

HEALTH AND PLANNING ALARM

The Joint Forum Executive is very concerned about two problems we have here in West Lothian which are concerning our Health Forum and our Planning Forum which have become linked in recent days.

The first concerns the House Building pressures from developers with little regard to the infrastructure and public services required to serve an expanding population that development brings. The Joint Forum has warned that building houses without investment in health power transport and sewage services will bring problems we don't need and will be difficult to solve.

The second concerns the local health services that we all depend on particularly the vulnerable relying on care services and those on waiting lists for operations.

Both topics were brought together in a report this week to the Integrated Joint Board for Health and Care in West Lothian. The report highlights the staffing shortages in Care at Home service which might result in visits not taking place or family being asked to cover their relative's needs.

It then goes on to report that almost 12 thousand new homes are planned to be built in West Lothian by 2017 with most of them in the east part of the area. Another 8 thousand homes are planned beyond that date. This will bring huge demand and pressure on GP's practices in the area beyond their existing resources. This comes at a time when the Health Board halted non urgent elective surgery at St Johns Hospital due to staff shortages and high rates of covid cases. Effectively stopping any catch up on waiting lists for operations and this effects every community.

We are concerned that the Health and Care services in west Lothian cannot cope at the moment and the future looks even worse if nothing is done.

This situation is drastic and consequently we are requesting that community councils put this on their agenda to discuss the situation and raise their concerns with their local councillors, MSP's and MPs.

We have attached the Health Chiefs Report below for your information