

factfile09

Introduction

This is a summary of West Lothian Council's annual report. We have taken the step of publishing this overview to reduce costs and our environmental impact. With more than 100 services it's not possible to mention all of our activities here, however, the full version is available to read online at www.westlothian.gov.uk/factfile or ask at any Council Information Services (CIS) centre or library and they will provide a printout for you.

Welcome

This publication reflects the council's progress during 2008/09 and is based on the work set out in the Corporate Plan 2007/11. Each section has been written to give you an overview of our activities and an outline of what we expect to achieve during 2009/10.

The past year has seen significant progress in many areas across the council. A major achievement was the completion by the Community Planning Partnership of West Lothian's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The SOA is essentially an improvement plan, which identifies the 12 key areas that the partners want to address over the next three years.

Earlier this year we worked closely with Lothian and Borders Police and other Community Planning Partners on Operation Focus, which saw a drive to remove drug dealers from our streets and an environmental push to clean up the communities involved.

Work progressed well on our two new secondary schools. Armadale Academy and Deans Community High School, a combined investment of £60 million, will be opened later this year. Work is also nearing completion on the major refurbishments at Inveralmond Community High School, The James Young High School and St Kentigern's Academy.

Livingston Leisure Pool (formerly Bubbles) had a major £4 million refurbishment following a fire. Work on a new £9.6 million swimming pool complex for Bathgate was started - to reduce energy costs and help the environment we installed wind turbines which will create enough energy for the pool and sports centre. Howden Park Centre

reopened following a stunning £6 million redevelopment and the £4.6 million reconstruction project at the Burgh Halls, Linlithgow started.

Our traditional town centres have benefited from funding of £250,000 to enable them to take forward improvement plans. A further pot of £163,000 is available to enable towns to bid for funding on a project basis. A highlight of the year was to see work progressing on the first phase of 248 new council houses and the announcement of phase two - a further 452 new homes.

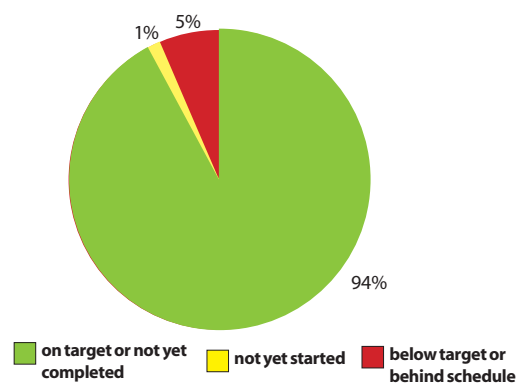
As we look to the future there is no doubt that the current recession will have serious consequences for the council. We expect budget restrictions in the near future to severely hamper our short-, medium- and long-term plans and drastically constrain spending. Our aim is to engage fully with communities to identify core needs. We will continue to work with our partners to investigate how we can work more efficiently and update you on our progress.



Peter Johnston
Leader of West Lothian Council



Alex Linkston
Chief Executive



| | on target or completed | not yet started | below target or behind schedule |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Planning for population growth | 116 | 0 | 5 |
| Improving health and wellbeing | 147 | 7 | 2 |
| Improving opportunities for young people | 135 | 0 | 2 |
| Maximising the efficiency of our services | 497 | 6 | 34 |
| Strengthening our economy | 71 | 0 | 12 |
| Protecting our environment and communities | 224 | 0 | 5 |
| Money matters | 58 | 0 | 3 |
| Total : | 1,248 | 13 | 63 |

The numbers in the table represent the volume of performance indicators or initiatives that support the objectives of the Corporate Plan and each one of them is used to drive the achievement of our aims and priorities. Within the Corporate Plan there are 388 objectives, supported by over 1,300 indicators or initiatives.

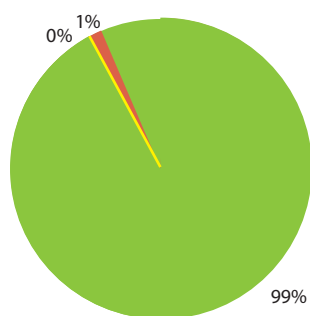
West Lothian Council delivers

westlothian.gov.uk



Improving opportunities for young people

We have developed evaluation techniques, important strategies and management systems to make sure that our services are effective and efficient and that we meet your needs. We use technology Improving opportunities for young people means developing their skills and helping them to become active in their communities, improving their quality of life. By focusing on young people we will provide the foundation for a stronger economy and improve the wellbeing of everyone in West Lothian in the future. to help you use our services in ways that will help us develop and work even more efficiently and effectively.



■ on target or completed
■ not yet started
■ below target or behind schedule

| | on target or completed | not yet started | below target or behind schedule |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| We will raise standards of educational attainment and achievement . | 29 | 0 | 1 |
| We will improve the learning environment . | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| We will promote equality and inclusion . | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| We will develop values and citizenship . | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| We will promote learning for life, and encourage a creative, enterprising and ambitious outlook . | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| We will promote community learning and development . | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| We will meet the cultural entitlement of all pupils . | 11 | 0 | 1 |
| We will promote health, physical activity and participation in sport . | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Total : | 135 | 0 | 2 |

Raising the attainment, achievement and qualifications of school leavers, and encouraging an enterprising attitude

5-14 Attainment

Over the five year period 2004/08 there has been very good progress in all areas of primary attainment, and the percentage (%) of children attaining at or above the appropriate level for their stage has improved in all measures of attainment. There has also been improvement in secondary 5-14 attainment, and the percentage attaining at or above the appropriate level in S2 has risen in all measures.

% of pupils achieving appropriate level P3/P4/P6/P7

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Reading | 82 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 84 |
| Writing | 76 | 76 | 78 | 78 | 79 |
| Maths | 84 | 83 | 84 | 86 | 86 |

% of pupils achieving Level E or above in S2

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Reading | 68 | 72 | 67 | 70 | 69 |
| Writing | 52 | 60 | 57 | 59 | 61 |
| Maths | 60 | 63 | 68 | 64 | 64 |

Standard Grade (SG) attainment

Over the five-year period 2004/08 attainment remains above that of comparator authorities in all cases, and above or equal to the national average. The % of pupils attaining SG English at Level 3 (Foundation) has risen, as has the % of pupils attaining SG mathematics. Attainment

in English and mathematics at SG Level 3 (Foundation) outperforms comparator authorities and the national average.

% of pupils achieving Standard Grade Examinations

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | National 2008 | Comparator 2008 |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------|-----------------|
| 5+ Standard Grade Level 5 | 36 | 33 | 36 | 33 | 34 | 34 | 31 |
| 5+ Standard Grade Level 4 | 78 | 77 | 80 | 75 | 77 | 76 | 75 |
| 5+ Standard Grade Level 3 | 94 | 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 90 | 91 |

% of Pupils achieving Standard Grade English and Mathematics at Level 3

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | National 2008 | Comparator 2008 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------|-----------------|
| English Level 3 | 96 | 97 | 96 | 97 | 97 | 94 | 94 |
| Maths Level 3 | 95 | 98 | 97 | 97 | 97 | 94 | 94 |
| English & maths Level 3 | 94 | 95 | 95 | 96 | 94 | 91 | 92 |

Over the five-year period 2004/08 attainment at Higher Level has remained static, in line with Scottish trends. Attainment in West Lothian has outperformed comparator authorities, although it remains below the national average.

% of pupils achieving Higher Grade Examinations

| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | National 2008 | Comparator 2008 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|---------------|-----------------|
| 3+ Higher | 21 | 21 | 19 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 18 |
| 5+ Higher | 9 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 7 |

Transition to work

We worked towards our target of increasing the % of young people progressing to work, training and further and higher education. We conducted an audit of current support for young people from schools and external providers and developed school based initiatives, early intervention in primary schools, and support for individual pupils, and shared good practice.

We established transition to work co-ordinators in all secondary schools and provided more quality work experience placements within West Lothian Council. We worked in partnership with more

than 500 employers to provide quality work experience of one week or longer for our pupils. We increased extended work experience placements to better meet the needs of all pupils, including the group in need of 'more choices, more chances'.

We worked in partnership with the Careers Service, West Lothian College and other further education establishments and the business community to provide more training places to provide more choices and more chances to school leavers

Improving the learning environment

We met Scottish Government targets to increase the hours of pre-school education available to all children in council and partner provision from 412.5 hours to 475 hours from August '07. A qualified teacher now leads all pre-school education provision in West Lothian.

We built a new early year's centre in Addiewell to improve the quality of preschool facilities and deliver multi-agency support for pre-school children.

We provided new nursery accommodation at Armadale and Parkhead primary schools, two additional class bases at St Nicholas RC Primary School, an additional class base and a new hall at Williamston Primary

School, and additional class bases to allow for class size reductions, including at Balbardie, Carmondean, Livingston Village, Peel primary schools.

We started refurbishment at Inveralmond Community High School, The James Young High School and St Kentigern's Academy. The new secondary schools - Deans Community High School and Armadale Academy will open in August '09.

We made significant progress towards meeting the class size reduction targets set by the Scottish Government, with 24.8% of P1-3 pupils in classes of 18 or less, amongst the highest percentages in Scotland.

Promoting community learning and development

We are increasing the Community Learning and Development staff resource to deliver literacy and core skills learning to young adults in the 'more choices, more chances' category to support them in obtaining and sustaining employment, with a significant increase in the number of young people benefiting.

We trained six staff to deliver English as a second or other language to a recognised, accredited standard to provide an improved service in the community, with a significant increase in the number of learners.

- 3,949 young people participated in a range of summer activities
- 2,073 young people attend 75 youth clubs every week
- 572 children attended 28 children's clubs
- 4,138 young people took part in democratic literacy events
- 632 young people participated in Duke of Edinburgh's Award

Promoting community learning and development *continued*

Library Services completed improvements to a number of its buildings - Almondbank and Whitburn libraries, and Carmondean Connected.

Libraries continued to welcome and involve young people with programmes such as Bookstart, the 'Chatter-Books' reader groups,

after-school clubs, story-time sessions, the 'Big Wild Read' summer reading scheme, the Young Writer of the Year competition. Books and other resources were provided to schools to assist in the delivery of the curriculum.

Developing cultural entitlement

Pupils were given the opportunity to experience and enjoy the arts through instrumental and cultural programmes and opportunities to participate in international links and exchanges.

- The Spring Concert Series showcased the outstanding musical talents of 100s of pupils.
- 16 members of the West Lothian Schools Fiddle Group and Pipe Band visited Grapevine, Texas.
- The West Lothian Schools Symphony Orchestra participated in a successful tour of Seville.
- West Lothian Schools Brass Band won The Scottish Youth Brass Band Championships for the fourth time.

- Pupils from Stoneyburn and Kirknewton primary schools exhibited art in London, as part of the final event in the 'Create a Quest' project.
- Pupils from Broxburn and Bathgate academies presented plays at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh as part of Class Act project.
- 16 pupils successfully obtained Highers in dance.
- West Calder High School's Senior Wind Band won the Gold Award at the National Concert Band Festival in Cardiff in April.
- More than 2,200 pupils received free instrumental music lessons in schools and we introduced bagpipe tuition in schools and 45 pupils are now receiving instruction.

Promoting health, physical activity and participation in sport

West Lothian has continued to develop a sports programme in secondary schools to allow talented young people to access good quality coaching and sports-leadership training. We have also developed multi-activity after-school clubs for primary school children to promote physical activity as a way of improving their health and wellbeing. More than 50 schools are now involved in the Active Schools Charter.

Communities will benefit from a new 25-metre competition swimming pool at Deans Community High School and the sports facilities at the new Armadale Academy.

We have implemented a Schools' Health Policy to improve health education and the health and wellbeing of our population.

2008/09 provided exciting and challenging sporting opportunities in West Lothian. Almost 200 activity clubs were organised at lunchtime or after-school. The innovative Excellence in School Sports Programme (ESSP) has attracted 65 of West Lothian's top young athletes. More than 50 schools are now involved in the Active School Charter and all schools have access to an Active Schools Coordinator.

A Street Football pilot ran for 12 weeks to end of May and the Midnight Football teams in the Under 17 and under 14 categories reached the final of the SFA regional event with the under 17s being successful and the under 14s losing by one goal.

The Outdoor Education Summer programme had a 87% take-up with activity sessions delivered in a wide range of activities such as sailing, kayaking and canoeing. Almost 300 people attended First Aid training at the Low Port Outdoor Centre.

Swim West Lothian took 30 swimmers to an international event in Germany and made a splash with 43 medals and many 'personal bests' achieved during the weekend event.

Club Accreditation continues to grow from strength to strength with clubs now working at all three levels of accreditation. Broxburn United Football Club started a major development to provide increased changing and a 3G pitch. Construction of the new Bathgate Swimming pool is underway with work expected to be completed next spring. The development of Eliburn and Limefield parks is also underway and planning permission has been secured for Linlithgow Skateboard Park.

Play parks

During 2008/09 we invested £675,000 improving and upgrading play parks and facilities for young people at Chestnut Grove Craigshill, West Calder, Dechmont Park, Hunter Grove Park Whitburn, Knightsridge, Douglas Park Linlithgow, Peel Park Eliburn, Philipstoun Park, Polkemmet Country park, rear of Springfield Primary School Linlithgow and Torphichen Park.

Next year we will:

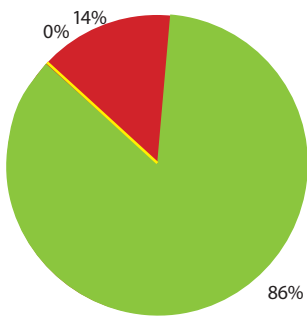
- Support learning and teaching through the full implementation of GLOW – the national intranet for education - across West Lothian schools in a three-year period.
- Open Armadale Academy and Deans Community High School in August '09.
- Provide new full-sized synthetic turf pitches as part of the development of new secondary schools at Deans Community High School and Armadale Academy.
- Focus on young adults in the 'more choices, more chances' group, and on literacy and core skills learning for adults, to improve their chances of sustainable employment.
- Open the new Bathgate Swimming Pool.
- Continue to develop the Champions in School project, which involves athletes in working with young people to improve their lifestyle and recognise and develop winning characteristics in their own lives.
- Implement the West Lothian Cultural Strategy to ensure that the cultural entitlement of all citizens is met.
- Serve healthy and nutritious food to encourage greater uptake of school meals.
- Invest over £600,000 in local play areas and play provision for our young people, as part of a 10-year investment plan in Children's Play Areas. Parks for investment this year include: Bellsquarry Park, Burghmuir Park Bathgate, Crathes gardens Livingston, Crofthead Community Centre, Fiddich Drive Muireston, Harrysmuir Pumpherstoun, Kaimes Court Kirkton, Langrigg Ave Fauldhouse, Langton View east Calder, Loch Trool Way Whitburn, Millbank Place Uphall, Parklands Broxburn, Polkemmet Drive Greenrigg, Stonebank Ladywell.
- Invest £200,000 on substantial neighbourhood play facility at Heatherbank, Ladywell.
- Implement sports strategies for indoor and outdoor facilities and use of school premises.
- Add Badminton to the ESSP.
- Produce a schools sports calendar.
- Develop the outdoor spaces at the Low Port Centre with a Lottery Grant.
- Combine all Sport and Outdoor Education Service teams to work co-operatively to develop sport in West Lothian.
- Open Eliburn Park with a six-team changing facility and three pitches.
- Replace synthetic pitches at Bankton Mains.
- Develop athletics facility at Craigswood in Livingston.
- Complete improved park improvements at Blaeberry Park central in Whitburn, Craigs Park green in Craigshill, Edmonton green Howden, Ennis Park, Limefield Park Polbeth, Greenrigg Park, Heatherbank Park, Letham Park, Loganlea Park, Mosswood playing fields Knightsridge, Murrayfield Park Blackburn, Red Craigs open space East Calder, West Rigg Park Blackridge.
- Organise a trip to Grapevine for our schools Wind Band and continue with golfing links.

Facts:

- More than 50 schools are now involved in the Active School Charter.
- During 2008/09 we invested £675,000 improving and upgrading play parks.
- 3,949 young people participated in a range of summer activities.
- 2,073 young people attend 75 youth clubs every week.

Making our economy stronger

West Lothian is a great place to live, work, visit and develop a business, and we want to build on that reputation. A wealthy community is one that can only be achieved through a varied and dynamic business base and a skilled and motivated workforce. We will work with our partners to create the conditions for our economy to grow, promoting West Lothian to attract and keep businesses and jobs, and we will deliver services and projects focused on contributing towards a successful community.



■ on target or completed
■ not yet started
■ below target or behind schedule

| | on target or completed | not yet started | below target or behind schedule |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| We will promote enterprise . | 15 | 0 | 1 |
| We will encourage better, sustainable, growing businesses . | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| We will improve people's skills . | 19 | 0 | 4 |
| We will connect people to good jobs . | 15 | 0 | 1 |
| We will improve transport and infrastructure . | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| We will create vibrant and sustainable places and communities . | 11 | 0 | 6 |
| Total : | 71 | 0 | 12 |

Meeting the challenge

2008/09 saw the onset of a deep and long recession affecting many areas of the local economy, with implications for many of the council's business and employment services.

One direct impact has been increased demand across areas such as support to existing businesses, assistance to individuals interested in starting their own business, especially after redundancy, redundancy response and continued delivery of employability services for the increasing numbers out of work.

West Lothian's upbeat annual economic conference in the spring provided the ideal opportunity for local business and policy makers to assess the impact of the recession, as well as to consider how best to turn challenges into opportunities.

We developed a new monthly key economic indicators ezine and improved credit crunch monitoring information.

Economic strategy

West Lothian is an important contributor to Scotland's economy with a strong presence in key economic sectors. Key objectives towards the goal of growing and strengthening the West Lothian economy are outlined in the council-led West Lothian Economic Partnership's current economic strategy, including fostering innovation to develop new markets, products, processes and services.

Progress against five strategic targets surrounding jobs, pay levels, educational attainment, school leavers progressing to higher education and economic activity was reported on in our Economic Review 2009.

New household projections show that the number of households in West Lothian is projected to grow by 35% from 70,240 households in 2006 (most recent) to 94,950 households in 2031. This remains the highest growth rate in Scotland.

Our working age population is set to rise by 20% by 2024 – the biggest increase in Scotland.

Property market

The West Lothian commercial property sector continued to expand in 2008/09 despite the downturn. Elements Square, the £130 million extension to the Almondvale Shopping Centre, Livingston, opened in October '08. It has attracted anchor stores Debenhams and Marks & Spencer, and created 34 new shop units plus seven restaurants and two multi-storey car parks.

The office sector has also seen growth this year with the opening of the £2.8 million Evans Easyspace Business Centre in Easter Inch, Bathgate, already almost 50% let and comprising 33 offices, nine workshops and 27 self storage units. The new Houstoun Business Park development from the Business Homes CALA Ltd partnership, was also completed and features 10 self-contained two storey office buildings with utilities firm Clancy Docwra moving their Scottish operations to the site. Gladman also finished the initial phase of its development at Eliburn

Office Park, while Miller Developments opened eight new office pavilions at Alba Business Park.

Other private sector developments started during the year include construction training firm Sibbald Ltd's £1.2 million expansion of their training facility at Blackridge and French headquartered distiller Glen Turner's expansion at Starlaw Park, Bathgate with additional warehousing capacity as well as new grain and malt distilleries.

A unique creative industries centre in West Lothian has also been provided with the £3.5 million restoration of 18th century Blackburn House.

The council continues to extend its portfolio of business properties and make them available on terms not otherwise easily available.

Employment change

Latest annual employment statistics (ABI 2007) show total jobs in West Lothian at 74,700, a slight fall from the previous year's figure of 75,400. The figure also predates the worst of the current economic downturn and the total jobs are likely to be lower when 2008 figures are released. There have been significant changes in the sectoral structure of the local economy, with a switch from manufacturing and assembly, particularly electronics jobs, to service-based employment. Sectors including retail, construction, and transport and communication continued to experience growth at that time. However other areas of the service sector such as banking and administration fell slightly while manufacturing jobs also continued to decline.

The latest economic activity rate is 82.7%, a level that has been consistent over the last three years. There has however, been an increase in the total economically active population to 91,000, as the working age population of the area continues to increase.

Over the last year, unemployment in West Lothian rose sharply from 2.1% in April '08 to 4.2% in April '09. It is now slightly higher than the Scottish average of 3.9% and the Great Britain average of 4.1%.

Supporting people into work

Through a network of locally based information and support services for jobseekers branded **access2employment**, we assisted 1,781 jobseekers during the year, some 774 of whom subsequently found a job.

A high level of redundancy response activity was undertaken in companies such as Shin-Etsu, Jabil Circuits, Alex Miller Homes, RR

Donnelly (Banta), Land of Leather, Sun Microsystems, WL Gore, Caradale Bricks and Mahle Engineering.

Job specific training was funded for Railtrack with eight individuals taking part, six of whom have moved into work. A retail training programme for Marks & Spencer was also undertaken with 12 participants, nine of which secured jobs. We also commissioned a study to quantify the training capacity gap in West Lothian.

More choices, more chances

To ensure that all young people leaving education for the first time are supported through 'more choices and more chances'.

During 2008/09 we:

- rolled out the **Neet@night** project to engage young people who would not normally access the services of careers or employment advisers in four areas - Stoneyburn, Winchburgh, Knightsridge and Polbeth
- key workers supported 50 statutory winter 2008 leavers from Whitburn Academy and Deans Community High School

- helped young people in Craigshill, Ladywell and Polkemmet to benefit from a Venture Skills pilot project funded through Jobcentre Plus

We have integrated literacies in all 'Get ready for Work' provision while providing opportunities to work towards a Youth Achievement Award at Bronze level. We have also worked in partnership to provide courses such as Driving Theory, DOSH (understanding money matters) and SAVVY (simple accounts and finance).

Supporting business

The council supports the growth of new and established indigenous companies and works to grow the base of internationally competitive businesses. We aim to support the emergence of key sectors and clusters of knowledge based businesses including assistance to business moving into the area. These services are promoted primarily through the Business Gateway brand and delivered through the Enterprise Centre, Livingston.

During 2008/09, along with other local authorities, the council has been involved in the team negotiating with Government over the final transfer of national Business Gateway functions and local regeneration from Scottish Enterprise to local government.

In 2008/09 we assisted some 855 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Of these, 142 received consultancy support, 24 received project grants. Some 447 jobs in total were generated by the start-ups and growing SMEs that we supported over the year. To help local companies beat the credit crunch we developed a programme of targeted support, including a number of new workshops.

We launched the West Lothian Loan Fund in August '08 offering gap funding of up to £30,000 to support small and medium sized firms with business change projects. We continued to support West Lothian Women in Business. The group, which provides a supportive environment for women to meet and do business, held their annual awards and celebrated their tenth anniversary in May '08.

We partnered West Lothian College and West Lothian Chamber of Commerce on the Business4Growth workforce development programme, which was granted ESF funding for a further two years from June '09. Participating businesses benefit from a comprehensive portfolio of support for people and skills development geared towards promoting business growth.

We sponsored the West Lothian Environmental Awards in September '08, in which Champfleurie Estate, Maxi Construction and Bausch & Lomb, Scotland, were all named as winners. E-business support was re-energised through the e-Business West Lothian group.

The council's Business Gateway and Procurement services worked together to undertake a joint survey to identify barriers to doing business with the council, achieving some 210 responses from local firms.

To help local business combat crime, in partnership with Lothian & Borders Police we surveyed businesses at Whitehill Industrial Estate to gauge crime levels and crime prevention initiatives. We introduced new monthly Business Gateway ezines for start up and growth and a new Women in Business ezine to help promote these services.

The growing expectation for social enterprises to demonstrate robust business planning with a fast track to self-sufficiency has led to a growth in the role for Business Gateway in supporting this sector. Thirteen such organisations were assisted during 2008/09.

Encouraging new business

Business start-up information, advice and training are provided by the council's Business Gateway at the Enterprise Centre in Livingston and throughout West Lothian in a number of outreach locations.

Despite banks reporting 25% drop in new business, Business Gateway was on target for new start-ups for 2008/09 with 286 new businesses taking advantage of these services:

- 144 of these were started by women, just over 50% of the total, well exceeding the 40% target.

- 54 were started by young people under 30, with many receiving additional specialist support from the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT).

Enterprise promotion activity included a Business Plan Competition held in March '09 at West Lothian College, and the PSYBT awards which were held in September '08.

Tourism strategy

The council supported and promoted tourism to the area through grant funding to visitScotland, West Lothian Tourism Forum and Edinburgh Film Focus.

A new public/private sector partnership tourism development company, Visit West Lothian was established in 2008/09 in the light of a study showing that tourism is worth £31 million to the area.

A local Homecoming events programme for 2009 was launched in January that will help to promote West Lothian's part in Scotland's great contributions to the world such as golf, whisky, great minds, innovations and a rich ancestry and culture.

Transnational links were strengthened during the year, especially those with Grapevine, USA.

Traditional town centres

The council works to develop town centre management groups in West Lothian's five traditional town centres – Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn, Linlithgow and Whitburn, bringing together organisations and individuals with the shared aim of creating vibrant, sustainable and prosperous communities.

The council pledged £526,000 in 2008/09 towards improving the area's five traditional town centres. The funding is the first stage of a significant

10-year programme, which will see £5 million invested to help revitalise the towns.

Broxburn Traders' Association was launched in July '08 becoming the third town in West Lothian to benefit from an active traders group. For more information see the section 'Planning for population growth'.

Improving our infrastructure

In 2008/09 we:

- resurfaced 116,459 square metres of carriageway
- resurfaced 24,164 square metres of footway
- laid 9,446 metres of kerbing

We have continued to work with Falkirk Council to press the case with the Scottish Executive for the necessary funding to deliver the

new Avon Gorge link. We made the case to Scottish Government which led to the project being incorporated in the strategic planning document Strategic Transport Projects Review. In addition, we have commissioned work on updating the economic business case and it is hoped that this will strengthen the case for the councils to secure Scottish Government funding which would allow the early delivery of this project.

Improving opportunities

Last year Community Learning and Development provided 1,300 adult learning opportunities through 86 courses. The Adult Basic Education (ABE) service supported 450 students in a range of group activities. One hundred and fifty young people accessed a variety of programmes (target 100). Thirty outreach groups were established to meet local needs.

During the year we also provided training opportunities for adults working with young people. In total, 15 sessions such as, child protection, alcohol awareness and youth literacy were provided for 560 part-time staff.

Next year we will:

- Continue to diversify and strengthen our economy by working with our economic partners.
- Promote enterprise, assisting 280 new business start-ups.
- Encourage better, sustainable growing businesses, assisting 250 small and medium sized firms to increase their turnover, profits and employment.
- Improve people's skills to benefit the local economy, delivering training to 300 West Lothian residents.
- Help 600 people to secure jobs.
- Create vibrant and sustainable places and communities through local regeneration strategies.
- Provide more choices and more chances for 130 young people not in education employment or training.
- Continue to position the area as a key location for knowledge-based investment.

Facts:

- We assisted 1,781 jobseekers during the year, some 774 of whom subsequently found a job.
- In 2008/09 we assisted some 855 small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
- The council pledged £526,000 in 2008/09 towards improving the area's five traditional town centres.
- We resurfaced 116,459 square metres of carriageway

Key Contacts:

Business Gateway 01506 777400 or text BIZ to 60777

Access2Employment 0800 0329768 or text JOBS to 60777

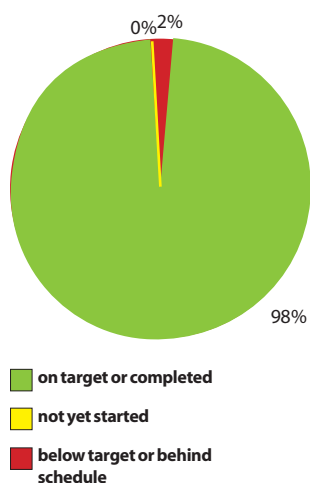
West Lothian Council 01506 775000

E-mail: enterprise@westlothian.gov.uk

www.westlothian.com

Protecting our environment and our communities

A safer community is one where people can live their lives without fear for their own or other people's safety. Improving people's quality of life is one of our main aims and this is affected by how safe people feel in their communities and by the quality of their home and local environment.



Corporate Plan 2007 - 11

| | on target or completed | not yet started | below target or behind schedule |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| We will provide and maintain good quality, affordable rented housing . | 29 | 0 | 1 |
| We will meet the needs of homeless people in West Lothian . | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| We will address anti-social behaviour and crime and improve community safety . | 18 | 0 | 0 |
| We will improve our response to domestic abuse in West Lothian . | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| We will reduce the prevalence of smoking, problem alcohol and drug use . | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| We will provide a high quality, accessible and well maintained local environment . | 78 | 0 | 2 |
| We will improve recycling facilities and reduce waste . | 61 | 0 | 2 |
| We will work in partnership with the police and continue to improve road safety . | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| Total : | 224 | 0 | 5 |

Council housing

In 2008/09 work started on 248 new council houses for rent on four sites across West Lothian. The first homes will be ready for let in the summer of 2009. We also helped fund 119 new housing association homes as part of the Scottish Government's development programme.

Last year we spent more than £28 million on capital works to our tenants' homes. We are ahead of schedule for ensuring all our council housing meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015, with 38% of our homes already meeting the standard (exceeding the 29% target). Every home has now been surveyed and this information was used to develop our new 10-year capital programme of £250 million investment in our council homes.

We set a challenging target of 3% for outstanding rent collection. Despite the economic downturn and the credit crunch, we successfully collected all but 3.2% of rent due. Letting houses as quickly as possible means we help people move into their new homes quicker and maximise our rental income. Last year we let 74% of vacant homes

in less than two weeks. The average time taken to re-let a house was 10 days. This is a very good performance in both a local and national context.

In our annual survey of council tenants 88% said they were satisfied with their homes, and 82% reported feeling safe in their local community. These are both improvements on the previous year. Customer satisfaction with the quality of housing repairs remained high at 96%. We managed to complete 96% of repair work at the first visit to the customer's house.

The new Tenant Participation Strategy, developed in partnership with tenants, was launched in October '08. The survey revealed that 93% of tenants feel we have taken account of their views when making decisions and developing the service.

During the year we sold 139 council houses, in the previous year we sold 262.

Housing need

We are working to reduce homelessness in West Lothian. The West Lothian Homelessness Strategy 2008/11 focuses on preventing homelessness from occurring in the first place, and on meeting the needs of those who do become homeless. Permanent homes were found for 44% of the 1,751 households presenting as homeless. This is an increase of 7% on the year before.

More than £1.4 million was invested in adaptations to private sector houses where people had a specific need to enable them to continue living at home.

A major consultation process was carried out with people on the housing waiting list, so that their views could be taken into account in developing the new Allocations Policy.

Our Private Sector Leasing Scheme was launched in September '08. This will increase the supply of good quality temporary accommodation, protecting the availability of our own houses for people needing permanent homes.

Safer neighbourhoods

Safer Neighbourhood Teams are now operating in all areas of West Lothian. Analysis of trends over a two-year period shows a 12% reduction in vandalism across West Lothian and a 30% reduction in youth calls to the police. Although this cannot all be attributed to

the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, they play a significant role in these encouraging trends. Council and police officers have taken part in a range of joint training to enable them to provide a more proactive role in the communities that they serve.

Roads lighting

During 2008/09 we:

- Replaced 954 obsolete street lighting columns – including the replacement of lighting columns on the A899 Livingston Dual Carriageway with passively safe Aluminium Lighting Columns. These columns are safer than previously installed columns as they are designed to cause less damage in the event of a vehicle collision.

- Replaced 25,000 metres of old cable, which has reduced the fault level in many high repetitive fault areas.
- Replaced or repaired 1,600 road signs.
- Upgraded 15 traffic light installations.

Managing waste

Reducing the amount of waste that is sent to landfill is a key to helping to protect the environment. Great progress was made in enabling people in West Lothian to play a part in this through the kerbside recycling scheme – last year we achieved 34% of all waste being recycled. We aim to achieve an overall recycling rate of 40%

We will continue to introduce flattened or difficult to reach households to kerbside recycling – so far we have rolled out kerbside recycling to approximately 2,000 (one third) of these properties.

Our average Community Recycling Centre (CRC) recycling rate increased from around 40% to 51%. Signage at CRCs was improved, including advertising recycling rates at sites, to encourage people to sort their waste and recycle.

We continue to determine the best method of ensuring that all trade waste customers pay for the waste they take into our Recycling Centres and how to maximise the amount they recycle.

Last year we promoted the Love Food Hate Waste campaign in partnership with farmers' markets, Food Co-ops and healthy eating initiatives. We worked in partnership with Changeworks Master Composter Project to encourage householders to recycle through

home composting. Due to increased demand we introduced an additional collection of brown bin waste to coincide with the Christmas tree collections in January '09.

To improve our collection of bulky household items we trialled a new system to improve the information received at time of booking, prior to uplift and by feedback to customers. To improve information we introduced new software and technology to improve 'real time' communication between waste collection crews and office staff.

All schools now recycle paper and have the opportunity to recycle cans and plastic bottles if required. During 2008/09 we continued to support the Real Nappy campaign this involved visiting Sure Start and the direct delivery of Trial Packs. There have also been various demonstrations and events across the area including St John's Hospital, antenatal groups and baby clubs

We installed 12 Automated Public Conveniences (APCs) throughout West Lothian.

To increase recycling and to divert waste from landfill we started the process to determine the best technology and partners to develop a new waste processing plant.

Flood prevention

During 2008/09 we invested £330,000 in reducing the risk of flooding in West Lothian and dealing with flooding issues. In addition we spent £70,000 to help aid the clean up of the areas in Broxburn and Linlithgow, which were affected by the major flooding event in August '08.

We carried out a review of the very serious flood that affected Uphall and Broxburn in August '08 and we installed and commissioned two telemetry-based level sensors on the Brox Burn to alert emergency personnel to rising water levels.

We also upgraded the level sensor and telemetry at Mains Burn, Linlithgow, following flood damage and replaced flood damaged midstream trash screens on the Mains Burn to help protect the integrity of the Flood Prevention Scheme

We have worked with householders, their elected representatives and an adjoining landowner to bring forward proposals to help reduce the risk of flooding to properties at Barnes Green, Deer Park, Livingston. A stakeholder group has been formed and we are currently preparing a grant application seeking support from SEPA's Restoration Fund to help meet the cost of a scoping study.

We have worked with Dedridge Environment and Ecology Project to improve the amenity, habitat value and to enhance the appearance and quality of the Dedridge Burn and ponds and woodland. We replaced the footbridge at the lower end of the small pond between Kenilworth and Ivanhoe Rise, Dedridge, allowing more water to pass through reducing the risk of flooding to the Lanthorn Community Centre.

Other significant achievements include:

- Investment to repair and upgrade Beecraigs and Eliburn reservoirs.
- The design of five parts of a six-part scheme along the northern edge of Fauldhouse to reduce the risk of flooding and seriously impaired drainage affecting property in the town. One part of the scheme has been constructed
- Designed and constructed the first phase of a drainage scheme to reduce the risk of flooding and seriously impaired drainage at Longridge Primary School.
- Completed a proposal to reduce the risk of flooding in the Lochs, Whitburn. One part of the scheme has been constructed.
- Constructed a further phase of improvements to reduce the risk of flooding associated with the social housing scheme comprising the Woodend, Birkenshaw and McCallum areas of Armadale.
- Reviewed an earlier report into flooding and seriously impaired drainage at Blackridge Primary School have designed and put in place further measures to reduce the risk of flooding to the school.
- Put in place further measures to reduce the risk of flooding to homes in Bowyett, Torphichen have carried out further investigative work.
- Worked together with householders to bring forward measures to reduce the risk of flooding to residential property at Parkvale, Roman Camps, Woodside Cottage, Bathgate and Causewayend, Kirknewton.
- Put in place a further phase of a land drainage scheme in the rear gardens and public open spaces in Loganlea to help protect the fabric of social housing and improve the quality of life of local residents.

Promoting equality

The council is dedicated to the promotion of diversity and to the ongoing development of equality of opportunity for all. The last 12 months have seen the development and publication of our Disability and Gender Equality Scheme annual reports, which outline our progress in identifying and eradicating discrimination, and promoting equality in the delivery of our services.

We also published a new integrated equality scheme, streamlining our activity on equality to focus on the key priorities for West Lothian in tackling discrimination and promoting equality.

To help us achieve our equality and diversity objectives, we developed and launched Race and Disability Equality Community Forums.

Community Safety

In 2008, the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership published its Community Safety Strategy for 2008/11.

A Community Safety Data Audit and a Community Safety Strategic Assessment were also commissioned on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership.

The three main areas identified in this work are: preventable injuries and deaths; antisocial behaviour; violence and crime. Along with these are cross cutting issues such as alcohol and drugs, young people and other general safety concerns. It is expected that these documents will inform action planning and assist in the development of the second strategy in 2011.

West Lothian Drug Action Team (WLDAT)

WLDAT co-ordinates policy around the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs. Last year we established three-year funding agreements with all WLDAT funded substance misuse services. All funded services also completed Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and now screen all female clients for forms of violence against women. We also received

a significant increase in funding to tackle the excessive use of alcohol, which we are investing in specialist support and treatment services and early intervention and prevention work in Addiewell, Armadale and Knightsridge.

Domestic Abuse Service

During 2008/09 a Substance Misuse Worker was recruited to the domestic Abuse Services to provide direct support to women who have experienced domestic abuse and to provide training to both

services for women and substance misuse. We provided direct support to 93 women and 106 children. A domestic abuse awareness course was also provided over three sessions for 200 S3 pupils.

Tackling underage drinking

Last year the council, supported by key agencies, launched a strategy to divert young people from drinking. Initiatives included: street football and rugby; arts and sports activities; youth drop-in sessions and in partnership with Lothian and Borders police – Operation Floorwalk.

Our external environment

During 2008/09 we invested £2.5 million in the Open Space Strategy. For example improvements at Letham Park included: sports pitches, car park upgrade, planting, play areas, path work and environmental improvements.

We continued to meet our targets for play ground safety inspections and maintenance on council owned and managed equipment.

In January this year we became the only council in Scotland to achieve full Approved Arboricultural Status for the Arbour Service. The Neighbourhood Environment Teams and Land Services won the outstanding achievement award and Support for Local Communities award for Keep Scotland Beautiful National Spring Clean Campaign. We also achieved a two-point increase for our Local Environment Audit

Management Systems, statutory performance indicator for street cleanliness.

In 2008/09 we dealt with

- 681 litter complaints
- 260 graffiti incidents
- 247 abandoned vehicles
- 1592 fly-tipping incidents
- 869 reports of dog fouling

Last year we issued 216 fixed penalty notices and 75 abandoned vehicle notices. We also continued to address the problem of environmental crime such as, litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling.

| Offence type | Dog fouling | Littering | Flytipping | Abandoned vehicles | Youth litter | Other | Totals |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|--------------|-------|--------|
| Fixed penalty | 131 | 226 | 26 | | | | 383 |
| 24hr notice | | | | 70 | | | 70 |
| 15 day notice | | | | 46 | | | 46 |
| 7 day notice | | | | 124 | | | 124 |
| Disposal notice | | | | 93 | | | 93 |
| Referrals | 39 | | 397 | 36 | | 233 | 666 |
| Enquiries | 275 | 169 | 712 | 167 | | 103 | 1426 |

Road safety

Last year the council invested more than £165,000 and delivered 11 road casualty reduction schemes as part of our "Accident, Investigation and Prevention Programme" which targets casualty reduction.

To help make our roads safer and more accessible we invested more than £300,000 in 13 safer streets projects including pedestrian crossings, new footpaths and traffic calming initiatives

During 2008/09 we provided 127 grants to help new drivers so that they could complete the PassPlus course, which aims to provide them with additional driving experience. Nearly 400 new drivers have benefited during last three years from the scheme

We are committed to reducing casualties on our roads. In 2008, 79 people were either killed or seriously injured on West Lothian roads which was a reduction of three on the previous year. Our target is for a reduction to 73 casualties by 2010. A further 563 people were slightly injured, an increase of 46 or 9% on the previous year. In 2008, six children were either killed or seriously injured on our roads. This was the same number as in 2007.

In 2008, we completed our review of speed limits on West Lothian's Class A and B roads in line with new national guidance. In addition we introduced revised speed limits on four roads and are currently working to advance three others.

Next year we will:

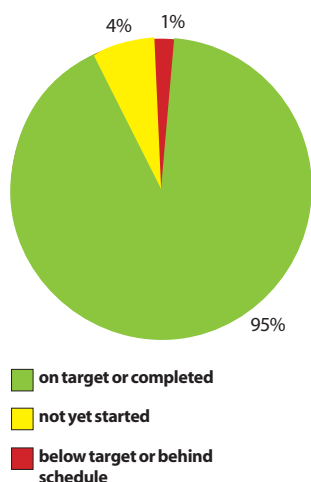
- Start to build a further 415 new council houses for rent.
- Introduce a new electronic repairs appointment system. This includes a text reminder being sent to the customer prior to the visit, and if the work cannot be completed at the first visit, the operative will not leave without giving the tenants an appointment for when they will be back.
- Expand the out-of-hours Noise Nuisance Service to operate seven nights a week.
- Improve information sharing and targeting of resources with respect to antisocial behaviour.
- Introduce a new Allocations Policy for council houses.
- Increase the supply of temporary accommodation for families with support needs.
- Invest £3.6 million in maintaining and improving all classes of roads in West Lothian as part of our 10-year Asset Management Plan.
- Invest £944,000 in maintaining and improving footpaths throughout West Lothian Replace approximately 800 obsolete lighting columns and 20,000 metres of old cabling.
- Replace/repair 1,600 road signs.
- Upgrade 15 traffic light installations.
- Continue to support the Eco Schools programme.
- Continue to progress the new waste processing plant
- Invest over £2.4 million in improving and upgrading open spaces and sports facilities in West Lothian.
- Invest more than £2 million in cemetery provision for West Lothian in Armadale, East Calder, Fauldhouse and West Calder.
- Work with NHS Lothian and other partners to assist the improvement of health and wellbeing as a result of the improvement at Letham Park.
- Increase volunteers in our Keep Scotland Beautiful National Spring Clean Campaign.
- Introduce a litter strategy for West Lothian.
- Fit Speed Limiters to all council vans to help reduce CO2 emissions. By introducing limiters to all vans, we can control the speed of the vehicles, reduce their fuel usage and therefore reduce their emissions and make them more fuel-efficient. This will reduce the use of fuel by council vehicles by 10% per year by 2011.
- Use our new integrated equality scheme to monitor the impact of our equality and diversity work on particular groups in the community.
- Continue to monitor and assess the impact of policies and functions on equality to inform our policy development.
- Devise and implement innovative initiatives to support equality and promote diversity.
- Invest £276,000 in the delivery of road casualty reduction schemes.
- Invest over £300,000 in the delivery of pedestrian crossings, new footpaths and traffic calming under the cycling, walking and safer streets initiative.
- Carry out a full review of all our existing disabled parking spaces in line with the requirements of the new Disabled Persons' Parking Places Act 2009.
- Support the PassPlus scheme by offering up to 150 grants to West Lothian residents who complete the course.
- Support Lothian and Borders police in Operation Opel, an enforcement and encouragement initiative aimed at young, predominantly male, drivers.

Facts:

- Work started on 248 new council houses for rent on four sites across West Lothian.
- We dealt with 681 litter complaints.
- We provided 127 grants to help new drivers so that they could complete the PassPlus course.
- We invested £330,000 in reducing the risk of flooding in West Lothian.

Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities

A healthy community is one where people feel physically and emotionally well, safe and part of their local community. Positive life circumstances such as: a living income (enough money to live on to have a satisfactory standard of living); decent housing; achieving in education; an environment where people can develop; making healthy choices; good job prospects; and access to cultural activities; all contribute to our health and wellbeing.



| | on target or completed | not yet started | below target or behind schedule |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| We will promote a healthy environment in which to live . | 30 | 1 | 1 |
| We will tackle poverty and inequality . | 19 | 0 | 0 |
| We will work together across services and agencies to improve life circumstances and reduce health inequalities . | 16 | 2 | 0 |
| We will reduce levels of disease, accidents, premature deaths and suicide by working with individuals, groups and communities to enhance their wellbeing . | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| We will enable people who are dependent or with increasing dependency to live at home or in their local community . | 13 | 2 | 0 |
| We will further integrate health and social work provision leading to improved care services . | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| 0207 We will develop more person-centred services and supports for people with disabilities, their families and carers, thus promoting greater opportunities for social and community inclusion . | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| We will provide opportunities for access to the arts, heritage, parks, open spaces, countryside, libraries and sports . | 47 | 1 | 1 |
| Total : | 147 | 7 | 2 |

West Lothian Council works with community planning partners and the West Lothian Health and Care Partnership to improve the health of all our citizens by developing and delivering people-focused services and support.

Community Planning

We undertook a major public consultation in December '08 to seek opinions on how West Lothian should develop towards the year 2020. The public's views will help shape the new Community Plan for the next decade. We held 11 events, nine groups and engaged with 928 people, in addition 500 postcards were returned with comments.

Earlier this year, the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) was endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership Board and Council Executive and submitted to the Scottish Government. Community Planning Partners include: West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, Lothian and Borders Police, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue, Coluntary Action West Lothian, West Lothian College, Oatridge College, Scottish Enterprise, Skills Development Scotland, Sestrans, Pension Service, West Lothian Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Water, Association of Community Councils, JobCentre plus, West Lothian Leisure, and West Lothian Youth Congress.

The SOA highlights the key areas where we need to work together to make a real difference. SOA high-level outcomes include: enabling people in West Lothian to live in balanced, well-designed, sustainable communities where they can access the high quality amenities and services they need. Working to ensure that fewer people are homeless, but people who become homeless are accommodated safely and supported as soon as possible.

Full details of the SOA are available online at www.westlothian.gov.uk

Work has been undertaken to develop a Community Race Forum, which was launched in spring '09. We delivered community engagement training to 78 people and published the results of the Citizens Panel Quality of Life Survey in April '08.

Community Regeneration

Nine Locality Plans, one for each multi-member ward, were developed and endorsed by the relevant Local Area Committee. These provide a focus for action on local priorities.

Five 'Life Stage Outcome Planning Model' reports were developed and presented to Community Planning Partners. These identify a long-term outcome, achievable over a decade, with activities and intermediate outcomes for disadvantaged target populations.

The Daisy Drop In project in Livingston was Highly Commended in the Partnership category of the 2008 SURF Awards, held in December. A new information service for older people was established in Whitburn

and a new project for teenagers in Knightsridge, the Vennie, was opened in November '08. The Democracy Challenge encouraging 17- and 18-year-olds to register to vote was the only West Lothian project short-listed for a COSLA Excellence Award.

A Compact with the voluntary sector was agreed and work continues on an implementation plan. The service has encouraged and supported the creation of a single voluntary sector "gateway" organisation for West Lothian, which is scheduled for September '09. Earlier this year we launched Community Chest, a small grants fund for the development of voluntary and community organisations.

Adult protection

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 has been implemented in West Lothian. The West Lothian Adult Protection Committee is well established and the attendant sub-committees for Learning and Development and Practice and Performance have also been established. We continue to train staff from the council, NHS Lothian and Lothian and Borders Police in Adult Protection and there continues to be a strong emphasis on joint, collaborative working with partner agencies.

During 2008/09 there were 152 referrals designated as Adult Protection cases, 100% had an allocated social worker. Eighty per cent of Adult Protection Case Conferences resulted in an Adult Support and Protection Plan being produced. We trained 517 staff from the council, NHS Lothian, and Lothian and Borders Police.

Child protection

An inspection of services to protect children in the West Lothian Council area took place during 2008. It covered the range of services and staff working in the area who had a role in protecting children. These included services provided by health, the police, the local authority and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA), as well as those provided by voluntary and independent organisations.

The Inspectors reported very positively on services to protect West Lothian's children and young people. The following key strengths in how well children were protected and their needs met in West Lothian were noted:

- A strong focus on pro-active early intervention in the lives of vulnerable children and families.
- The role of the community child health service in meeting the health needs of children.
- A strong culture of involving children and families in key processes and service development.

- Very effective approaches to information sharing using information technology.
- Robust processes within the inter-agency Referral Discussion arrangements for early response and decision-making when there are concerns about children.
- The visionary leadership of the Chief Executive, elected members and senior officers of the West Lothian Council.
- The collaborative approach to the continuous development of services to protect children across all key services.

On 31 March 2009 there were 108 children on the Child Protection Register.

The National Care Home Contract Framework has enabled the ongoing monitoring of staff training and quality of care within local care homes and promotes an agenda of continuous improvement within the sector.

Supported Accommodation Placement Scheme

The Supported Accommodation Placement Scheme (SAPS), in West Lothian, has proved successful in providing young people leaving care with an effective service, which prepares them for independence and for living in their own tenancies. The scheme is in accordance with Leaving Care Regulations and with the Children's Commissioner's 'Sweet 16 Report'.

There are currently nine young people in placement, eight of whom are either in full-time employment, or are attending college full-time.

Working for older people

West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) is committed to enabling older people a quicker and more streamlined access to appropriate services. During 2008/09 we completed a review of single shared assessment with a view to promoting wider use within other disciplines. We also successfully completed the conversion of a sheltered housing service in Livingston to a 'Housing with Care'

service contributing to our continuing drive to shift the balance of care towards more independent living models.

West Lothian, in comparison with other councils, has continued to maintain one of the most responsive hospital discharge services in Scotland.

People with learning disability

During the last year we have continued to develop and promote independence and social inclusion. Respite provision has been developed to increase the number of people who can receive a respite package at Burnside. The capacity for this service has doubled following its expansion to adjacent accommodation and the recruitment of additional staff.

Last year the new replacement unit for Deans House, which provides residential accommodation and care for adults with learning disabilities was completed. In addition to providing a significantly improved

quality of accommodation this development offers better preparation for independent living.

We have continued to expand the provision of person centred planning for adults with learning disabilities, this approach enables the service user to have greater control over the development of their own 'life plan' by ensuring that they are at the centre of the planning process. During 2008/09 we appointed a new Person Centred Planning Support Worker and have recently increased the number of people with learning disability who have a Plan in this area to 70.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

In 2008, our OT service carried out 3,484 assessments; made 2,790 adaptations; fitted 295 large pieces of equipment such as ramps and stairlifts; and allocated 86% of high priority items within the target of six days. Our successful OT Self-selection allowed 1,152 people to

request equipment without the need for a home visit, 24% of people requested the service following a fall and 44% requested this service to reduce the risk of a fall.

Community Equipment

Last year the service delivered 17,526 pieces of stock disability equipment to 4,765 service users and delivered 12,504 pieces of continence equipment.

■ 77% of equipment is delivered within the target of three working days

■ 45% of stock was re-issued exceeding our target of 40%
■ 621 service / breakdown visits were undertaken.

Home Safety Service

In 2008/09 we fitted 859 Home Safety sets bringing the total number of homes supported by the technology to 3,360. More than 580 alerts were raised using the technology provided by this service allowing a speedy response for people who had falls

Sure Start West Lothian

The aim of Sure Start is to give very young children (from pre-birth to three years) the best possible start by working closely with parents and other local authority, health and voluntary agencies to provide a more

cohesive service for parent and child in a non-stigmatising way. Last year we supported 1,180 parents and 100 children were involved in activities.

Suicide prevention

West Lothian has continued to offer and provide a range of suicide alertness, intervention and mental health first aid training. In the year 2008/09 we delivered 28 training sessions to 373 individuals, enabling them to become more suicide alert and gain mental health first aid knowledge.

Learning and physical disability

We have supported a number of groups of young people with additional needs to develop their communication skills and build up their confidence by providing opportunities to participate in youth activities and international exchanges.

Healthy eating

Primary schools within West Lothian are now fully compliant with the requirements of the Food and Nutrition Action Bill for Scotland.

Following a successful seminar in 2007, a food and health course was piloted for local catering businesses. This will be offered again in 2009. Environmental Health Officers continue to promote nutrition during inspection of food premises.

Regulation

A project officer was appointed on a three-year contract to increase under-age sales enforcement activities, particularly in relation to tobacco. Standard conditions relating to noise control are now included in planning permissions as a matter of course.

Next year we will:

- Start the conversion of a further sheltered housing complex in Bathgate to provide 28 additional housing with care tenancies.
- Deliver up to an additional 70 home safety packages per month.
- Reduce our target for longest waiting time for assessment to six weeks.
- Respond to requests for independent advocacy from older people in a care home or in hospital within seven days.
- Increase the number of older people in receipt of personal direct payments.
- Continue to promote the use of a Single Shared Assessment.
- Pilot a 'Safe at Home' assessment tool which will allow faster and more streamlined access to services.
- Commit additional funds to the development of a flexible respite service for people with dementia.
- Contribute to the two-year Lothian Dementia Project, which provides awareness and communication training for health and care staff.
- Fund the development of a residential and respite resource for people with physical disability to be on-stream by 2010/11. The respite service will support service users and their carers, enabling people to live within their own homes for longer. The residential service will provide a local resource for people who require long-term care placements.
- Fund the development of a number of barrier free, adapted tenancies to be offered for rent to people with complex physical disability.
- Issue a Strategic Service Statement for Physical Disability in 2009 giving details of the proposals for the delivery and development of services to people with disability and sensory needs over the next three years.
- Continue to deliver the Adult Protection training programme.
- Streamline the referrals process for Adult Protection for the public and other agencies and improve the recording processes across all agencies.
- Join a national publicity campaign for Adult Protection in autumn '09.
- Increase the number of places for respite care at Burnhouse by 60.
- Increase the provision of Person Centred Plans by a further 30.
- Continue, with relevant stakeholders, to take forward the development of the new day resource centre.
- Increase capacity, train more staff and deliver more programmes by employing a Parenting Coordinator, a specialised early years worker and a clinical child psychologist for a fixed term of 12 months.
- Implement our Corporate Parenting Policy by autumn '09.
- Pilot a 'health promoting business' scheme in Armadale.
- Work with relevant businesses to improve the management of work-related violence in licensed premises.
- Work with relevant businesses to improve the safety and welfare of workers in the tyre and exhaust fitting industries.
- Target under-age sale of tobacco products from ice cream vans and in communities where a high proportion of young people smoke.

Culture, community learning and development

The completion of the £6 million redevelopment of Howden Park Centre, Livingston, created a landmark destination for West Lothian's art and theatre enthusiasts. Work also started restoring the Burgh Halls, Linlithgow, which will include a multi-purpose centre featuring heritage interpretation, visual arts and crafts, arts education programmes, events and activities.

Last year we developed cultural links with Grapevine in Texas with the aim of promoting West Lothian as a visitor location and open exchanges for West Lothian's young people in both sport and music.

Sixteen community English as a 'second or other language' courses attracted 116 learners with 23 learners participants taking courses in their own workplaces.

During 2008/09 our libraries developed an electronic newsletter – Ezine – the first issue was distributed last September. The 'What's On'

area of the council's website was revamped to make it easier to use.

A new website was developed in partnership with the CHCP www.westlothianchcp.org.uk/bop and launched for the Books on Prescription service. The service aims to assist people to help themselves with targeted medical conditions.

The Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre was set up in Carmondean Connected. Staffed by a Macmillan nurse the service offers drop-in sessions and support to people affected by cancer and to people who have questions about cancer.

Library Services is working with colleagues across Scotland to create an Ask Scotland online reference enquiry service. A partnership event with the BBC was held at Carmondean Connected as part of the Remembrance 90 campaign. More than 300 people participated in the event.

Next year we will:

- Survey our customers to find out what social, learning, cultural and economic benefits they receive from using Library Services.
- Move the Local History Library to new custom designed premises that support public access to heritage resources.
- Continue to encourage new members to join Library Services by targeting new housing and supporting outreach in the community.
- Increase the range of informal learning opportunities available to the public in libraries, museums and archives by promoting e-reference resources and AskScotland Reference Service.
- Open a new Library within the Fauldhouse Partnership Centre.
- Libraries will continue to provide information resources and outreach opportunities through the Health and Libraries Group (HILDA).
- Work in partnership with Community Learning and Development to share resources and offer learning opportunities in Fauldhouse, the Lanthorn, Livingston, and Armadale
- Explore new ways of reaching our customers using new technology.
- Ensure all secondary schools are fully compliant with the requirements of the Food and Nutrition Action Bill for Scotland.
- Increase the uptake of the catering service throughout Secondary Schools, in partnership with Education.

Housing and Council Tax benefit

The economic downturn has had an impact with an increase in the number of claims. During 2008/09 we dealt with 1,309 more new claims and 5,203 more change of circumstances notifications compared to the previous year. Despite this we continue to process cases at a level that exceeds Government targets. New ways of working in

order to improve our efficiency against an ever-changing legislative background continue to be developed. The average number of days taken to process changes in circumstances notifications was eight days and 28 days for new claims, exceeding the target of 10 days and 36 days respectively.

facts:

- OT service carried out 3,484 assessments; made 2,790 adaptations; fitted 295 large pieces of equipment such as ramps and stairlifts.
- Sure Start supported 1,180 parents and 100 children were involved in activities.
- The Home Safety Service technology is supporting 3,360 people at home.
- We engaged with 928 people on our Community Plan.

Planning for population growth

The West Lothian Local Plan was adopted in June 2009. The plan provides a framework for how West Lothian will grow until 2020 which allows new houses to be built for the growing population, makes sure we put facilities in place for the new residents, helps the local economy to grow and help reduce the effect the growing population will have on the environment.



As well as adopting the local plan we also continued to develop a suite of supplementary planning guidance, including guidance on preparing health impact assessments, to ensure that everyone involved with the development process in West Lothian has the clearest advice on what is required of applicants for planning permission.

Planning applications and building warrants

Amongst the planning applications granted was that for a crematorium at Starlaw, between Bathgate and Livingston.

The number of planning applications submitted during 2008/09 was 1,106, 40 fewer than in the previous 12 months. During the year, 74% of the applications were determined within the statutory time period. This was lower than the 79% achieved in the previous year.

The value of development in the area, as measured by building warrant fee income, during 2008/09 was £122 million – representing 27% of the value of the work in the previous year highlighting the impact on building activity as a result of the economic downturn. During the year, the number of building warrants received also fell by around 23% to 1,864 applications.

Developing transport

During 2008/09 we worked with Transport Scotland to ensure that the needs of West Lothian are considered within the plans for the new Forth Crossing. We secured an all-ways junction at the M9 Junction 1A and we are working closely with Transport Scotland to ensure that the impact of the new crossing is minimised for the residents of Newton and the surrounding area.

Working with Network Rail, we advanced works on reopening the Bathgate to Airdrie railway line. The project is on programme with the double tracking between Edinburgh and Bathgate and the new platforms at Uphall Station and Livingston North now complete. Works have now started on the reopening works between Bathgate and Airdrie. The project is expected to be complete by winter 2010.

We have continued to work with Network Rail and Transport Scotland, towards the delivery of a new station at Blackridge. Planning approval has now been obtained and land purchase is being finalised. The council has reached an agreement on funding and detailed design has now started. The project is programmed to be completed by winter 2010, to coincide with the opening of the Bathgate to Airdrie project.

To improve local bus services, we introduced a new 30-minute weekday town service in Armadale, improved the service frequency of the Bathgate town service to every 30 minutes, introduced a new Saturday morning service on the Whitburn town service and enhanced the daily bus service from St John's Hospital to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

Climate change

Working with the Carbon Trust, the council prepared its first Carbon Management Plan to help reduce CO2 emissions from council buildings and vehicles.

Improving town centres

Early last year the council implemented an action plan aimed at improving West Lothian's traditional town centres - Armadale, Bathgate, Broxburn/Uphall, Linlithgow and Whitburn and £413,000 was allocated to lead improvements, with each town centre allocated £50,000 to enable them to continue to develop local projects. The balance £163,000 has been allocated on the basis of competitive bids.

The public realm design guide was completed for Bathgate. Broxburn/Uphall and Armadale are also preparing design guides. It is proposed that a similar model will be developed for Linlithgow taking account of the historic importance of the town, while the approach for Whitburn is currently being considered.

Linlithgow, Bathgate and Broxburn/Uphall also have active town centre management groups in place, which act as a platform for discussion and consultation on town centre projects.

A successful shop front improvement scheme in Bathgate has seen 90 grants being awarded totalling £44,500. Including the businesses own investment, total investment in shop front improvements by the end of the project is expected to exceed £235,000. Success in Bathgate has led to the scheme's rollout in Broxburn/Uphall and Armadale.

The success of these schemes has been boosted by the contributions of local traders groups which already existed in Linlithgow, Bathgate and Armadale and have been formed in the last year in Broxburn/Uphall and Whitburn.

Another initiative led by the traders groups has been the publication of Town Guides in both Bathgate and Broxburn to highlight the wide variety of shops found in the traditional town centres.

In Bathgate, plans have been submitted to demolish Lindsay House and to redevelop the town centre site as a partnership centre. The

aim is to provide new community facilities and council offices in one attractive, modern building which will include on the ground floor a new library for Bathgate; community facilities including café, community hall, smaller hall, flexible meeting rooms, interview rooms, playgroup and out-of-school facilities and landscaped garden; a Council Information Services (CIS) centre and the Advice Shop. Offices for council staff will be provided on the first floor of the development.

In Fauldhouse, work nearing completion on the new £7.2 million health and community campus, which will include two GP practices, a dental surgery and a pharmacy, as well as a swimming pool and fitness centre. It will also house services such as library, learning suite, Council Information Service, police presence and café.

The Fauldhouse Community Development Trust is also developing four themed festivals to be delivered each year. A music festival is planned for 3 to 12 April '10 featuring local bands, plays and activities for all ages.

Linlithgow has also been developing its status as a great place to live and shop. In 2008 it was accepted as the second Scottish member of Cittaslow – an international movement of over 100 towns across the world that are dedicated to improving their quality of life. To achieve Cittaslow status Linlithgow was assessed in a process covering six areas: the environment, infrastructure, quality of urban fabric, and encouragement of local produce and products, hospitality and community and Cittaslow awareness creation.

Linlithgow's qualities were also recognised at the 2008 Liveable Communities Awards in Dongguan, China. Linlithgow were the only Scottish representatives at the prestigious international awards and received a Bronze Accolade in the towns with under 20,000 inhabitants category.

Improving town centres *continued*

The Linlithgow Aspires was launched, a partnership project between council and the Linlithgow Business Association which seeks to secure support from community individuals and organisations to work together on a future vision for Linlithgow. The project aims to allow everyone in the community to have the opportunity to get involved in developing a 20-year vision to keep and improve Linlithgow as a vibrant and sustainable place to live, work and visit.

Linlithgow's 17th century Burgh Halls are undergoing a £5 million revamp. When restored Burgh Halls will be a multi-purpose centre featuring heritage interpretation, visual arts and crafts, arts education programmes, events and activities and are scheduled for completion by March '10.

During 2008/09 we launched the European funded LEADER programme, which will inject up to £1 million into rural projects in West Lothian over the next four years.

Next year we will:

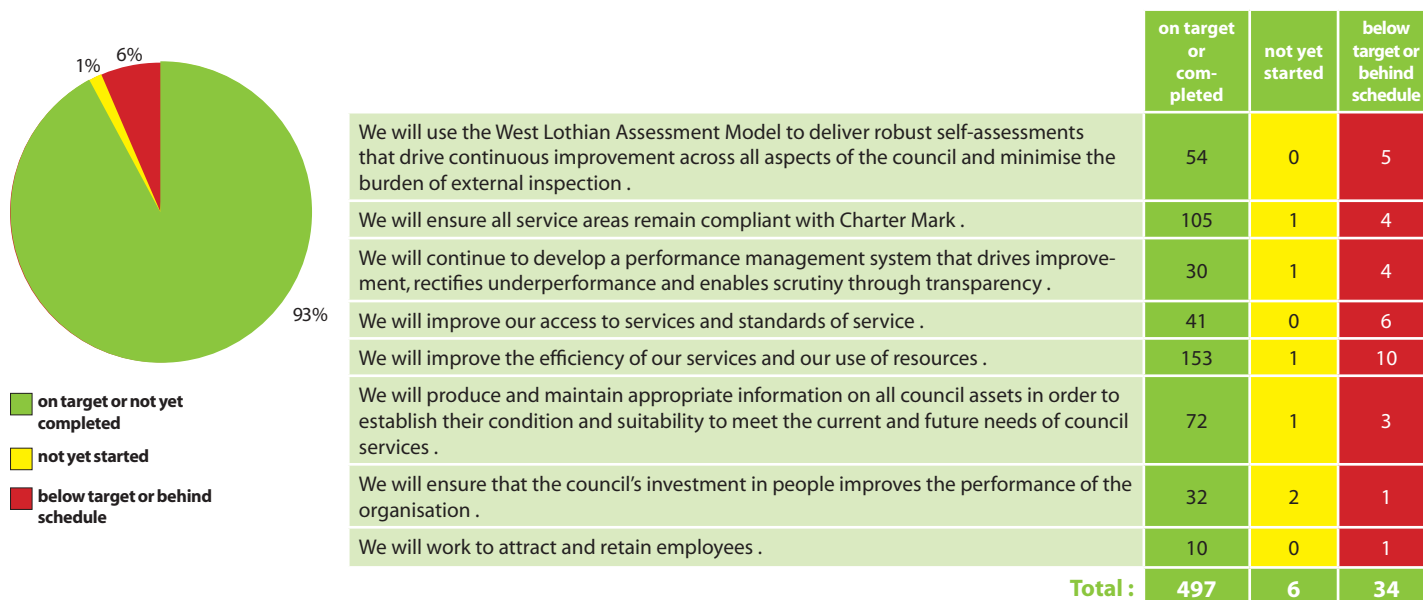
- Launch the single voluntary sector Gateway in September '09.
- Design and tender the road and bridge works required to access the new Blackridge Station.
- Continue to do what we can to make sure that the new Forth Crossing serves the needs of West Lothian as the project moves towards the Parliamentary Bill stage.
- Continue to work with Network Rail to ensure the delivery of the Bathgate to Airdrie Railway.
- Provide additional bus services to HMP Addiewell.
- Progress implementation of the West Lothian Local Plan and start work on a replacement plan. Preparation of a replacement plan is required by new planning legislation which will also result in significant changes to the way planning applications are handled by the council.
- We will start to prepare the first stage of a strategic development plan for south east Scotland. The first stage of this process will identify the main issues for development in the area over the coming 20 years as a basis for public consultation.
- Begin preparation of a climate change strategy for West Lothian.

Facts:

- 1,106 planning applications submitted.
- 1,864 applications for building warrants were received.
- Work started on the £7.2 million Fauldhouse Partnership Centre.
- Work started on a £5 million revamp of the Burgh Halls in Linlithgow.

Making our services as efficient as possible

We have developed evaluation techniques, important strategies and management systems to make sure that our services are effective and efficient and that we meet your needs. We use technology to help you use our services in ways that will help us develop and work even more efficiently and effectively.



Making better connections

In October '08 we refreshed the home page of the council's website: www.westlothian.gov.uk. We added more links to the homepage to take you straight to the information and advice that you need. For example pay your council bills online, order a library book or set up a bulky uplift, find out where you can meet your local councillor, report a fault or even make a planning application. And if you are looking for a job with the council you can also apply online.

A new 'find my nearest' facility has been added to the home page. Enter a West Lothian postcode and search for a range of services close to where you live including, libraries, leisure centres, dentists, places of worship, recycling centres and council buildings.

To improve communications a number of council services are now using text messaging as an easy way for you to access services and information. Just text a key word and your name and address and enquiry to 60777. For example: text BIZ for advice on starting a new business, for a copy of the latest arts brochure text ARTS, for advice on finding employment or training text JOBS and for information on recycling text ECO. The council is also piloting the use of the social network website Twitter – checkout: www.twitter.com/WestLothian and www.twitter.com/LoveWestLothian for business and council news.

Managing our assets

West Lothian Council is responsible for a large number of assets including buildings and land, vehicles, information technology, roads and structures and much more. The council has an Asset management plan in place, which is based on sound, good quality information on the extent, condition and investment requirements for all assets. The plan formed the key basis of the

council's 10-year capital investment programme allocating investment funding where business cases had clearly established the highest priorities. The plan also forms the basis for reviews of several categories of assets to assess their efficiency and will be the core of several efficiency strategies such as the recently approved office rationalisation strategy.

Carbon reduction

The council is committed to reducing carbon and set an ambitious target of a 20% reduction in emissions for gas and electricity from its buildings and street lighting by 2014.

Energy management

We have an Energy Policy and an Energy Strategy in place, which includes targets for reductions in energy use and for the fuel used in buildings, vehicles, street lights and homes. Over the past year we have installed smart meters at our largest properties enabling more accurate monitoring of energy consumed. We have also installed Energy Management Software to improve the quality of information on energy

billing and minimise the number of invoices paid on estimated energy readings. New policies and practices have been introduced governing the use of the council's fleet of vehicles all aimed at reducing fuel used and carbon emissions. Annual performance against targets is closely monitored and reported to elected member

Working in partnership

The council has continued to develop partnership working. During 2008/09 West Lothian's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) was developed by the Community Planning Partnership - recognising the key role other organisations will play through working in partnership to deliver positive outcomes for local people.

Last year great progress was made on West Lothian Civic Centre which is believed to be the most ambitious public sector partnership of its type in the UK. The aim is for partners to share resources and knowledge, creating efficiencies and best value, all of which will benefit the citizens of West Lothian and maximise public spending. When it is fully operational later this year, the Civic Centre will house: a Divisional Police Headquarters, Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Court complex, council Headquarters, The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Service, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, and West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership.

Work is also underway on a major new partnership in Fauldhouse. The new £7.2 million Fauldhouse Partnership Centre will offer integrated health, social care and community services for the local community. The centre, which is also being built in collaboration with Lothian and Borders Police, underlines the council's

commitment to providing easy access to services and creating efficiencies. When it is completed it will provide access to: two GP practices and associated community services; a two chair dental surgery; pharmacy; swimming pool; library; crèche; learning suite; health and fitness suite; café; community information system; sports hall; Police; a community youth room; and all weather pitches.

Electronic Document and Records Management System
Last year the council developed an innovative system which will revolutionise the way the that records and information are stored. The Electronic Document and Records Management System or EDRMS will provide all council services with the ability to manage documents electronically. These can range from scanning and storage systems to fully integrated, paperless offices solutions. EDRMS is an easy to use software application that manages all types of records in all formats, paper-based and electronic, during their entire life cycle, from creation to destruction.

The system offers huge benefits to the council for sharing and re-using its information and will ensure that records are handled efficiently, securely and consistently - providing an efficient way of working which is environmentally friendly.

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) and Charter Mark

The council has retained its Corporate Charter Mark and 27 services have successfully completed CSE assessments.

Myjobscotland.com

We have signed up to new website: www.myjobscotland.com. The aim of the website is to capture all Scottish public sector vacancies in one location creating an efficient and convenient shop window for job seekers. You can also create an account and profile and receive notification of the jobs that interest you.

Next year we will:

- Transfer operations from West Lothian House, Lammermuir House and Lindsay House to the Civic Centre by autumn 2009.
- Open the Fauldhouse Partnership Centre.
- Introduce EDRMS in the Civic Centre and begin a roll-out across the council.

Facts:

- A new 'find my nearest' facility has been added to the home page
- The council currently maintains 6,800 linear metres of storage that is equivalent of five Ben Lomonds.
- The council has set itself an ambitious target to reduce carbon emissions by 20% for gas and electricity from its buildings and street lighting by 2014.

Financial round up

This round up provides a summarised guide to the council's financial performance during the 12-months ended 31 March 2009. The summary is based on information contained in the council's Statement of Accounts, which are independently examined by Audit Scotland. A full copy of the council's statement of accounts is available for examination on request.

Financial Performance – 2008/09

Revenue Budget – General Services

The council is required to set an annual Revenue Budget to provide for services such as Education, Social Work and Environmental Services. We must ensure that the money we spend on these services is balanced by the funding we receive from our two main sources; Scottish Government grants (82%) and Council Tax (18%). The council set a balanced budget for 2008/09 in February '08 and by the end of the financial year the council had spent £376.4 million on providing services to the public, which was £536,000 less than budgeted.

Revenue Budget - Housing

The council is required to agree a separate housing budget for housing expenditure and rental income. During 2008/09 the council received £35.9 million rental income from its housing. This income was all spent on managing, repairing and maintaining the council's housing stock. At the end of 2008/09 the council owned 12,831 houses.

Capital Budget

Major capital investment totalling £121.4 million was undertaken in 2008/09. This expenditure was split between two distinct blocks; the Housing Programme and the General Services Programme. Expenditure of £28.9 million on the housing programme covered areas such as new-build housing, external upgrading and meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, including the kitchens and bathrooms replacement programme. Expenditure on the General Services Programme totalled £92.5 million, which included investment on improving three secondary schools, maintaining our roads, building a new Civic Centre in conjunction with our partners, substantial refurbishment and extension to the Howden Park Centre, as well as investment in primary schools, community centres, libraries and IT infrastructure.

Revenue Account

The revenue account below presents the cost of running the council services between April 2008 and March 2009, where the money came from to finance these costs, and the surplus at the year end.

| | 2008/09 | 2007/08 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Education & Cultural Services | 178,637 | 149,060 |
| Customer & Support Services | 4,005 | 3,480 |
| WLCHCP & Social Policy | 78,214 | 61,918 |
| Development & environmental Services | 109,359 | 78,265 |
| Corporate Services | 6,711 | 7,824 |
| Other Services | (471) | 1,379 |
| Net Cost of General Fund Services | 376,455 | 301,926 |
| Housing Revenue Account | 11,611 | 10,223 |
| Exceptional Items | 9,462 | 8,912 |
| Net Cost of Services | 397,528 | 321,061 |
| Other Operating Expenditure and Appropriations | 9,613 | 3,777 |
| Net Operating Expenditure | 407,141 | 324,838 |
| Income | | |
| Scottish Government Revenue Support Grant | (215,520) | (177,355) |
| Non Domestic Rates | (63,498) | (59,716) |
| Council Tax and Community Charge Income | (67,452) | (66,762) |
| Total Income | (346,470) | (303,833) |
| Deficit for the Year | 60,671 | 21,005 |
| Net additional amount to be credited to the General Fund Balance | (61,207) | (20,778) |
| Decrease / (Increase) in General Fund for the year | (536) | 227 |
| General Fund balance - start year | (4,066) | (4,293) |
| General Fund balance - end year | (4,602) | (4,066) |
| Committed Expenditure 2008/09 | 2,106 | |
| Net Balance available to meet uncommitted expenditure | 2,496 | |

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account records all expenditure and income associated with managing, maintaining and repairing the council's housing stock. By law, all expenditure on this account must be funded by council house rents.

| | 2008/09 | 2007/08 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Income | | |
| Council House rents | (34,950) | (33,616) |
| Other income | (1,267) | (1,445) |
| Total | (36,217) | (35,061) |
| Expenditure | | |
| Repairs and Maintenance | 14,179 | 12,744 |
| Supervision and Management | 8,710 | 7,839 |
| Depreciation and Impairment | 21,567 | 20,235 |
| Bad or doubtful Debts | 244 | 385 |
| Other Costs | 3,128 | 4,081 |
| | 47,828 | 45,284 |
| Net Cost of HRA Services per Income & Expenditure A/C | | |
| Share of Other Costs | 45 | 34 |
| Other Operating Income and Expenditure | 2,393 | 2,406 |
| Net additional amount to be credited to the HRA Balance | (14,049) | (12,662) |
| Decrease / (Increase) in the HRA Balance | 0 | 1 |

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet information provided below presents a summary of what the council owns, and is owed as at 31 March 2009.

| | 31 March 2009 | 31 March 2008 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Balance Sheet | | |
| Land, Buildings, Roads, Machinery, Vehicles, Stock and other assets we own | 1,369,671 | 1,354,205 |
| Cash owed from / (to) Bank | 947 | (132) |
| Money owed to the council | 107,364 | 137,643 |
| Money owed by the council | (310,536) | (137,441) |
| | 1,167,446 | 1,354,275 |
| Financed by: | | |
| Borrowing | 229,521 | 299,508 |
| Reserves | 937,925 | 1,054,767 |
| | 1,167,446 | 1,354,275 |

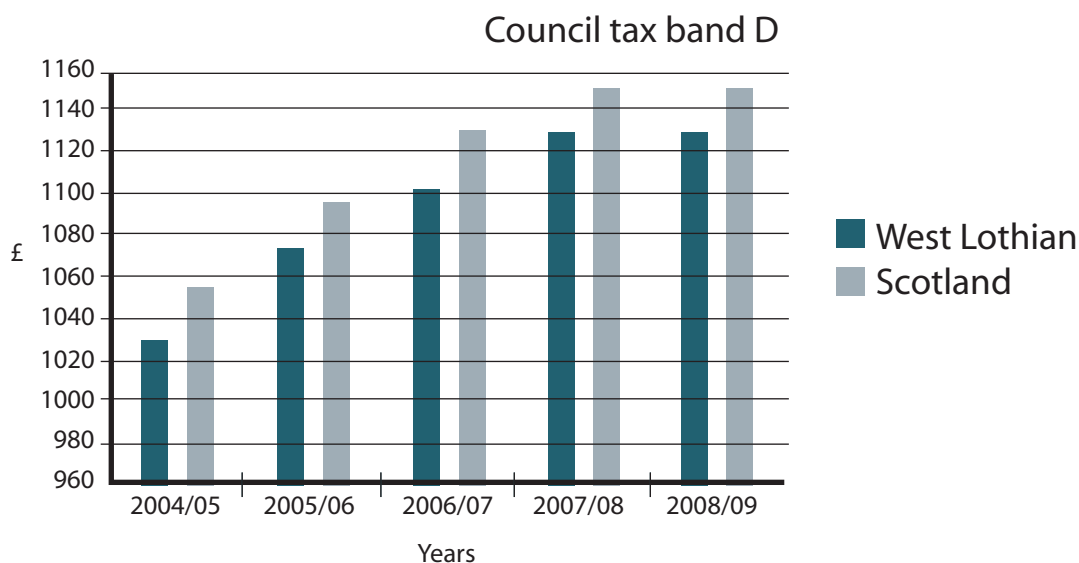
Capital Investment

Capital expenditure generally represents money spent by the council on purchasing, upgrading and improving assets such as schools, housing, and roads and buildings. The public receives the benefit from capital expenditure over a longer period of time than revenue expenditure. In 2008/09, we spent £121.551 million on capital investment. The money to pay for this investment comes from three main sources: borrowing, general capital receipts from sale of land and buildings, and capital grants.

| | 2008/09 | 2007/08 |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 |
| Capital Expenditure | | |
| Development and Environmental Services | 35,158 | 30,636 |
| Education & Cultural Services | 50,270 | 19,298 |
| Customer and Support Services | 2,901 | 522 |
| WLCHCP and Social Policy Services | 4,343 | 1,451 |
| Chief Executive and Finance | 6 | 81 |
| Housing Services | 28,873 | 25,319 |
| total capital expenditure | 121,551 | 77,307 |

Council Tax 2008/09

The Band D council tax for 2008/09 in West Lothian was frozen at 2007/08 levels and therefore remained at £1,128. The average Scottish Band D council tax for 2008/09 was £1,149. This represented the eighth year in succession that West Lothian's council tax was below the Scottish average.



Other Key Financial Facts – 2008/09

- We budgeted to collect 97.5% of council tax in 2008/09. At the end of the financial year we had collected 93.98% of council tax due for that year. The outstanding council tax arrears will be pursued and it is anticipated that the 97.5% target will be achieved.
- We paid 92.8% of invoices within 30 calendar days of receipt.
- In 2008/09, we made efficiency savings of over £6 million, which were used to maintain or