



## ***Whitburn and Blackburn Local Area Committee***

West Lothian Civic Centre  
Howden South Road  
LIVINGSTON  
EH54 6FF

28 November 2022

A physical meeting of the **Whitburn and Blackburn Local Area Committee** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Seafeld Community Centre, Seafeld** on **Monday 5 December 2022 at 10:00am**.

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, declarations of interest in any urgent business and consideration of reports for information.

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

4. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting of the Committee held on 26 September 2022 (herewith).
5. Police Ward Report - report by Police Scotland (herewith).
6. Fire Service Ward Report - report by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (herewith).
7. Housing, Customer and Building Services - report by Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).

8. Service Update - NETS, Land & Countryside - report by Head of Operational Services (herewith).
9. Anti-Poverty Service Update - report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith).
10. Community Regeneration Update - report by Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development (herewith).
11. Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund Allocations 2022-23 - report by Depute Chief Executive, Education, Planning and Economic Development (herewith).
12. Workplan (herewith).

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NOTE      **For further information please contact Val Johnston on 01506 281601 or email [val.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:val.johnston@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](mailto:james.millar@westlothian.gov.uk)
- Carol Johnston, Chief Solicitor and Depute Monitoring Officer, 01506 281626, [carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:carol.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk)
- Committee Services Team, 01506 281604, 01506 281621  
[committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@westlothian.gov.uk)

January 2022

MINUTE of MEETING of the WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within BLACKBURN PARTNERSHIP CENTRE, ASH GROVE, BLACKBURN, on 26 SEPTEMBER 2022.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Kirsteen Sullivan, Jim Dickson and Mary Dickson

In Attendance -

Marjory Mackie, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council  
Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council  
Michelle Kirkbright, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council  
Bryan Bell, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Sergeant Lee Brodie, Police Scotland  
Stephen Ross, Financial Services, West Lothian Council  
Eirwen Hopwood, Parks and Woodland Manager, West Lothian Council  
Peter Kain, Greenrigg Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the Minute of its meeting held on 6 June 2022. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. COVID-19 LOCAL RECOVERY RENEWAL FUND

The committee considered a report (copies of which had by the Lead Officer) providing members with an update on the projects allocated funding from the £150,000 COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Fund approved by the committee on 13 December 2021 and to agree the re-allocation of any underspends within the list of projects.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee :-

1. Notes the update on the approved projects; and
2. Agrees that the underspend totalling £5,000 from WB9 and WB12 be re-allocated to WB35 which was projecting a £5,000 overspend.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report

4. PLACE BASED INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23 TOWN CENTRE CAPITAL FUND

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Deputy Chief Executive inviting committee to consider the

allocation of the £18,682.29 available to support the Place Based Investment Fund Town Centre Fund projects and to agree the allocation as set out in this report.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee:

1. Notes that the Council Executive on 21 June 2022 agreed and additional £8,021.33 to support projects in the ward
2. This is in addition to the original total underspend from the ward of £10,660.96.
3. Notes the three-step process to be used to decide the allocation;
4. Agrees to award funding as set out in the report;
5. Notes that some of the funding costs remain as estimates and delegates the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to finalise award amounts within the overall value of the funding available within the ward;
6. Notes that as projects are implemented the detail and associated costs may change and so delegates the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to agree such changes and to re-allocate any money that becomes available as a result to other projects in the ward, both so long as projects remain within the aims, purposes and overall intent of the original applications and approvals; and
7. Notes the terms and conditions associated to the awarding of grants as set out in the report.

#### Decision

1. To approve the terms of the report; and
2. To ask the Community Regeneration Officer to confirm with all ward members if the Whitburn 7's project was likely to go ahead despite the funding gap.

#### 5. HOUSING REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of the service activities within the ward.

It was recommended that the committee note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period Quarter 1; 1 April to 30 June 2022.

#### Decision

To note the content of the report

## 6. POLICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Scotland providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 31 March 2022.

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

### Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To request that extra police patrols take place at the following locations due to speeding and inconsiderate parking :- M8 (junction 4a) as there had been an increase in speeding especially near to the fast food outlets; inconsiderate parking close to the roundabout as you left East Whitburn/Redmill; speeding on Polkemmet Road (as you go uphill); and an increase in off-road bikes on the cycle path between Longridge Road and Polkemmet Road; and
3. To request that Sergeant Harte/Sergeant Brodie provide all four ward members with a timeline of when data for MMW's would be available for LAC meetings.

## 7. FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service updating on the activity within the ward for the period up to 30 June 2022.

It was recommended that the committee note and provide comment on the Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward Performance Report.

### Decision

To note the contents of the report.

## 8. GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on general services capital investment in the ward during 2021/22 and planned investment for the six-year period 2022/23 to 2027/28, subject to the review of future expenditure requirements as part of the process for preparing the next ten-year capital programme for 2023/24 to 2032/33.

It was recommended that the local area committee notes :-

1. The progress made in delivering the approved general services capital programme within the Whitburn and Blackburn ward in 2021/22;

2. The approved capital projects planned for the ward in 2022/23 to 2027/28, subject to the review of expenditure requirements as agreed by West Lothian Council on 15 February 2022;
3. That detailed allocations of block budgets for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 to specific programmes attributable to individual wards will be undertaken as part of the development of the new ten-year programme;
4. Progress in delivery of the 2022/23 programme will be reported to Council Executive following detailed budget monitoring exercises during the course of the year;
5. An updated capital investment programme will be presented to Council for approval in early 2023.

#### Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To request that the Head of Finance and Property Services provide all four ward members with further details of when the refurbishment work at the Whitburn Community Centre would be completed.

#### 9. SERVICE UPDATE, NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising of the recent activity of the NETs, Land & Countryside Services' teams for the period 1 May to 31 July 2022.

It was recommended that the committee:

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

#### Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To request that all future reports provided the costs for fly tipping for all other wards.

#### 10. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Deputy Chief Executive updating on regeneration activity within the ward.



It was recommended that members note the updates on :-

1. Regeneration activity in both Blackburn and Whitburn
2. Town centre matters related to Whitburn;
3. Progress with the development of Whitburn Partnership Centre including the public art installation; and
4. Progress with establishing a management committee for the community wing in Greenrigg Primary School

Decision

To note the content of the report

11. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

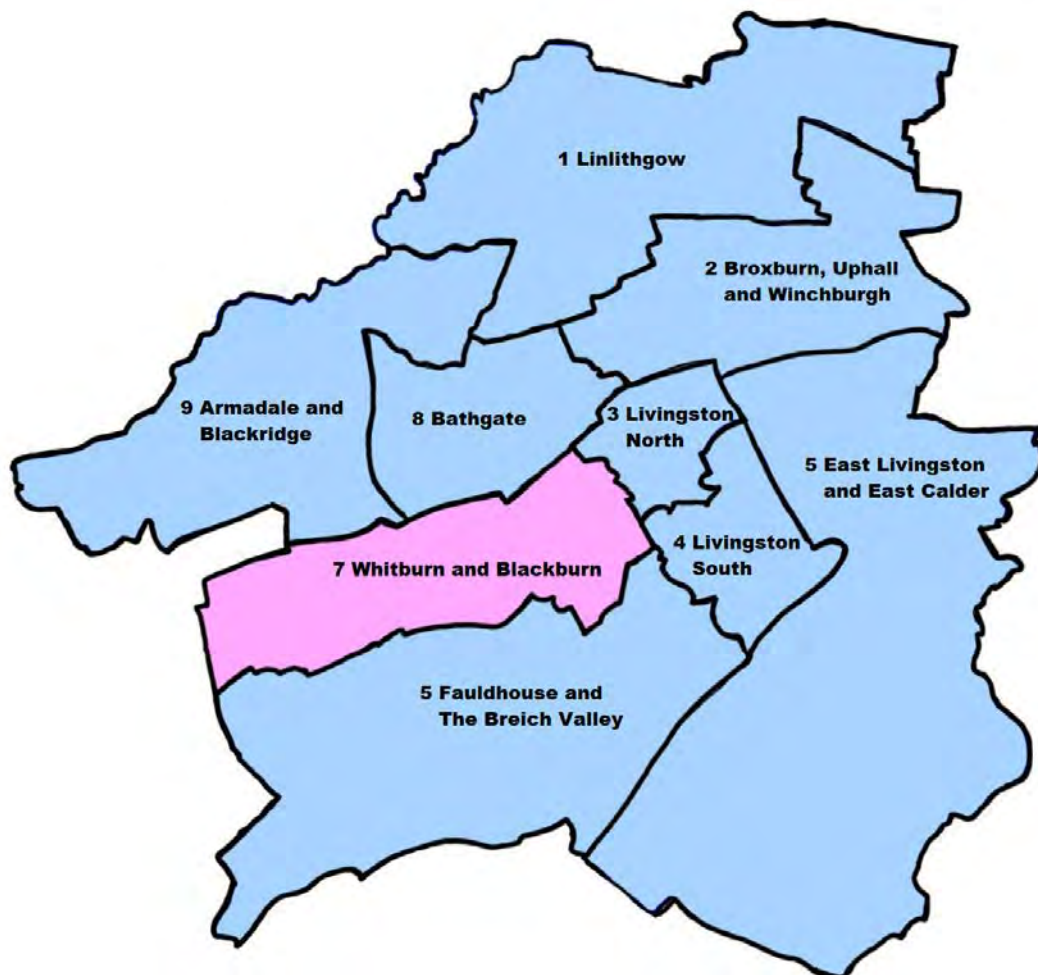
To note the workplan.





## West Lothian Area Command

### Lothian and Scottish Borders



### Ward 7 Whitburn & Blackburn Multi Member Ward Report

Quarter 2 – 2022/2023

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an update on performance, activities and issues across the Ward for the period up to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

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

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; making best use of our resources; and working in partnership
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None.
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	Performance relative to the same period in 2021; set out in the report.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger; we take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive society
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	None.
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	None.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	None.

**D. TERMS OF REPORT****Introduction:**

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

- Protecting The Most Vulnerable People

- Reducing Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Reducing Acquisitive Crime
- Improving Road Safety
- Tackling Serious and Organised Crime

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

Whitburn and Blackburn Community Engagement Priorities:

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

### **Whitburn & Blackburn Community Officers**

PC Carol-Ann Wilson

PC Barrie Kennedy

### **Executive Summary:**

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

- **Protecting the most vulnerable people**

Domestic abuse crimes is an area of focus in terms of providing confidence to report, undertaking professional investigations, providing victim support, pursuing perpetrators and managing offenders.

The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) has two main approaches. The “Right to Ask” is open to anyone who has concerns about a new partner’s abusive past or has concerns about another person’s new partner. The “Power to Tell” is when we receive information or intelligence about the safety of a person who may be at risk, this information is thereafter disclosed to the person concerned so they are able to make informed decisions about their personal safety. During Q2, there was 58 applications in the last Quarter (121 YTD), this is 17 more than the previous quarter and highlights the ongoing commitment to keeping people safe.

We had recorded 34 crimes under the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act 2018 by the end of Q2 – domestic offences relating to controlling and coercive behaviours. This shows better recording of this crime type and understanding amongst officers. Detection rate is at 76.5% which is expected to increase as many enquiries take time to collate all the necessary evidence.

During Q2, there were five individual missing person incidents pertaining to adults living with Dementia, the individuals concerned were traced safe and well. Since the implementation of the protocol in 2020, West Lothian has dealt with 22 individuals who met the criteria. In September, we supported World Alzheimer’s day, whilst using the opportunity to extensively promote this protocol in Social Media.

The ACAST mental health triage system is still widely utilised by officers when appropriate. By the end of Q2, this service was utilised 54 times providing support and advice to individuals suffering from a mental health crisis.

At the start of the educational year, local Community officers attended the Fresher's Fayre held at West Lothian College where Hate Crime awareness and crime prevention advice was shared to those in attendance. Advice regarding student online safety was also distributed to all students at West Lothian College as well as those attending Oatridge agricultural college.

We know that Hate Crimes continue to be massively underreported, and we continue to work with external agencies to support reporting mechanisms, including remote, online and 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting.

Community officers have been engaging with 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations such as West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service (WLDAS) or Change Grow Live (CGL) for those members of the public who may be affected by alcohol or substance misuse to streamline referral processes rather than criminalise individuals. These organisations can assist with early and effective intervention to break the criminal cycle and offer much need support to members of the community when in crisis.

Annual national campaigns such as #That-Guy are being promoted within the ward area highlighting violence against women and girls. This and other campaigns are promoted through partnership working with large employers within West Lothian area which enables messages to reach all sections of the community.

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

We continue to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in its various forms with our partners.

During Q2, West Lothian Police worked alongside Lothian and Country buses and ran a 'decoy bus' initiative throughout the county. The initiative was instigated following a number of incidents of buses being vandalised in various towns throughout the county. During the initiative there were no incidents of vandalism to the decoy bus or any service buses, however during the initiative a number of youths were identified as being in possession of alcohol which was subsequently seized. Similar operations are being planned for Q3.

The anti-social behaviour use of off road vehicles continues to be a concern in a number of communities in the county. Local community officers have been carrying out letter drops in communities where regular reports occur in an attempt to establish the identity of those involved. Such information was provided to officers after an incident in Livingston which resulted in a 17 year old male being identified and charged with numerous offences.

During 2022, Police Scotland promoted the National Firearms Surrender Campaign which allowed members of the public to hand in unwanted or illegal firearms and ammunition anonymously, if required, without prosecution. To date, 23 firearms were surrendered to West Lothian Police Stations, this included Lethal, Imitation and Airsoft Weapons. Various types of ammunition were also surrendered, including cartridges, ball bearings and powders. Although firearm offences remain low, the removal of unwanted weapons from criminal availability will help to reduce the risk of harm to the public and our communities.

The 'It'll Cost You' proxy purchasing campaign continued in Q2 with the assistance of the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV). The aim of this campaign was to raise awareness with off licence premises. To date, there has been no FPN tickets issued although premises staff are fully cited on the consequences should their business fail any future proxy purchase.

Community officers have continued to work with care providers for young people, engaging with both staff and residents to provide support where and when required. Officers in the ward area have been delivering bespoke inputs to schools regarding dangers of fireworks and general anti-social behaviour. Regular unannounced visits continue to be made to licensed

premises to ensure conditions of their licence are being met. These visit are reported to divisional licensing officers who use information for subsequent licence board meetings.

- **Reducing Acquisitive Crime**

Dealing with Acquisitive Crime to protect people by reducing the impacts of theft on individuals and communities remains a priority.

During Q2, our Preventions and interventions Officer along with Community Officers held several Community Surgeries in Broxburn, Linlithgow, Bathgate and Armadale. During these surgeries, officers were on hand to provide home security advice with focus on practical and often inexpensive ways for communities to protect their homes. Vehicle security advice was also provided as well as through our social media accounts. Due to the positive feedback from communities and elected members, further surgeries are being considered.

Furthermore, with the darker nights closing in, the Rural Watch Scotland alert scheme is being utilised to encourage those living in our rural communities to report any suspicious activity witnessed in their area. As always, all suspicious activity can be reported via 101, the 'contact us' form on the Police Scotland internet page or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

During Q2, pro-active patrols (with both marked and unmarked vehicles used) continued at identified vulnerable premises, and pro-active team officers will continue to target recidivist offenders. When possible, our Community officers have also been carrying out high visibility patrols in both urban and rural areas within their community, working with partners and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations to assist in the prevention of crime.

Community officers have continued to work with partners such as Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC) to provide information to local businesses and/or individuals regarding various methods of fraud including on line, postal or telephone scams which have a detrimental effect on individuals who may lose their life savings causing substantial stress and hardship.

- **Improving Road Safety**

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

Sadly Q2 saw four fatalities in West Lothian. Extensive enquiries are also still ongoing into previous fatalities from 2021/22 which is unfortunately reducing abilities to engage with the usual speeding initiatives.

We will continue to support the Roads Policing campaign calendar during 2022/23. During Q2, we supported the Summer Drink Drug Drive, Commercial Vehicle Week and Vulnerable Road Users Week.

With school returning during Q2, local community officers visited a number of schools during drop off/collection times to assess inconsiderate parking. No offences were detected during visits however it is acknowledged that the volume of traffic around schools during peak times is high. Schools are encouraged to partake in the 'Parksmart' scheme which includes pupils from the schools providing educational advice in relation to inconsiderate parking/driving outside schools to parents and carers.

Community officers carry out high visibility patrols of identifiable accident locations to create a visible deterrent for speeding drivers. This will be enhanced once training in hand held speed detection devices is completed where enforcement rather than advice may be considered. Officers also aim to be visible at the various schools during peak times prior to delivering other inputs to pupils (as per reducing ASB section)

- **Tackling Serious and Organised Crime**

Drugs supply has a close link to Organised Crime Groups (OCG), and is a blight on any community. We focus to those who bring harm to our communities, and particularly those who are involved in drugs supply, cultivation/production and the sale and distribution in particular, but not exclusively, of Class A drugs.

West Lothian Pro-active Crime Team continue to develop and carry out enforcement on members of organised crime groups based in West Lothian (Operation Wingman) that are involved in the supply of controlled drugs. By the end of Q2, Op Wingman removed over £643,769 worth of drugs from West Lothian streets, along with nearly £130,000 in cash along with numerous items linked to proceeds of crime.

Our divisional approach is now well established which introduces multi-agency engagement and recording of all Non-Fatal Overdoses. We send notification of any NFO to the local addiction services who ensure the individual is offered support. This programme is seeing an increased engagement with local drug support groups and is allowing for intelligence streams around developing drug trends and potentially harmful products. By the end of Q2 we had referred 55 people for direct intervention via our Non-Fatal Drugs Overdose processes.

During Q2, Police Scotland Counter Terrorism Liaison officer delivered further Counter Terrorism and Prevent Awareness Training to new recruits at HMP Addiewell. ACT e-learning package has also been prepared and rolled out to staff based at Howden Park Centre with plans to complete face-to-face training once online training has been completed.

Two sessions of Postal Threats Training was delivered at ESC for Livingston COPFS staff during Q2. This training was completed by the Police Scotland Counter Terrorism Liaison Officer. Further sessions are currently in the planning.

Community officers have assisted in both local and national operations within their community utilising their knowledge of local trends to feed information and intelligence in order to target organised crime groups.

Community officers continue to work closely with partner organisations to enhance the intelligence picture concerning crime groups who may seek to utilise the ward area as a base to conduct their criminal ventures. Working with 3<sup>rd</sup> sectors organisations (WLDAS and CGL) advice is given to those who may be involved in criminality to give the confidence to break this cycle and receive additional support where required.

*Please note: Police Scotland have recently migrated to a new data source as its single source of truth for our reporting requirements. During the transition it was identified that significant improvements could be made to the completeness and accuracy of our geo-spatial data. Over the last eight to nine months we have been developing, deploying and quality assuring a number of processes that would improve these data. We are now in the final stages of the transition process and working on the outputs required at MMW and datazone levels. We hope to launch revised products in the next couple of months. Subsequently, MMW figures will be unavailable until validity checks have been completed.*



Data Label: Public



## **WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT**

#### **REPORT BY SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To update the Whitburn and Blackburn Local Area Committee on the activity within the Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward for the period up to 30th September 2022.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

Committee members are invited to note and provide comment on the Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward Performance Report.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

Quarterly reports on the Multi-Member Ward Operational Plans have been produced by SFRS to ensure delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2021, which is a requirement under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Section 41E.

### **D.2 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward Quarterly Report**

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

The key priorities within the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward area are as follows:

#### Continuous Priority

- Local Risk Management and Preparedness.

#### High Priority

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

#### Medium Priority

- Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting
- Reduction of Fires in Non-Domestic Property
- Reduction in Casualties from Non-Fire Emergencies. (excluding RTCs)
- Reduction in RTC Fatalities and Casualties.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward Performance Report aligns to the key priorities of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2021, the West Lothian Strategic Assessment of Community Safety and continues with the excellent partnership working on Community Safety, which is evident in West Lothian.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

None.

**Bryan Bell**  
**Station Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**  
**November 2022**  
 Appendix 1 Whitburn and Blackburn Multi-Member Ward Report



## West Lothian Council Area

### Ward Performance Report

Quarter 2 2022/23

## Whitburn and Blackburn

#### **DISCLAIMER**

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

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

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

## Introduction

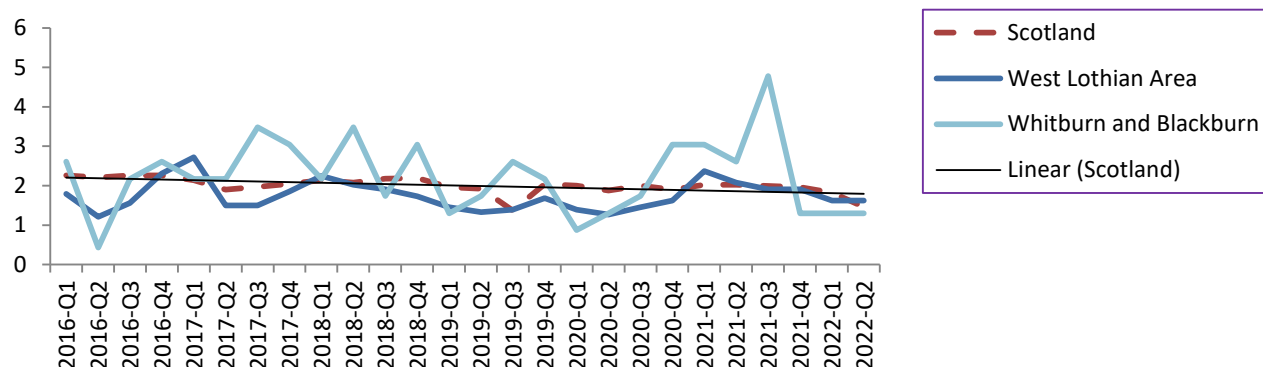
Welcome to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Ward Performance Report. This performance report is designed to provide citizens, stakeholders and partners with information relating to ward based activity undertaken by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

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

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

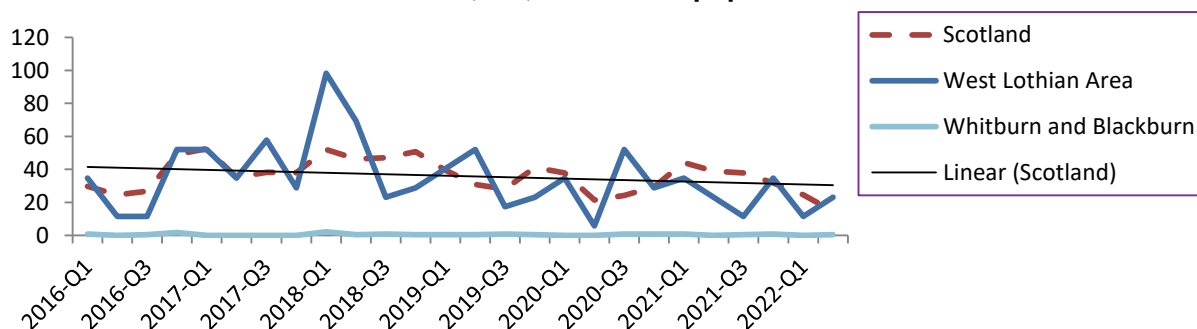
However, regardless of statistical anomalies, emerging patterns and trends in fire related incidents and events can assist the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Community Planning Partners plan and implement preventative intervention initiatives to target reducing fire related incidents and events.

### Accidental Dwelling Fires Per 10,000 head of population



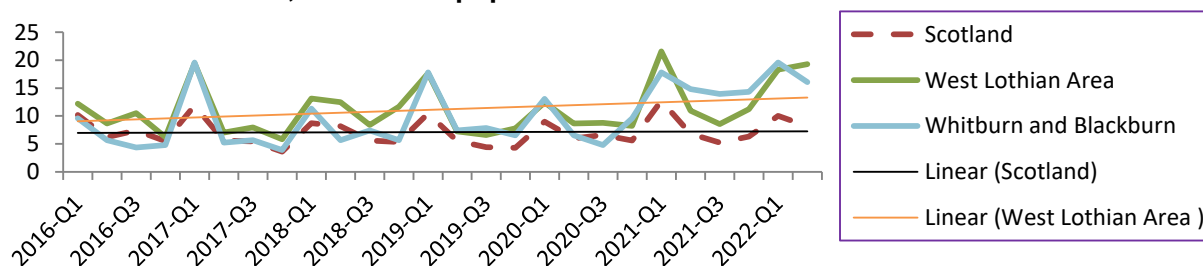
During the 2022-23 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 3 accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 6 during 2021-22 year to date reporting period.

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



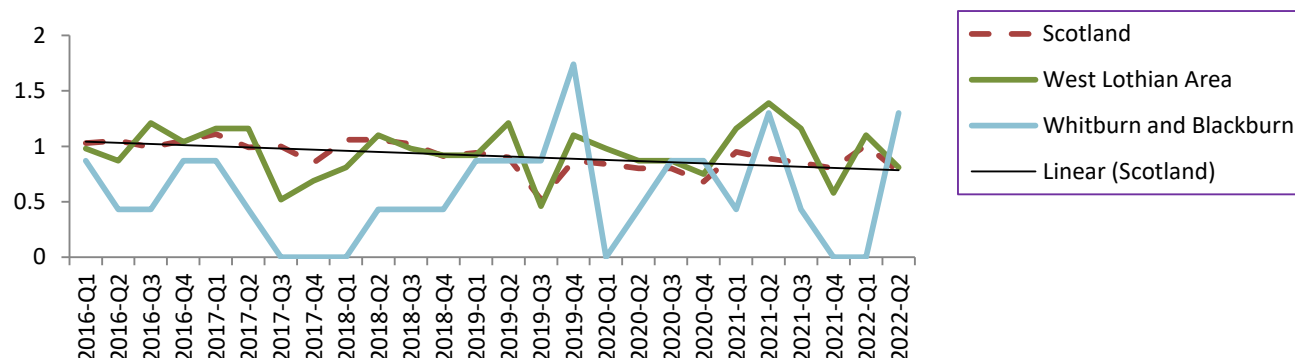
During the 2022-23 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 1 Casualties and 0 Fatalities due to fire in comparison to 0 Casualties and 0 Fatalities during 2021-22 year to date reporting period.

### Deliberate Fires Per 10,000 head of population



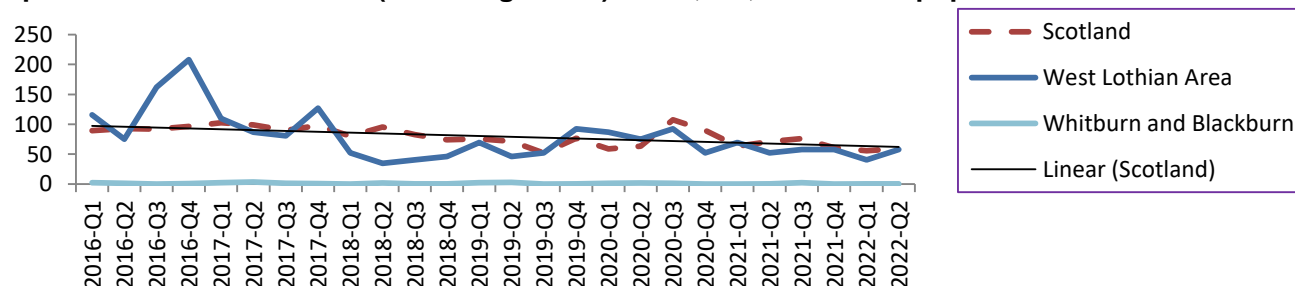
SFRS have dealt with 37 Deliberate fire incidents during 2022-23 year to date reporting period in comparison to 34 during 2021-22 year to date reporting period.

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



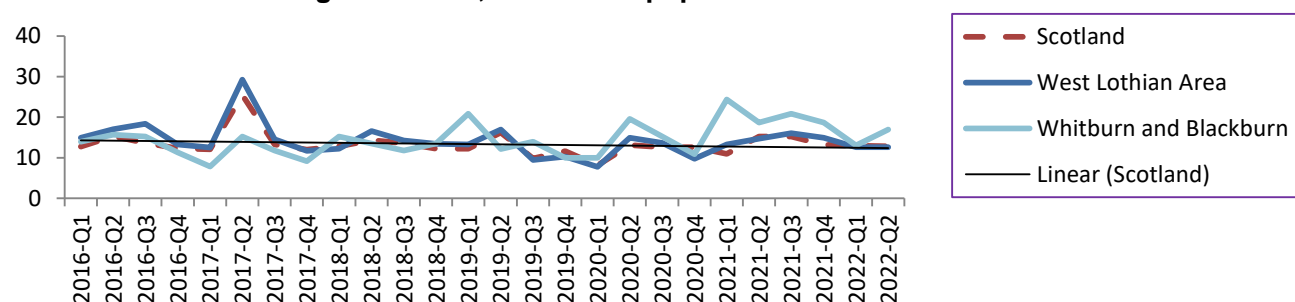
SFRS have dealt with 3 non domestic fire incidents during 2022-23 year to date reporting period in comparison to 3 during 2021-22 year to date reporting period.

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



SFRS have dealt with 2 casualties from Special Services during 2022-23 year to date reporting period in comparison to 1 during 2020-21 year to date reporting period.

### Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Per 10,000 head of population

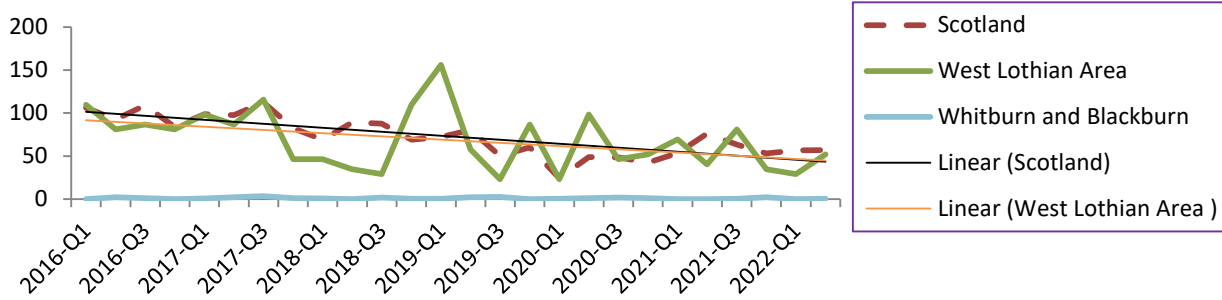


SFRS have dealt with 39 UFAS incidents during 2022-23 year to date reporting period in comparison to 43 during 2021-22 year to date reporting period.

### Additional Comments

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

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



During the 2022-23 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 1 Casualties and 0 Fatalities from RTC's in comparison to 1 Casualties and 0 Fatalities during 2021-22 year to date reporting period.





DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **HOUSING CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES**

#### **REPORT BY INTERIM HEAD OF HOUSING CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide the Local Area Committee with an overview of the service activities within the Whitburn and Blackburn ward.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

The Local Area Committee is asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period Quarter 2 - 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	There is no impact
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	There are positive impact on the following SOA indicators:  SOA4 – we live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities  SOA8 – we make the most effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment
<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	None
<b>VII Consideration at Housing Services PDSP</b>	Yes
<b>VIII Other consultations</b>	None

## D. TERMS OF REPORT

### D1. Housing Performance Information

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

To ensure that council tenancies are being re-let as quickly as possible and that we are meeting our duty under homeless legislation, the Housing Team has continued to prioritise resources to complete the letting process for both temporary and mainstream properties.

**Table 1: Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies**

Void Period	July 2022	%	Aug 2022	%	Sep 2022	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	3	33.3%	2	29%	2	19%	55%
2-4 wks	3	33.3%	1	14%	0	0%	30%
4+ wks	3	33.3%	4	57%	9	81%	15%
<b>Total Lets</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 2: Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies**

Void Period	July 2022	%	Aug 2022	%	Sep 2022	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	0	0%	2	33%	2	25%	55%
2-4 wks	2	100%	1	17%	4	50%	30%
4+ wks	0	0%	3	50%	2	25%	15%
<b>Total Lets</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

There were 27 policy voids in the ward for this period, 3 less than last reporting period.

**Table 3: Policy Voids**

Void period	Number of properties	PV reasons
<4 weeks	4	2 – kitchen upgrade 1 – kitchen & bathroom / dampness 1 – kitchen & heating upgrade
4 – 12 weeks	9	3– kitchen upgrade 2 – kitchen & bathroom / dampness 4 – kitchen & heating upgrade
13 – 16 weeks	7	1 – legal dispute 1-bathroom upgrade 1 – kitchen & bathroom upgrade and woodworm 2 – kitchen & bathroom upgrade 2 – kitchen upgrade
26+ weeks	7	5 - decant 2 – Fire/Insurance

## D2. Arrears

For the Whitburn ward the collection rate for the year to date in Quarter 2 remains excellent at 93.4%. Whitburn has collected £5,867,253 vs a charge of £6,279,498.

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

In the same week last year Whitburn ward had 605 Universal Credit (UC) households in arrears. Since then the number of UC households in arrears has increased by 6.4%.

The number of tenancies in arrears in this ward has increased by 67 since last year. Small debt cases (£300 or less), account for 47.6% of households.

There are 245 serious arrears cases (+£1000 in arrears). These cases are 17.7% of all households in arrears in this area, containing 63.6% of the debt.

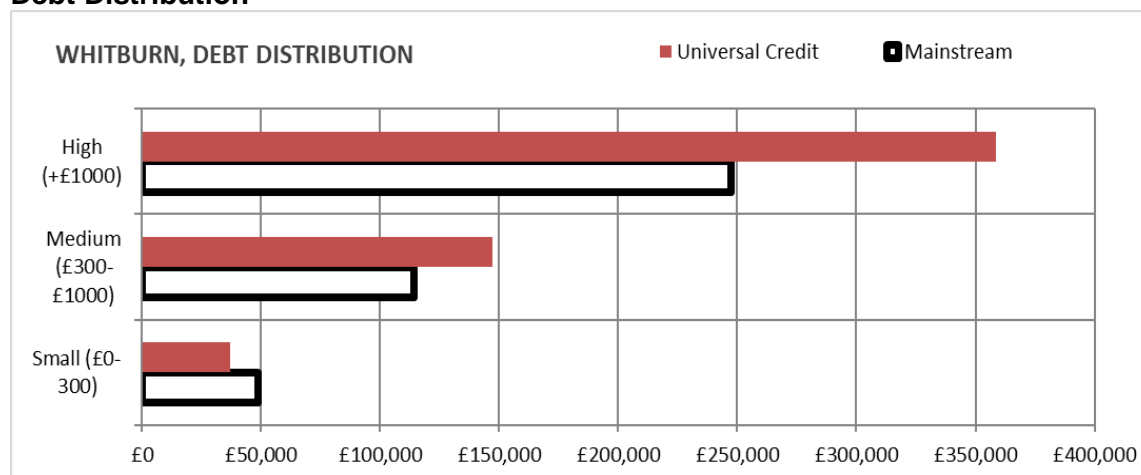
The arrears position for Whitburn Quarter 2 is £953,488. This is an increase of £110,220 on last year's position. The West Lothian overall position at end Q2 £4,780,804.

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

- Making best use of resources by considering communicating more with customers through SMS, email/ telephone and target visits

- Benchmarking with other local authorities to ensure we identify and consider implementing any best practice.
- Performance Monitoring and Reporting will be reviewed and where appropriate streamlined to ensure information is meaningful and robust to assist with improving rent arrears due.
- Promote Alternative payment methods, particularly the Tenant's Self-Service Portal, Secure On-line and Pay Point.

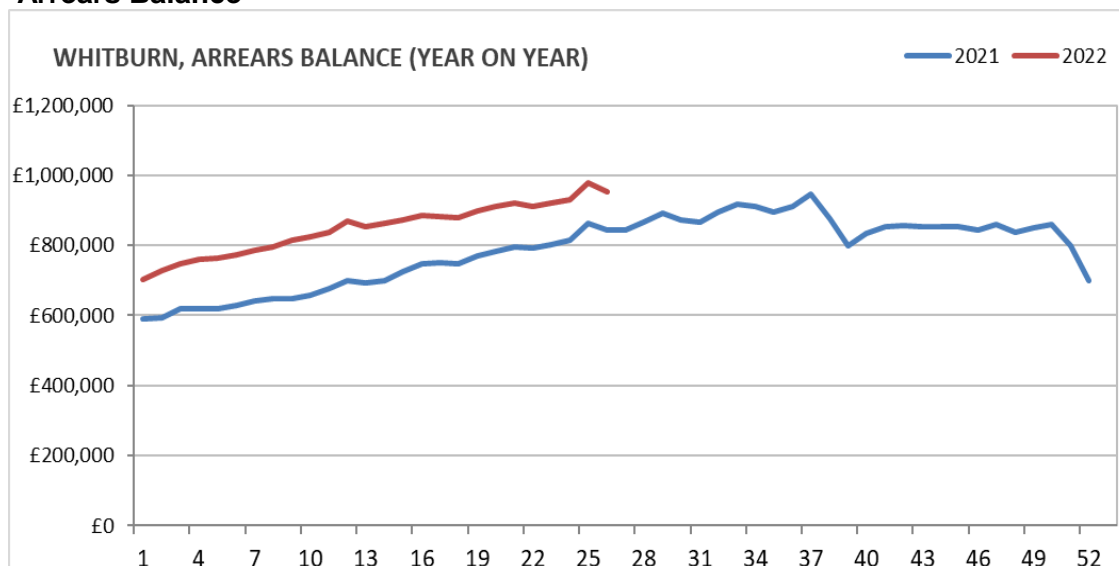
### Debt Distribution



### Arrears Banding

Arrears Banding	2021/22 (WK26)				2022/23 (WK26)			
	Mainstream		UC		Mainstream		UC	
	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases
£0.01 to £99.99	£8,605	202	£4,925	82	£8,013	190	£4,596	80
£100.00 to £299.99	£39,706	221	£32,820	172	£40,771	223	£32,690	165
£300.00 to £499.99	£33,927	86	£39,599	98	£44,878	116	£49,179	124
£500.00 to £749.99	£36,110	59	£38,803	64	£41,689	69	£53,995	87
£750.00 to £999.99	£31,447	36	£41,125	48	£27,603	32	£43,995	52
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£87,325	66	£112,154	81	£87,378	64	£102,498	69
£2000+	£142,638	41	£194,086	60	£159,973	45	£256,230	67
<b>Group Total</b>	<b>£379,757</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>£463,510</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>£410,305</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>£543,183</b>	<b>644</b>
<b>Movement</b>					(+) £30,548	(+) 28	(+) £79,672	(+) 39
<b>Overall Total</b>			<b>£843,268</b>	<b>1316</b>			<b>£953,488</b>	<b>1383</b>
<b>Overall Movement</b>							(+) £110,220	(+) 67

### Arrears Balance



### D3. Whitburn Area Team Activity

Officers in the Housing team have embraced the council's flexible / hybrid working arrangements since April 2022 working from home, office and in our communities. The Whitburn team have two officers seconded to the Central Void Team and one officer has been secondment to the Performance and Change Team which is a positive development opportunity. The focus on rent arrears activity has continued to be a weekly priority task for the team and they will continue to work with all our tenants offering support, advice and assistance. Such assistance includes referrals for money and debt advice, benefit health checks, completion of income and expenditure to help set up a sustainable payment plan and where appropriate, assist with applications for Discretionary Housing Payments.

During Quarter 2, officers have continued to work closely with colleagues in Building Services, engaging with tenants to ensure that health and safety work has been completed and all necessary compliance work is undertaken in tenancies to ensure that these meet legislative requirements. As a result we have identified a number of tenants requiring support.

Officers have been working to support a number of tenants in the area alongside colleagues from other service areas and agencies, dealing with a range of tenancy management issues and providing assistance and support to help tenants sustain their tenancies. This can range from being involved in complex care management cases alongside colleagues in social policy to being involved in assisting to resolve neighbour disputes with Police Scotland and Safer Neighbourhood Team colleagues.

### D4. Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing

There is ongoing general capital activity in all areas such as assisted decoration scheme, fencing, rhones etc. In this Ward in respect of new build completions :-

#### WLC completions - 216

#### RSL completions - 134

RSL New Build Activity	Site	No of units	Site Start	No. of Houses Handed Over	Site Completion
Cairn Housing Association	Longridge Road	52	Jan 22	0	TBC

## Refurbishment & Investment

Street	Contract	Site Start	Update
Almond View, Cousland Terrace/Crescent	Roof and Roughcast	September 2022	2 year programme due to commence September 2022
The Loch Scheme	Structural roof works: Stairs and balcony repairs: Insulation: render	2021	Council's revised scheme of assistance. Two half blocks to be completed this year, 99% complete
Glebe Road, Union Road, Armada Road, Manse Avenue, Griffith Drive, Dick Gardens	Roofs & Roughcast to all: Heating upgrades and chimney removal	2018	Year 5 of the programme which is progressing well with a completion date of March 2023.

### D5. Tenant Participation

Tenant Participation continued throughout the quarter via digital methods and seen face to face meetings monthly. The customer experience team and tenant participation team have worked together to ensure the best possible service is delivered to our tenants. They have jointly implemented improvements and communication. Such as:

#### Tenants Panel

Tenant members continued to take part in monthly digital meetings with senior managers and the Head of Service, discussing service improvements and developments and receiving updates from each service area. They have been provided with the HRA and Capital Overview and have been involved in performance scrutiny over the quarter.

#### Capital & Repairs Working Group (CaRs)

Managers from Building Services and the Housing, Strategy & Development Team met with tenant members to discuss major improvement works, update them on the various projects being carried out and share benchmark information. These meetings ensure that tenants' views are heard and offer another scrutinising service delivery method.

#### Tenant Participation Development Working Group (TPDWG)

Members meet to ensure Tenant Participation stays high on the services agenda, looking at ways of engaging with more tenants. This group have worked with the Tenant Participation Team to review and agree the roles and remit of each working group. They have worked hard to produce a new 5 year Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy. The TPDWG completed their work on the animated video to increase engagement. This has now been launched and widely recognised by TPAS and TIS. This was an excellent piece of work.

### Editorial Panel

This quarter the members have been involved in the collation of the Winter edition of Tenants News. The members continue to review the tenant's handbook online to ensure it is still relevant and current.

### TP Facebook Group

The Tenant Participation team continue to see a steady rise in the number of tenants engaging with Facebook posts. The members have recently reviewed what content should be shared on the Facebook page and how the 397 members would like to be involved in Tenant Participation. These discussions have resulted in implementing the tenant's talk scheme, where tenants become experts on our social media platforms. We share our surveys in digital form on the Facebook page for tenants to complete. We will soon be investigating how we can implement focus groups using the Facebook group.

## D6. Safer Neighbourhood Council Officer Ward Information

The Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) officers continue to work across the nine multi member ward areas as an integral part of the Community Safety Unit, as part of their working remit to reduce noise and antisocial behaviour (ASB). Partnership working involves the local housing team, council officer within the SNT and officers from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service all working together to tackle antisocial behaviour. When necessary, the partners will liaise with voluntary organisations including West Lothian Youth Action Project, mental health advisory workers and private landlords in order to reduce antisocial behaviour.

### Whitburn and Blackburn Ward Data

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

<i>Cases and Incidents</i>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>
Incidents reported to SNT	49	41	40	45	49	29
Number of new cases	1	4	1	7	4	3
Number of active cases	5	7	9	12	10	11
Number of resolved cases	2	0	3	1	4	4

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

<b>Incident Categories</b>	<i>Apr</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>Jun</i>	<i>Jul</i>	<i>Aug</i>	<i>Sep</i>
ASB Complaint	14	16	27	27	31	14
ASB Noise Complaint	29	19	10	7	12	11
Dog Barking	1	2	0	0	1	0
ENV Health Complaint	0	1	0	0	1	0
Non ASB Noise Complaint	5	3	2	0	0	0
SST Section 3 Tenancy Management	14	16	27	1	2	3
Unlicensed HMO	0	0	1	0	0	0

Youth Disorder	0	0	0	3	0	1
Unauthorised Encampment	0	0	0	7	2	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	49	41	40	45	49	29

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

ASBO	<i><b>Q1</b></i>	<i><b>Q2</b></i>
Number of ASBO's current	<i><b>1</b></i>	<i><b>1</b></i>
All of West Lothian	<i><b>7 plus 1 Interim</b></i>	<i><b>8 plus 1 Interim</b></i>
Age of perpetrator	<i><b>30</b></i>	<i><b>30</b></i>

### West Lothian Ward Data

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

West Lothian	<i><b>Apr</b></i>	<i><b>May</b></i>	<i><b>Jun</b></i>	<i><b>Jul</b></i>	<i><b>Aug</b></i>	<i><b>Sep</b></i>
Total Number of Active Cases	45	47	51	61	51	58
Total Number of Incidents	309	339	323	326	333	229

### Examples of SNT work during Quarter 2

Partnership working is essential to reaching outcomes. **Joint Visits** with Housing Operations, Social Policy, Police and SRFS have taken place across the Ward. There have been **multi- agency discussions** which have taken place in tackling issues in relation to vulnerable adults. Cases are complex due to adult protection concerns. Staff worked with Housing Officers and Police on potential hate crime. **1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stage Warnings** were issued to residents for loud music, noise nuisance, disturbance and threats. These warnings could be issued as there was evidence to do so. Officers continue to monitor cases. **Letter drops** are also actively used to assist SNT gather further information from neighbourhoods when officers have difficulty in obtaining independent corroboration and seek witnesses to come forward with information. A **Notice to Quit** was issued by a landowner for an illegal encampment.

## E. CONCLUSION

The void and let turnover remain steady and officers continue to provide advice and assistance to customers on their housing options. The team continue to provide support and assistance to new tenants moving into their tenancies both in mainstream and temporary accommodation.

Income management continues to be one of our main focuses of work to ensure customers are supported and that officers maintain good income collection. Officers within the overall service have been continuing work engaging with customers through tenant participation and capital programme works. Officers within the team have supported colleagues in Building Services ensuring that compliance work is completed within our tenancies. Joint working has continued with police colleagues and wider community safety partners in dealing with issues of anti-social behaviour.



**F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

None

Contact Person: Gary Stoddart, Housing Manager,  
Housing, Customer and Building Services

Email; [gary.stoddart@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:gary.stoddart@westlothian.gov.uk)

Tel: 07776164538

**Julie Whitelaw**

**Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services**

**5<sup>th</sup> December 2022**



DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **WHITBURN & BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE**

#### **REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise members of the recent activity of the NETs Land & Countryside Services' teams for the period 1 August 2022 – 31 October 2022.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

The Local Area Committee is asked to:

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

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	In line with available revenue and capital budgets
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	None
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	None

**D1 TERMS OF REPORT**

The report covers the activity for the period 1 August 2022 – 31 October 2022.

**D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works**

The grass cutting team for the ward are on cycle 11 and due to the time of the year and wet weather will not be able to start the 12th cut. This will be one short of the Service Level Agreement of 12 cuts. All grass areas that required a one-off cut has been completed.

It has been a difficult year for our weed management squads and as stated in previous reports we are currently running behind due to weather conditions throughout the year, and may not complete the second weed spray of our soft landscaping areas.

Our winter works programme of open space hedge cutting and shrub bed maintenance started in late October.

Enquiries are being dealt with on a daily basis.

**Grounds Maintenance Enquiries**

In total there were 31 grounds maintenance related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Ball Game Enquiries	0	1
Bench or Seat Enquiries	1	0
Complaint Grounds Maintenance	3	0
Fencing Enquiries	1	2
Grass Cutting Enquiries	5	2
Grass Cutting Missed Not Cut	3	3
Ground Ownership Enquiries	0	1
Grounds Property Vandalised	3	1
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	3	1
Public Park Enquiries	2	0
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	5	7
Shrub/ Vegetation Sight Lines	0	1
Sports Facility Enquiries	0	2
Weeds General Enquiries	3	2
Weeds on Paths or Roads	2	2
Total	31	25

**D3 Garden Maintenance Routine Works**

The Garden Maintenance Scheme grass cutting was completed and have met the Service Level Agreement of 11 grass cuts. Garden Maintenance hedge cutting will commence in early October and weather permitting will be completed by the end of October.

## Garden Maintenance Enquiries

In total there were 43 garden maintenance related enquiries received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Complaint Garden Maintenance	2	1
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	13	9
Garden Maintenance Grass Not Cut	20	22
Garden Maintenance Hedge Cutting	4	1
Garden Maintenance Standard of Cut	4	3
Total	43	36

## D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

Staff continue to carry out routine works of emptying street litter/ dog waste bins, litter picking and sweeping of footpaths and road channels while dealing with enquiries as they arise.

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

The NETs team continue to deal with fly tipping enquiries and removing fly tipping from Council ground.

The contract for carrying out a deep clean of Whitburn Town Centre that was approved through the Covid recovery funds within the Ward was completed in August.

We have now received the nine replacement compact sweepers giving us one per Ward.

## Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 117 cleaner communities related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Dead Animals	7	3
Dog Bin Overflowing	0	1
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	2	4
Dog Fouling on Paths Roads	9	8
Fly Tipping Dumping	52	46
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	1	4
Graffiti Non Offensive	2	1
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	4	5
Litter Bin Burnt Damaged	4	7
Litter Bin New Request for Bin	1	2
Litter General Enquiries	3	5
Litter Paths Road Verges	9	3
Needles Syringes Abandoned	0	1
Street Sweeping Enquiries	4	5
Trolleys Abandoned/Dumped	0	2
Vehicle Abandoned	19	39
Total	117	136

**Fly Tipping Enquiries (Full Year)**

	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Illegal Fly Tipping/Dumping	251	261	316	375	276

**Enforcement Community Action**

Officers continue to deal with enquiries relating to fly tipping, littering, dog fouling, abandoned vehicles and general enquiries. There have been 52 enquiries in relation to fly tipping for the period compared to 46 for the same period in 2021.

In dealing with abandoned vehicles, Officers have gained compliance from vehicle owners with said vehicles getting removed from public highways or getting taxed in most cases. Where appropriate, requests have been sent to WLC contractors for removal.

Throughout West Lothian, officers continue to engage with volunteering groups, attend regeneration group meetings and assist where required.

There was one (1) Fixed Penalty Notices issued in Ward 7 for the period of 1 August 2022 – 31 October 2022. For the same period in 2021, there was two (2) Fixed Penalty Notice issued within the Ward.

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

**Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 August 2022 – 31 October 2022**

*Please note the table below for 2022 covers the period of strike action when any Fly-tipping would have been taken direct to the contractors site.*

Wards	Number of Fly Tipping Enquiries	% of enquiries relating to Ward	Total Tonnage all wards	Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	Contractor removal of Fly Tipping	Removal of Asbestos
1	11	2.20	69.9	£999.19		
2	55	10.98	69.9	£4,995.94		
3	74	14.77	69.9	£6,721.81		
4	102	20.36	69.9	£9,265.20		
5	106	21.16	69.9	£9,628.54		
6	22	4.39	69.9	£1,998.38		
7	52	10.38	69.9	£4,723.43		
8	48	9.58	69.9	£4,360.09		
9	31	6.19	69.9	£2,815.89		
Total	501			£45,508.47		

### Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 August 2021 – 31 October 2021

Wards	Number of Fly Tipping Enquiries	% of enquiries relating to Ward	Total Tonnage all wards	Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	Contractor removal of Fly Tipping	Removal of Asbestos
1	20	4.43	60.84	£1,735.57		
2	53	11.47	60.84	£4,599.27		
3	64	13.85	60.84	£5,553.83		
4	78	16.88	60.84	£6,768.73		
5	129	27.92	60.84	£11,194.45		
6	38	8.23	60.84	£3,297.59		
7	46	9.96	60.84	£3,991.82		
8	24	5.19	60.84	£2,082.69		
9	10	2.16	60.84	£867.79		
Total	462			£40,091.74		

## D5 Parks and Woodland

### Tree & Woodland Enquiries

In total 30 Parks and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Tree Advice or Consultations	2	4
Tree Affecting Public Utility	0	2
Tree Blocking Light	1	1
Tree Branches Overhanging	11	3
Tree Broken/Damaged or Dead	1	0
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	2	1
Tree Enquiries General	13	3
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	0	1
Total	30	15

	2022	2021
Access Rights Way Core Paths	1	0
Complaint Country Parks/ Trees	1	0
Country Park General Enquiries	1	1
Ranger Service Polkemmet	2	2
Total	5	3

### Tree and Woodland Management

#### Ash Dieback Disease

Observations have shown that the decline in ash trees due to this disease has not been as rapid as seen over the previous two much wetter years. However, a repeat survey of some of the areas of trees previously looked at showed the following: -

- 4% showed an improvement
- 71% had the same condition score
- 25% were worse

A condition survey of all the ash trees along the road network managed by WLC, started two years ago, has been completed and once the results have been compiled an update will be published on the Ash Dieback section of the website [Ash Dieback Disease - West Lothian Council](#).

One of the Tree Inspectors, Wayne Murphy, has been appointed to the new post of Ash Dieback Officer. It is proposed that he will be supported by a new Technical Officer in due course and that the Tree & Woodland Team will be strengthened with the appointment of two apprentices.

Preparations are being made to undertake further remedial work along roads and in well-used public open spaces over Winter 2022-23. This will be followed by replanting in suitable locations.

### **Ranger Service Update**

No. Rights Of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	20.5
No. Volunteer hours	164

The six new Assistant Rangers, funded by NatureScot's Better Places Fund 3, have been working with the Ranger team since the start of July. Their remit is to raise awareness of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SOAC), providing information and advice to visitors across West Lothian. They do this through patrols of 'hotspot' areas, running events, volunteering sessions and delivering school lessons. Their contracts end on 31 October 2022. From August - October, they patrolled a total of 260km, with around 150 hours spent patrolling hotspot areas. Several patrols were carried out of Polkemmet Country Park, and Blaeberryhill Park, where many bags of glass and rubbish have been removed.

The Assistant Rangers have started delivering Scottish Outdoor Access Code lessons to P5/6/7 classes and have visited Croftmalloch, Whitdale and Polkemmet Primary Schools, delivering a total of seven lessons to students.

The Assistant Rangers held a pop-up event near the Whitburn Community Garden, in partnership with Whitburn Community Development Trust. They helped visitors learn about invertebrates, and built a bug hotel in the garden. Following this, they held a Bioblitz event in Blaeberryhill Park, where visitors helped to record different species and learn identification skills.

One of the Wild Wednesday events was held in Polkemmet Country Park, in partnership with RSPB, Forest and Land Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Governments' Road Safety Campaign featuring Ziggy the robot. The event received good reception from visitors and partner organisations.

The monthly Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) sessions continue to be popular with regular volunteers.

The Ranger Service continue to assist different organisations wishing to run events across West Lothian and within the Country Parks, including running clubs, filming crews and orienteering events.

### **Access**

The Ranger Service continues to review all West Lothian planning applications for access implications, and submit comments to Planning Services.



The Access Ranger post has been filled, and the Ranger team have given a presentation on ongoing access issues and the format for submitting planning comments. Any access enquiries should continue to be reported through the 'Report it > Core Paths & Rights of Way' section on the Council's website.

The Ranger Service received no new access enquiries during this period.

### **Polkemmet Country Park**

The Ranger Service received an enquiry from Employee Volunteering about organising for another corporate group to help volunteer in Polkemmet. Following a site meeting, the Rangers then facilitated a volunteer session for 24 students and a group leader in the Park, where they spent the day helping to remove non-native invasive plant species Rhododendron and Japanese knotweed from the bank sides along the path routes.

The Ranger Service held an evening Friends of Polkemmet meeting to discuss future tasks, volunteer session days and timings and events for 2023. Following Covid, the Friends of Polkemmet volunteer sessions have restarted, but numbers have been lower than pre-Covid. As a trial, sessions have been moved from a Sunday to a Saturday, straight after Park Run, which will hopefully help to boost volunteer numbers. The first session will be held on Saturday 19 November from 11am-12pm.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

Government Consultations - Officers compiled and submitted a council response to the Scottish Government's Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) consultation in September. The SBS will be a new 10-year national strategy for biodiversity, influencing statutory nature restoration targets set out in the new Natural Environment Bill. The council response included a detailed analysis of the draft document, identified shortcomings and proposed amendments for the final strategy. The response was agreed at the WLC Environment and Sustainability PDSP and Council Executive.

Ecology and Biodiversity Officers are actively engaged in the co-design process for Nature Networks and 30 x 30 with NatureScot. These are two key mechanisms for meeting agreed international biodiversity targets. Following several rounds of workshops, NatureScot will deliver a draft framework to be consulted on next spring, and guidance published in June 2023. We plan to observe Nature Networks and 30x30 guidance in the forthcoming West Lothian LBAP (Local Biodiversity Action Plan).

Planning - Officers continue to provide input to planning applications, to ensure that legislation for the protection of wildlife, and policies and processes to safeguard the environment are followed. This ranges from written responses, to meetings with Planning officers and developers to discuss particular concerns (e.g. with regard to protected species). This type of proactive working with developers and the Planning team should encourage better results for local environments and wildlife in future applications. For the reporting period, the team received 257 planning applications for ecological comments, of which 17 were specific to Whitburn and Blackburn.

Community Choices - Officers have been working on a grassland management plan for grounds maintenance. The plan seeks to improve the diversity of habitats in settlements and to enhance nature networks across the area, through changed land management including relaxed grass cutting, in appropriate areas voted on by communities.

WLC Climate Emergency Fund projects - Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) – a new LBAP is being created by officers. Currently, consultants are compiling a map of habitats across the whole of West Lothian and assessing their condition. Following this, the benefits provided by the habitats will be calculated - specifically benefits provided by the council's natural assets. This information will guide how habitats should be managed and enhanced through the LBAP, in order to ensure viable nature networks across the area. An LBAP partnership will be set up with other land owners/managers in West Lothian to work together on this joint plan.

#### Nature Restoration Fund projects

- Raingardens – these are areas in parks and open spaces that naturally collect water, where bog gardens are created to enhance biodiversity and slow the flow of water from the park drainage into the wider drainage system.
- Bog restoration - Pottishaw Moss. Though not in WLC ownership, officers have continued to liaise with the land owners for some restoration works to be carried out. Easter Inch Moss - officers now have a scope of approach for the restoration project and are in the process of engaging contractors.
- Habitat monitoring – Buglife was employed to organise and lead urban wildflower meadow and freshwater workshops for the public over the summer of 2022. They also assessed the condition of all the B-Lines wildflower meadows created in the last two -three years and compiled a report to aid in the management of these meadows as they develop.

## D6 Open Space and Cemeteries

### Open Space Capital Programme

Polkemmet Country Park Play Area, Whitburn. Upgrade of play area pending. The council intend to remove two large expired items (tyre swing and cone climber), and install toddler and inclusive items in their place. This will include interactive and sensory items, and items suitable for those in wheelchairs. The associated footpath network will be improved to facilitate wheeled access. Construction is anticipated to take place Spring 2023.

KGV Whitburn MUGA. Works pending to extend and resurface the ball court into a 3G 7-a-side pitch. Works anticipated to take place in 2023. Planning permission has been submitted and due for a response in December.

Redmill Park, East Whitburn, canopy installation. WLC is assisting in delivery of a community project via a Town Centre Funding application. The project is to install a steel canopy over existing gabion seating. This will provide shelter and enhance the seating feature for park users. Works anticipated to take place between Autumn 2022 – Spring 2023.

### Open Space Enquiries

There were three Open Space enquiries for this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Childrens Play Enquiries	3	0
Glass or Litter in Play Areas	0	1
Skateboarding Enquiries	0	1
Total	2	2

## Cemeteries Routine Works

### Whitburn Cemeteries

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

### Cemeteries Enquiries

There were 109 Cemeteries enquiries for this reporting period.

	2022	2021
Bench Donations	0	1
Cemeteries General Enquiries	14	5
Cemetery Property Vandalised	0	1
Complaint Cemeteries & Burials	0	1
Lair Enquiries	1	9
Lair Sunken or Uneven	2	4
Memorial/ Headstone Works	29	38
New Interment Booking	46	42
Purchase of Interment Lair	17	13
Total	109	114

## E. CONCLUSION

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

The Open Space Capital Programme is progressing as scheduled.

## F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Open Space Strategy

Capital Programme

Appendices/Attachments: None

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**Jim Jack**  
**Head of Operational Services**  
**05 December 2022**



DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **ANTI-POVERTY SERVICE UPDATE**

### **REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES**

#### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of the report is to inform the Local Area Committee of the work undertaken by the Anti-Poverty Service from April 2021 to March 2022.

#### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee notes:

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

#### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I</b>	<b>Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership
<b>II</b>	<b>Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None.
<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	The activity contained in the report contributes to service KPIs.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	<p>We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities.</p> <p>We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.</p> <p>We have tackled significant inequalities in West Lothian society.</p>

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

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

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

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

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

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

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

### **D.2 Key Highlights 2021/22**

Over the past year the service has undertaken the following activities:

- Supported customers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery period using pro-active and reactive measures and successfully adapting to challenges and restrictions ensuring all customers who required support

implemented this.

- Digitalisation of areas of the service, improving efficiencies and offering more choice to customers at a time which suits them. This has included online forms, self-help tools, video conferencing software and ask the advisor sessions on Facebook adding a new service delivery channel and increasing accessibility to the service.
- Developed and implemented new software to improve accessibility and processing timescales for Blue Badges.
- Continued development of the FORT referral and tracking system to allow internal and external services and organisations to easily refer customers ensuring they receive the support required at the earliest point. 710 users across 88 agencies are currently using the system which resulted in 4998 referrals being received during 2021/22.
- Introduced automation to Education Benefits for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants reducing the FTE required by one. This has allowed resources to be diverted to other areas of pressured work such as Crisis Grants.
- Supported 855 households experiencing fuel poverty by paying £60,025 in grants and issuing 1,783 in fuel vouchers worth £78,171.
- Offered holistic support and advice to customers looking to access the Foodbank. In total 3,768 Foodbank vouchers were issued by the service. The food insecurity project has worked with 77 customers experiencing persistent food insecurity to secure extra income of £119,190.
- Assumed Responsibility for the Under 22 Young Scot Travel scheme, with around 45% of all young people in West Lothian entitlement to the scheme now using it successfully. Efforts to increase take up will continue throughout this financial year and is helped by the delayed Scottish Government campaign that went live on 27 September 22.
- Provided additional support to 359 individuals through the Feeling the Pinch Fund amounting to £79,988.
- The service recorded the third best Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction performance in Scotland with new housing benefit claims being processed on average within 13 days against a Scottish average of 18 days.
- Delivered Winter Support Funding of £633,285 to 4,691 Council Tax Reduction recipients with additional vulnerabilities to assist with the additional costs experienced over the winter period.
- Provided direct financial support to Ukrainian refugees and their hosts with £39,950 paid directly to help support 232 individuals and £61,041 in “Thank You” payments made to 50 families hosting Ukrainian refugees.
- Payment of Scottish Governments Low income Pandemic payment of £130 to approximately 16,000 eligible households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction or qualifying Council Tax exemption.

The Anti-Poverty Service continues to embed services into the local community and to support customers to help mitigate poverty, to enable and empower people and work collaboratively with partners to maximise the benefits of our service at a customer’s time of need.

### **D.3 Local Provision**

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

The Advice Shop has helped 2,124 customers to manage their money and to resolve benefit problems within the Whitburn and Blackburn ward. This resulted

25,952 additional enquiries and contacts from these customers. As a result, customers have a better understanding of their situation and options available to them. Feedback shows this has a positive impact on individuals by increasing knowledge and understanding and ultimately improving the customer journey and empowering customers.

The Advice Shop generated £4,033,838 in extra income and successfully managed £717,042 in debt within the Whitburn and Blackburn ward.

#### **D.4 Work delivered by team within the Anti-Poverty Service**

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

##### **Advice Shop**

In 2021/22 The Advice Shop has supported 13,433 individuals resulting in 155,374 additional enquiries and contacts from these customers, covering money and debt, energy, housing and welfare benefits. This is a 54% increase compared to 2020/21 figure for contacts and enquiries.

The Advice Shop generated £28,126,573 in extra income and successfully managed £1,325,572 in debt.

109 appeals were lodged to help customers appeal a DWP benefit decision. 84% of appeals had their decisions overturned. This is a 43% decrease in the number of appeals compared to the previous year.

1,800 customers were provided energy advice to help improve household income and savings. This is a 5% increase from the previous year and amounted to £480,439. 13% of these customers were aged 60 years and over.

A range of targeted support and campaigns have been delivered over the period which include increasing uptake in new Social Security Scotland payments and, help and advice relating to energy. Advisors were able to support customers to engage with charities and third sector organisations which have received additional, one-off funding to help the most vulnerable as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Service delivery continued to adjust throughout the pandemic. Further Implementation of new digital outreach sessions and re-introduction of face to face appointments have been well received by customers and staff.

Improved processes and system digitalisation has also meant that we have managed to continue to fully support customers. This includes the benefit check and budgeting calculator which is freely available to customers. Self-help guides and information continues to be developed and publicised by the service which information such as the West Lothian Food Map.

##### **Benefits**

In 2021/22, 1,350 Housing Benefit applications have been received and 21,098 change of circumstance notifications. Despite the demand, performance remains high and within the target, new housing benefit claims were processed within 13 days against a Scottish average of 18 days. Change of circumstances within 3 days



against a Scottish average of 5 days.

There were 2,917 applications received for Council Tax Reduction and 31,959 change of circumstance notifications. Again, despite the demand performance remains within the target with new Council Tax Reduction claims processed within 13 days and change in circumstances within 5 days.

### **Scottish Welfare Fund**

In 2021/22 there continued to be a significant number of Crisis Grant applications received. There were 12,284 Crisis Grant applications received between 01 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, compared to 12,789 for the same period in 2020/21. The total financial support provided via Crisis Grants for this period in 2021/22 was £1,025,212 compared to 2020/21 is £1,022,126. Although the number of applications are slightly down in the last financial year compared to the previous year, the amount paid out on Crisis Grants was marginally higher. This is because the amount paid in each grant was higher. Households continue to struggle with household bills given the current cost of living crisis and it is expected that as we move into the winter months, the demand for Crisis Grants will increase.

2866 Community Care Grant applications were received during the same period which resulted in £1,212,699 in Community Care Grant payments.

### **Self-Isolation Grant**

This grant continued during the 2021/22 financial year but went through a number of changes by Scottish Government in relation to qualifying criteria. During this year, those that qualified received a £500 payment if they are working, unable to work from home during self-isolation and lost income as a result. Individuals also have to be in receipt of a qualifying benefit. In 2021/22 6002 applications were received and 3008 individuals were awarded a grant. The total paid was £1,504,000.

The grant is due to end on 31 October 22 however we await final confirmation from Scottish Government. We are now only receiving a few applications for this grant on a weekly basis. The amount of the award also changed in May 2022 from £500 to £225.

### **School Clothing Grants/Meals**

Education Grants are reported in academic years running from August to June the following year. In the Academic Year 2021/22, over 4,913 children were awarded free school meals and school clothing grants were awarded to 7,468 pupils. From August 2021, all children from P1 to P4 were awarded Universal Entitlement to Free School Meals, this increase to include P5 from January 22.

Children eligible for Free School Meals or living in households with low income, have also benefited from financial support during the school holidays. In the Academic Year, including the summer of 2021, a total of £1,207,254 was paid to over 5,700 children. This was paid to parents to help with the purchase of food during school holidays periods.

### **Discretionary Housing Payments**

In 2021/22 the service has made 6,196 awards for discretionary housing payments amounting to £3,410,786.

1126 awards amounting to £492,204 were awarded for financial hardship and 5,070 awards amounting to £2,918,581 for under occupancy.

### **Bridging Payments**

Scottish Government Bridging payments replaced the previous Family Pandemic Payment and were paid during the 2021/22 Academic Year and continue to be paid until the end of this calendar year. We await information from Scottish Government as to whether these will continue however given the payment is a compensation payment for the late roll out of the Child Payment which is due for roll out at the beginning of 2023, it is unlikely that these will continue. The payment is made to all children who qualify for Free School Meals because they live in a low-income household, or any child entitlement to Universal Entitlement to School Meals if they live in a low-income household. During 2021/22, the October 21 and December 21 payment was £160, however the payment changed and in April 22 and June 22, the payment reduced to £130. Over the Academic Year 2021/22 £3,103,400 was paid to over 5,500 children.

## **D.5 Priorities 2022/23**

The Anti-Poverty Service has identified the following priorities for development over the 2022/23 year, which are:

- Continuing to work with partners and customers to assist in the recovery from the Covid 19-Pandemic which includes targeted advice and support.
- Providing advice and support to customers and partners to help mitigate the effects of the increased cost of living crisis which includes in work poverty.
- Increasing awareness, understanding and knowledge of support available in relation to poverty through arranged events, training and information sharing channels such as social media.
- Providing face to face support in community settings such as Community Hubs, Health Care Settings and Partnership Centres.
- Supporting customers affected by debt through Improving the Debt Journey to improve understand and maximise tailored support for long term benefits.
- Supporting the roll out of the Child Disability and Adult Disability Payment.
- Providing focused support and advice to those affected by addictions with multiple issues and/or a history of none engagement with support services.
- Providing targeted support to customers who have exhausted Foodbank vouchers.
- Retaining Scottish National Standards for Information Advice Providers.
- Making meal payments during school holiday periods with payments already made in October 2022 amounting to £127,995
- Payment of the Scottish Government Bridging Payment until the end of the 2022 calendar year of £130 per child.
- Continuing to support the Under 22 travel scheme for all those with a Young Scot card by promoting the scheme in schools; businesses and on our own website and social media pages.
- Awarding an additional £80 clothing grant to all qualifying children as at January 2023. This is estimated to benefit around 6000 children
- Awarding a £20 fuel payment to all Crisis Grant recipients who apply and are awarded a Crisis Grant that includes a fuel request from 1 October 2022. There is currently a budget of £44,000 for this scheme
- Supporting Ukrainian Refugees to access all available advice and support including financial, housing, debt, energy, training and employment.
- Increasing uptake of the Council Tax Reduction scheme
- Delivering further Winter Support Fund payment of £80 to 4,242 Council Tax

Reduction claimants with additional vulnerabilities to support them with additional costs over the winter period.

**E. CONCLUSION**

The report summarises the work of the Anti-Poverty service in the Whitburn and Blackburn ward area and provide an overview of the service as a whole. The Local Area Committee is asked to note the contents of the report. It is the intention to report on activity in the ward area on an annual basis.

**F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

None.

Appendices/Attachments: None.

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Donald Forrest

**Head of Finance and Property Services**

Date of meeting: 05<sup>th</sup> December 2022



DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE**

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

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to update members on regeneration activity within the ward.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that members note the updates on:

1. regeneration activity in both Blackburn and Whitburn including recent engagement undertaken around locality planning and the West Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP);
2. Whitburn town centre matters including the planned heritage trail for the town;
3. progress with the opening of Whitburn Partnership Centre including the public art installation;
4. progress with establishing a management committee for the community wing in Greenrigg Primary School; and
5. Business Gateway and access2employment activity.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	Community regeneration reinforces the council's commitment to community planning at a local level.  Local authorities have a statutory requirement for developing locality plans for targeted communities in their area. Regeneration Plans fit this requirement for West Lothian.  The projects set out do not require a strategic environmental assessment. The projects to different degrees seek to address health and

equality issues.

<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	None.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	Performance indicators relating to the activity within the plans are captured within the set of Regeneration key performance indicators.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We are better educated and have access to increased and better-quality learning and employment opportunities.</li> <li>- We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities.</li> <li>- We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.</li> <li>- We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.</li> </ul>
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	<p>The activities set out are funded from existing budgets and relevant external sources but also Town Centre Fund budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2019/20: £310,131 allocated to ward.</li> <li>- 2020/21: £110,845 allocated to ward.</li> <li>- 2022/23: £82,822 allocated to ward.</li> </ul>
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	Annual updates on regeneration plans will be presented to the Community planning Partnership.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	None.

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D1 Background**

The report updates the committee on the work of the Community Wealth Building Team and its partners to support communities in the Whitburn and Blackburn ward with a particular focus on the towns of Whitburn and Blackburn. These are two of 13 areas covered by the local plans required by the Scottish Government as part of their Community Empowerment approach and reported through the Community Planning Partnership.

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

### **D2 Community Connections**

Community Connections is a new initiative that is being rolled out in 13 locations in West Lothian. The first two pilot drop-ins were in West Calder and Linlithgow with phase two currently being rolled out in Blackburn and Livingston North.

The service aims to provide support to individual on numerous issues including advice on benefits, employment, housing, health etc. The project was identified through the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and has input from a range

of partners and services. The location for Blackburn's drop-in has been identified at Blackburn Partnership Centre.

The initiative was launched in Blackburn on 15 November and will be delivered every Tuesday from Blackburn Partnership Centre.

Phase four will see a drop-in service located in Whitburn with engagement with local organisations and group starting soon to ensure a collaborative approach to working.

### **D3 Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Local Priorities updates**

The Community Wealth Building Team has been leading on engagement within all of the regeneration areas for the purposes of both the LOIP and local plans.

Questions were designed that sought the views and opinions on the LOIP 'Pillars'. These Pillars are effectively the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership's priorities and are as follows:

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

As part of the first phase of this, community engagement activities were undertaken in Whitburn and Blackburn during the week commencing 26 September. This involved using visual engagement tools in prominent locations in these places, with officers speaking to local groups and organisations along with on street discussions with local residents. Health staff from the respective health centres, and young people via some primary schools in both areas, were also engaged with.

The data from these exercises, in line with the other areas which were part of the first phase, is still to be analysed. The demographics of those who participated in the engagement so far has identified which remaining groups/ sections of the community within both areas require to be engaged, for which subsequent activities will be arranged.

However, there are some emerging preliminary issues identified in both areas. In both Whitburn and Blackburn there is recognition around the impact that the cost of living crisis is having and will have locally. In Whitburn, mental health has also emerged as a particular issue, identified from health professionals, staff from both council and health facilities in the town, and volunteers from Whitburn CDT. In Blackburn, the preliminary findings are mirroring the existing priorities with many respondents reporting concerns regarding poverty, mental health and high substance misuse.

### **D4 West Lothian 2028 – Your Council, Your Say**

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

In the ward this has included engagement in Whitburn and Blackburn.

## **D5 Blackburn Updates**

### **D5.1 Blackburn Future Group (BFG)**

The next BFG meeting will take place on 6 December. The meeting will hear the updates from the subgroups who meet regular throughout the year and will also look at the priorities for the Blackburn Future Plan with discussion on the emerging priorities identified from the engagement carried out in the autumn. The current priorities that were identified through engagement with the community, local worker knowledge and using statistical data from the Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) are: poverty, health and wellbeing; care, maintenance and feeling safe; health facilities and economic growth; and recreation, learning and youth provision.

Engagement carried out by Architecture and Design Scotland under the Climate Action Towns project will also be fed into the findings from the recent LOIP engagement (see D3). This will help by including a climate action 'lens' onto the findings and strengthens potential actions linking into one of the Local Outcome Improvement Plans pillars on Creating Net Zero Carbon Communities. All of the data will be collated to form a new and updated action plan for the Blackburn Future Plan. To add value to the face to face and group engagement, an online survey will be rolled out in early 2023 to capture further views and thoughts from the community. By offering an online tool, we are able to increase the demographics of those in the area and incorporate more participants and increase response rates.

### **D5.2 Blackburn Bonfire Night Action Group (BBNAG)**

The BBNAG once again met with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour (ASB) over the bonfire season. The group continued the work carried out in previous years with the promotion of campaigns including Fearless and awareness raising sessions within the community. An event was delivered on 29 October to provide information and diversionary activities with a range of partners and agencies supporting. A free BBQ was provided which attracted people into the Partnership Centre to partake in activities and talk to the agencies present. Unlike previous years, the numbers were lower than expected. This could have been due to clashing with other events taking place and inclement weather. The BBNAG will commence meetings again in August next year.

### **D5.3 Food Insecurity Group (FIG)**

An action from the Blackburn Futures Plan was the establishment of a food pantry. During the Covid pandemic and lock-down, a temporary food pantry was set up in partnership with Community Action Blackburn (CAB), Blackburn family Centre, Youth Action Project and Blackburn United Community Sports Club. This was well attended in the community with it supporting a number of people and families. Due to the lockdown ending and organisations/activities returning back to delivery, the food pantry had to stop until a new venue was found. The Food Insecurity Group (FIG) was established and initiated the project again. On 10 November, the Community Shop, Waste Not Want Not opened up for its first session. The shop is being delivered from Blackburn Partnership Centre every Thursday between 4 - 5.30pm. People attending join the membership scheme that costs £3, with their first bag of food being free, subsequent visits are then £3 a bag. Weeks 1 and 2 will provide ambient goods, weeks 3 and 4 will see bread and rolls introduced with weeks 5 and 6 seeing fresh fruit and vegetables included. During this initial 6-week period, service users will be consulted to establish if they would like an option of



fresh meat to be added with an additional cost being put in place if meat is purchased. This new initiative is supported by CAB, Hopefield Nursery and the Food Network.

#### **D5.4 Merger of Groups**

Both the Blackburn Drug and Alcohol Action Group and the Health and Wellbeing group have merged together in order to condense meetings, reducing the pressure on organisations and services attending. The first joined up meeting was held on 16 November and was well attended by a range of partners who all supported the merger of the two groups. The new group, who are currently looking a new name, are looking at an action plan that will support the priorities identified within the Blackburn Future Plan and the LOIP. The first action that was agreed at the meeting was the delivery of an awareness session on 19 December incorporating a range of services to provide information to the community on the cost of living, reducing stigma around a number of issues and providing information on range of topics including safety advice on plug usage and deep fat fryers.

#### **D6 Whitburn Updates**

##### **D6.1 Whitburn Community Development Trust (WCDT)**

###### Whitburn Community Fridge

Updates on the community fridge include the following:

- WCDT now has around 750 members registered for the Community Fridge. The service has supported 1,208 adults and 688 children.
- WCDT's Brunch Club is opening to take on new service users though there are limited spaces available.
- They are looking to recruit volunteers for the Fridge, particularly those who can drive to help support this and other services.
- A 'bake-along' course was recently delivered and well received. WCDT are looking to deliver another cook-along course.
- Community Fridge staff have observed a reduction in surplus food available from supermarkets and from the Food Network, and considering responses to this.

###### Community Garden

Updates on the community garden include the following:

- The garden has been in use for growing food. Staff and volunteers have been harvesting some of the produce for use within the Community Fridge. This will be continuous.
- More raised beds have been built in the garden ready for use in 2023.
- The 'Change Grow Life' recovery group has had a couple of sessions within the garden.
- WCDT is keen to have more volunteers to develop and maintain the community garden.
- WCDT has applied to the Voluntary Sector Gateway administered Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. The application looks for funding for a project worker to deliver health and wellbeing activities at the garden with the local schools.

###### Potential Asset Transfer Application for the old Whitburn Library Building

WCDDT are still considering asset transfer as a possible option to explore. However, they advise that they would face considerable challenges in obtaining funding for the associated project costs, as well as the capital spend to upkeep and renovate the building to allow it to be fit for purpose. They have applied to the Scottish Government's Investing in Communities Fund and expect to know the outcome of this in January/ February 2023.

They report that they will work to identify partner organisations or businesses who would be willing to potentially lease a space on a long-term basis to help cover running costs. WCDDT are also considering other options of building space to develop the projects that had been identified and supported in their survey results.

## **D6.2 Whole Systems Approach – Type 2 Diabetes, Whitburn**

Whitburn is currently taking part as a pathfinder area for a 'Whole Systems Working' approach which aims to reduce obesity and type 2 diabetes. Whitburn was chosen by the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership for this. West Lothian is one of three areas within this NHS Scotland's East Region piloting this approach.

This work follows a process and model developed by Leeds Beckett University. The local approach in Whitburn to date has included running two workshops to help local stakeholders identify areas to further develop or change in order to make a difference and encourage a healthy lifestyle amongst residents.

As reported to the previous LAC, an action plan for the project was developed after Workshop Two in late August. The action plan aims to address some of the faults in the system structures to try and create the biggest impact possible. This formed an application to the NHS East Region's Whole Systems Grant Funding Application which was for £60k. This application was submitted in early September in accordance with the deadline for it. However, the status of the outcome of application is still unknown and officers await a response from NHS East Region on this. The funding would be utilised by further developing partnership working between statutory services but, importantly, also with the local third sector.

Despite the outcome of the application being unknown, the working group is continuing to meet and develop actions for the workstreams laid out in the action plan. The working group consist of officers from the Health and Care Partnership, Community Wealth Building Team, Active Schools and representation from Whitburn & District Community Development Trust. The workstreams are:

- a) Physical Activity and Greenspaces
- b) Food and Health

Consideration of cost of living and sustainability is part of the approach.

A feedback meeting with key stakeholder will be arranged to further develop the action plan, including evaluation and to begin put action into practice.

This work will be linked to the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy, Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and locality planning/ community regeneration.

## **D7 Whitburn Town Centre Updates**

### **D7.1 Heartlands Village Square**

Members will be aware that construction work continues with the new mixed-use neighbourhood commercial development at Heartlands Village Square. This will be

anchored by a stand-alone Scotmid supermarket, and other parade occupiers are Domino's and Supperbowl. The remaining three units are currently being marketed for lease.

#### **D7.2 Whitburn Pharmacy**

Public consultation was undertaken earlier in 2022 by NHS Lothian and Logan Gray Ltd, regarding a proposed opening up of a new pharmacy for the town within the refurbished unit at 68 West Main Street, Whitburn. Engagement ended in April 2022, and in October 2022 a decision was made by the Lothian Pharmacy Practices Committee to refuse the application. The decision was reportedly taken based on a view that the existing Whitburn provision is adequate. It is understood that the local applicant is now looking to submit an appeal against this decision.

#### **D7.3 Whitburn Town Centre Management Group**

The group continues to meet on a monthly basis, currently by virtual means. The group acts primarily as a local forum to discuss town centre related matters within Whitburn, and to seek to develop improvement projects or activities, that will be able to utilise the Council's Town Centre Improvement Fund, and other external funding that may be available.

#### **D7.4 Town Centre Occupancy**

Whitburn town centre continues to act as a community focal point and 'hub' for local employment opportunities, services and amenities. The town centre is subject to a quarterly occupancy and vacancy survey, as one measure of its relative vitality and viability. In October 2022, a vacancy rate of just under 10%, was noted, although this did not take account of properties under refurbishment, e.g. such properties are noted vacant. As context, this is relatively favourable in comparison with UK national average of c.11%, reported by Springboard, and it should be observed this is an improvement from a peak vacancy of 16.2% in January 2017.

### **D8 Whitburn Heritage Trail**

Agreement through the Council's Whitburn Town Centre Improvement Fund to support the scoping, development and implementation of a town wide heritage trail for Whitburn. This will include wider community engagement as well as interpretation, and be linked to the now completed community museum facility within the Whitburn Partnership Centre. The steering group, comprising officers and community partners, will oversee the project going forward.

A steering group has been initiated consisting of officers from Economic Development, the Community Wealth Building Team, Museums Services as well as representatives from community groups. Whilst the project delivery is being led by these council officers, the steering group will help manage the project, including undertaking community engagement on the project to help raise awareness and commissioning the associated works.

The steering group first met in late September 2022 where a project plan was agreed. A second meeting was due to be held in late November.

The project plan is based on there being two stages: research and engagement; project delivery. The first stage will be delivered in-house.

The target for this stage is to write up the recommendations for trail delivery etc. by end of January 2023.

The second stage will also be delivered in-house but with deliverables for external supplier support for specific elements of the project such as panels displays. The target for overall project completion is spring 2023.

The current intention is that the trail itself would be linked with the museum space being established within the new Whitburn Partnership Centre. The project will be associated with and linked to the new community museum facility being established within the new Whitburn Partnership Centre.

## **D9 Whitburn Partnership Centre Update**

Whitburn Partnership Centre opened its doors to the community on 24 October following mobilisation of staff groups and the library during the week beginning 17 October.

Since then it has been a busy time. The building hosted a meeting of Whitburn Community Council the week before it opened. The community council also received a tour of the building which was well received by them.

A small ceremony was held to mark the naming and opening of the library. The family of Ian Tennant, after whom the library is named, attended the ceremony. The partnership centre itself was then officially opened by Councillor Paul on 18 November. Guests at that ceremony included representatives from contractors, partners, the wider community including schools and schoolchildren, and the various council services involved in the project. Tours and refreshments were provided at both openings.

All services are now operational in the building, providing accessible services to the local community. Community groups are enjoying the community rooms and many adults and children have been attending the library and visiting the community museum since the building's opening.

### **D9.1 Public Art Feature**

The public art project is being administered and managed by West Lothian Council's Community Arts Service, and is funded by the Council's Whitburn Town Centre Improvement Fund and the Public Art Fund of West Lothian Council - Developer Contributions.

The artist, Alisa Magnus, has now secured planning permission for the artwork installation, with the process of fabrication and then installation nearing its completion. The community art should be installed early in the new year.

## **D10 Greenrigg Community Wing**

Officers met with the members of the management committee for Greenrigg Community Hub on 17 November. Officers advised the group that they were now in a position to finalise their constitution. They also advised the committee on applying for charitable status and the funding opportunities that becoming a charitable organisation would create. This will also help ensure that the group are confident that they are able to meet the needs of the area of benefit.

There was also discussion around the possible arrangements for the management of the facility in future. Officers will endeavour to provide potential working arrangements and guidelines that will satisfy all stakeholders over the short, mid and long term.

Part of the Town Centre Fund award for Greenrigg Community Council in June 2022 includes monies towards improving the fabric of the facility. Works or capital items associated with this need to be contracted/ordered by 31 March 2023, which committee members were reminded of. The condition of funding attached to this is that council officers need to be supportive of, and agree to, the improvements.

## **D11 Business Gateway Update**

Council's Business Gateway team provides confidential and impartial support to residents looking to start-up in business, local firms, new and existing 3rd sector organisations and our major employers. All engagement with Business Gateway is client-led. Support is provided to individual clients and business owners/decision makers.

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

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

The vision and commitment of local people to start their own business, especially in such challenging economic circumstances since 2020, is commendable. Across West Lothian, the Business Gateway team supported 325 new start firms in 2021/22. These businesses created 407 new jobs. The main business sectors are personal, professional and local services. Around 20% of all early stage firms go on to take premises, employ staff and grow the scale of the business. New starts are worth over £10.5 million to the local economy every year.

The Business Gateway team also includes advisers who deal with existing, growing and relocating firms to West Lothian. The advisers provided direct support to 811 local firms in the financial year to end of March 2022. This included 41 social enterprises, 20 of whom operate across West Lothian. Our priority sectors include Life Sciences, Manufacturing, Engineering, Construction and enabling technologies. West Lothian firms engaged with us around new premises, new markets, recruiting/training, working capital, Research & Development, export regulation, digital marketing and carbon reduction projects. All against a background of macro-economic challenges including fears of recession, weaker value of sterling, rising inflation and interest rate pressures.

Council's Business Gateway advisers support firms who have combined annual sales in excess of £1.41 Billion per annum. While these businesses employ over 12,000 staff, this represents 15% of total jobs in West Lothian. However, the supported firms account for more than 30% of the annual gross value add (GVA) of the West Lothian economy.

As part of Council's long-term commitment to retain and attract the best businesses, and to grow our value-added sectors, a commercially-focused website, [Why West Lothian? - Invest in West Lothian](#) has been developed to highlight the

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

In the 6 months to September 2022, a further 13 new start businesses have been established in the Ward with the team's support. This is a healthy level of starts, especially in a strong jobs market with many vacancies. Over the same timescale, the Business Gateway team assisted 30 existing firms in the Ward who between them employ 310 staff and have sales of more than £53 million.

<b>West Lothian</b>	<b>Whitburn &amp; Blackburn Ward</b>
<b>April – Sept 2022</b>	<b>April – Sept 2022</b>
New Business Starts 134	New Business Starts 13
Existing Businesses Supported 363	Existing Businesses Supported 30

In summarising the work of Business Gateway, it is not all about sales and wider economic impacts. The business advisers have the trust of local people, working with them to find solutions often in complex economic circumstances. Whitburn & Blackburn Local Area Committee is asked to note the team's ongoing contribution to a sustained and inclusive economic recovery.

## **D12 Access2employment**

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

Support is provided one to one consultation's with clients and through the provision of a range of courses including one day specific courses to 6-week personal development and employability courses, Women n2 Work and Men n2 Work.

A2e's Employment Advisers offer tailored support to assist clients achieve their individual goals, with the ultimate aim of securing sustainable employment, improved household financial security and upskilling opportunities.

## New registrations for all wards:

Multi member ward	TOTAL	SIMD most deprived 20%	Total Engaged most deprived 20%
Armadale and Blackridge	23	4	17.39%
Bathgate	50	13	26.00%
Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh	47	1	2.13%
East Livingston and East Calder	42	6	14.29%
Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley	40	9	22.50%
Linlithgow	18	1	5.56%
Livingston North	43	14	32.56%
Livingston South	84	8	9.52%
Whitburn and Blackburn	65	23	35.38%

## Outcomes for all wards:

Multi member ward	TOTAL	SIMD most deprived 20%	Total Engaged most deprived 20%
Armadale and Blackridge	17	6	35.29%
Bathgate	31	5	16.13%
Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh	23	1	4.35%
East Livingston and East Calder	21	5	23.81%
Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley	20	5	25.00%
Linlithgow	6	1	16.67%
Livingston North	23	5	21.74%
Livingston South	32	6	18.75%
Whitburn and Blackburn	50	21	42.00%

From 1 April 2022 – 30 Sept 2022, the service registered 419 new clients (including 65 from the Whitburn and Blackburn ward) with 229 progressing into a positive destination, (including 50 from the Whitburn and Blackburn ward). This support has been mostly been provided remotely during the year due to the pandemic, however employment advisers are now delivering a hybrid service in line with client needs, with 22/23 delivery being a mix of face to face and online.

The service delivered 8 online workshops, including 1 face to face Women N2 Work course and 3 Wellbeing Workshops. In total 61 residents attending workshops. In 21/22 the service supported Connecting Scotland by securing over 200 Chromebooks and internet connections to give to unemployment clients seeking work that currently did not have any digital connectivity.

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

Since October 2021, with funding from the Scottish Government Long Term Unemployed provision, a2e have supported over 50 individuals aged over 25 and

who have not worked for more than one year to secure employment. This support builds on a range of targeted interventions currently available which includes dedicated support for young people to assist them progress towards employment and support for parents. During 2021/22, the team introduced two additional services to support parents who are currently unemployed or in work but in insecure employment and an intense family support programme based within Social Policy.

This provision seeks to address the identified need for a whole family intervention approach to combat the complex issues the families that are engaging have presented with.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Members are asked to note the range of activities taking place across the ward and, in particular, the work to support regeneration within the Whitburn and Blackburn areas.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

None.

Appendices/Attachments: None.

Contacts:

- Michelle Kirkbright, Community Regeneration Officer (Blackburn), 07500 816855, [michelle.kirkbright@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.kirkbright@westlothian.gov.uk)
- Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Officer (rest of ward), 07500 816862, [scott.mckillop@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:scott.mckillop@westlothian.gov.uk)
- Clare Stewart, Manager, Community Wealth Building Manager, [clare.stewart@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:clare.stewart@westlothian.gov.uk)

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

05 December 2022



DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **PENSIONERS GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2023-23**

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

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to inform the Local Area Committee of the final allocations that were made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2022-23 to groups in the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups. The committee is asked to note that applicants were offered, as they were in 2020 and 2021, an additional option of a pre-prepared chilled meal as an alternative to a direct grant award.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the committee notes:

1. Three groups in Whitburn and Blackburn ward are being supported through the Pensioner's Christmas Fund 2022-23
2. The continued inclusion of a pre-prepared meal option

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	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.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	The report does not raise any health or risk assessment issues. No strategic environmental assessment is required.
<b>III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Services has the delegated authority to make the final allocations and payments.
<b>IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	This will be reported against indicator EDR061_9b.1b; Number of community organisations funded or supported through funding managed or administered by Community Planning and Regeneration.
<b>V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life.

<b>VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	£29,000 agreed by the Council with £875.02 awarded to groups in Whitburn and Blackburn
<b>VII Consideration at PDSP</b>	The Voluntary Organisations PDSP is updated annually.
<b>VIII Other consultations</b>	A similar report will be made to all Local Area Committees

## **D. TERMS OF THE REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

Each year the Council approves the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund. In 2022-23 the total fund amounts to £29,000 which is allocated through an application process. Funding is paid out on the basis of a pro-rata allocation based on the beneficiary numbers identified by the applicants. In 2022-23 this saw 3 organisations and 134 beneficiaries in Whitburn and Blackburn Ward supported with an allocation of £6.53 per head.

### **D.2 Additional Meal Option 2022-2023**

In 2020 and 2021, the council in partnership with the West Lothian Food Network, offered applicants the option of a pre-prepared chilled Christmas meal as an alternative to a direct grant award as a contribution towards the costs an event or activity, this option was offered again to applicants in 2022-2023. No applicants to the fund in Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston Wide or West Lothian Wide requested the meal option in 2022-2023.

### **D.3 Applications 2022-23**

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

Eleven groups in total were contacted in Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston Wide and West Lothian Wide, all applied to the fund and all requested the finance as opposed to the meal option.

As a result of this work:

Whitburn and Blackburn Ward

- Four groups in Whitburn and Blackburn Ward were contacted and three applied to the fund
- One group, Weavers Court Tenants Social Club, did not respond to correspondence
- All three Whitburn and Blackburn groups requested a grant payment

Livingston Wide

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

#### West Lothian Wide

- Six West Lothian Wide groups were contacted and five applied to the fund
- One group, West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network, declined to apply to the fund
- One new group, Carers of West Lothian, was added to the West Lothian Wide list
- The additional group requested a grant payment
- In all, five West Lothian Wide groups applied to the fund and all requested a grant payment

All applicants to the fund will be supported.

As in previous years the fund is divided equally by the total number of beneficiaries of the fund, which in 2022-23 will see £6.53 per head allocated to recipients in the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston Wide and West Lothian Wide.

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

Letters and e-mails were sent to groups advising them of the amount of funding they were to receive in a grant payment. Payments were made directly to the bank accounts of groups using the BACs payment method.

#### **E. CONCLUSION**

The report asks the committee to note the allocation of the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund in 2022-2023 and the continued inclusion of the pre-prepared chilled meal option this year.

The report advises of the allocations that were made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2022-2023 to groups in the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston Wide and West Lothian Wide.

Letters and e-mails were issued to groups advising them of the amount of funding they were to receive in a grant payment. Payments were made directly to the bank accounts of groups using the BACs payment method.

A satisfaction survey will be conducted with applicants in February 2023.

#### **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

None.

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1 Pensioners Groups Christmas Fund Allocations 2022-23

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**Elaine Cook**

**Deputy Chief Executive Education, Planning and Economic Development**

5 December 2022

**WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE****PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2022-2023****REPORT BY THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Appendix 1:** 2022-2023 Allocations to groups in the Whitburn and Blackburn Ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

**Whitburn and Blackburn Ward Organisations**

Group	Provision	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount Awarded
Blackburn Women's Social Services Club (WSSC)	Grant Payment	40	£261.20
Seafeld Senior Citizens	Grant Payment	50	£326.50
Young at Heart	Grant Payment	44	£287.32
<b>Totals</b>		<b>134</b>	<b>£875.02</b>

**Livingston-Wide Organisations**

Group	Provision	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount Awarded
Braid Health and Wellbeing (formerly Braid House)	Grant Payment	73	£476.69
<b>Total</b>		<b>73</b>	<b>£476.69</b>

**West Lothian-Wide Organisations**

Group	Provision	Number of Beneficiaries	Amount Awarded
Boghall Drop-In Centre	Grant Payment	120	£783.60
Carers of West Lothian	Grant Payment	30	£195.90
Society of St Vincent De Paul (Whitburn Conference)	Grant Payment	120	£783.60
SPARK (formerly Craigshill Good Neighbour Network)	Grant Payment	40	£261.20
West Lothian 50+ Network	Grant Payment	443	£2,892.79
<b>Total</b>		<b>753</b>	<b>£4,917.09</b>

**Notes:** Four groups in Whitburn and Blackburn Ward were contacted and invited to apply to the fund. Three groups applied to the fund. One group, Weavers Court Tenants Social Club, did not respond to correspondence. One Livingston Wide group was contacted and applied to the fund. Six West Lothian Wide groups were contacted and five applied to the fund. One group declined funding. One new group was added to the list

**WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN – 05 DECEMBER 2022**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>
1	Housing Report	Quarterly update on housing issues	Julie Whitelaw	27 February 2023
2	Police Report	Quarterly update on police/NRT activity	P.S. Mike Harte	
3	Community Regeneration Update	To update local members on Economic Development and Regeneration service activity in the ward. This will now include updates on progress with works at Whitburn Community Centre.	Elaine Cook	
4	Fire and Rescue Report	Quarterly report on activity	Paul Harvey	
5	Operational Services Report	Quarterly report on activity	Jim Jack	
6	Housing Report	Quarterly update on housing issues	Julie Whitelaw	05 June 2023
7	Police Report	Quarterly update on police/NRT activity	P.S. Mike Harte	
8	Community Regeneration Update	To update local members on Economic Development and Regeneration service activity in the ward.	Elaine Cook	
9	Fire and Rescue Report	Quarterly report on activity	Paul Harvey	
10	Operational Services Report	Quarterly report on activity	Jim Jack	