector agencies



Wellbeing Scotland received £111,000 to support counsellors and group work.

Partnership and Strategic Working

Investment, partnership working and sharing of expertise is vital to both shaping strategy and delivering for our communities. The establishment of the Third Sector Working Group to link between the Council and the Third Sector has been important and will be developed further moving forward. It is one such example of a number of key strategic for a that involve West Lothian Council, Community Planning partners and Third Sector representatives.

This approach is reflected across a wide range of partnership structures, from the development of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan through the Community Planning Partnership Board to community level and the development of locality plans where the Third Sector is key to planning, sharing best practice and taking actions forward based on where the gaps are. This maximises the ability for limited resources to be best targeted to address the key priorities for our communities.

Below lists examples of current partnership and strategic working groups:



Some of these are touched on further in some service updates throughout this report.

Investment

The following section give a broad overview of funding and partnership working across a range of services and provides an overview of the vital role the third sector plays in supporting delivery. The information also contains funding that is provided by Health Partners.



Economic Development and Regeneration

In 2021/22 £2,829,561.52 was paid to community organisations through a number of application based programmes detailed below.

The Voluntary Organisation Budget was split between a new **Third Sector Community Support Fund** (with some additional funding from other funding streams including the Modernisation and Improvement Fund) as well as organisations identified for commissioning or service agreements. This funding supported 29 West Lothian Third Sector Organisations with a total allocation of £1,154,728.50. The 29 recipients also received an additional share of one off funding of £285,000 to help with core costs and allow more funding to support COVID-19 recovery. This meant a total £1,439,728.50 was allocated to support work being delivered in 2021/22 from a mix of 2020/21 and 2021/22 funding.

The **Modernisation and Improvement Funding** also allocated £70,987 to 12 projects in 2021/22 to help them modernise and improve their organisation.

Young Persons Guarantee Fund – To help support young people into employment £200,000 of Scottish Government Funding received by West Lothian Council was awarded to eight Third Sector organisations.

Pensioners Xmas Treat Fund - Once again £29,000 was distributed to support our older people with a treat at Christmas with 49 small organisations receiving a grant to support 3,372 beneficiaries.



West Lothian Development Trust - The Service also administers the wind farm monies through a Trust and awards funding to local community organisations in eligible areas. In 2021/22 16 awards were made to local groups to the value of £256,282.02.



Place Based Investment Fund Community Wealth Building 2021/22- West Lothian Council received £1,302,000 for year one of a new five year funding stream from the Scottish Government to support place based projects. The Council chose to focus this funding specifically on Community Wealthy Building through an application based process. This saw five projects supported, four of which were third sector led projects that shared investment of £808,564.

Community Choices Pilot -As part of a pilot project on Community Choices, £25,000 was allocated to Blackburn. Local groups, organisations and clubs were invited to bid for funding (maximum of £5,000) to take forward their ideas on how they could improve health and wellbeing in Blackburn, focusing on one or more of the following areas: Mental Health and Wellbeing, Children Living in Poverty and Healthy Life Choices. Eleven applications were received and nine out of the eleven were funded (one part funded):

Group

- Blackburn Galaday (£1800)
- Blackburn Young at Heart (£700)
- Blackburn Family Centre (£2500)
- Change in Blackburn Group (£3200)
- Blackburn and Seafield Church (£5000)
- Blackburn Friday Club (£1590)
- Screen Memories (£3650)
- West Lothian Youth Action Project (£5000)
- Blackburn Bulldogs (£1560)

Support for Social Enterprise - For the 12 month period from April 2021 to the end of March 2022 Business Gateway supported 74 social enterprises across West Lothian. During this time 21 organisations have also received specialist business support and advice from the Business Gateway service on Community Asset Transfers.

Education

The Education Service works with Third Sector providers in a number of areas and includes a major contribution to West Lothian Leisure. Below shows some of that funding with £4,805,779 committed in 2021/22. There is additional monies through PEF for example that goes to third sector organisations that is not included here.



Active Schools and Community Sport

Opportunities to participate in sports and physical activities have been significantly constrained through the pandemic and participation rates have dropped, particularly amongst key target groups. In these challenging times, the value of sports and physical activities to physical and mental health and wellbeing, however, has never been more apparent.

Community sports clubs, their members and volunteers are a fundamental, and often unacknowledged, part of the third sector landscape in West Lothian. One example of how sports clubs and organisations were provided support was via the West Lothian Club Network across the year with a variety of groups attending workshops to help with the return to sport and to consider the impact of other sector wide challenges. These were themed following a consultation with clubs.



2021-22 Sporting Grants - Funding support is also currently provided through the Sporting Grants scheme and the service allocated a total of **£34,779** to 15 different community organisations via the Sporting Grants fund. These projects covered a variety of targeted projects aligned to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework.

Get Into Summer Funding - Working in partnership with Community Learning & Development, the service supported 10 Accredited sports clubs with their applications to the WLC holiday provision fund. Clubs used this funding to deliver activities targeted at children from low income families and those with additional support needs.



Third Sector Strategic/Consultative Group -The service works in partnership with ClubSport West Lothian; a committee made up of the member community sports clubs across West Lothian. ClubSport West Lothian is the voluntary voice of sports clubs, organisations and individuals within West Lothian. They provide support, information and funding to affiliated members in an effort to enhance the provision of sport and increase the opportunities available to the ever-growing population of the sporting community. Funding is awarded to support their development and also to administer a smaller grants pot with different criteria from our own. ClubSport West Lothian is used as a consultative partner. There are 43-member clubs. ClubSport West Lothian are affiliated to Scottish ClubSport, previously the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils (SALSC). The organisation is a National partner of sportscotland and is the umbrella organisation for Local Sports Councils and ClubSport networks across Scotland.

West Lothian Leisure - West Lothian Council awarded West Lothian Leisure £4.182M in 2021/22.



Youth Services

Youth Services supported 42 local organisations who shared £380,000 in funding to support youth work in the area, this was mainly focussed on the Summer Programme activities and was a mix of administering external (including Scottish Government) and council monies.

Youth Services also have a strategic group that meets and included two representatives of local youth providers who represent the wider youth sector.



Playgroups



20,000 from the Voluntary Organisations Budget is currently available each year to support Playgroups who can apply and receive an annual grant if they are registered with the Care Inspectorate.

In 2021/22 - 11 local playgroups across West Lothian benefitted from this funding.



School Counselling funding - £577,000 from Scottish Government includes elements of work being delivered by voluntary organisation partners. In 2021/22 of £189,000 supported Primary school counselling service for all primary schools for children aged 10 years and up from Wellbeing Scotland.

All secondary schools (including The Skills Centre) have been provided with £25,000 to procure their own school counselling services. Work being covered includes £10,000 to procure a specialist therapist for pupils with significant learning needs with secondary schools working with 4 main providers locally (SMILE, Your Space, TCS (Therapeutic Counselling Services) and an independent provider).

NETs, Land and Countryside Service

The Council has continued to work closely with Green Action Trust (GAT) in project development and delivery. GAT was commissioned to undertake work that required expert advice or additional time resources that were not available in-house due to other programme delivery targets. This included extensive community and stakeholder consultations, preparation of funding applications, preparation of briefs to secure consultancy services, appointment and management of consultants and contractors and management of on-site work with different elements or over multiple locations.

The value of management fees for 2021/22 was as follows:

Livingston North Blue Green Network	£24,762	WLC Climate Emergency Fund
Wyndford park, Broxburn	£31,524	Capital funding
Balbardie Park Pump Track, Bathgate	£12,566	Capital funding

Open Space has also worked with a number of community gardens to provide advice

or support in developing their

spaces for food growing or

community spaces. This has

included Addiewell Community Garden, Ladywell

Community Garden, Strathbrock Community

Garden, Ash Grove Community Garden Project,

Winchburgh Community Growing Group,

Whitburn Community Garden, Linlithgow Peace

Garden, Murieston Community Council (for their

Community Garden), West Lothian Youth Action,

Project, Killandean Allotment Association,

Bathgate CDT, Broxburn and Uphall Growers,

Polbeth Community Council (were interested in setting up informal gardens in patches in Polbeth), The Hub

in Polbeth (food bank, etc), Kirknewton CDT, Ladywell Neighbourhood Network, West Lothian Litter Pickers

(looking to create wildflower meadows), Burgh Beautiful, Almond Housing and the Growing Together project

in Craigshill.



An Open Space Officer attends and supports West Lothian Growing Forum which is a district wide meeting group comprising community gardens, allotment and food bank representatives and groups involved in growing generally to share issues and opportunities and learn best practice.”



Anti-Poverty Service

The West Lothian Food Network was formed in Spring 2020 with 24 organisations. Its membership has now grown to 46 organisations which ensures coverage across the whole of West Lothian. The network aims to support low income households who face on-going food insecurity over a period of time. From May 2020 to the end of June 2022, the West Lothian Food Network has provided a total of 3,211,008 meals (an average of seven meals per week to 4,103 people). 85% of recipients indicated they were financially at risk, on a low income and/or unemployed.

In 2021/22 the food network received **£596,831**, following £253,469 in 2020/21. In 2022/23 a further £595,452 has been committed.

West Lothian Council at its budget setting meeting on 15 February 2022, agreed the Revenue Budget for 2022/23 including time limited funding of £600,000 in 2022/23 to provide additional payments to the West Lothian Food Network. Council also agreed an additional £300,000 funding for the Food Network to extend the period the funding will cover.



Added to this increased Energy prices are requiring additional resources to develop and deliver cash first approaches.

Strategic Groups

The Anti-Poverty Task Force, The Anti-Poverty Practitioners and the Short Life Working Group for the Cost of Living Crisis. All these groups work in partnership with our community planning partners/third sector and voluntary sector to help mitigate poverty locally and bring about change.



Social Policy

In **2021/22** a total of **£31,654,375** was paid to third sector bodies through commissioned services, grants, spot purchase, block payment etc. In Adults and Older People services, there was **£21.7m** expenditure on care homes, care at home, supported accommodation, day care and other related services such as advocacy and carer support. In Children & Families, there was **£9.9m** expenditure on external placements for children, care for children with disabilities, supported accommodation, and other support to families.

Winter Protection Fund is a national programme developed to mitigate social harm posed by the concurrent risks of COVID-19, winter cost of living increases and EU exit, as well as to promote equality and human rights. Within the 2020/21 period, locally **£150,000** were allocated to fund the '**Return of Children to West Lothian**', this multi-disciplinary approach with the third sector, **The Rock Trust, Open Door, Action for Children, Bethany** along with internal WLC partners allows



support and accommodation packages for the planned move of young people back within authority. At time of publication £5,000 of this fund has been accessed, with the remaining £145,000 still to be drawn down. The fund is regularly reviewed through the Vulnerable Due to Young Age PSP and the Accommodation Group.

Mental Health Development

Coming out of COVID mental health has become a key area for focus. Within the financial year 2020/21 West Lothian Council received **£511,000** from the Scottish Government to be used to deliver new and enhanced community based mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children, young people, their families and carers. We have recently been advised that the same amount has been awarded for 2022/23 and we hope that going forward this will become an annual award.

In 2020/21 West Lothian Council received a grant of **£383,250** which was then identified for the Mental Health PSP, named 'Roots' which is led by Children 1st in partnership with Action for Children, Carers of West Lothian, Family and Community Development West Lothian Safe Families, Signpost, Wellbeing Scotland, WLDAS, WLYAP and Firefly. The above noted award of £511,000 will partly be used (£325,000) to fund this PSP in October 2022/23, for year 2 of the project. This will support the growing demand for mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families to improve and sustain emotional health and wellbeing.

Vulnerable Due to Young Age Public Social Partnership has been designed to involve the third sector earlier and more deeply in the design, commissioning of and delivery of services which will support Young People who are identified as Vulnerable Due to Young Age. **WLC Social Policy, WLC Housing, The Rock Trust, Action for Children, Bethany Trust and Open Door** manage an overall budget of **£715,548**. This has been proportionately split between all third sector agencies with referrals from, but not limited to: Social Work, Youth Justice, CYPT, Housing, Education, Health, West Lothian College and also between providers services.

WLC Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT):

DASAT work alongside several third sector agencies to support women and children affected by domestic abuse and or sexual assault. These groups include, **West Lothian Women's Aid, Shakti Women's Aid (Edinburgh), River Kids, Wellbeing Scotland, The Foodbank, The School Bank West Lothian.**

Wellbeing Scotland offer a confidential service to adult survivors of both sexual assault and domestic abuse. Support sessions are offered throughout West Lothian or online. Wellbeing Scotland also offer an Art Group (ASHA) In Livingston providing support for adult survivors of abuse.

Wellbeing Scotland receive **£36,000** for an Open Secret Counsellor, which is their regular contract. Open Secret is confidential support for survivors of childhood abuse and trauma. They also receive **£75,000** per year for two years (21/22 and 22/23) as part of one-off Covid-19 support, which funds an additional counsellor and a groupworker.

In terms of strategy development, the Gender Based Violence Committee is currently attended by both West Lothian Women's Aid, and Wellbeing Scotland. It is hoped that through Voluntary Sector West Lothian additional 3rd sector involvement can be identified to develop the partnership and a focus and action going forward is to strengthen our links in this area. The Gender Based Violence Committee is a multi-agency partnership concerned with preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls. The Committee has a role in supporting the delivery of Equally Safe, the Scottish Governments strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.



Housing

Housing Need Service has 3 working groups that sit under the RRTP Board which consist of a range of partner services some of which who represent themselves of the wider third sector. As part of RRTP and council funding we have commissioned a number of third sector services to deliver services. This includes:

Action for Children – Young Persons Emergency Prevention Service - £75,000

Rock Trust – Nightstop Service - £50,000

Rock Trust – Housing First - £52,000

Cyrenians – Housing First - £95,000



NHS Lothian, Public Health and Health Policy

NHS Lothian's Public Health and Health Policy Directorate has recently gone through organisational change which led to the creation of a Public Health Partnership and Place team in each local authority area. The main purpose of the West Lothian Partnership and Place team is to improve population health and reduce health inequalities by acting on the wider determinants of health. The team works with community planning partners to achieve this long-term aim and makes a financial contribution to delivering outcomes through the Health Improvement Fund (HIF).

Health Improvement Funding (HIF)

NHS Lothian has Service Level Agreements with third sector organisations in place until March 2023. The following table illustrates the spend:

Name of Project	Organisation Delivering	Resources Allocated
Playbase	Family and community development West Lothian	£49,519
Financial advice in GP surgeries	Citizens Advice Bureau	£29,686
Nutritional inequalities for children and families	Kidzeco	£51,000
Young People's Green Gym	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)	£49,987

Strategic Partnership Working

The role of the West Lothian Partnership and Place Team is to work with partners and colleagues to deliver evidence-based actions to reduce health inequalities and improve population health. These include a range of Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Groups and Forums, including the CPP Board and CPP Steering Group. Key areas of work include:

- Chairing the Health & Wellbeing Partnership. This group is leading on the Health & Wellbeing pillar of the revised LOIP. Delivery plans are being developed for each priority area – mental health and wellbeing, alcohol prevention and the food and physical activity environment.
- Leading the Whole Systems Approach to prevention of Type2 Diabetes in Whitburn.
- Leading the Child Poverty Reference Group which produces the Local Child Poverty Action Report including and delivers partnership action to tackle the main drivers of child and family poverty. The team also supports the work of the Anti- Poverty Task Force.
- Leading work on capacity building in mental health and trauma informed practice and contributing to the Mental Health Oversight Group and Trauma Informed Practice Board.
- Supporting the Children and Families Strategic Group and leading the Health and Wellbeing priority. This includes work to improve community mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and families.

The team is working with partnership groups whose key aim is to act on the wider determinants of health, including, the Economic Partnership Forum, Local Employability Partnership and work on the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

The team also supports the work of the following groups:

- Gender Based Violence Group
- Community Justice Partnership
- ADP Executive and Alcohol Licensing Forum
- Community Learning and Development Board

CASE STUDIES

The report has provided a range of high level facts and figures to provide about the sector nationally, locally, funding and partnership working. However, what is ultimately important is what this actually looks like in practice.

Below are a number of cases studies provided by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian members that help bring to life some of the work the sector does in West Lothian. A number of these organisations receive funding from the various funding streams covered throughout the report and external funding sources not yet reported:

The following organisations are covered:

- 1. Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian;**
- 2. Family and Community Development West Lothian;**
- 3. The Bridge Community Project;**
- 4. The Larder;**
- 5. No Limits;**
- 6. The School Bank West Lothian;**
- 7. The Brock Garden Centre;**
- 8. Signpost;**
- 9. New Directions West Lothian;**
- 10. West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service;**
- 11. Wellbeing Scotland in West Lothian;**
- 12. West Lothian Youth Action Project; and**
- 13. Beechbrae SCIO**

Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

Volunteering with Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

Since the 1940s the Citizens Advice Bureau has been a leading advice provider for the West Lothian community. During this time the bureau has developed and evolved to ensure that client needs are met. The key to our success is the ability to adapt and to ensure that we maintain a strong team of advisers both voluntary and paid staff equipped to provide a quality, accurate, confidential and free service to our clients.



Against this overall background there is a huge reliance on our volunteer force which forms the backbone of our service. Traditionally our volunteers have provided our main generalist advice service through a range of communication channels such as phone, email, face to face ensuring that our services remain accessible to all in the community.

Many volunteers have joined and left us over the years however we do have volunteers who have remained with us long term and have experienced many changes over the years as to how we provide services and also what service we provide. Events such as the restrictions as a result of COVID have come as challenges however our volunteers have stood up to the plate and continued to provide advice services throughout these difficulties. This is testament to our volunteer's commitment and sense of duty which is admirable and much appreciated by the Bureau and indeed more importantly our clients.

In terms of where our volunteers come from we have always had a healthy annual intake from those who may have just ended a successful professional career to younger people embarking on a working life and looking to gain some experience. In any event all of our volunteers bring differing experience and skills to the Bureau which enhances our ability to relate to clients and understand their problems.

When volunteers join us, we pride ourselves in providing an extremely comprehensive training programme to equip volunteers and staff alike so that all advisers are trained to the same exacting standards thereby ensuring excellent and consistent quality of advice provision.

The Bureau was recently subject to an independent and rigorous audit of our services by the Scottish Legal Aid board which we passed. This is testament to the highly professional manner in which we go about our daily business and indeed the how our volunteers and staff deliver that service. In the year to March 2022 we dealt with:

- 15,000 Issues
- 3,000 emails
- 6,300 phone calls
- 500 face to face enquiries
- And secured £1.5 Million worth of client financial gain.

In the coming months we will yet again be faced with significant challenge as the effect of the cost of living crisis kicks in and many clients who have perhaps never needed advice and support before now find themselves in difficulty.

New clients, new issues, new problems.

No matter what they face our volunteers are up to the challenge

Brian Jeffrey, Manager
Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

Ronnie's Story

I joined CAB as a volunteer in May 2022 and was immediately welcomed by a supportive team through the entire induction and training process. The online Adviser Training Programme is vast, extensive, and initially quite daunting but you are given as much time as you need to learn and find your way around the CAB processes, systems, and ways of working in the office. You can also do the learning from home. The staff and volunteer colleagues are approachable, friendly, and genuinely interested in you as an individual and a volunteer colleague. They are always around and available to share knowledge openly and willingly, to train everyone, and give advice and feedback in new areas. The focus on aiding/supporting members of the public, irrespective of their personal circumstances, with their life challenges, welfare and wellbeing is notable, heart-warming, and excellent. It is a role that also has a positive effect on you as an individual. While you may feel that you could or want to do more to assist each client, you do need to accept that you cannot resolve or fix everything. You do, however, walk away from each contact by phone, e-mail or face to face meeting feeling good and knowing that the client has been given the information they need to make their own positive steps forward.



Sylvia's Story

I have been a volunteer with Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian since 2010 starting before the training was on line and before the current computer systems and phone systems were installed. These were steep learning curves for me however got through that and have been successfully advising ever since. Pre Covid-clients were mostly seen face to face but of course all that has changed and contact now is primarily by email and phone. The infinite variety of enquiries and not knowing day to day what you might be faced with makes the work extremely interesting and challenging. In my experience support for volunteers is excellent and is given generously. I do enjoy the work and have done so for many years



Family and Community Development West Lothian



Family and Community Development West Lothian have been supporting vulnerable children and families across West Lothian for 34 years. From their beginnings at Broxburn Family Centre, the organisation has gone on to develop the Range Adventure Playground, the Dale Hub in Armadale and the Playbase mobile project. Since 2010, it's Simply Play, childcare social enterprise has become the largest provider of after school and holiday care in West Lothian and they opened Wonder Woods, West Lothian's first fully outdoors woodland nursery, just over 2-years ago. The organisation is also an accredited SQA Centre, with its own Modern Apprenticeship programme and delivers training to the sector.

The organisation's impact is largely due to its unique approach to using play: play is non threatening, fun, engaging and inviting and is a great way to bring people in, get chatting with them and build trust and supportive relationships. Also, as a community-based organisation, their local services take the lead from local families in identifying where the gaps and needs are for them. And they have no time limits - they commit to their children and families for as long as is required, in ways that are appropriate to them, in recognition that there are no quick fixes to complex issues. Most importantly, they bring fun and joy into people's lives, during, often, difficult times: they help them to create new positive memories, to heal and to build resilience. All of this demonstrates relationship-based engagement at its best.



In the last year they have delivered for West Lothian's families, with 22 family groups and 16 children's groups every week, for 163 families and 233 children. They also provided intensive, one-to-one support for 20 vulnerable parents/families. They provided out of school care at 6 locations, covering 21 primary schools, as well as pre-school childcare at their Wonder Woods partnership nursery, all totalling childcare for 691 families, with 873 children. Through a contract with the Child Disability Team they provided play, socialisation and respite, sessions for 22 children/families during school holidays.

Families have fed back that they have helped to reduce or prevent: Poverty; Obesity; Social exclusion; Social Work intervention; Children being taken into care; Domestic abuse; Isolation and loneliness; Substance misuse; Deteriorating mental health; Loss of tenancy; Child safety issues; Malnourishment; Neglect; and the repeating pattern of parents ACEs.

With everything for them being about prevention and early intervention, to save on more expensive crisis interventions further down the line, they contributed to: improved mental wellbeing; improve family functioning and resilience; strengthened attachment; improved physical health; reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety; and improved self-esteem and confidence.

The organisation is a key strategic and delivery partner in West Lothian. This year they have been part of the new "Roots" public social partnership, chaired the Third Sector Strategic Group, were a Sector Rep in the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group, contributed to the writing on the Children's Services Plan and were an ongoing member of a Council/Sector Working Group.

Likemost of West Lothian's ThirdSector they have added significant value to Council's investment in their services and in our local communities. In the last year they have used this secure base to quadruple Council's contribution and deliver a 4:1 return on investment for the people and communities of West Lothian. This has provided excellent value for moneyand delivered far more than Council couldhave by itself.

The charity is one of West Lothian'sstrongest, with: good governance; effectiveleadership and management; an excellent fundraising record; quick and innovative reactions to crises like the Covid pandemic; delivery of ongoing contributions to improved outcomes for children, families and communities; and a very enterprising approach that has built one of West Lothian's most successful social enterprises



The Bridge Community Project



the bridge
CONNECTING HOME WITH HOPE

BRIDGE COMMUNITY PROJECT
IMPACT SEPTEMBER 21 - AUGUST 22

IMPROVING EVERYDAY WELLBEING

236

PEOPLE SUPPORTED

3

WELLBEING SERVICES



the bridge
financial wellbeing service



“

It's removed the mounting pressure and worry. I felt trapped and imprisoned by debt whereas now I'm paying back my debtors and feel as if I can breathe again.

”

Our Financial Wellbeing team have been able to support **88** individuals in a person centred way to improve their financial Wellbeing. We worked predominately with those who live in **rural areas** and those who present with **mental health** conditions.

Our impact has ensured that clients:



-  are less stressed
-  keep on top of finances
-  have improved mental wellbeing



have budgets in place



are more connected to their community



have less debt

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

We also provide clients with vital practical support

✓ 1 to 1 cooking & recipe bags



+

- ✓ Budgeting packs
- ✓ Energy top ups
- ✓ Signposting
- ✓ volunteer opportunities
- ✓ Support with pip appointments
- ✓ Small community grants
- ✓ Support with warm home discounts

Our Counselling team have been able to support **61** individuals to improve their emotional wellbeing while offering **812** counselling sessions. Our service provides affordable mental health support in a safe environment.

The most common presenting issues are

TRAUMA ANXIETY DEPRESSION BEREAVEMENT SUICIDAL IDEATION

These are some of the stories of improved emotional wellbeing:

“

My story began with me being in a terrible place. I was suicidal and really believed everyone would be better off without me. Bridge for me was a final chance to give it one last attempt at wanting to be alive.

I told my councillor things I had carried around with me my whole life, that I hadn't told anyone. Although the first few weeks were hard, by session four I started to feel the weight I'd been carrying around was lifting and the pain inside of me was healing a little. I am a different person today and happy to be alive. I have self worth, which is a first for a very long time.

”

“

I reached the bridge broken and willing to try anything to try to help improve my mental health. I was sceptical about how much counselling would actually be able to help me. It took me about 6-8 weeks to settle in and feel I could really open up which is when I really started to feel the benefit. I now feel like a different person, I am able to cope with situations that used to easily overwhelm me and enjoy my life again.

”

“

I was aware that I had past trauma affecting my life. Bridge counselling helped me identify where some of my negative thinking and self hate was originating from. With the counsellor's support, I was able to address some past beliefs that had been incorrect and address them so that I can move forward. The process has helped me gain self confidence and begin to address my negative self talk.

”

“

I moved to Scotland in 2008 to marry an amazing Scotsman. He unfortunately passed away unexpectedly in 2020. I was left to raise our two children alone in this country. I felt very overwhelmed, lonely, isolated and depressed. Without any family here to support me, and having been suffering from anxiety and stress, I was pretty much struggling to find the motivation to keep me going. I am now at a much better place mentally and emotionally thanks to the help I received. I am forever grateful.

”



Our Stepping Stones to Wellbeing team have been able to support **87** individuals to improve their financial and emotional wellbeing through offering **20** groups and courses across the past year.

“

I found the group to be very helpful with people who are experienced to help me understand my mental health

”



LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING

5 groups completed



EMOTIONAL LIFEJACKET COURSE

2 groups completed



MONEY MANAGEMENT MASTERCLASS

2 courses completed



SHARING SKILLS FOR LIFE

3 groups completed



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT COURSE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LIVINGSTON UNITED PARISH CHURCH AND COOP BEREAVEMENT CARE

8 courses completed

OTHER IMPACTS



purchased our **wellbeing hub**



launched our **1st** Social Enterprise



employee **15** people locally



supported **25** volunteers

THE LARDER

The Larder is committed to creating a more equal and just Scotland through the alternative economic model of social enterprise and calling for a Scotland without poverty, where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and the right to food is enshrined in Scots law.

We are a social enterprise that combats poverty and hunger, through 4 key strands:



01. TRAINING

for young people and adults who experience complex and multiple barriers to reaching their full potential.



02. SOCIAL FOOD

providing dignified responses to food insecurity and making sure no-one in West Lothian goes hungry



03. ENTERPRISE

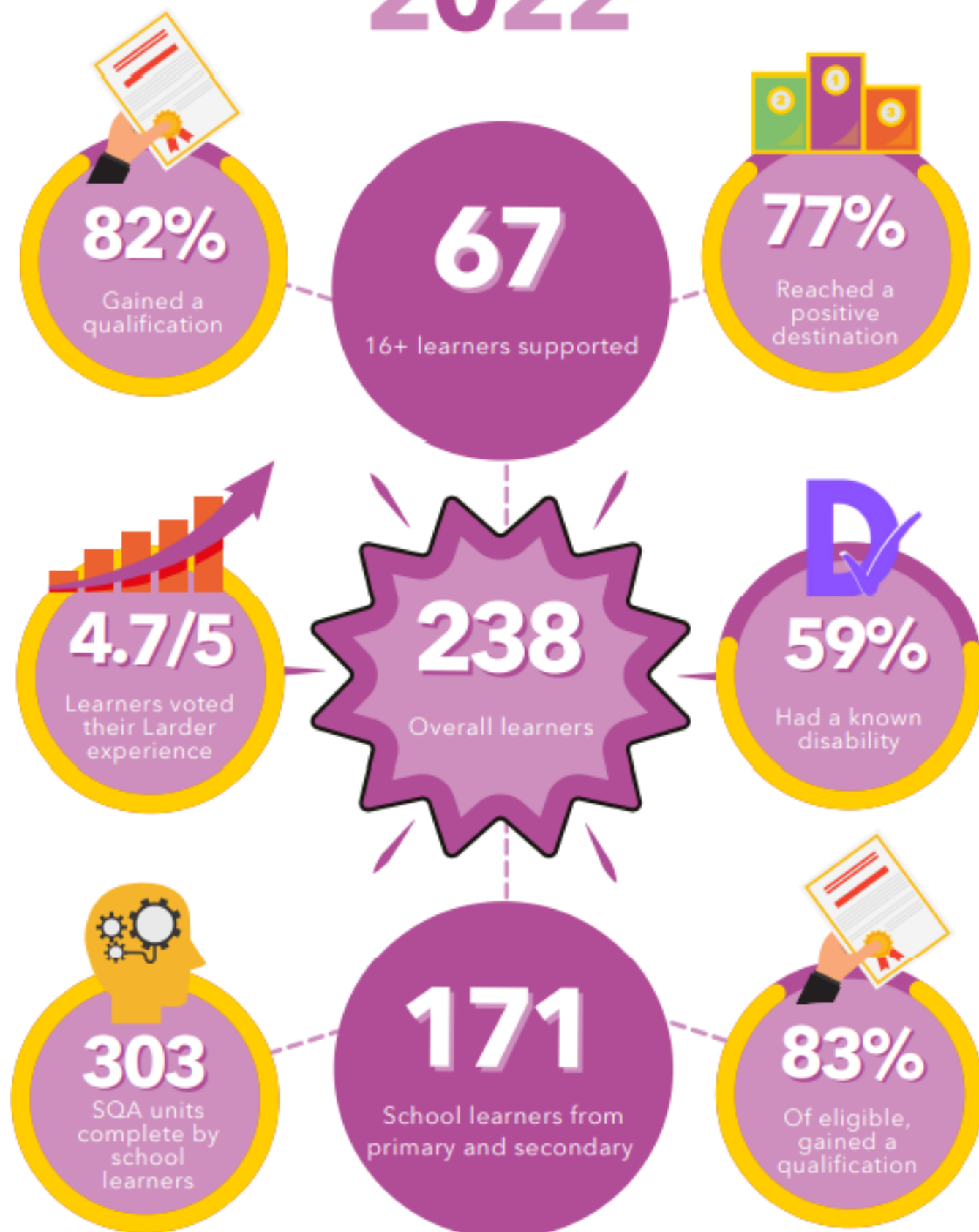
projects that create solutions to social problems, improving life chances, the creation of living wage jobs and generating surplus to support the charitable aims of the organisation.



04. CAMPAIGNING

working with other charities to call on Governments for systemic changes that will eradicate poverty in Scotland .

TRAINING IMPACT 2022





244

On average supported with meal deliveries.



45,754

Meals delivered throughout West Lothian



92%

were experiencing low income



78%

were experiencing poor mental health



47%

were experiencing homelessness



27%

were families with children

I'm a newly single parent of 3 girls, the help you've given us has been invaluable, you are all worth your weight in gold, making our life that bit easier during this awful time

Thank you so much to everyone at Catalyst Kitchen, the meals have been a lifeline for me. I have no support & on low income plus isolating with poor mental health, so life has been a struggle.

I've always had to manage before when I've been ill, I now feel like there is a little team of people who care around us this time and its honestly beautiful. Thanks so much for the food and more than that, the gesture that means were not alone and people care.

No Limits

'No limits' are a West Lothian based multi-sports and social club for children and young people with disabilities and they provide a wide variety of sporting and social opportunities to the county for people who face major life challenges. The club has a membership of 64 people most of whom come from West Lothian. The club has been in existence for 26 years and was assisted by West Lothian Council sports development unit in its early stages. The club meets weekly at Xcite leisure Centre, Linlithgow and we do a variety of sports including, football, basketball, hockey, carpet bowls, new age curling, badminton, table tennis, darts, rounders and model car racing. The club members have taken part in many local, regional and national competitions including, Boccia, Carpet Bowls Table Tennis and the Special Olympics. We regularly send teams to the national Boccia championships and have achieved notable successes in this sport.

The club is run by a combination of parents and volunteers and there is a high level of interaction with the community which by and large funds the club via voluntary contributions and fundraising events. The club have organised more than 60 weekend adventure holidays – at Badaguish, Aviemore (2 weekends per year) and at the Calvert Trust centre at Kielder (one week per year) taking on average between 30 and 40 people at a time. 2. The club holds four Ten Pin Bowling competitions a year and four indoor and seven outdoor Archery Sessions. Since 2008 the club has supplied Archery Leaders in a joint venture with Lothian Disability Sport to provide weekly Archery sessions for people with disabilities at Blackburn Community Centre. This service is used by the Community Inclusion Team and people from the various support services.



The Club is accredited to 'Active assured plus' with West Lothian Council, the highest level possible, and were the first general sports club to achieve same. The club and it's members have won numerous awards over the years and in 2015 won the 'Queens Award' for voluntary service. The club is a registered charity SC026826 and works closely with other charitable organisations in the area such as 'Carers of West Lothian' and Signpost. Committee members meet bi-monthly to review and conduct the business of the club. The committee members arrange fund raising events such as sponsored walks, ceilidhs, abseiling events, bingo and race nights. They undertake training and coaching courses and organise trips to sporting events both locally and nationally. Information about where and when the club meets and forthcoming events can be obtained at our website at <http://nolimitssportsclub.org>

The club is a valuable resource to West Lothian, particularly because it is self-sufficient and not reliant on any specific funding streams (eg. Council/Health/Education/Government), however it operates within a voluntary sector which provides support as and when required, and offers funding opportunities which the club does take up on a regular basis.

Here are a few picture examples of the clubs activities during the past year. No Limits Pics from 2022



The School Bank West Lothian

The work of The School Bank West Lothian is driven by the need to address the immediate financial and material effects of poverty on children and their families who reside in West Lothian. Current statistics show that 25% of children in West Lothian live in poverty, which equates to 10,000 young people. The COVID pandemic and cost of living crisis has resulted in many more people in our community suffering severe financial hardship, including many families who are working. This has resulted in a 60% increase in demand for our service over the last two years.



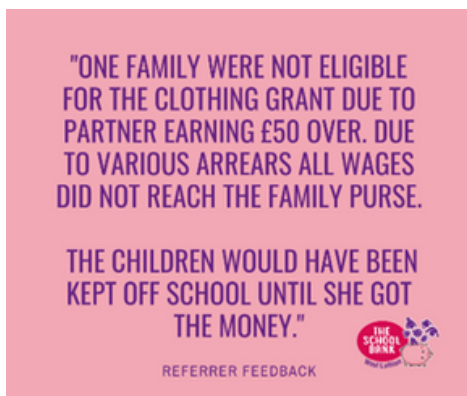
We support struggling families with the cost of the school day by providing school supplies for both primary and secondary aged young people. We supply school uniforms and any other essential items deemed necessary to meet the cost of the school day, e.g., full school uniform, PE kit, footwear, jackets, school bags, stationery, and underwear. We operate on a referral basis (this includes self-referral) and pride ourselves in providing a straightforward, timely and confidential service that is accessible to any family in direct need.

We believe we are fulfilling a need in our local community without which these children would undoubtedly suffer, having a detrimental effect on their educational attainment, and ultimately their life chances. Without support children will continue to suffer from the effect of being in poverty e.g., more likely to achieve lower qualifications, less likelihood of attending school, experience chronic illness, mental health issues, substance abuse, unemployment and have a shorter life expectancy.



Our charity is 6 years old; demand has grown year on year, and in the last full year (12 months ending April 2022), we provided 1,344 school uniform packs. In August 2022 we provided a total of 729 uniform packs for children starting the new school year (a 40% increase on the same period last year). We are deeply concerned about the cost-of-living crisis and how that will impact on the need for our service in the months ahead. This demonstrates the need for financial support in our local community. While it is impossible to predict the impact of the rise in living costs, we forecast the demand for our service to increase to between 1,600 and 1,900 referrals in the current year. We and our referring partners are deeply concerned about how our communities and our service will cope during the months ahead.

There are many reasons why families are referred to us for support. Although West Lothian Council provides a school clothing grant, a significant percentage of children referred to us come from working families who are ineligible for the grant. In addition, there is no council grant provision to support families throughout the year as they out-grow/wear out clothes/shoes or help in crisis situations such as unexpected homelessness or fleeing domestic abuse or moving school due to bullying. We can help in these emergency situations and support any family at the point of need – our service is not means tested. Additionally, the uniform grant covers basic costs but often does not enable parents to buy all the items required for school so for some families we supply necessary extras such as a warm jacket, shoes, and outdoor PE kit.



"THE CHILDREN WOULD HAVE BEEN GOING TO SCHOOL WITH UNIFORMS THAT WERE OLD AND ILL FITTING.

ONE BOY BURST INTO TEARS AS ALL HIS CLOTHES MATCHED AND WERE BRAND NEW. SOMETHING THAT HADN'T HAPPENED BEFORE."

REFERRER FEEDBACK



We receive feedback from our referrers about our impact on the children and families who receive assistance. We hear a very strong message that:

- Providing a school uniform pack gives an immediate boost for children and families who lead extremely difficult lives. Receiving new items is really valued by people who may rarely receive any new clothes or possessions.
- Being the same as their peers is really important to children, affecting their self-esteem and confidence. When children have the correct uniform and supplies the risk of bullying is reduced and school attendance improves.
- Knowing that your child is adequately clothed and not having to worry about them being unhappy, bullied or not wanting to go to school because of lack of uniform, greatly reduces anxiety for parents and carers.
- Providing uniform also relieves a burden for families who are struggling financially.

As a charity, we drive forward our ambition to work closely with local community groups, referrers, and key partners, while simultaneously building awareness of our profile in the community. Our Project Manager monitors the impact of societal changes and invents new methods of support e.g., helping schools to set up their own second-hand uniform hub to support families more directly; sourcing and redistributing re-furbished laptops to support digital inclusion; launching a casual clothing project in Craigshill, Livingston; re-cycling once used clothing such as Halloween outfits and Christmas Jumpers; sourced food vouchers; and we recently launched a preschool clothing project in partnership with West Lothian Women's Aid to support early years. #EveryChildDeservesToTakePart



"ONE OF OUR CHILDREN WAS AVOIDING THE PLAYGROUND AS SHE WAS COLD. SHE REALLY WISHED FOR A WARM JACKET WITH A FURRY HOOD. I PUT IT ON THE REFERRAL AND YOU MADE IT HAPPEN. I JUST WISH YOU COULD HAVE SEEN HER FACE WHEN SHE SAW IT AND PUT IT ON.

YOU'LL NEVER REALLY KNOW THE DIFFERENCE YOU'RE MAKING TO OUR FAMILIES. THANK YOU ISN'T ENOUGH."

REFERRER FEEDBACK



The Brock Garden Centre SCIO

Overview of 2021

The New Year started with another lockdown. Our indoor workshops were paused, and The Brock was happy to be able to continue activities outdoors to smaller groups.

Due to having to remain outdoors, everyone received a thermal mug and a personalised fleece.

The Brock welcomed our new Outreach Facilitator, repurposed our indoor multi-activity room, and revamped the website.

Our socially distanced outdoor AGM took place on 23rd March, and it was wonderful to see so many people. We spent a good hour looking back on the last year, and the consensus is that everyone is happy with how The Brock managed to work throughout 2020, and there is real optimism for the future.

In April the indoor workshops restarted, The Brock opened its doors to the public again, with many people using our planter refilling service – The Brock also reached 1000 Facebook followers!



In Autumn we restarted our Service Users Meetings, for the first time since pre-COVID. Thank you to all who have contributed, your ideas led to the creation of the new Tuesday Walking Group!

End of summer is Brock BBQ time; a great day with great food, great games and great people

Community Involvement

The Brock is very grateful to Broxburn Parish Church, who donated their old pews. We still don't know which wood they were made from, but we do know it is great for turning.



**Alzheimer Scotland's
adopted raised bed at
The Brock**



**Planting Project at
Tippethill**



**Building Projects at
St John's Hospital**

It's so much more than The Brock.....

All service users who attend The Brock are offered access to The Brock WhatsApp Group. This is used to stay in touch and to share the things we do or just something funny we see.

This also led to people joining up for activities in their own time - outwith The Brock;

In July and August, a number of people on glamping trips to St Andrews and Biggar. A few people went to visit them for the day

"The best was sitting at the camp fire"

"We saw a wild rabbit and a bird of prey"

"In St Andrews some went swimming in the sea, in Biggar some went swimming in the pool"

"We went to the Prego restaurant in Biggar, the food was good and we enjoyed it"

"I enjoyed just getting away, peaceful in the countryside, relaxing without worries or cares"

The Service Users Group organised a number of meals out. They were brilliant nights out, the food was lovely, and everyone was enjoying the blether and a fun night with lots of laughing

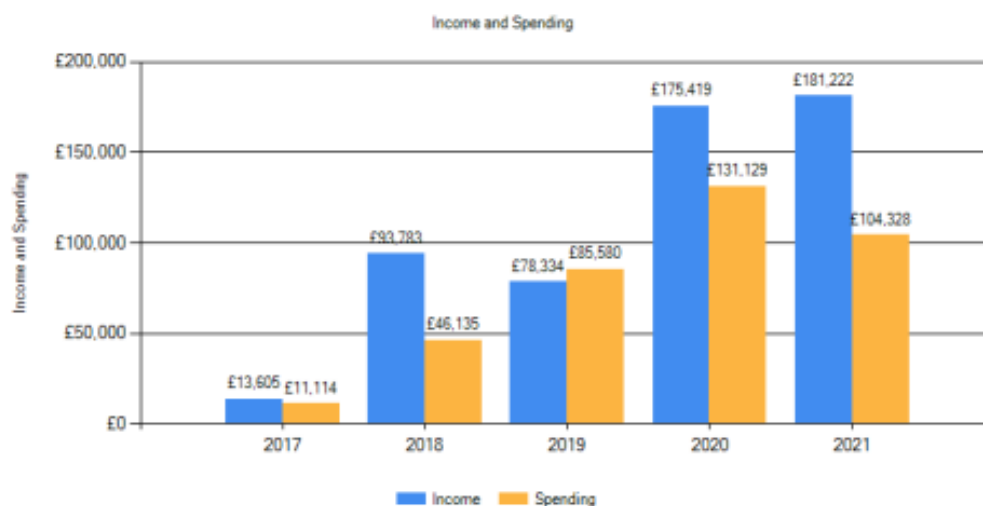
The Brock is extremely grateful to the Postcode Lottery Local Trust, who made it possible for our paths to be re-laid.

We now have mobility friendly access to the Garden Centre and the Community Mind Garden.

Special shout-out to Rab and his team, who kept smiling as they tolerated us continuing our normal activities during the works!



The interesting numbers



The difference between income and expenditure over the past two years is due to accumulated funding which could not all be spent during the pandemic – this funding is kept restricted and we are now (2022) catching up.

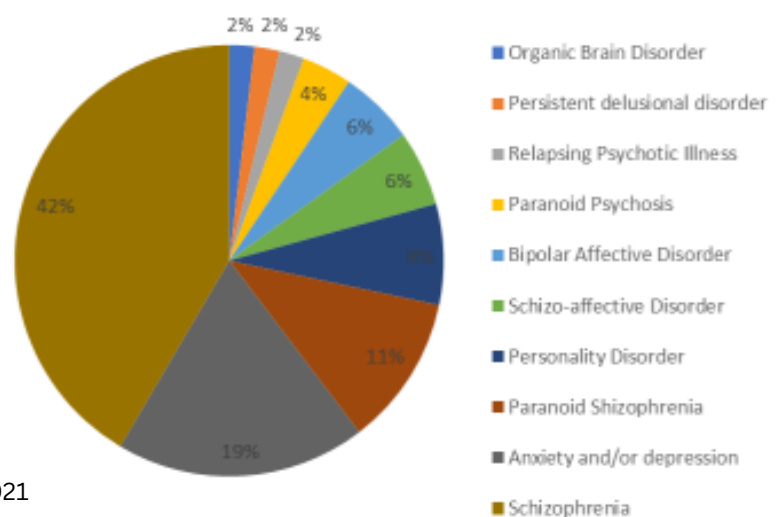
Service Users;

The number of people attending The Brock grew from 28 in 2016 to 78 when the pandemic struck in March 2020. Upon re-opening this fell to 64, and has since increased to 83 (January 2022).

Before March 2020, the average attendance at The Brock was 66%. Following the re-opening in July 2020 after the initial COVID-19 lockdown, attendance rose to 94%! This has since balanced out to 90%, indicating the high need for our service.

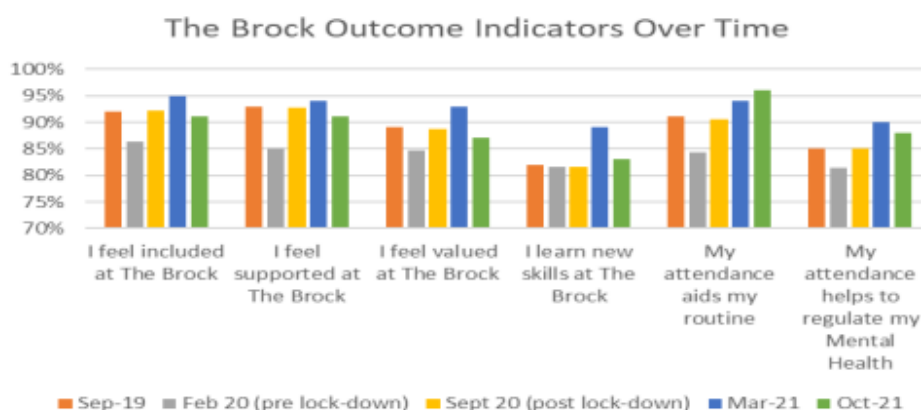
In 2020 The Brock delivered 2915 sessions – which is comparable to 3750 in 2019 when taking into account the 15 weeks closure due to COVID-19. In 2021 The Brock delivered 5332 sessions, an increase of 42% which is due to more service users, higher attendance and a larger variety of activities

Service Users' Primary Diagnoses Dec 21



Measured Outcomes Indicators;

The Brock also uses the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. The average score for people attending The Brock is consistently lower than the average score for people living in Scotland, especially for women



Signpost

In the last couple of years, Signpost has worked hard to support families of young people with additional support needs to weather the storm of the pandemic, and now the cost of living crisis.

Signpost provides not only information on every topic of interest to families, but also support to use that information & deal with the emotions that living with disability can bring, empowering them to make good decisions that meet the needs of each unique family.

An independent impact report from Community Enterprise, published in September 2022, said:

“It is evident that the organisation provides a critical service to children and families who are experiencing disability and that the support provided enables children and their families to be better informed, better connected, more confident and better prepared for whatever challenges or obstacles they may experience”. The report went on to note:

“There was a high level of satisfaction from all those engaged in the evaluation. Signpost supported children and families from across all West Lothian communities. Their person centred, holistic, tailored, and collaborative approach was held in high regard by all. The values, ethos, and organisational style were seen as a key strength, with the organisation regarded as flexible, highly responsive, passionate, and good at listening to parents and children.

Partner agencies see Signpost as a trusted, competent, and highly skilled organisation and one which provides a key, and sometimes unique, service that both supports and complements their own activity but also that of their clients”.

Activities include dealing with over 900 contacts a year on our helpline/social media, who are helped individually with any difficulties or questions. We also provide group training such as ‘Getting Through the Day with Autism’ and ‘Moving on from School’ which equip parents with the skills and knowledge they need. We are part of the successful ‘Roots’ partnership, in which 9 local voluntary organisations collaborate to support young people’s wellbeing, and we also work in partnership with Carers of West Lothian, as well as making and taking referrals from other agencies.

This year we have also facilitated 39 young people with additional support needs to contribute their own solutions and perspective to child planning meetings and similar events.

Other families have been supported to negotiate better support in school for children left anxious by the pandemic or having other difficulties.



“I am 13 and I have autism signpost made me realise that I have a voice and a right to have it be heard and now I know that things will get better I can push back against this injustice and say this isn’t right I don’t deserve this”



One of our simplest, but most successful interventions, is the loan of passes for local attractions, which enable over 400 trips per year to be taken by families whose children’s behaviour and health can be unpredictable. These families often miss out on days out together due to prohibitive costs and the fear that money will be ‘wasted’ if they have to leave suddenly due to their child’s needs.

Even before the cost of living crisis, most families with disabled children reported that they seldom or never had holidays or days out. The cost of raising a disabled child can be 3x more than a typical child.

Our 'Financial help for families' booklet gathers together all the supports relating specifically to children with disabilities.

We partner with the local 'Advice Shop' to ensure families receive benefit maximisation checks.

We match families with funders who can buy equipment or fund short breaks.

As well as the positive impact on local families, Signpost contributes to the local economy by bringing around £90,000 per annum into West Lothian to support local families, in the form of grants and other funding (in addition to the funding provided by West Lothian Council).

Signpost is also a key partner in an exciting new project to build a Discovery Centre heritage attraction in West Calder, which will also incorporate a centre of excellence for people with disabilities across West Lothian. The first phase of this development is now underway, bringing further funds into West Lothian from the National Lottery Community Fund and other investors.

950 contacts last year, 35% from new families, the rest from people returning for further help as their child's needs change.

557 families supported
950 problems solved
2 new partnerships

My daughter has Autism. Signpost has supported us to recognise what we know already and what we still need, and to voice our emotions and worries in difficult situations. In the early days they gave us books so my daughter could understand how Autism affected her. Later it was about making sure her little sister got support and Signpost suggested a Siblings Club, and now she knows she's not alone, and gets so many opportunities that I couldn't provide. Both of them have clubs, which has really boosted their confidence. I joined a Carers Group which has helped me to speak up better. Recently we attended the Signpost Transition Course, which led to us getting Social Work support, which we would otherwise not known about. Our daughter has now got a place at college which is another thing we didn't think was possible.

New Directions West Lothian

New Directions has been active in providing Social Care in West Lothian for over twenty years. Initially we provided advice and support for people with epilepsy but since 2015 we have broadened our remit and support people who have a learning disability, autism, mental health, physical disability, addictions and life-limiting conditions.

The organisation has been led for the past six years by Carolyn Craig who has managed Third Sector services for thirty years. She was initially tasked with creating transformational change in the organisation.

Since 2006 we have grown by 89% percent and deliver 41,000 hours of support per year. Our main contract is with West Lothian Council but we also deliver support on behalf of Falkirk Council and City of Edinburgh. We support seventy-five people and assist people to take part in education, training, paid and voluntary work, look after their homes, their health and their money. We have close links with colleagues in health and social work.

During the early part of the Covid pandemic we provided two hundred hours of face-to-face support to people in crisis at no cost to West Lothian Council and partnered with West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust to deliver chilled meals to vulnerable people across West Lothian.

We employ thirty-two staff who are all residents of West Lothian and provide training and a funded professional qualification. In 2021 our team benefited from x hours of training. During the current recruitment crisis in social care we have been able to maintain and add to our staff team. We are one of only two social care providers in West Lothian who are accredited Scottish Living Wage employers and, over the past six years, have been able to increase salaries for our Support Workers by 28%. Our most recent staff survey found that 100% of our team were proud to work for New Directions. Collectively our managers have over seventy years of experience in social care.

Our Board of Directors come from a range of backgrounds including education, health and social care and lived and family experience of disability.

As well as our social care contracts we provide added value in the form of groups, including drama and music. We host well-attended social events and, this summer, ran a community café which provided paid work experience for people with a learning disability and local high school students as well as providing good-quality and affordable food for local people.

New Directions regularly gathers feedback from stakeholders including our team, the people we support and their families and other professionals and are signed up to the Charter for Involvement which commits us to involving people at every level of the organisation.



West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Service

The service was established in 1985 to educate the local community in the risks of alcohol and drugs that had significantly increased due to socio-economic factors for example, the demise of local industry leading to high unemployment coupled with a proximity to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Funding was originally provided for education and training as well as to conduct research locally to establish issues and need. It became evident there was a definite need to provide support to individuals who were experiencing difficulties with drug and alcohol misuse and indeed to support family members affected by theirs or another's use.



The service has changed dramatically during its 37-year history in all areas. None more so than in staff compliment and funding streams. Furthermore, the services that are provided are varied and include provision for those with no substance issue but have unfortunately experienced sudden death or anticipated death of a friend or loved one. What has not changed is the commitment of the organisation to provide the best evidence-based support available to the whole community in West Lothian and to tackle the inequalities that people unfortunately experience.

WLDAS takes pride in its insight and innovation as it continually strives to develop new initiatives and indeed seek funding opportunities to deliver such initiatives to the people it serves within West Lothian and not rely on one main funding source. This is evidenced through WLDAS securing funding from The Corra Foundation for its Wraparound West Lothian Project and Family Matters Project as well as, The Big Lottery Fund for Grief Matters Project.

- Wraparound West Lothian Project was awarded a grant of £496,508 in April 2022 to develop and deliver this project over 5 years
- Family Matters Project was awarded a grant of £229,740 in April 2022 to develop, improve and deliver this project over 4 years
- Grief Matters Project was awarded funds amounting to £161,574 in April 2022 to develop and deliver this project over 3 years

The above projects will enhance the Whole Family Approach that WLDAS and its partners (working in partnership within a multi-disciplinary team is paramount to provide the best support for the people of West Lothian) are taking in tackling the issues whole families are experiencing in relation to substances, inequalities, stigma and sudden or anticipated death. The latter being available to people with or without a substance issue.

WLDAS as an organisation believes in involving the people who use its services to assist in the development of the services it provides. This is achieved through an active voluntary Service User Advisory Group (SUAG) who conduct service user evaluations and feedback interviews. Furthermore, the SUAG has most recently become involved as peer interviewers (after initial training) in a research project involving WLDAS, University of Edinburgh, Kings College London, and Public Health Scotland to establish a new programme to assist people in recovery from drug and alcohol issues to reduce or quit smoking (DASHES Project). Several statutory, private and 3rd sector organisations will be involved by providing service users for interview on and off site.

Further involvement over the coming months will be from family members/close relatives who attend WLDAS' Family Matters (family support) service. This will see WLDAS staff and Family Matters attendees collaboratively compiling a presentation on Stigma to highlight the damaging impact this has had personally on family members/close relatives who have a loved one involved in dependant/problematic substance use. Stigma is the largest barrier to people accessing support whether they are using substances or are associated with someone else who is using substances.

On the next page are some quotes from client evaluations of our Therapeutic Support Service which provides counselling, support, and psychological therapies:

‘Made me look at myself and how I could improve my life and lifestyle without drugs’

‘I trusted my counsellor to be honest with her. She understood my issues and empathised with cultural issues and recognised the racism I experienced is real’

‘It is ok to seek help and share your feelings and anxieties with a sympathetic, non-judgemental ear. The trained counsellors at WLDAS are very understanding and listen rather than criticise’.

‘I always tell people about WLDAS and how important they have been in my recovery’.

‘The support I received from WLDAS saved my life’.

Wellbeing Scotland in West Lothian

Wellbeing Scotland (formerly Open Secret) have been working in the West Lothian area since 2008. We run a variety of services for both adults and children. Our main area of work is counselling. We are also keen on running projects for people's general "Wellbeing", for example peer support group work, artwork and befriending.



Adults Services Counselling

We work in conjunction with DASAT (Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Team) at West Lothian Council. Our specialism is to provide counselling for adult survivors of childhood trauma, including abuse and/or domestic abuse. We have been providing this since 2008.

We offer clients 12 to 20 sessions of counselling, usually on a weekly basis. We are returning to some face-to-face work as well as continuing with offering clients online and phone counselling. Despite Covid restrictions, we have managed to grow as an organisation and increase our numbers of clients and counsellors.

In 2021/2022 we received 353 new referrals, peaking to on average 30 new referrals for counselling a month during Covid.

Our evaluation measures and feedback reflect that clients who accessed services from wellbeing Scotland had 100% improved levels of wellbeing, 100% reported feeling safer (were assessed as being at less risk of harm) and 100% Improvement in suicidal ideation at the end of their journey with the service.

In addition, we have secured external funding for 5 individual clients who were eligible (£500 each). The 'Safe Lives' funding was secured to help those fleeing domestic abuse.

West Calder project

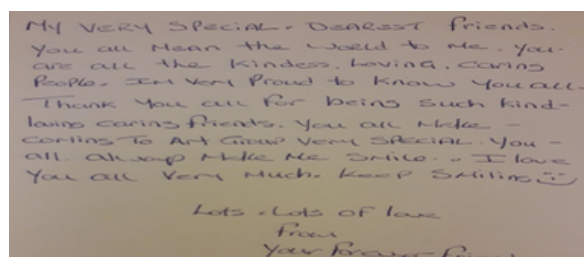
In conjunction with the West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust. We provide one day of counselling a week for those within the boundaries of the Trust or those linked to the Reach Out Talk Out groups.

A qualified counsellor runs this with a volunteer.

ASHA Art Group

Again, for adult survivors, we run an art group in Livingston, which has been running for 8 years. This group can be for those waiting for counselling or moving forward after counselling.

Link to ASHA video: ASHA



Peer Support Groups: “Reach Out, Talk Out”

Reach out talk out is offered to people on the waiting list for counselling and for those who have had counselling. These groups offer adults a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment that promotes their wellbeing.

Facebook page: Reach Out Talk Out

Schools Counselling

Since July 2020, we have been providing a counselling service in Primary Schools in West Lothian. We work with pupils aged between 10-12 years old (primarily P6 and P7). We have five full and part time qualified counsellors who are linked to individual schools.

The total of referrals received since July 2020 is 536, each child referred has been offered 12 one-to-one sessions and with the option of re-referral for further sessions to meet the needs of each individual child.

Roots Project

We are part of the partnership for children and young people called “Roots” which was established in October 2021. We offer Play and Creative Therapy as well as Art Therapy.

WLSen West Lothian Wellbeing

Wellbeing Scotland work in partnership with the West Lothian Wellbeing Project, run by WLSen. We are part of the group that helps people of West Lothian know where to be referred to and offer signposting.

Various Online Events and Groups

As part of the wider Wellbeing Scotland remit, we offer online groups, particularly during Covid restrictions.

These were a variety of groups that ran for six to eight weeks, subjects included Self Care, Self-Compassion and Anxiety workshops.

Volunteers

We have a team of volunteers who provide counselling (during training at University or College), befrienders, peer support workers and helpers at the groups and training events we facilitate.

Free Online Training

In 2021/2022 we provided free, monthly training workshops for fellow counsellors, other professionals, and clients. These covered topics such as: Suicide and self-harm, working with trauma, adverse childhood experiences, understanding Dissociation.

Monica Mochar

Head of Counselling and Wellbeing (West Lothian)

monica@wellbeingscotland.org

West Lothian Youth Action Project

West Lothian Youth Action Project is a third sector charity who have operated in West Lothian for almost 30 years. Our services include Early Intervention and individual support for young people experiencing challenges in their lives, these being problems with mainstream education, poor mental health, isolation, complex family backgrounds, involvement in anti-social behaviour and low-level criminality in the community or just finding things difficult to manage. In addition to this provision, we are part of a network of agencies providing family support through the Roots Project, we offer practical skills training programmes, music groups, Growing Together, an environment, growing and food initiative with Almond Housing and a Community fridge service which assists individuals and families who are struggling to access good nutritional food.



We receive core funding from West Lothian Council but like many third sector organisations we have to raise external funds to meet the ever-increasing demands on our services.

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight two specific areas of our work – Integr8, our befriending service for young people aged 10-21 years. Our highly skilled volunteers are carefully matched to provide individual support and time for some of West Lothian's most vulnerable young people. The following case study highlights the story of one young woman and the benefits she gains from the service.

Ashley (**not her real name**) originally came to the Youth Action Project via the mental health screening group, following a referral from her GP. Initially, Ashley was allocated weekly 1-1 support, to enable her to talk about the things going on for her, how she reacted and behaved in certain circumstances, and to explore alternative ways to manage situations when they cropped up. Following the initial 1-1 support, Ashley transferred into the Youth Action Project's befriending service, where her support continued, but also included opportunities to engage in social and recreational activities, while still working on her emotional reactions to demanding situations. Sessions gave Ashley the time and space to think about the different ways she could deal with her challenges, and strategies to help her to choose alternative ways of reacting to things. She was able to begin considering the impact of her actions on others.

Ashley's journey has not been smooth; however, she has continued to engage in her sessions regularly and has used the time to share her experiences and talk through what led there, and what she may do differently in the future. Over time, Ashley's reactions and outbursts have reduced significantly, her communication with her family has improved, and she is able to weigh up any consequences relating to her choices. The opportunity to participate in social and recreational activities brought an added benefit to Ashley, giving lighthearted fun while navigating her emotional challenges.

We would also like to highlight the excellent partnership that we have developed with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in West Lothian. For many years, we have worked with SFRS, sharing information regularly to address the issue of youth anti-social behaviour involving fire raising, often low-level criminality such as stealing wheelie bins and setting small fires in local communities. These actions may not be the crimes of the century but are very frustrating. Costly to the local authority, Police, SFRS and of course a nuisance to local residents and property. There is in addition the significant risk of harm to young people themselves and the negative impact this behaviour has upon the wider community and opinions they have of young people.

SFRS Officers have assisted us by joining our youthwork team in groupwork sessions, providing factual information in an engaging manner on the consequences of fire raising. They have also joined our detached streetwork team, directly providing safety advice and preventative messages to young people and community members. Partnership working is vital at this time of fewer resources and increased demands, it has been a pleasure working with committed professionals and at times the added humour makes the job just that little bit easier.

We were fortunate enough to be provided with the statement below, supporting our partnership.

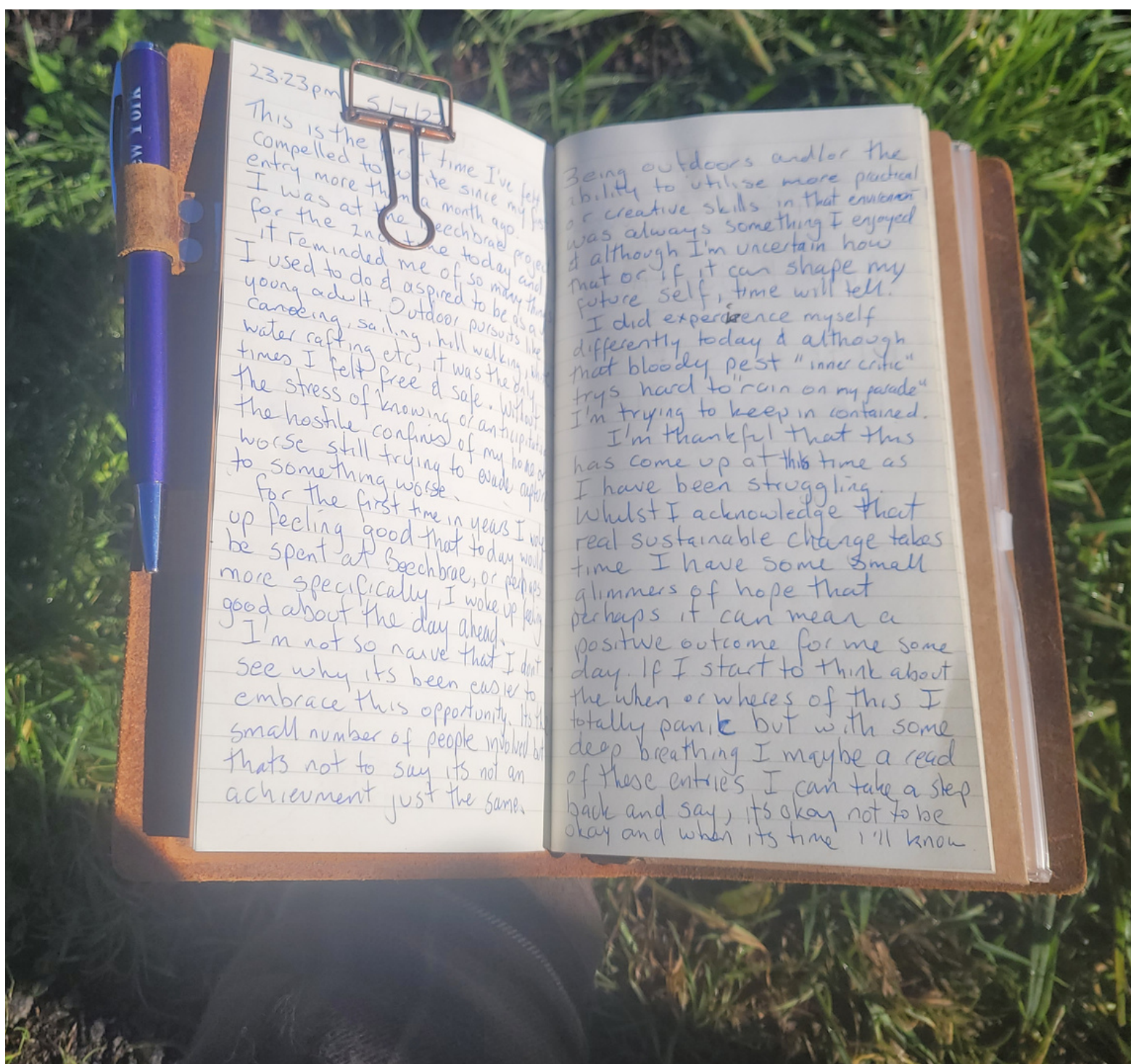
“The main purpose of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) as defined by the Scottish Government's Fire and Rescue Framework is “To work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors on prevention, protection and response to improve the safety and well-being of people throughout Scotland.”

That purpose is no better exemplified than in the close collaborative work with the West Lothian Youth Action Project (WLYAP). SFRS and WLYAP work together to help improve the outcomes for the communities of West Lothian, joint working on youth streetwork in identified target areas and sharing information daily to help reduce community risk. WLYAP are a highly valued partner in the Community Safety Partnership and have provided considerable support to SFRS on deliberate fire reduction strategies, seasonal bonfire reduction strategies, community events and group education work. The team at WLYAP are able to reach far into communities and provide support and assistance to young people and families to assist their community partners.

On a personal basis I am immensely proud of the relationship that the local SFRS team have with the good people of WLYAP, I have learned much from working with them and I look forward to continuing to work in partnership to improve the safety and well-being of our communities.”

Beechbrae SCIO

Beechbrae is based in the woods in Blackridge and supports people who are in hard places. We work with young people who aren't engaging with school through woodland wellbeing programmes teaching social skills, emotional regulation and life skills. We also work with adults with a diagnosed mental health condition through our 12 week Branching Out Programme that was developed by Scottish Forestry and NHS. Beechbrae receives no core funding from West Lothian Council and runs through a combination of self generated income and grants.



CONCLUSION

As evidenced by this report, the partnership work between West Lothian Council, Community Planning Partners and the Third Sector is well established. It will be vital to continue to consolidate and build on this partnership going forward.

There has been a huge range of different and complex challenges facing the third sector during the pandemic and the recovery period, as we move out the effects remain, especially in relation to mental health and wellbeing and the developing Cost of Living crisis. These will shape the priorities for the coming years from the partnership.

The importance of Community Planning Partners, including West Lothian Council and the Third Sector, working as strategically as possible to deliver for our communities remains key. This will help make best use of constrained resources. For example, consortium or collaborative funding applications is an area that may need more investigation with some funding streams looking specifically at this approach and clearly address strategic priorities. This may attract larger pots of external funding, probably something that has not been developed as much as it might have.

As part of moving forward there are developing frameworks and approaches that offer a way of empowering our communities and ensure the local economy works for all. It is hoped that the developing work around Community Wealth Building, community empowerment, asset transfer, community choices as well as developing further the strategic approach and partnership working covered in this report will provide the basis for meeting our communities needs.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



**ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

VOLUNTARY AND THIRD SECTOR FUNDING 2023/24

**REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide a background to the Third Sector funding processes to date and seek comments on the proposals to modify the process for 2023/24 and future years.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Considers and provides comment on the provision of an additional three months funding for organisations funded on 2022/23 to take them to the end of June 2023, and
2. Considers and provides comment on the process to be taken forward in 2023/34 and future years which will be presented to Council Executive for approval.

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)	None.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	High relevance to the SOA

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Annual budget in 2021/22 - £944,000 Time limited Modernisation and Improvement Fund - £650,000 2019/20 to 2022/23
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Funding allocation 2021/22 considered at the Voluntary Sector PDSP
VIII	Other consultations	Financial Management Unit, Third Sector Working Group

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

Funding model 2021/22 and 2022/23

The funding for the Voluntary Sector for 2021/22, £944,000, was allocated via two approaches, after a review of how funding was provided to the sector. The two approaches were:

1. An open round of grant funding through the Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22, which had a budget of £357,996
2. A number of organisations identified as being more suitable for Service Level Agreements or commissioned activity with 12 identified organisations with a budget of £586,004.

The Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22 was then topped up by a further one off £42,004 to give a fund of £400,000. The top up was funded from the unallocated 2020/21 £40,000 Gala Grant and £2,004 from the time limited Modernisation and Improvement Fund.

It was agreed that the Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22 would be opened up, via a grant application process, to any groups in West Lothian that could deliver on the three main priorities:

1. Income and employment
2. Physical and mental health and wellbeing
3. Housing and homelessness issues

Following an assessment panel, which included Third Sector representation, 22 organisations were funded to the total of the £400,000 from the Third Sector Community Support Fund and a further allocation of £168,724.50 from the time limited Modernisation and Improvement Fund.

For 2022/23 it was agreed, following the request for a roll over of funding given pressure on the sector who were in the middle of dealing with the impact of the pandemic, that all organisations funded in 2021/22 would receive funding for a second year.

Appendix one contains the full detail of the funding allocated through the Third Sector Community Support Fund and Service Level Agreements or commissioned activity.

Broxburn United Sports Club were funded in 2021/22 but not in 2022/23 as the

project was delayed and therefore being delivered over two years with one year of funding. The five West Lothian twinning associations were not funded in 2021/22 as no activity was taking place but £11,920 was made available for activity in 2022/23

D.2 Key Challenges – 2023/24 funding

The previous processes used for the allocation of funding provide a number of key challenges for officers and the Third Sector:

- The current process of allocating funding is out of sync with the council budget setting process which happens in February each year. In order to avoid organisations having to issue redundancy notices, the sector calls for confirmation of funding by 31 December each year, before the budget settling process has taken place.
- In the case of a few organisations that pay a service charge for council rented properties, costs are not finalised, until after they have applied and been awarded funding. This is due to the application process taking place in quarter three and the charges being set in quarter four or one of the subsequent year. Often the costs are different from the estimated costs provided by organisations when putting together bids.
- Calls from organisations for timescales for applying to be the same each cycle of funding.

To address the challenges identified, it is therefore recommended that the process for allocating funding is modified and improved. This would include changing the model to fund delivery from 1 July to 30 June each year rather than 1 April to 31 March. With a grant application process of the funding being open for applications to the Third Sector Community Support Fund and officers undertaking the commissioning / service level agreement process with organisations identified as being more suitable for this approach.

Those organisations, in appendix one, it is recommended, would be provided with an extension of three months to enable delivery until the 30 June 2023 to make this change for 2023/24. This is subject to the full allocation from 2022/ 2023 being fully utilised by organisations. The budget to cover the three months would come from the last remaining amount of the time limited Modernisation and Improvement Fund, which is £41,223 and a share of the budget allocation for 2023/24.

D.3 Proposed process for 2023/24

Following the extension, it is recommended that the following process is followed for allocation funding in 2023 / 24 and future years:

1. Grant funding is opened to applications from any Voluntary or Third Sector organisation delivering within West Lothian on 9 January 2023, with a closing date of 24 February 2023. Whilst the total budget won't be known until mid-February, this will have no impact on bids as the maximum amount that can be applied for will remain at £50,000 for organisations. Applications to cover the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.
2. Projects should meet the refreshed corporate priorities and / or supporting the alleviation of the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis. This information and further guidance will be provided in the guidance for applicants.
3. As with previous funding rounds, a scoring panel will assess the

applications, this will include representation from the sector including the Voluntary Sector Gateway.

4. Successful applicants will be notified by 31 March 2023.

If approved this would become the process that would be adopted year on year for the allocation of funding. The fund will open from applications in January until the end of February, with confirmation of funding being provided by 31 March. Whilst this is occurring the budget settling process and agreed service charges would be taken in parallel enabling officers to have an approved budget position.

D.4 Support for the Third Sector

Following discussions with the Third Sector working group, alongside the grant being open in January and February funding workshops would be delivered by the Voluntary Sector Gateway and officers. The aim of the workshop will be to provide support, hints and tips on how to complete funding applications and how to report outcomes of the funding provided.

E. CONCLUSION

The report highlights the key challenges currently faced in terms of the allocation of the Voluntary Sector revenue grants budget for 2023/24 and highlights a number of changes that could be made to ensure a more streamlined process going forward.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Council Executive, 29 October 2018

<http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=40192>

Voluntary Organisations PDSP, 21 March 2019

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=41887>

Council Executive, 6 October 2020

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=46448>

VOPDSP, 18 February

2021 <https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Dh%97p%82%8A>

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix one – Grant allocations 2022/23

Contact Person: Clare Stewart, Community Wealth Building Manager,
clare.stewart@westlothian.gov.uk

Elaine Cook

Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development

7 November 2022

Appendix one - Voluntary Organisations allocated Funding

Organisation	Fund	Funding awarded (£)	Q1 funding (£) 2023/24
Bridge Community Project	Third Sector Community Support Fund	25,000.00	6250.00
Kidz-Eco	Third Sector Community Support Fund	28,392.10	7,098.02
Whitburn & District CDT	Third Sector Community Support Fund	31,174.00	7,793.5
S.M.I.L.E Counselling	Third Sector Community Support Fund	26,000.00	6,500.00
Fauldhouse and Breich Valley CDT	Third Sector Community Support Fund	15,780.00	3,945.00
Food Train West Lothian	Third Sector Community Support Fund	20,000.00	5,000.00
Firefly Arts Ltd	Third Sector Community Support Fund	40,450.00	10,112.5
Family & Community Development West Lothian	Third Sector Community Support Fund	41,978.65	10,494.66
The Brock Garden Centre	Third Sector Community Support Fund	8,000.00	2,000.00
Polbeth Community HUB	Third Sector Community Support Fund	21,485.00	5,371.25
Linlithgow Young Peoples Project	Third Sector Community Support Fund	25,000.00	6,250.00
Knightsridge Adventure Project-The Vennie	Third Sector Community Support Fund	31,850.00	7,962.50
Craigshill Good Neighbour Network	Third Sector Community Support Fund	34,419.25	8,604.81
Dedridge Good Neighbour Network	Third Sector Community Support Fund	14,475.00	3,618.75
Broxburn Utd Sports Club	Third Sector Community Support Fund	N/A in 22/23	N/A in 23/24
1st Step Development Ventures	Third Sector Community Support Fund	14,716.00	3,679.00
West Lothian 50+ Network	Third Sector Community Support Fund	12,134.00	3,033.50
The Larder West Lothian	Third Sector Community Support Fund	31,314.50	7,828.62
Ladywell Neighbour Network	Third Sector Community Support Fund	20,958.00	5,239.50
Daisy Drop In	Third Sector Community Support Fund	32,453.00	8,113.25
Community Action Blackburn	Third Sector Community Support Fund	34,650.00	8,662.50
Boghall Drop in Centre	Third Sector Community Support Fund	37,215.00	9,303.75
West Lothian Twinning Associations	Third Sector Community Support Fund	11,920.00	2,980.00
West Lothian Youth Action Project	Service Level Agreement / Commissioning	190,000.00	47,500
Handicabs (Lothian)	Service Level Agreement / Commissioning	182,156.00	45,539.00
Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian	Service Level Agreement / Commissioning	48,770.00	12,192.50
West Lothian Social Enterprise Network	Service Level Agreement / Commissioning	31,500.00	7,875.00
Citizen's Advice Bureau	Service Level Agreement / Commissioning	76,266.00	19,066.50
Linlithgow Heritage Trust	Service Level Agreement / Commissioning	51,142.00	12,785.50
Bennie Museum	Service Level Agreement / Commissioning	6,170.00	1,542.50
Overall Total allocated in 2022/23		£1,145,368.50	£286,342.12

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



**ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY
DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST LOTHIAN UPDATE

**REPORT BY DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the panel on key issues affecting the Third Sector in West Lothian and the work by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Considers and notes the overview provided by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in Appendix 1 and their work in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

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	None.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.
VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	£48,770 has been awarded to VSGWL from the Voluntary Organisations budget for 2022/23.

VII Consideration at PDSP

The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated on a quarterly basis.

VIII Other consultations

None.

D. TERMS OF THE REPORT**D.1 Background**

The role of the third sector interface (TSI) is to provide an effective single point of access for support and advice for the third sector within a local area. It is expected that the TSI will provide a strong cohesive conduit between the third sector and the local authority and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and that it is well managed, governed and effective.

The TSI operating in West Lothian is the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL). The VSGWL is a member of the West Lothian CPP. VSGWL receives a grant from the Scottish Government Third Sector Unit and received £48,770 from West Lothian Council in 2022/23.

D.2 Current update

An update from the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian is attached as Appendix 1.

E CONCLUSION

The panel is asked to consider and note the report by the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and that the PDSP will receive regular updates going forward.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1

Contact Person:

Clare Stewart, Community Wealth Building Manager, e-mail: clare.stewart@westlothian.gov.uk

Douglas Grierson, Regeneration Team Leader, email douglas.grierson@westlothian.gov.uk

Elaine Cook, Deputy Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development

16 June 2022

Appendix 1

THE GATEWAY

Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian

Introduction

The joint Third Sector Annual report 2021-2022, presented separately to the PDSP, provides a snapshot into the role, scope, and value of the Third Sector and voluntary landscape across West Lothian. The sector is highly diverse. It ranges from tiny volunteer-run community groups like village halls and play groups to major public service providers in social care and housing.

Voluntary organisations are charities, community organisations and social enterprises. Across West Lothian and indeed Scotland, the voluntary sector is a major employer, a partner in delivering public services, and a vital contributor to society and the economy. Voluntary organisations provide the essential services that people and communities in rely on.

The Annual report includes a number of case studies provided by third sector partners to showcase their work and their contribution to providing much needed help and support to those in need. The report also provides high level information about the size and value of the sector from a national perspective as well as in the local context.

The Third Sector has been recognised for its outstanding role through the Covid pandemic, collectively working to meet need in communities and adapting new approaches with statutory partners to tackle issues as they arose.

The sector continues to play a key role by working in partnership with key stakeholders like West Lothian Council and other Community Planning Partners to deliver help and support to individuals and communities across the local area.

Key facts

Scotland

- 46,500 active voluntary organisations, including 23,800 charities
- 82% of voluntary orgs are local
- £8.5 Billion income
- £7.9 Billion expenditure
- Volunteers contribute £5.5 Billion to Scotland's economy
- 118,644 staff

West Lothian

- 1,456 active voluntary organisations with 536 charities operating
- 84% of voluntary orgs are local
- £109m income
- £89m expenditure
- Volunteers provide 4.1 million hours of help

- Volunteering contribute £62.1m to the local economy
- 1083 paid staff
- 2,855 trustees

Third Sector Manifesto and Hustings event

In advance of the 2022 May local elections, the Third Sector developed a Manifesto for Change - [West Lothian third sector Manifesto](#) - that called on candidates from each of the main Political Parties to a commitment to work with the sector.

Our Manifesto set out calls for

- **Vision** – A Council-wide strategic vision for engaging with and investing in, West Lothian's third sector.
- **Partnership** – Build true partnerships based on equality, trust and mutual respect.
- **Investment** – Increase investment in the sector through multi-year funding.
- **Prevention** – increase expenditure on early intervention and preventative approaches.
- **Empowerment** – Invest further in local initiatives that empower people, communities, and organisations to build their capacity to create solution.

Revised Council PDSP structure

Following the local elections, West Lothian Council revised its PDSP arrangements. The Third Sector is actively exploring how we best support and be represented in the new structure.

Funding landscape

Even before COVID, the voluntary sector was fragile, and it is more so now. The cost-of-living crisis is impacting on everyone - individuals, communities, and businesses. The impact is greatest on those who are already vulnerable and disadvantaged – the crisis will only worsen already entrenched inequalities.

In 2021/22, VSGWL distributed £570K from the Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to 32 organisations in West Lothian. The funding supported and encouraged initiatives that promote and benefit the mental health and wellbeing of people at a small scale, grassroots, community level. In October 2022, VSGWL launched a further £469K round of funding to support community-based initiatives that promote and develop good mental health and wellbeing.

Soaring energy bills, the cost-of-living crisis and the social care crisis are also having a significant impact on the Third Sector and creating huge uncertainty about the sustainability of many organisations. There are real concerns that the critical support and services provided by the sector to those most disadvantaged in local communities will be cut back or simply not be there in the future.

Sustainability needs to be vastly improved, including a greater degree of financial security, such as multi-year investment. Many voluntary organisations delivering public services struggle with short term funding arrangements that make it challenging to plan.

As a result, leaders in the sector frequently raise concerns about the amount of time they spend trying to raise money rather than delivering vital services. Short-term funding also creates stress for staff and beneficiaries and diverts organisations away from focussing on helping individuals and local communities. This creates precarious working conditions for

individuals in the third sector and contributes to high staff turnover and ongoing loss of knowledge and expertise.

Research conducted by SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations) also paints a bleak picture of the challenges facing the sector arising from spiralling costs and falling income, with 61% of voluntary organisations experiencing financial challenges while continuing to see an increased demand for services

<https://scvo.scot/policy/campaigns/running-costs-crisis>

Volunteering

According to the latest (2020) Scottish Household Survey (SHS), 64% of adults had taken part in formal or informal volunteering in the last year. 56% of adults took part in informal volunteering, and 26% took part in formal volunteering.

In West Lothian, 32% of adults in West Lothian, an estimated 46,270 people, volunteered formally through an organisation or group. This equates to around **4.1 Million hours** of help providing **£62.1 Million** to West Lothian's economy.

Research **published by Volunteer Scotland** has warned that targeted support must be offered to communities in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) lowest quartiles, where the demand for volunteering support will be highest.

These areas - among the poorest in Scotland - are likely to see a "major increase" in the need for support, with Volunteer Scotland stating that offering "health and wellbeing support will be critical". Volunteer Scotland added that as the cost-of-living crisis grows the work of volunteers will be affected. The poorest areas in Scotland could be worst hit if the ongoing cost of living crisis engulfing households leads to a reduction in volunteers across the sector.

There were also concerns raised that the increased cost of heating, and higher operating costs for buildings generally, are likely to affect the places where people volunteer.

Volunteer-involving organisations may be forced to reduce their opening hours or in extreme cases close altogether, the report warned, with a direct impact on their ability to engage volunteers.

Conclusion

There needs to be targeted support and effective support to Third Sector organisations addressing the financial and societal challenges associated with the cost-of-living crisis and the social care crisis. The sector is critical to West Lothian's wellbeing, prosperity, and success.

The sector is agile, vibrant, and uniquely placed to support those in most need in our communities. Organisations are totally committed to working in partnership with statutory partners to improve health and wellbeing, relieve pressures on statutory services and in ensuing West Lothian is a great place to live, work and prosper.

Presented by Alan McCloskey
Chief Executive Officer
VSGWL
November 2022

ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING

Workplan 2022-2023

Issue	Purpose	Lead Officer	Date	Referral to Council Exec
ED- Visit West Lothian	To inform and update the Panel of the work by Economic Development associated with Visit West Lothian and advise of future plans	Jim Henderson	08/11/22	No
ED – Town Centre Management	To update the panel of the work of TCM Groups and advise of changes to be made	Alice Mitchell / Jim Henderson	08/11/22	TBC
Planning Enforcement Charter Review	To inform the panel of the proposed updated Planning Enforcement Charter	Jim McGinley	08/11/22	Yes
Community Wealth Building Update	The purpose of this report is to provide the panel with an update on the development of a Community Wealth Building approach within West Lothian.	Clare Stewart	08/11/22	No
Voluntary Sector Annual Report & Update	To update panel on the work of the Voluntary Sector	Clare Stewart	08/11/22	No
Voluntary and Third Sector Funding 2023/24	The purpose of the report is to provide a background to the Third Sector funding processes to date and seek comments on the proposals to modify the process for 2023/24 and future years	Clare Stewart	08/11/22	
ED – Shared Prosperity Fund	To inform the panel on the outcome of the Investment Plan and agreed interventions	Alice Mitchell	TBC	No
NPF4	Update panel on the National Planning Framework 4	Jim McGinley	25/01/23	yes

Gala Day and related Grants	To update panel on the disbursement of the grants	Douglas Grierson	25/01/23	possible ¹²
ED - Employability	To update panel on the various workstreams around employability including MCMC, MA's A2E etc	Alice Mitchell / Yvonne Shaw	25/01/23	no
Community Sport Team	Presentation about the work of the Community Sport Team	Alan Colquhoun	25/01/23	
ED – Invest in West Lothian	To inform the panel on the performance of Business Gateway and support to local Businesses in West Lothian.	Jim Henderson	28/03/23	No
FMU	To update panel on the financial performance	Robert Young	28/03/23	No
VSG & WLSEN	Joint report to update panel on the work of the organisations in supporting the third sector and social enterprises.	Douglas Grierson	28/03/23	No
Community Wealth Building Update	The purpose of this report is to provide the panel with an update on the development of a Community Wealth Building approach within West Lothian.	Clare Stewart	28/03/23	no
Annual Community Asset Report	To update panel on the work of the Community Asset Transfer Board	Scott Hughes	06/06/23	Yes
Voluntary Sector Funding	To update panel on the process of funding for 23/24	Douglas Grierson	Various	tbc
Local Development Plan	To update panel on the progress of the LDP	Jim McGinley	various	yes
City Region Deal – Joint Committee & EMOC Minutes	To advise the panel on matters considered by the City Deal Joint Committee and Elected Member Oversight Committee	Alice Mitchell	Various Dates	No
ECEWB Performance Report	To update the panel on the performance of the services which report to the panel	Alice Mitchell	Quarterly	No