



Bathgate Local Area Committee

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

8 June 2021

A meeting of the **Bathgate Local Area Committee** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Webex Virtual Meeting Room** on **Monday 14 June 2021** at **10:00am**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business
4. Confirm Draft Minutes of Meeting of Bathgate Local Area Committee held on Monday 08 March 2021 (herewith)
5. Police Ward Report - report by Police Scotland (herewith)
6. Fire Service Ward Report - report by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (herewith)
7. Housing, Customer and Building Services - report by Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (herewith).
8. Service Update: Nets, Land and Countryside - report by Head of Operational Services (herewith).
9. Community Regeneration Ward Update - report by Head of Planning,

DATA LABEL: Public

Economic Development and Regeneration (herewith)

10. Workplan (herewith)

NOTE **For further information please contact Val Johnston, Tel No.01506 281604 or email val.johnston@westlothian.gov.uk**

CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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

NAME	MEETING	DATE

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

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

Other key terminology appears on the reverse.

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

SUMMARY OF KEY TERMINOLOGY FROM REVISED CODE

The objective test

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

The General Exclusions

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

Particular Dispensations

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

The Specific Exclusions

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

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

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

MINUTE of MEETING of the BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within WEBEX VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 8 MARCH 2021.

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

In attendance -

Marjory Mackie, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council
Nairn Pearson, BID & Town Centre Manager, West Lothian Council
PC Francis Sinnet, Police Scotland
Stuart McNiven, Local Authority Liaison Officer, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Andy Johnston, Service Manager, West Lothian Council
Kate Ward, Housing Manager, West Lothian Council
Margaret Stone, Planning Officer, West Lothian Council
Ronnie McLeod, Bathgate Community Council
Donald Stavert, Bathgate Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 9 December 2020. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. POLICE WARD REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Scotland which provided an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period to 31st December 2020.

The Committee was invited to note the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE WARD Q1 REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire & Rescue Service providing an update on activity across the ward to 31st December 2020.

The committee was asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the content of the report

5. WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION PROGRAMME - FIRST REVIEW (2020) - UPDATE FOR WARD 1: BATHGATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing ward members of the Local Development Plan (LDP) Action Programme First Review - 2020 as it related to the Bathgate ward.

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

Decision

To note the content of the report

6. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of the service activities within Bathgate ward for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020.

The committee was invited to note the service activity as details in the ward report for the period 1st October to 31st December 2020.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising members of the recent activity of the NET's, Land and Countryside teams for the period 1 November 2020 – 31 January 2021.

It was recommended that the Committee:

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

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE REPORT

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

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

Decision

To note the content of the report

9. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the Workplan.

10. PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS

The committee considered a proposed timetable of meeting dates (copies of which had been circulated) for the period August 2021 to June 2022.

It was recommended that committee approve the timetable of meetings.

Decision

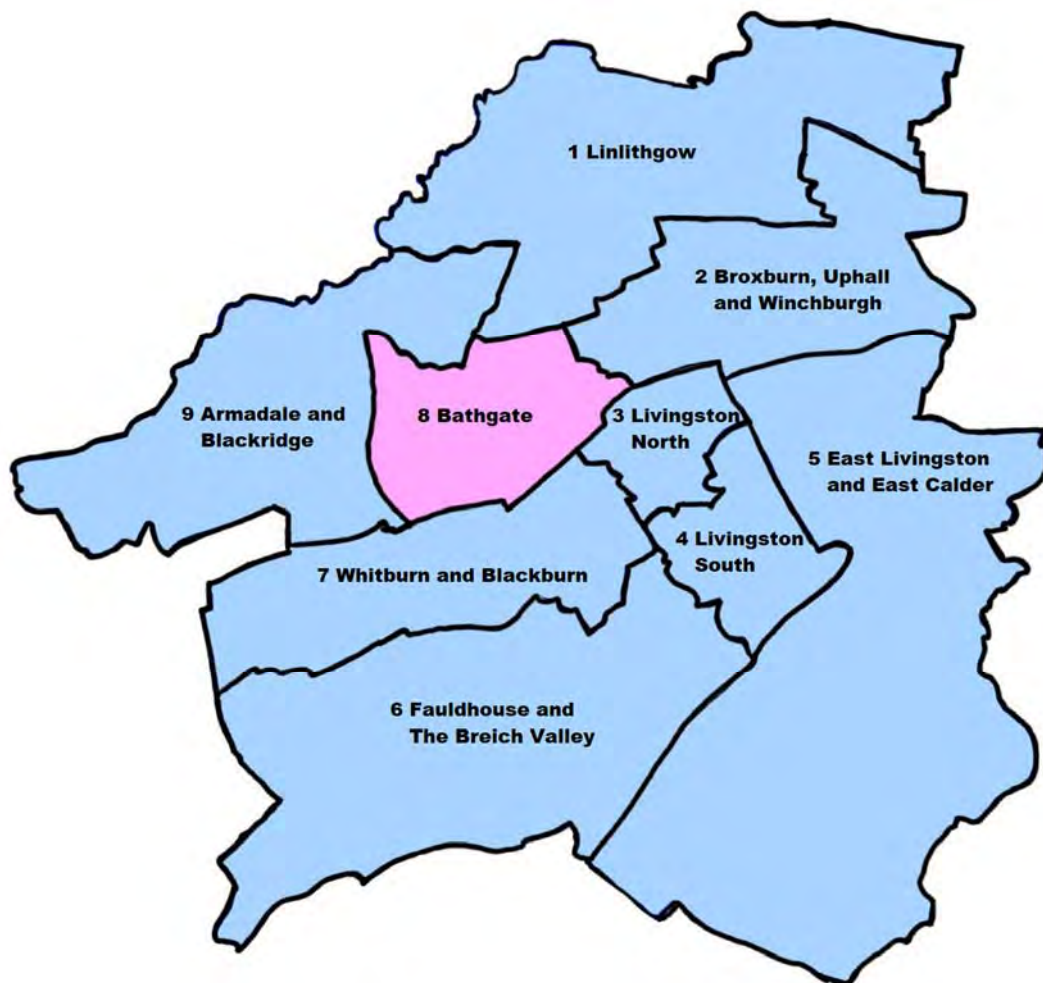
To approve the timetable of meetings.

OFFICIAL



West Lothian Area Command

Lothian and Scottish Borders



Ward 8 Bathgate Multi Member Ward Report Quarter 4 – 2020/2021

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Local Area Committee with an update on performance, activities and issues across the Ward for the period up to 28th March 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

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

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

D. TERMS OF REPORT

OFFICIAL

Introduction:

This document is intended to provide a summary of the performance of West Lothian Area Command for the reporting period of Quarter 4 2020/2021. The report references the police priorities within the Local Police Plan for West Lothian 2020-2023, namely:

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

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

Bathgate Community Engagement Priorities:

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

Bathgate Community Officers

PC Iain Law

PC Francis Sinnet

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.
During 2020/2021, Operation Shoestack was established which increased solvency in respect of domestic and violent crimes. There has been an increase in domestic incidents reported during the year with many being historical incidents which have been identified by detectives engaging with victims, identifying previous partners and follow up enquiries to identify previously unreported crimes. We continued our use of Social Media to ensure the message of domestic violence being unacceptable is reiterated.

Significant demands are placed on the police when dealing with Mental Health concerns and missing persons enquiries, which can be hugely time consuming. In partnership with NHS we have access to the Acute Care and Support Team (ACAST) where officers can get direct contact with a Mental Health Nurse to seek direction and advice for persons suffering from a mental health or emotional episode. This was used on 12 occasions in March 2021 to ensure those people received the most appropriate support at source and also significantly reduced time officers spent in dealing with these issues.

We are continuing our work with St John's Hospital to refresh protocols relating to missing persons and deliver the Herbert Protocol to Care Homes, NHS and 3rd sector to help safeguard some of the most vulnerable people in areas from going missing, or maximising the likelihood of a swift and safe return.

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

During Q4, the number of reported incidents of ASB has increased compared to the 2019/20 period. This can be attributed to the pressures of continuous on/off lockdown restrictions with frustrations and low tolerance, there has however been a reduction on vandalisms and fire-raising across West Lothian.

Given the restrictions imposed and the limitations of face-to-face interactions, social media posts have been used to engage with the local community highlighting issues and raising awareness. The posts have received a high level of positive local engagement.

Neighbour disputes are included in the ASB figures with persons working from home, breaches to these restrictions are more likely to be observed causing tension and low tolerance levels. West Lothian officers continue to engage with the public and utilise the 4 E's – Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce with an overall good compliance level.

Officers continue to respond to ASB calls dealing robustly with any criminality. CPT Officers are in constant contact with WLC Housing and SNT sharing information regarding problem tenancies and working together to resolve ASB issues. This has resulted in a problem tenancy in Bathgate being issued with an ASBO and so far there have been no further complaints in respect of the address.

There is continued attention to public space anti-social behaviour and through the Community Safety Partnership, police work closely with partners to address repeat issues. We have also been proactive in looking at repeat offenders and are pro-active in providing follow up intervention visits.

- **Reducing Acquisitive Crime**

Working to Protect People by reducing the impact of acquisitive crime on our community's remains a priority in West Lothian. The number of reported Crimes of Dishonesty has decreased, in particular domestic housebreakings being down about a quarter on the previous year.

As part of the "Made From Crime" Campaign, Community Officers worked alongside Trading Standards and SFRS to set up Crime Prevention packs regarding information and advice on bogus workmen, telephone/online scams and fire safety. These were thereafter distributed to vulnerable groups by West Lothian PSYV.

Furthermore, we posted a variety of Social Media posts offering online advice, in particular in relation to Rogue Traders (with Trading Standards colleagues), Bogus workmen and online/email scams. These continued online with further prevention activities planned as restrictions are relaxed.

With more people staying at home more often there is a greater awareness in communities of suspicious behaviour. Officers carry out high visibility patrols where possible to vulnerable business and domestic premises to deter acquisitive crime.

- **Improving Road Safety**

Officers in the West Lothian area work closely with partners to prevent collisions from occurring. During Q4, Roads Policing officers continued with Local and National Campaigns including Mobile Phone & Seatbelt Campaigns as well as a National Day of Speeding.

Through a proactive, intelligence led, targeted approach to priority locations throughout West Lothian, overall injuries in collisions have reduced by over 40%. In addition, there has been a significant increase of more than 30% in people reported for dangerous driving, speeding, disqualified driving, no driving licence and no insurance.

In the Bathgate ward there have been 59 driving offences detected in the reporting period that include dangerous or careless driving, no insurance, no licence, no mot and even careless cycling. This is along with 61 fixed penalty tickets issued for offences such as no seatbelts, using mobile phone, prohibited parking etc. This activity increases overall road safety.

- **Tackling Serious and Organised Crime**

West Lothian officers continue to disrupt organised crime groups by targeting drugs supply offences, gathering intelligence and generate enforcement opportunities. This includes working with UK Border Agency to target those involved in online drug purchases. Due to this multi-agency approach, a

substantial number of packages have been intercepted and investigations followed up.

During Q4, 13 MDA Warrants were issued and executed at various addresses within West Lothian and by the conclusion of 2020/2021, 61 MDA Warrants had been executed. We also explore all opportunities through Proceeds of Crime legislation with over £100,000 of cash and assets identified for restraint orders. A significant Cultivation was uncovered within West Lothian with an approximate value of £750,000, estimated to be the largest cultivation discovery of its kind in Scotland this year.

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

Bathgate Officers have also reported 12 individuals found in possession of controlled drugs through proactive patrolling of the ward area.

Reporting Period April 2020 – March 2021			
Bathgate	Recorded		
Crime Type	YTD	LYTD	% Diff
Robbery	10	5	+100.0%
Serious Assault	15	26	-42.3%
Sexual Crimes	49	64	-23.4%
Housebreaking dwelling	19	20	-5.0%
Housebreaking non-dwelling (sheds/garages)	17	9	+88.8%
Housebreaking Other Premises	12	16	-25.0%
Theft of motor vehicle	34	40	-15.0%
Theft from motor vehicle (OLP)	15	26	-42.3%
Vandalism	206	205	+0.4%
Total drugs supply	7	14	-50.0%
Possession of Drugs	64	81	-20.9%
Common Assault	268	236	+13.5%
Common Assault - emergency worker	22	17	+29.4%
Total Crimes and Other Offences	2100	1984	+5.8%

Note: The above figures cover the period to Week 52.

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

Together we can increase community resilience and prevent crime.

Data Label: Public



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

BATHGATE MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

REPORT BY SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Bathgate Local Area Committee on the activity within Bathgate Multi-Member Ward for the period up to 31st March 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

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

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

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

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

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

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

Continuous Priority

- Local Risk Management and Preparedness.

High Priority

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

Medium Priority

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

E. CONCLUSION

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

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Gordon McGuire

Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

April 2021

Appendix 1 - Bathgate Multi-Member Ward Performance Report



West Lothian Council Area

Ward Performance Report

Quarter 4 20/21

Bathgate

DISCLAIMER

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

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

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

Introduction

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

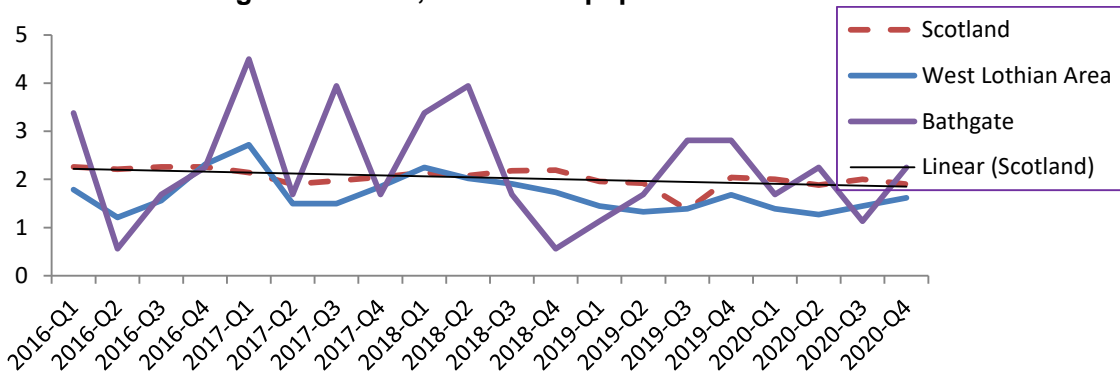
In addition to historical ward based activity, this performance report provides information on the historic activity in the West Lothian Council area and Scotland. To allow benchmarking to be undertaken, the units of measurement in the performance graphs in the report are based on incidents/events per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

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

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

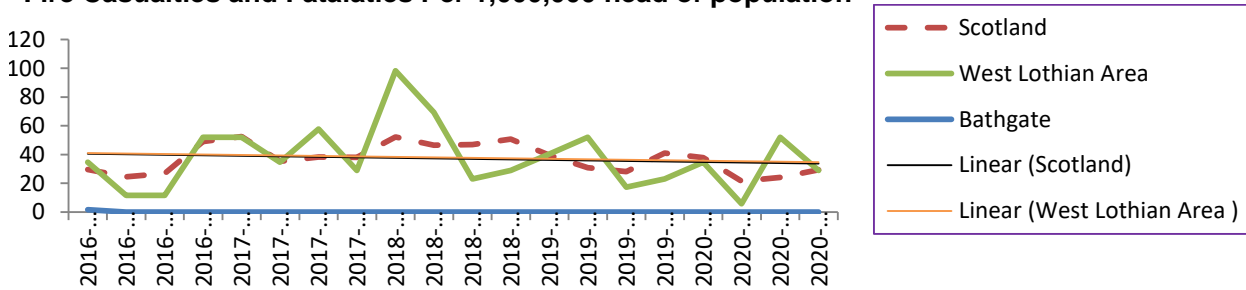
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Accidental Dwelling Fires Per 10,000 head of population



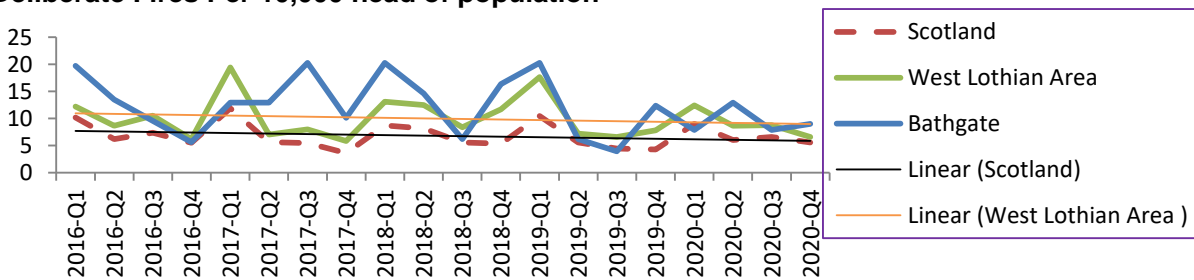
During the 2020-21 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 4 accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 5 during 2019-20 year to date reporting period.

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



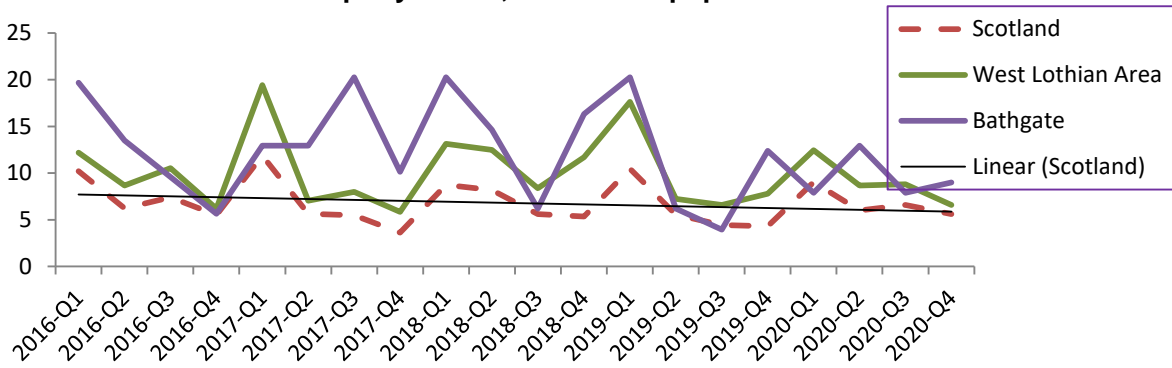
During the 2020-21 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 0 Casualties and 0 Fatalities due to fire in comparison to 5 Casualties and 0 Fatalities during 2019-20 year to date reporting period.

Deliberate Fires Per 10,000 head of population



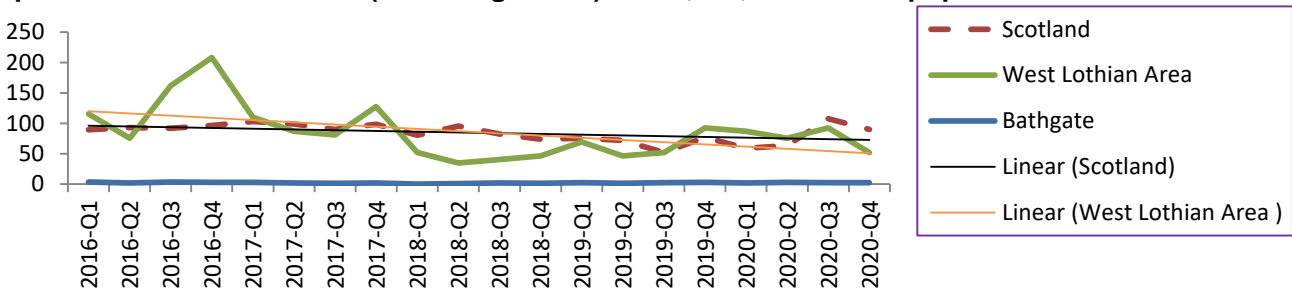
SFRS have dealt with 17 Deliberate fire incidents during 2020-21 year to date reporting period in comparison to 22 during 2019-20 year to date reporting period.

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



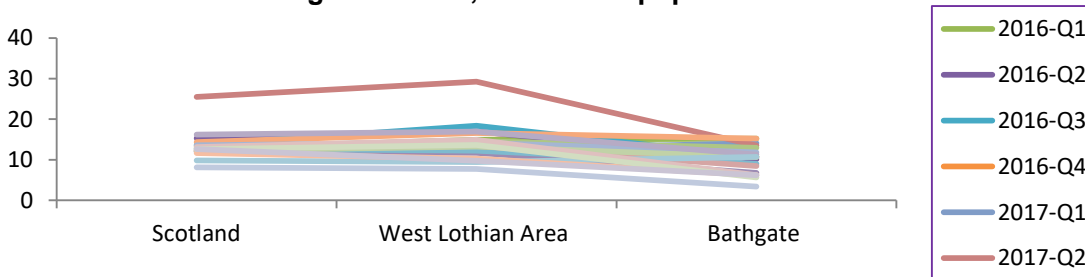
SFRS have dealt with 0 non domestic fire incidents during 2020-21 year to date reporting period in comparison to 3 during 2019-20 year to date reporting period.

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



SFRS have dealt with 7 casualties from Special Services during 2020-21 year to date reporting period in comparison to 9 during 2019-20 year to date reporting period.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Per 10,000 head of population

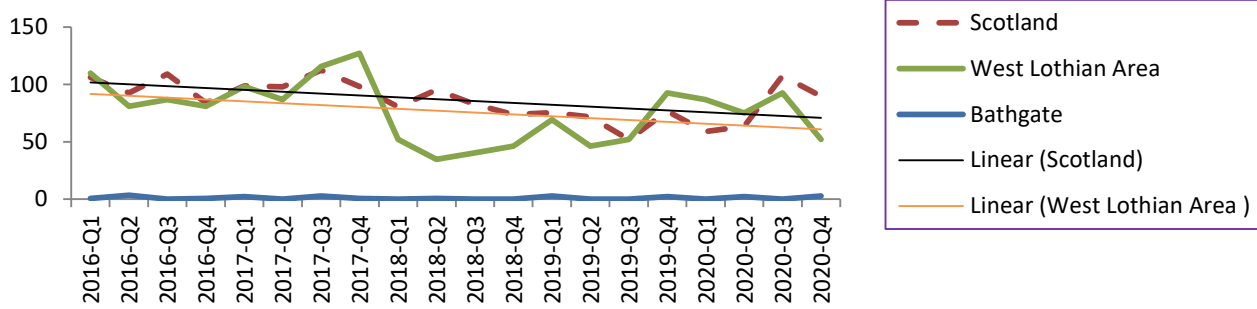


SFRS have dealt with 12 UFAS incidents during 2020-21 year to date reporting period in comparison to 11 during 2019-20 year to date reporting period.

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 2020-21 year to date reporting period SFRS have dealt with 5 Casualties and 0 Fatalities from RTC's in comparison to 4 Casualties and 0 Fatalities during 2019-20 year to date reporting period.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period Quarter 4 – 1st January to 31st March 2021.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

VII Consideration at PDSP Yes

VIII Other consultations N/A

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1. Housing Performance Information

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

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

Property Void & Let Performance: Mainstream Tenancies

Void Period	Jan 2021	%	Feb 2021	%	March 2021	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	2	28.57%	2	25%	2	28.57%	55%
2-4 wks	0	0%	0	0%	1	14.3%	30%
4+ wks	5	71.4%	6	75%	4	57.1%	15%
Total Lets	7	100%	8	100%	7	100%	100%

Property Void & Let Performance: Temporary Tenancies

Void Period	Jan 2021	%	Feb 2021	%	March 2021	%	WL Target %
0-2 wks	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	80%
2-4 wks	0	0%	2	50%	0	0%	15%
4+ wks	2	100%	2	50%	2	100%	5%
Total Lets	2	100%	4	100%	2	100%	100%

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

There were 10 policy voids in the ward for this period, a reduction of 5 from the last reporting period.

Void period	Number of properties	PV reasons
<4 weeks	2	Woodworm & held for legal purposes
4 – 12 weeks	1	Structural work
13 – 16 weeks	3	Structural work, woodworm & bathroom upgrade
26+ weeks	4	Health & Care Committee, surplus to long term requirements x 2 Being used as a decant x 2

D2 Rent Arrears

For the Bathgate ward the collection rate for the YTD in Q4 remains excellent at 99.0%. Bathgate has collected £8,238,964 vs a charge of £8,321,206.

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

In the same week last year Bathgate ward had 250 Universal Credit (UC) households. Since then the number of UC households has decreased by 6.4%.

The number of tenancies in arrears in this ward has decreased by 19 since last year. Small debt cases (£300 or less), account for 59.5% of households.

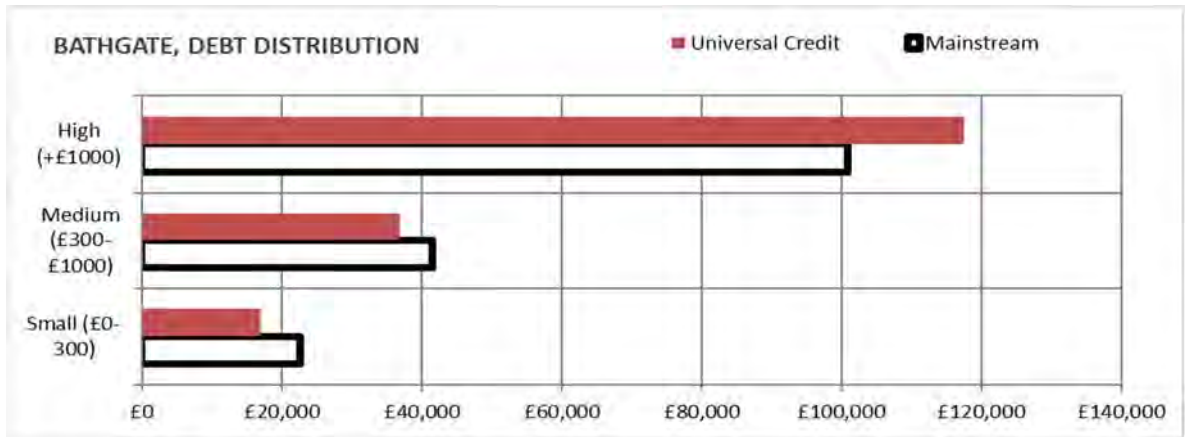
There are 88 serious arrears cases (+£1000 in arrears). These cases are 15.9% of all households in arrears in this area, containing 64.9% of the debt.

The arrears position for Bathgate Q4 is £336,258. This is an increase of £26,406 on last year's position. The West Lothian overall position is currently £2,978,530.

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

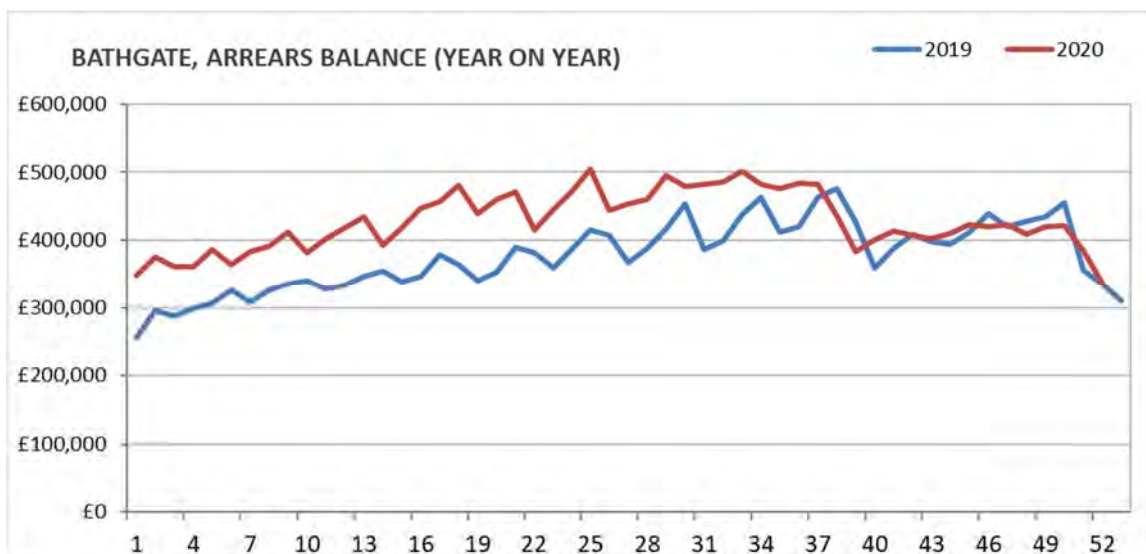
- Making best use of resources by considering communicating more with customers through SMS, email and telephone
- Benchmarking with other local authorities to ensure we identify and consider implementing any best practise

- Performance Monitoring and Reporting will be reviewed and where appropriate streamlined to ensure information is meaningful and robust to assist with improving rent arrears due
- Promote alternative payment methods, particularly the Tenant's Self-service Portal



Arrears Banding	2019/20 (WK53)				2020/21 (WK52)			
	Mainstream		UC		Mainstream		UC	
	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases	Balance	Cases
£0.01 to £99.99	£4,685	105	£1,656	35	£5,840	121	£1,972	42
£100.00 to £299.99	£18,390	99	£12,863	64	£16,763	89	£14,948	78
£300.00 to £499.99	£13,702	35	£13,913	36	£10,309	26	£10,598	28
£500.00 to £749.99	£19,216	31	£20,282	34	£20,404	34	£13,444	22
£750.00 to £999.99	£12,390	15	£21,490	25	£10,878	12	£12,806	15
£1000.00 to £1999.99	£36,359	26	£60,236	42	£21,512	15	£35,340	27
£2000+	£38,386	13	£36,285	14	£79,306	24	£82,137	22
Group Total	£143,127	324	£166,725	250	£165,013	321	£171,244	234
Movement					(+) £21,886	(-) 3	(+) £4,520	(-) 16

Overall Total	£309,852	574	£336,258	555
Overall Movement			(+) £26,406	(-) 19



D3. Bathgate Area Team Activity

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

The focus on rent arrears activity has continued to be a weekly priority task for the team and will continue to work with all our tenants in offering the support, advice and assistance. Such assistance includes referrals for money and debt advice, benefit health checks, completion of income and expenditure to help set up a sustainable payment plan and where appropriate, assist with applications for Discretionary Housing Payments. Officers have also been doing targeted work to encourage tenants to update their universal credit journals as many have not updated their housing costs in April 2020 following the rent increase meaning they are losing out on money they are entitled to.

D4. Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing

Local New Build Update

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

Street	Works	Update
Balbardie Avenue & Crescent	New roof coverings	Complete
Race Road and Glasgow Road	Roof & roughcast	Minor works to complete

D5. Tenant Participation Update

During the Winter months, the TP Team continue to carry out the schedule of meetings with tenants using online resources to ensure TP continues in all aspects of service delivery.

Tenants Panel

Tenant members continue to take part in monthly meetings with senior managers and the Head of Service, discussing service improvements and developments as well as receiving updates from each service area on implementing the changes imposed by the pandemic to deliver services and changes to working protocols. Members have also been involved in performance scrutiny, questioning information and results over this period.

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. Building Services provided an overview of Complaints, Processes & Analysis at the January meeting and the Central Void Team (CVT) pilot in March. Tenant representatives were very impressed with the way the CVT are processing void properties.

These meetings ensure that tenants views are taken onboard and offers another method of scrutinising service delivery.

Tenant Participation Development Working Group (TPDWG)

Members meet to ensure TP stays high on the services agenda, looking at ways of engaging with more tenants. They have also been reviewing the current TP Strategy with an emphasis on digital engagement and inclusion. The TP Team have carried out a review of the roles and remit of each group and discussed this with members for their understanding and approval.

Editorial Panel

With the use of Adobe Reader, members are now able to review publications and propose changes online prior to meeting. This was carried out with them in February/March for the Spring edition of Tenants News, which will be solely published online on the council website in April 2021. The Editorial Panel have also been involved in reviewing letters and online information intended for tenants, with regard to the new Housing Allocations Policy

Consultations

Tenants were supported by staff from Housing, Strategy & Development and the TP Team to complete two consultations in January and February. The first from the Scottish Housing Regulator on the ESSH Indicators for the Annual Return on the Charter and the second on New Build Heat Standard Consultation. These were completed, agreed and submitted online during the course of the meetings.

TP Facebook Group

The TP team continue to see a steady rise in the number of tenants following posts on the TP Facebook Group Page. The team post useful information from various sources such as Scottish Government, NHS and the Council's Corporate websites as well as queries from tenants and light-hearted quotes and phrases. The team are working with the Tenant Participation Development Working Group to ensure they have a method of communicating with fellow tenants.

Tenants Panel New Build Planning & Progress Meeting

Housing, Strategy and Development met with the members of the Tenants Panel to provide an update on the progress and planning of current and future new build sites. The Panel will meet six monthly for updates on these projects.

Tenants Learning & Development Sessions

A session was held in March on the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to update tenants on progress made against the plan and to discuss future planning. Further virtual sessions have been planned on various topics up to July this year.

D6. Safer Neighbourhood Team

The outcome returns for Quarter 4 – January, February, March 2021. Officers continue to add their details of enquiries/incidents and ASB cases onto the Open Housing system.

During Quarter 4, the Covid19 pandemic continued to have an impact on the service that officers were able to provide although constraints were lifted slightly during the restrictions. Since October 2020, when Service Recovery Plans enabled the Safer Neighbourhood Team Officers to be able to be mobilised again, SNT officers have had the ability to take formal legal action where necessary for some enquiries. Officers have continued to work a blended model of working, carrying out some home working as well as office and community-based work for enquiries.

Within communities and within agreed safety guidelines, SNT officers could speak to complainers and alleged perpetrators, gather witness statements and evidence for enquiries and be able to witness some antisocial behaviour. They were also able to (distantly) meet with Police and other partners for joint visits.

From home, officers continued to provide a telephone service where able to telephone complainers and alleged perpetrators as well as corresponding with written letters and e-mails. They have provided advice and assistance, telephone mediation, issued warning letters where there was evidence to do so and increase partnership working.

INCIDENTS			
No of All ASB Incidents	Jan	Feb	Mar
Bathgate	114	108	81
Count of Case/ Ward - new cases opened	Jan	Feb	Mar
Bathgate	5	4	3

Warnings

Further incidents of a council tenancy being targeted by locals, causing damage and trying to gain entry was received by the SNT. Whilst the tenant was a victim in most of the incidents they were also witnessed causing a disturbance. A warning has been issued due to their behaviour.

A 1st warning was issued to a tenant in the Wester Inch area of Bathgate for a disturbance in the street and since then, no further complaints have been received.

A 2nd and final warning has been issued to a tenant in central Bathgate for creating a disturbance and allowing visitors to do the same. This is being monitored and will be submitted to the Legal team for consideration of an ASBO should complaints continue.

A 1st warning was issued due to information received from Police Scotland when loud music was witnessed following a report by a neighbour. No further incidents have been reported since.

A serious incident was reported by neighbours of a perpetrator involving fire and general ASB. All authorities and relevant services are aware through the weekly TAC process and a 1st warning was issued as a result of the incident.

A 1st warning was served on tenants for incidents relating to shouting, swearing and fighting in the communal areas and repeated COVID breaches.

Letter Drop

Several instances of letter drops being carried out within the area advising customers of reporting mechanisms, should they experience incidents of noise nuisance, resulted in a warning being issued and engagement with a landlord. These have both had a positive effect.

There is 1 interim ASBO in the ward area.

E. CONCLUSION

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

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

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:

None

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Date: 14th June, 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

SERVICE UPDATE – NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE

REPORT BY HEAD OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise members of the recent activity of the NET's, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021.

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to:

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

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

D1 Terms of Report

The report covers the activity for the period 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021.

D2 Grounds Maintenance Routine Works

All winter routine works on shrub beds and hedges was completed in the ward.

NETS and Land Services were highly involved in the winter maintenance programme which lasted for about seven weeks from late December to early February.

Open space grass cutting started on Tuesday 6 April, and we have just finished the third cycle. We are on target to achieve the 12 cuts for the season.

Due to the weather our routine spraying has been put back to late May, roughly four weeks behind.

With the schools requesting sports and athletic marking for their school curriculum, along with the resumption of football matches we are struggling to keep up with demand for line marking.

Enquiries through the Confirm system are being prioritised and dealt with on a daily basis.

Fly tipping and the lifting of refuse sacks generated by West Lothian Litter pickers are also putting pressure on our NETs Teams.

Grounds Maintenance Enquiries

In total 21 ground maintenance related enquiries were received and dealt with during this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Complaint Grounds Maintenance	1	0
Drainage Flooding Grass Areas	0	1
Emergency Tree Out of Hours	0	2
Fencing Enquiries	8	3
Flower Bed or Bulb Displays	1	0
Grass Area Damaged	0	1
Ground Ownership Enquiries	2	0
Grounds Property Vandalised	2	0
Hedge Cutting Enquiries	1	0
Neighbourhood Env. Teams	0	1
Public Park Enquiries	5	1
Shrub Bed Enquiries	0	1
Shrub Bed Overhanging Path	0	3
Shrub Beds Not Maintained	0	1
Sports Facility Enquiries	1	1
Weeds General Enquiries	0	1
Total	21	16

D3 Garden Maintenance Routine Works

The Garden Maintenance Scheme started on 6 April, and we are presently on the third cycle. We are on target to complete the 11-cycle programme.

Garden Maintenance Enquiries

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

	2021	2020
Garden Maintenance Change of Address	1	1
Garden Maintenance General Enquiries	6	2
Total	7	3

D4 Cleaner Communities Routine Works

The Street Cleansing Teams have been reduced in size to comply with social distancing guidelines over the period 1 January – 31 March.

There has also been a further reduction due to self-isolating procedures by some operatives.

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

The compact mechanical street sweeper has continued to sweep footpaths and kerb edges and we have two HGV sweepers that are used to clean roads and channels during this time.

Resources have been redirected when required during this period to deal with leaf fall.

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

Due to Covid-19 and Street Cleansing Staff assisting other Council Services during the pandemic, a tender had been awarded for a contractor to carry out road sweeping of A, B & C roads. This work was completed on 28 March 2021.

Cleaner Communities Enquiries

In total 135 cleaner communities enquiries were received and dealt with during this period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Complaint Street Cleansing	1	0
Dead Animals	3	6
Dog Bin New Request for Bin	0	2
Dog Fouled Grass Open Space	1	2
Dog Fouling on Paths Roads	25	30
Dog No Fouling Sign Request	1	0

Fly Posting	4	0
Fly Tipping Dumping	46	46
Glass on Paths or Open Spaces	1	7
Graffiti Non-Offensive	1	1
Graffiti Racist or Offensive	3	0
Litter Bin Overflowing	3	0
Litter General Enquiries	12	3
Litter Grass Open Space	1	2
Litter Paths Roads Verges	15	27
Needles/Syringes Abandoned	1	1
Street Sweeping Enquiries	5	14
Trolleys Abandoned/Dumped	1	4
Vehicles Abandoned	11	8
Total	135	153

Fly Tipping Enquiries (January-December)

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

Environmental Community Action

The Education, Engagement and Enforcement team have continued to deal with enquiries as they are logged following COVID-19 guidance.

In dealing with abandoned vehicles, Officers have gained compliance from vehicle owners with said vehicles getting removed from the streets and 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 render the necessary assistance needed to encourage the exercise they currently perform.

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

There has been no Fixed Penalty Notices issued in Ward 8 for the period of 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021. For the same period in 2020, there were three Fixed Penalty Notices issued within the Ward.

Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021

Fly tipping is covered by the NETs teams who also carry out other non-routine works for Grounds. We are unable to split costs over specific ward areas or from the other works they carry out, but can give the yearly cost for the NETs teams with an estimate of their time spent on fly tipping which we currently estimate as 85% of their time. For 2020 the estimate was 70% of their time.

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

Fly tipping costs:

1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021	91.2 tonnes
Cost of disposal including costs for NETs team/vehicles	£60,098.04
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL	£60,098.04

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021 for the Ward was 46 out of 730 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 6.3% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 8.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the Ward of £3,787 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 January 2021 and 31 March 2021 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team).

Costs for fly tipping for the period 1 January 2020 – 31 March 2020

1 January 2020 – 31 March 2020	52.42 tonne
Cost of disposal including estimated costs for NETs team/vehicles	£34,543.20
Contractor removal of fly tipping	£0.00
Removal of asbestos	£0.00
TOTAL	£34,543.20

The number of enquiries received between 1 January 2020 – 31 March 2020 for the Ward was 46 out of 504 enquiries for the whole of West Lothian equating to 9.13% of fly tipping enquiries relating to Ward 8.

Percentage wise this would equate to an approximate cost for the ward of £3,153 for disposal of fly tipping between 1 January 2020 and 31 March 2020 including cost for Staff/vehicles. (This does not include the removal of asbestos by the Councils asbestos team).

D5 Parks and Woodland

Parks and Woodland Enquiries

In total there were 28 Tree and Woodland related enquiries were received during this reporting period.

	2021	2020
Tree Advice or Consultations	9	3
Tree Branches Overhanging	2	2
Tree Broken Damaged or Dead	3	1
Tree Dangerous or Unsafe	6	3
Tree Enquiries General	7	6
Tree Leaves Causing Problems	1	2
Total	28	17

	2021	2020
Access Rights Way Core Paths	1	0
Ranger Service Beecraigs	1	0
Ranger Service General Enquiry	2	0
Total	4	0

Ranger Service Update

No. Rights of Way / Core Path / Patrols carried out (hours)	6.5
No. Access Enquiries	3

Ranger Service representatives attended a Zoom call hosted by the Bathgate Hills Project group, to explain our remit in West Lothian, and to outline the limitations and priorities in terms of access. We have also received a request from Bathgate Hills Project for information on existing paths in the hills. A map has been provided highlighting all Parks & Woodlands sites / WLC paths in the hills.

The West Lothian Planning Portal is being monitored weekly to identify applications that have an access or biodiversity impact. A number of planning applications have been commented on regarding access and biodiversity.

The Parks & Woodland team had a meeting with Police Scotland's Rural Crime and Community Liaison Officers to look at closer working relationships and how we can work together to solve some of the anti-social and criminal issues affecting the country parks and wider countryside.

The Ranger Service is getting the first tentative enquiries from schools in regards to a resumption of outdoor education sessions. But given the current surge in access work/enquiries and the doubling of visitor numbers to Parks & Woodlands sites since Covid, (especially the Country Parks), we don't expect to be able to offer such visits this side of the summer holidays. The Ranger Service met with some school representatives from the Skills Centre and Connolly School to advise on how to better integrate outdoor education into their day-to-day learning.

The Country arks have been very busy, with car parks filling up by mid-morning on the nicer weekends. Rangers had to log a call to Police Scotland in regards to irresponsible parking at Balvormie (Beecraigs).

Covid restrictions eased on 26th April, and visitor centres and other facilities at the Country Parks all reopened. Rangers have been inspecting facilities prior to reopening at the three parks, and assisting with duties at Beecraigs reception and caravan & camping site.

The Ranger Service put out two 'Responsible Access' posts on the Council Facebook page in advance of the good weather weekends, and both were well received, with a massive online reach of around 60,000 users per post. Educational posters encouraging responsible access in West Lothian to help avoid conflict with land management operations, have been completed in partnership with local landowners/residents.

Rangers have applied to Nature Scots 'Better Places Green Recovery Fund 2' for four assistant rangers and two assistant operatives to help deal with the increased visitor numbers expected over the next few months at the country parks and other hotspots around the county.

Access

We received a report of barbed wire strewn across paths and around trees at Ravensraig. This was found, cut away and removed by the Ranger Service. Flytipping at Ravensraig was also reported to Waste Services. An additional enquiry was received in regards to the poor state of Ravensraig entrance and paths due to dog waste/litter. A new bin is being trialled at Ravensraig which will be emptied periodically by Waste Services.

There are unofficial mountain bike trails at Ravensraig Woods. Confirm notice raised for tree safety inspection and reported to Parks and Woodland Manager. Awaiting refresher training on plant machinery for operatives before the trails can be demolished.

A patrol was carried out at Little Boghead. Although no major issues were reported, path conditions were scored and other smaller issues were added into the Ranger Services maintenance schedule for future action.

D6 Open Space and Cemeteries

Balbardie Park Play Area, Bathgate. Rotten timber retainer will be removed and a basket swing will be replaced (with two regular swings) in Summer 2021.

Balbardie Park. Funding applications pending.

Meadow Park, Bathgate. Small goal and basketball hoop have been replaced with a new dual-purpose goal (football/basketball).

Kirkton Park Play Area, Bathgate. Replacement of sand toddler/junior play area and other surface upgrades will be complete in Summer/Autumn 2021. Replacement toddler/junior play area will have increased inclusive value.

Wester Inch Pond Play Area, Bathgate. Additional seating overlooking play area and ponds will be installed in May 2021.

Open Space Enquiries

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

	2021	2020
Adopting Childrens Play Areas	1	0
Childrens Play Enquiries	5	6
Complaint Childrens Play Areas	1	0
Total	7	6

Cemeteries Routine Works

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

Cemeteries Enquires

There were 140 Cemeteries enquiries for this reporting period in 2021.

	2021	2020
Bench Donations	1	0
Cemeteries General Enquiries	15	10
Complaint Cemeteries & Burials	0	1
Lair Enquiries	4	7
Lair Sunken or Uneven	1	0
Memorial/ Headstone Works	34	9
New Interment Booking	48	13
Purchase of Interment Lair	37	17
Total	140	57

E CONCLUSION

The Education, Engagement and Enforcement team have continued to deal with enquiries as they are logged following COVID-19 guidance.

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

14 June 2021

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY REGENERATION WARD UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

B. RECOMMENDATION

The Local Area Committee is asked to note Economic Development and Regeneration activity as detailed in this ward report.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	Appropriate assessments will be carried out as re
III Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV Impact on performance and performance Indicators	There is no impact. Performance indicators relating to this activity are captured within the community regeneration key performance indicators.
V Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	There are positive impacts on the following SOA indicators: SOA1 – we make West Lothian an attractive place to do business 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

SOA10 – we live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access services we need.

SOA12 – we value and enjoy our built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.

VI Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)

The activities set out are funded from existing budgets and relevant external sources.

£1.826 million is to be made available through the Town Centre Fund 2019-20 and £658,000 from the Town Centre Fund 2020-21.

Bathgate ward has been allocated a share of this overall budget, representing £161,674 in 2019-20 and additional £59,124 in 2020-21.

VII Consideration at PDSP

Not applicable

VIII Other Consultations

None

D TERMS OF THE REPORT

D.1 Background

This report updates the Elected Members on the work of the Community Planning and Regeneration Team and its local partners to support communities within the Bathgate ward, as one of 13 areas covered by the local plans required by the Scottish Government as part of their Community Empowerment approach and reported through the Community Planning Partnership.

The Bathgate areas were identified as priority areas due to being within the least prosperous 20% of data zones in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

D.2. Locality Regeneration Planning in Bathgate

Since March 2020 the focus of regeneration and related activity within the Bathgate ward has been to support the local community and business during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst current restrictions remain in place, considerable time and support has more recently been extended to assist those local groups in achieving implementation of town centre capital projects.

With these projects nearing completion a meeting of Bathgate Locality Regeneration Partners Group is planned for the last week in June to discuss current activity and needs in the town and update the local plan. This will be the first opportunity to share experiences from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and identify the key local issues that will help to update the plan and identify actions going forward. It will also provide an opportunity to consider future group structure, meetings and planning.

D.2. Bathgate Town Centre

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

At recent meetings, it was agreed to focus on identifying potential new capital projects and improvements for implementation, with one potential reference being the approved Bathgate Public Realm Design Guide and the more recent Review documentation prepared by Council officers and considered at the Council's Development and Transport PDSP in December 2020. Furthermore, a local community and town centre user survey is being developed to be undertaken during the Summer 2021, the purpose of this being the gauging of views and perceptions around Bathgate town centre and from there what improvements or additional services people would like to see provided.

Bathgate town centre acts as a focal point and 'hub' for community employment opportunities, services and amenities. The town centre is subject to a quarterly occupancy survey as one measure of its relative vitality and viability. In April 2021, the vacancy rate of 7.1%, was noted, although this does not take account of properties subject to refurbishment at the time of survey. The figures have also required to take account of any COVID-19 temporary restrictions that may have continued to be in place at time of survey. To provide some context, Bathgate continues to position itself favourably in relation to wider national vacancy rates for Scotland (10.6%) and UK (11.5%) as based on the published Springboard national vacancy survey research. It should be observed that this is an improvement from the Bathgate recent peak vacancy of 9% back in July 2019.

Bathgate town centre traders and local businesses continue to be eligible to apply for capital grant assistance through the shop front improvement scheme. This supports with costs associated with making external property frontage improvements. Since inception of the current operational scheme (September 2020) there have been 5 grant awards made and paid in full. There remains continuing interest from new and existing businesses in this supporting initiative which is being promoted across Council services with clients and business as appropriate. The scheme is funded through the budgetary allocation made from Council's Bathgate Town Centre Improvement Fund, which forms part of the Council's capital programme (as above).

The local elected members will be familiar from previous reports made to Committee, that officers from Community Planning and Regeneration have been, and continue to actively support local community groups to deliver a number of Scottish Government funded town centre capital projects. This involves 12 projects within Bathgate (7 in 2019/20 and 5 in 2020/21). The projects to date have all be contracted out within the prescribed timeline of 31 March 2021, and officers continue to expend significant time and support to grantees, alongside Council services, to ensure that all projects and components are completed by the September 2021 reporting deadline. It is planned to

provide a further update report to the Local Area Committee at the next cycle meeting in August and then November 2021.

D.3. Enterprising Bathgate

Enterprising Bathgate, the Bathgate Business Improvement District (BID) continues to support local businesses and traders during these challenging times of economic recovery. The BID has been supported during May 2021 by Council officers from Economic Development & Regeneration in their application submission to Scotland's Towns Partnership through the third phase of COVID-19 funding.

The BID is seeking to secure around £10,000 via the BID Recovery and Development Fund, to assist with undertaking localised promotional and marketing activities in Bathgate town centre, from June 2021 to March 2022. This will aim to complement the Scotland Loves Local national campaign, through encouraging and emphasizing a 'think local first' and shop local message. If successful, this will enable them to build upon the work and funding previously secured through earlier funding grants in 2020.

D.4 Bathgate Partnership Centre

At the time of writing this report, Bathgate Partnership Centre remains closed to the wider Bathgate community. Whilst most services had ceased face to face contact, Council staff continue to provide service remotely with limited staff working from inside the building. Staff within the Bathgate CIS operate the appointment phone line booking appointments for customers in other local offices.

The payment office remains open for customers to continue to make payments to their rent and council tax, although it was encouraged that customers used other methods to make payments: for example, either online or over the telephone. In the period from 1 February 2021 to 30 April 2021, 278 welfare fund crisis payments (£42,665) had been paid, and during that time 3,917 transactions made equating to £467,474.20 in income collected.

West Lothian Libraries are still operating a click and collect/phone and collect service for customers. From 26 April 2021, Simpson Library has offered customers an appointments system, allowing customers to book an appointment to browse or book a public access PC. This has since been rolled out to other West Lothian libraries where they are all offering click and collect and an appointment system.

The Simpson Library had 1,345 issues during the February, March and April 2021 reporting period. New Members continue to join the library completing online memberships. Simpson Library has run online Bookbug sessions, Easter Bonnet Crafts with Balbardie Primary School, and a creative writing course for 6 weeks.

Bathgate Community Centre within Bathgate Partnership Centre continue to open offering a restricted service to user groups, including the Bathgate playgroup providing morning sessions to under 3 years old on a Monday and Wednesday.

The Bathgate Registration Office continues to offer an appointment system for customers, to allow them to sign/pick up registration certificates only: with all other registration services being completed over the telephone.

Bathgate Partnership Centre was utilised as an COVID asymptomatic testing centre for a period of 2 weeks at the end of April 2021, before moving to Linlithgow Burgh Halls. This was fully operational over 7 days with the approval from the Management Committee of the Bathgate Community Centre.

D.5. Reconnect Regal Theatre

In March 2018, following a period of community consultation on proposals for the future use of the Regal Theatre, the Council Executive approved a five-year lease of the Regal Theatre to Reconnect SCIO. The business plan proposed that Reconnect would operate the Regal as a community theatre space and use the venue to promote a range of art, music and drama related activities.

In October 2019, following initial discussion with Council officers on future plans for the building, a successful funding application was made through the Town Centre Capital Fund 2019-20 by Reconnect. This along with committed funds previously secured (£55,000) allowed investment to improve exterior of the Regal. This painting, lighting and replacement window work will all be complete by late Summer 2021, following COVID-19 delays.

Through ongoing dialogue with Reconnect, officers are aware of their plans for theatre redevelopment and upgrade of facilities. This can best be explained in three individual and directly interlinking capital components, with a preference should funding become available for all three components to be completed as a package.

Theatre Modernisation (Stage 1) would comprise the redevelopment of the ground floor foyer/bar; the first, second and third floor renovations; and auditorium restoration. The estimated indicative costs for the improvement package would be up to £1.08 million (plus VAT). This can be split: redevelopment of ground floor foyer and bar (£280,000); first and second floor renovations (£350,000); and auditorium restoration (£450,000).

At the Council Executive meeting on 8 June 2021 it was agreed that the Council would submit a Stage 1 application to the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund scheme in 2021 to support the Reconnect Regal Theatre deliver Stage 1 of the work. Officers will work with the Regal Reconnect to ensure the application is submitted by the deadline on the 17 June 2021.

A second ambitious and aspirational proposal has also been developed to create The Beacon (Stage 2), which would comprise redevelopment of Auditorium and Creation of New part of the Building to the Rear. A new fly tower would also be added to make the Regal Theatre viable for national and international touring shows. The indicative costs for this advanced stage of works would be £8 million. This is clearly a vision for the venue's future which encompasses and would build on stage 1. Officers are working with Reconnect to seek to identify suitable funding opportunities.

D.6. Boghall Drop In Centre

Boghall Drop In Centre has continued to provide a comprehensive range of socially distanced services, activities and support to the local community in Boghall and wider Bathgate, in the period since the initial lockdown was put in place in March 2020. This has included, but not exhaustively:

- Activity packs - covering arts & Crafts/gardening/toys/STEM packs/cooking from March 2020 until February 2021. Increased during Summer/October and Easter breaks.
- Food Parcels - Started on Monday the 23rd of March 2020 (twice a week until June 2020 then weekly) until March 2021.
- Weekly online Bingo for families and individuals
- Social Distance walking Group and Renegade

- Daily lunch provisions from March 2020 to July 2020 and then Monday to Friday until October 2020.
- Family Cooking Bags - with ingredients at regular periods including Breakfast bags for school breaks.
- Big Camp OOt - 50 free tents given away and 15 Family BBQ packs. Kids Camping bags giveaway.
- Free treat bags for children at Gala Day and Halloween event.
- Christmas food parcels for families, and present support and gifting
- Special days for Mothers day with 30 mothers getting an afternoon Tea and gift box.

More recently there has been a bike club for children (high level of interest); 3 new youth clubs - aimed at Primary 1 to 3; Primary 4 to 7; and Primary 7 to Secondary year 6. (high level of interest at each club). PC computer access for job searches has resumed and there are plans to introduce the drama class in person in June 2021.

At the time of writing this report, the Board are considering several events and proposals for services during the summer period for children and young people. An application has been submitted for support from the Council via the 'West Lothian Summer of Play'.

D.7. Employability Support

Access2employment provides employability support to residents across West Lothian. Support is provided to residents who are unemployed and who are in employment but are in uncertain employment or are struggling financially to make ends meet. Support is provided via 1 to 1's with individual clients and through the delivery of a range of courses including one day specific courses to 6-week personal development and employability courses, Women n2 Work and Men n2 Work. Advisers will work with clients until they have met their individual goals to secure sustainable employment including better paid employment and education opportunities.

In 2020/ 21 the service moved supported remotely during the pandemic with 1 to 1 support and courses being delivered remotely via video calls, web-based platforms, emails and the telephone. The service was expanded to provide support in the evenings and weekends to meet the needs of clients whose life circumstances had changed as a result of the pandemic.

The service developed a weekly bulletin that contain information on the latest local vacancies for West Lothian Job seekers. This is sent weekly to job seekers and services supporting clients. It is shared through social media and websites, and all partners and stakeholders are encouraged to share onwards. The service also introduced a service offer to support parents who are currently unemployed or in work but in insecure employment or financially struggling.

Despite the pandemic and the impact this has had on West Lothian residents the engagement by clients has been high. The service delivered the following during 2020/21:

- 814 new clients registered with the service
- 1645 existing clients received support during the year
- 264 clients were supported into a positive destination including finding work or starting further or higher education

- 41 short employment skills workshops, which focused on topics such as CV building, interview skills and applying for vacancies, were delivered with 161 participants attending
- 7 well-being workshops were delivered which focused on health and well-being with 45 participants attending
- Women n2 Work delivered 5 six-week courses and Men n2 Work delivered 1 six-week course, in total 31 clients attended
- A vacancy bulletin was created which is sent to 850 clients directly and 155 individuals within community groups, council services and schools each week
- The service introduced a project to support parents both who are unemployed and underemployed
- The service introduced additional support for young people through the introduction of Kick Start and the Young Person's Guarantee

In the Bathgate ward 95 new residents registered with the service, with 37 being supported into employment, education or training.

A community leaflet has been designed by the Access2employment team to highlight the work of the team, how they are working, how to get in contact with them and the type of support they are offering. This is intended to be shared through local networks to promote the service, promote its new way of working and reach those that might not be aware of the service and how it can be of support.

D.8. Other Ward Activity

Bathgate Community Development Trust has continued to have a monthly meeting open to its members and held online until restrictions allow otherwise. The recent focus of the Trust activities has been on carrying out a community survey in relation to any aspiration for improvements to amenities at Meadow Park, Bathgate.

Bathgate Community Development Trust is also now an active participant in Bathgate Town Centre Management Group have attended their first meeting in May 2021.

Representatives of both the Bathgate Community Council and Bathgate Community Development Trust have recently met with Council colleagues from Housing Strategy and Development in relation to sites at Mid Street and Marjoribanks Street, Bathgate (see Housing ward report, local new build update). This was arranged in the context of the future redevelopment plans of the sites as part of delivery of the Council's new build housing programme for the Bathgate area.

Persimmon Homes has recently submitted their Proposal of Application notice to the Council in respect of their proposal to develop the remaining undeveloped land (e.g. neighbourhood centre area) off Leyland Road out at Wester Inch. This refers to mixed use development including residential (up to 61 new homes, 19 affordable tenure), commercial, retail and land for a future community facility (Class 10).

The period of consultation for comment closed at end of May 2021, and feedback will help to inform their forthcoming planning application. This was also to include meeting and consulting with WICA and Bathgate Community Council.

E. CONCLUSION

Elected Members are asked to note the range of activities taking place across the Bathgate ward, by the Council's Economic Development and Regeneration service and local partners, and in particular work to help regenerate our local communities.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:
None

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Craig McCorrison
Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration

Date: 14 June 2021

BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

	Agenda Item	Purpose	Lead Officer	Date
1	Police Scotland Report	Quarterly update	Sgt Keith Jack	June 2021
2	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Report	Quarterly update	Stuart McNiven	June 2021
3	Housing Ward Report	Quarterly update	Kate Ward	June 2021
4	NETS Land and Countryside Services Ward Update	Quarterly update	Tony Fleming	June 2021
5	Community Regeneration Ward Update	Quarterly update	Nairn Pearson	June 2021
6	Workplan	Update on forward reports	Nairn Pearson	June 2021
1	Police Scotland Report	Quarterly update	Sgt Keith Jack	August 2021
2	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Report	Quarterly update	Stuart McNiven	August 2021
3	Housing Ward Report	Quarterly update	Kate Ward	August 2021
4	NETS Land and Countryside Services Ward Update	Quarterly update	Tony Fleming	August 2021
5	Community Regeneration Ward Update	Quarterly update	Nairn Pearson	August 2021
6	Headteacher School Presentation	Annual update	Grant Abbot/Andrew Sharkey	August 2021
7	Workplan	Update on forward reports	Nairn Pearson	August 2021