

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



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

AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the panel on work that Development Planning and Environment are undertaking to deliver age friendly communities.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the panel:

1. notes the content of the report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Caring and compassionate Open, honest and accountable; and Collaborate, inclusive and adaptive.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. There are no legal, equality, health or risk assessment issues associated with this report.
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	There are no implications for the Scheme of Delegation to officers.
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	One of the stated aims of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is to improve the performance of the planning system.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life.

We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities.

We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	There are no direct staffing or financial implications as a result of this report. A number of matters in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, including changes to the development plan process, may however have consequential impacts on resources.
VII Consideration at PDSP	No report on age friendly communities has been previously reported to PDSP by Development Planning and Environment.
VIII Other consultations	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

West Lothian faces a growing and ageing population. The demographic and population projection data for West Lothian shows a population where older adults are increasing in number and will form a greater proportion of the population over time. The numbers of people in West Lothian aged 65 to 74 is expected to increase by 19% by 2028 with those aged over 75 increasing by 39%. This is compared to the Scottish average growth of 14.4% in the 65 to 74 population and 25.4% increase in those aged over 75 during the same time period.

Age group	2018	2028	WL % change	Scotland % change
All people	182,140	192,812	5.8	1.8
0 to 15	35,485	33,562	-5.4	-6.0
16 to 24	18,575	19,604	5.5	-0.9
25 to 44	46,800	50,401	7.7	3.1
45 to 64	51,470	51,212	-0.5	-5.5
65 to 74	17,404	20,744	19.2	14.4
75 and over	12,406	17,289	39.4	25.4

Source: [West Lothian Council Area Profile \(nrscotland.gov.uk\)](https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/publications/west-lothian-council-area-profile)

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) was adopted in February 2023. NPF4 is required by law to contribute to meeting the needs of people living in Scotland including, in particular the housing needs of older people and disabled people.

NPF4 Policy 16 'Quality Homes' supports the delivery of high quality, sustainable homes that meet the needs of people throughout their lives. In particular, it supports proposals for new homes that improve affordability and choice by being adaptable to changing and diverse needs, and which address identified gaps in provision. This could include: accessible, adaptable and wheelchair accessible homes; homes that meet the needs of older people; a range of size of homes; and other specialist groups.

Development that provides homes to meet the needs of older people and disabled people will be considered further during the progression of the next Local Development Plan (LDP). Work is underway to consult with the public at large. This includes an invitation to comment on how the public and stakeholders would wish to participate in the preparation of the next Local Development Plan, several online surveys including 'how good in your place' and ten drop-in engagement events were held during October to discuss and listen to people's issues and priorities that should be addressed in the forthcoming LDP. <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/ldp2-updates>

Development Planning and Environment will work closely with key stakeholders and will ensure that the LDP has regard to the Local Housing Strategy (LHS). The latest LHS was published in June 2023. The LHS aims to enable people to live in their homes for as long as they are able to do so with the support they need. Part of this support will include provision of housing that is accessible, including wheelchair accessible. Housing specifically for over 55s is being proposed by RSLs through the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

The LHS sets out that private sector housing providers will be encouraged to provide a broader range of house types and sizes to meet the needs of the community. This is an example of a policy that could be developed further and implemented in the forthcoming LDP.

A key aspect of the next LDP would be to ensure that not only the bricks and mortar elements of housing needs are met, but to also ensure people are able to live in communities where they are able to live physically and mentally active lives and access the services that they require.

The work of the community regeneration team also supports the principles of age friendly communities. Examples include the establishment of a men's shed in Armadale; Ladywell neighbourhood network are supporting community activity in Ladywell for older people, and an allocation of £29,000 per annum to the pensioners fund, to support a meal at Christmas for older people. This is in addition to providing funding support to groups who are supporting older people, were required, to create constitutions, to help fill out application forms, to co-ordinate activity with other partners and to look at how other groups operate.

D2 Scottish Accessible Home Standard

The Scottish Government national housing strategy 'Housing to 2040' aims for all homes to be good quality, whether they be new build or existing, meaning that everyone can expect the same high standards no matter what kind of home or tenure they live in.

For over 20 years, homes delivered with the support of grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (and its predecessors) have – wherever possible – been delivered to the standards set out in the Housing for Varying Needs design guide. While many of the design standards within Housing for Varying Needs are now included in building standards, there is still a difference between the two.

The Scottish Government has committed to introducing the Scottish Accessible Homes Standard for all new homes, which will be implemented through changes to building standards and guidance from 2025-26

The Scottish Accessible Homes Standard will raise the baseline level of accessibility, adaptability and usability of all new homes, across all tenures to meet the needs of people of all age groups, individuals and families, as well as the needs of wheelchair users and others.

A consultation on enhancing the accessibility, adaptability and usability of Scotland's homes commenced in June 2023 by the Scottish Government. A draft response will be reported to Council Executive before the consultation period finishes in December 2023 by the Interim head of housing, customer and building services.

E. CONCLUSION

West Lothian, similar to the demographics across Scotland has an ageing population. Creating age-friendly communities will therefore be critical to serve the needs of our communities.

The progression of the next LDP is currently in the early stages, with views being sought on people's priorities. Development planning will work with key stakeholders to identify specific projects and / or to develop new planning policies to ensure that the housing needs of West Lothian including older people and disabled people are met.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

[Consultation on Scottish Accessibility Standard NPF4](#)

Appendices/Attachments: None.

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