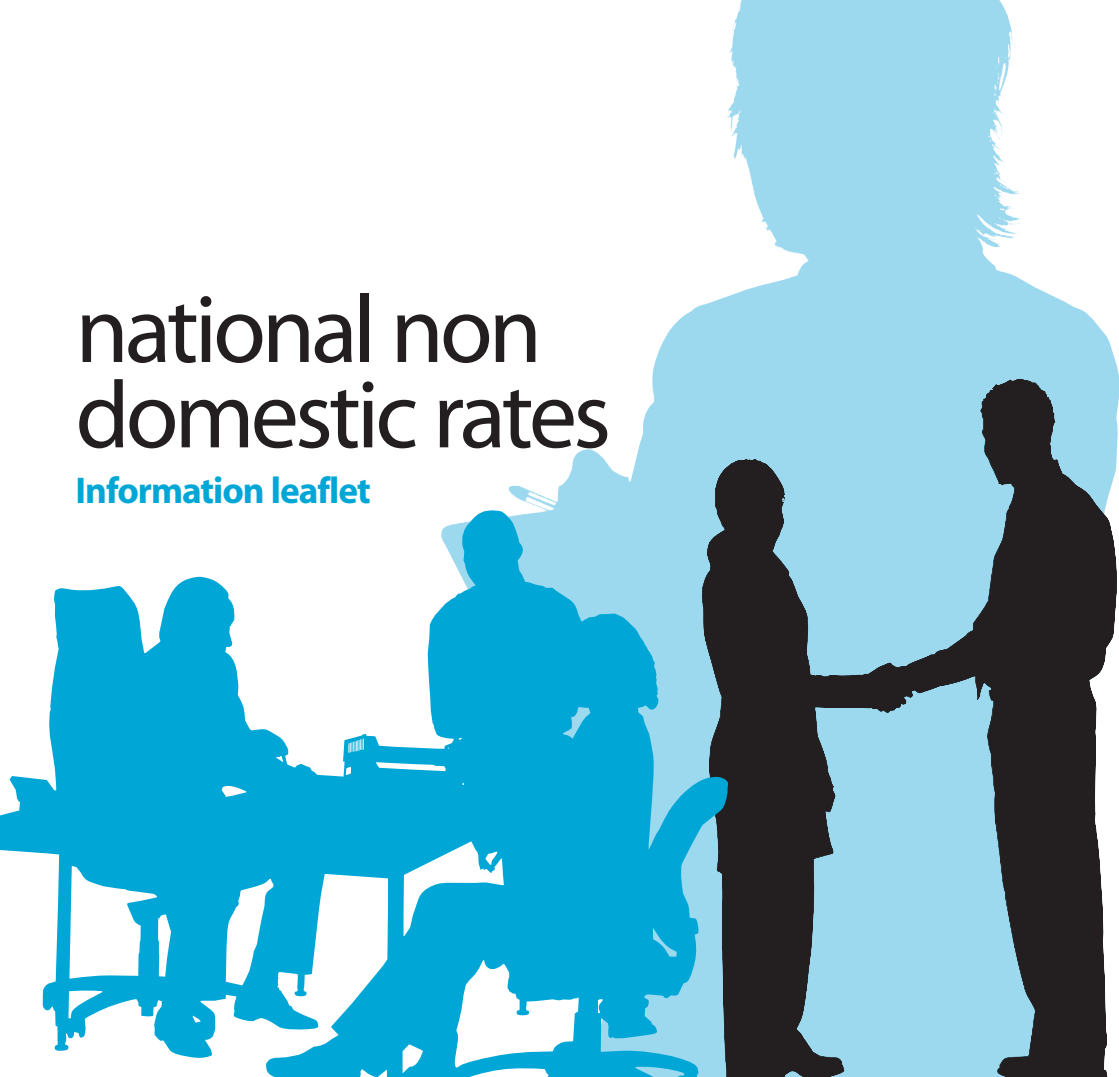


national non domestic rates

Information leaflet



and A to Z of council services

2008/09

This leaflet forms part
of your demand notice

West Lothian Council delivers

westlothian.gov.uk

**UK Council
of the Year
2006**



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



**West Lothian
Council**

contents

National Non - Domestic Rates	page 2
Rateable value	page 2
Transitional arrangements	page 3
Business rate poundage	page 3
How rates are worked out	page 3
Rates for empty properties	page 3
Rate relief	pages 4-5
Appeals	page 6
Paying your rates on time	page 6
Changes in circumstances	page 7
Electronic bills and payments	page 7
Electronic Business Support	page 8
Questions about business rates	page 8
Service Standards: Revenues and Benefits	page 9
Spending on our services	page 10
More information	page 11
Funding our services	page 11
A to Z of council services	pages 12 - 14

National Non - Domestic Rates

National Non-Domestic Rates (business rates) is a tax we raise and collect from business properties such as offices and shops.

We collect payments of this tax on behalf of the Scottish Executive.

The money collected from all councils is passed to the Scottish Executive, who then passes the money back to the councils through grants.

Rateable value

The assessor, who works for the Lothian Valuation Joint Board, sets the 'rateable value' for your property. The rateable value is an estimate of the yearly rent the property could earn on the open market.

All rateable values have been reviewed from 1 April 2005. This is known as a revaluation. If you have any questions about your rateable value, please contact:

The Assessor for Lothian Valuation Joint Board

17A South Gyle Crescent
Edinburgh
EH12 9EB

Phone: **0131 344 2500**

E-mail: **enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk**

Transitional arrangements

The Scottish Executive has introduced 'transitional arrangements' to help ratepayers plan for their new rates bill because of revaluation. The arrangements started on 1 April 2005 and are due to end on 31 March 2008.

For more details, please read the leaflet produced by the Scottish Executive. You can view this on the Scottish Executive website at www.scotland.gov.uk/businessrates under transitional arrangements.

Business rate poundage

Each year, the Scottish Executive sets the 'business rate poundage'. The business

rate poundage for 2007/08 is 44.1p for every pound of rateable value.

How rates are worked out

To work out the bill for your property, you should multiply the rateable value by the poundage rate. The amount you have to pay may be less if you are covered by

transitional arrangements. You may also be entitled to rate relief or other reductions in your bill.

Rates for empty properties

If your property is left empty, you will not owe any rates for the first three months. If it is still empty after three months, you will have to start paying empty property rates. Empty property rates are charged at 50% of the bill. The person or company entitled to use the property will have to pay the bill.

We do not charge empty property rates on certain properties, for example:

- industrial properties (you must fill in a short questionnaire to see if your property qualifies); and
- properties with a rateable value of less than £1700.

Before we award any reduction, we will arrange to visit the property.

Disabled relief

You may get disabled relief if:

- you provide residential accommodation to care for people who are ill;
- you provide facilities for training people who are ill; or

■ you provide welfare services or workshops for disabled people. At least half of the floor space must be used for these purposes before relief is available.

You must fill in an application form.

Small business rate relief

The Scottish Executive introduced the small business rate relief scheme on 1 April 2003. The scheme aims to help genuinely small businesses. All properties with a rateable value of £11,500 or less may get a reduction of between 5% and 50% on the rate poundage.

For more details, please read the leaflet produced by the Scottish Executive. You can view this on the Scottish Executive website at www.scotland.gov.uk/businessrates under Small Business Rate Relief Scheme.

You must fill in an application form each year to find out what level of reduction you are entitled to.

Charitable and discretionary relief

If your organisation is a registered charity, we must grant relief of 80%. This is known as 'mandatory relief'. We can then decide whether you have to pay part of or the rest of the other 20%.

We may grant relief of up to 100% to certain other organisations who, although not registered charities, were not set up to make a profit.

The council's current discretionary relief scheme began on 1 April 2003 and ends on 31 March 2008.

If you have already applied for and been awarded relief, the amount will be shown on your bill.

Our policy on who to award relief to includes the following.

- 100% relief to all clubs which meet the definition of 'sports clubs' as set out by the Scottish Sports Association.
- 100% relief to recreation clubs which do not have a licence to sell alcohol.
- 80% relief to licensed and unlicensed clubs and societies which are not run to make a profit and which are used mainly for recreational purposes.
- An extra 20% relief for organisations which already receive 'mandatory relief' if they are mainly concerned with working with people aged under 19 or provide community facilities in village halls and community centres.

You will need to fill in an application form and show that you follow equal opportunities.

Rural rate relief

You may be entitled to a 50% reduction on your property if it is in an area included in our rural settlement list and is:

- a general shop;
- a post office;
- a pub;
- a hotel;
- a petrol station; or
- a food shop.

If the property is a pub, a hotel or a petrol station, the rateable value must not be more than £10,500. For small food shops, general

shops and post offices, the rateable value must not be more than £7000.

We may also award a 50% reduction if you have a different type of property which is still included in our settlement list. The rateable value of the property must not be more than £14,000. Also, your yearly turnover (before taking off things like tax) should not be more than £250,000, and we must be satisfied that the property is used for purposes that benefit the local community.

You must fill in an application form.

Appeals

You can appeal against your rates charge if you believe we have not assessed the charge correctly.

For example, if:

- the person named on the bill is not the ratepayer;
- the rateable value or net yearly value does not match the entry in the valuation roll (to see the valuation roll, please contact the Assessor for Lothian Joint Valuation Board – the address is on page 1);
- we have not worked out the rates correctly; or

- we have not awarded a relief or a reduction.

If you want to make an appeal, you must write to:

Revenues and Benefits Manager

Revenues Unit
St David House
South Bridge Street
Bathgate
EH48 1TT.

You must continue to pay your rates if you appeal.

Paying your rates on time

You must pay your rates as instructed in your bill. If you have not paid at least four of your monthly instalments by 30 September 2007, you will lose your right to pay in instalments. Also, if you miss two or more payments after 30 September 2007, you will lose your right to pay in instalments.

If you have chosen to pay your bill in one instalment, you must make this payment by 1 October 2007. If you do not, you will lose your right to pay in instalments.

If you lose your right to pay in instalments, we will send you a final notice. You will have 14 days from the date of the notice to pay the rates you owe for the year. If you do not pay as instructed, we will apply to the Sheriff Court for a 'summary warrant', which allows us to collect the taxes you owe us. If you do not pay, we will add costs of 10% of the amount you owe to your account.

Changes in circumstances

Moving in

If you have taken over a new property, please tell us your name and the date you took over. We will then send you an enquiry form to fill in.

Moving out

If you are a tenant in a rented property and are about to give up your tenancy, please contact us so we can finalise your bill.

Selling your property

Please get your solicitor to confirm:

- the date of sale;
- the name and address of the buyer; and
- the name and address of the buyer's solicitor.

Electronic bills and payments

You can choose to receive your business rates bill by e-mail. This has the following advantages.

- It is a faster way of communicating with you.
- We offer a 'reply to sender' facility so you can e-mail any questions you have back to the sender.
- It reduces the use of paper, envelopes and postage, helping us to save money and protect the environment.

- We offer a link to our on-line payment facility.

If you want to receive your bill by e-mail, please let us know. Our contact details are listed in this leaflet.

You can also pay on-line by visiting www.westlothian.gov.uk and clicking on 'online services' and then 'online payments'. There is a link to this facility through your e-mailed bill.

Electronic business support

So that you can take advantage of the benefits of receiving and paying your bill electronically, and a range of other opportunities which being on-line offers, you can get free advice and support from

our Enterprise Centre on Almondvale Boulevard in Livingston.

Phone one of our advisers on **01506 777400**.

Business support

We are committed to supporting the growth of local businesses. To do this, we bring together a wide range of business, employment and economic development services at our Enterprise Centre in Livingston.

These include:

- Business Gateway services, including support for new businesses, business reviews, business advice and planning;
- business growth programmes, workshops and events;
- access to business grants and loans;
- on-line support;
- reducing waste and other initiatives to protect the environment;
- support for companies moving to West Lothian;
- business and economic information and publications; and
- employment services.

The Enterprise Centre delivers its services with a number of partners including Scottish Enterprise, West Lothian Chamber of Commerce, West Lothian College, Jobcentre Plus, the Federation of Small Businesses, Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust and the Local Investment Network Company (LINC).

Contact: The Enterprise Centre
Almondvale Boulevard
Livingston
EH54 6QP.

Phone: **01506 777400**

Fax: **01506 777909**

E-mail: **enterprise@westlothian.gov.uk**

Website: **www.westlothian.com**

Service Standards: Revenues and Benefits

Customer Care Standards

We will:

- deal with your enquiry fairly and sensitively;
- deal with your enquiry promptly and accurately;
- communicate with you clearly and make sure our documents are easily understood;
- ask you regularly if our services are meeting your needs and strive for continuous improvement; and
- make sure you can access the services we deliver.

Core Service Standards

We will:

- provide a complete revenues and benefits service to West Lothian;
- work in partnership with customers to achieve a service that satisfies their objectives and fulfils value for money;
- measure and monitor our performance against other revenues and benefits services; and
- monitor and review our performance against our standards openly and publish the outcome.



Spending on our services

The money we need to spend to provide services is set out in our yearly 'revenue budget'. This budget relates to all services except housing, which is funded entirely from money we receive from rent.

In 2007/08 we will spend £324.266 million, which is made up of the following.

Gross spending	£335.843 million
Less fees and charges	£11.577 million
Net spending	£324.266 million

Gross spending is total spending. Net spending is spending less fees and charges.

The budget sets how much services can spend each year. The 2007/08 budget for each service is as follows.

	Net spending (not including 'capital charges')	'Capital charges'	Net spending (including 'capital charges')	Increase from the previous year	Percentage change from the previous year	Breakdown of Council Tax in band D
	£million	£million	£million	£million	%	£
Education and Cultural Services	154.2	8.9	163.1	7.0	4.5	567
Community Health and Care Partnership and Social Policy	59.9	0.7	60.6	3.2	5.6	211
Customer and Support Services	10.6	2.1	12.7	0.4	2.9	44
Development and Environmental Services	79.6	7.0	86.6	4.7	5.8	301
Adjustment for 'capital charges'		1.3	1.3			5
Total	304.3	20.0	324.3	15.3	5.0	1,128

'Capital charges' are an amount we must take into account by law to cover things such as buildings and vehicles losing their value over time.

For 2007/08, the Scottish Executive has worked out we will need to spend £4934 for each home to provide the necessary range of services. We estimate that we will actually need to spend £5070 to provide high-quality services. As a result, we have amended our budget.

More information

This booklet is a guide only. For more information, please contact:

The Revenues Unit

St David House
South Bridge Street
Bathgate
West Lothian
EH48 1TT.

Phone: 01506 776982

Textphone: 01506 776827 (for people who are deaf or hard of hearing)

Text: Text 'BR' and your message to 07624 802248

E-mail: BusinessRates@westlothian.gov.uk

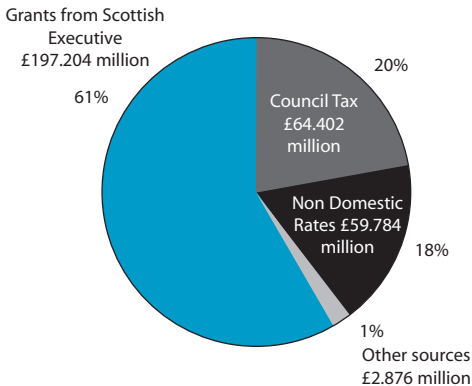
Website: www.westlothian.gov.uk

Funding our services

Our budget for 2007/08 is £324.266 million. The money comes from a number of sources, the most important of which is grants from the Scottish Executive. In 2007/08 we will receive £1569 of grant for each person who lives in our area, compared with the national average of £1711.

After taking account of Scottish Executive grants, National Non-Domestic Rates and other sources of funding, we raise the rest of the money we need from Council Tax, which will fund 20% of our spending.

The chart below shows the various sources of funding for 2007/08.



Staff numbers

Full-time equivalents

2007/2008	6755
2006/2007	6676
Change	79

There are extra staff numbers in high-priority areas, such as teachers and staff providing social care services.

A to Z

of council services

On the following pages you will find a listing of some of the many services provided by West Lothian Council along with some key services provided by our partners.

You will find additional information on all of these services and more on our website. Our customer service centre is also available to help with your enquiries.

Website: www.westlothian.gov.uk

E-mail:

customer.service@westlothian.gov.uk

Phone: 01506 775000.

The crystal mark for plain English does not apply to the following pages.

Your A to Z of council services

A

- Ability Centre - support services for those with a physical disability **774066**
- Adoption **775959**
- Adult basic education **776333**
- Advice Shop (welfare rights, benefits, employment problems, debt etc) **776444**
- Almondell and Calderwood country park **882254**
- Animal welfare licensing **775400**
- Antisocial behaviour **0800 801331**
- Arts services **777585**
- Archives and records centre **773770**

B

- Beecraigs country park **844516**
- Benefits (incl housing & Council Tax) **776800**
- Benefit fraud **776884**
- Blue badges & parking permits **775287**
- Building standards & warrants **775222**
- Bulky uplifts **777800**
- Bus & rail transport information **775288**
- Business advice & information **777400**
- Business rates **776982**

C

- Care homes - see social work
- Caring for children **775959**
- Cemeteries **775000**
- Childcare information service **776660**
- Children's panel membership **777241**
- Children's play areas **775000**
- Citizens' panel membership **774035**
- Community council information **777239**
- Community equipment store **523335**
- Community Recycling Centres **777800**
- Composting helpline **0845 600 0323**
- Concessionary travel **775291**
- Consumer advice **776410**
- Council Information Services Centres: Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Broxburn, Carmondean, Fauldhouse, Linlithgow, Livingston, West Calder, Whitburn **775000**
- Council tax **776800**
- Councillors:
Labour **777002**
SNP **777299**
Conservative **777296**
Independent **777019**
- Criminal justice service **775900**
- Customer service centre **775000**

D

- Day care centres - see Ability Centre or social work
- Dentists (NHS) **0800 22 44 88**
- Dial-a-bus service **633336**
- Dial-a-ride service **633953**
- Disabled parking **775000**
- Dog fouling problems **775000**
- Dog warden **775400**
- Domestic abuse **777401**

E

- Economic Development service **777400**
- **Education:**
 - General enquiries **776000**
 - Customer care **776005**
 - Education maintenance allowance **776003**
 - Free school meals and clothing grants **776001**
 - Lets of education premises **776008**
 - Pupil placement **776002**
 - Special education placement **776002**
 - Special education transport **776392**
- Electoral register **0131 344 2500**
- Energy advice **0800 834 672**
- Environmental health **775400**
- Environmental wardens **0800 616 446**
- Equality issues **777136**
- Events in West Lothian **776335**

F

- Family centres - see social work
- Fire safety **0131 228 2401**
- Flooding **775000**
- Fly tipping **775000**
- Fostering **775959**

G

- Gala day enquiries **775000**
- Garage plots/lock-ups **775000**
- Gardens competition **775000**
- Garden maintenance (elderly & disabled) **775000**

- GP services (NHS) **0800 224488**
- Graffiti **775000**
- Grounds maintenance **775000**

H

- Health and safety **775400**
- Holiday play schemes **776093**
- Home safety service **771770**
- Home security (pensioners) **775000**
- Homeless enquiries **775000**
- Hospital - St John's **523000**
- Houses in multiple occupation (HMO) **777229**
- Housing offices: Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Broxburn, Fauldhouse, Linlithgow, Livingston, West Calder, Whitburn **775000**

L

- Leisure - see West Lothian Leisure
- Library services **776336**
- Licensing board - liquor, betting and gaming **777227**
- Licensing - taxis/private hire **777229**
- Licensing miscellaneous **777230**
- Litter hotline **0800 616 446**
- Local history **776331**
- Low Port Centre **775390**

M

- Meals service - see social work
- Mobile library services **776336**
- Museum services **776347**

N

- National entitlement card (young people) **775291**
- Neighbourhood environment teams (NETs) **0800 616 446**
- Neighbourhood Response Team. Responding positively to antisocial behaviour problems or noise nuisance. **0800 801 331**
- Noise (commercial/industrial) **775400**
- Nursery classes **776660**

The dialling code for all numbers is **01506** unless otherwise shown.

O

- Occupational therapy services under 65 **777777**
over 65 **776700**

P

- Payment line for council payments **775050**
- Personal care - see social work
- Pest control **775400**
- Planning enquiries **775222**
- Polkemmet country park **01501 743905**
- Public toilets **777800**
- Public transport helpline **775288**

R

- Real nappy project **0131 555 4010**
- Recycling **777800**
- Refuse collection **777800**
- Regal community theatre - box office **433634**
- Registration services (births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships)
Bathgate **776191**
Broxburn **775509**
East Calder **884680**
Linlithgow **775373**
Livingston **773754**
West Calder **874700**
Whitburn **01501 678005**
- Residential care - see social work
- Respite care - see social work
- Road and lighting faults **0800 23 23 23**
- Roads - all enquiries **775000**

S

- Schools - see education
- School crossing patrols **775000**
- School meals **775000**
- School transport **775291**

- Sensory resource centre **774490**
- Signs and nameplates **775000**
- Social care emergency team out of hours service **777401**
- Social work services
Bathgate **776700**
Broxburn **775666**
Livingston **777777**
St John's Hospital **524088**
- Sports Centres - see West Lothian Leisure
- Street lighting **775000**
- Swimming pools - see West Lothian Leisure

T

- Taxicard **775287**
- Tourist information **0845 22 55 121**
- Town centres management **777934**
- Trade waste **777800**
- Trading standards **776410**
- Tree enquiries **775000**
- Traffic signals **775000**

V

- Vehicles (abandoned) **775000**
- Victim Support **635050**

W

- West Lothian College **418181**
- West Lothian Leisure **775388**
- Wheelie bins **777800**
- Winter fuel payment helpline **0845 915 1515**

Y

- Young Scot West Lothian **776478**

Customers with special requirements

Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages. Please contact the interpretation and translation service on **0131 242 8181**

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط وبخط كبير وبلغات الجالية.
الرجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الهاتف 0131 242 8181

এই তথ্য আপনি ব্রেইল, টেপ, বড় অক্ষরে এবং কমিউনিটির বিভিন্ন ভাষাও লিখতেও পাবেন। অনুগ্রহ করে ইন্টারপ্রেটেশন অ্যান্ড ট্রান্সলেশন সার্ভিসের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন। টেলিঃ 0131 242 8181

這份資料是可以凸字、錄音帶、大字印刷及社區語言的式本提供。請聯絡傳譯及翻譯服務部，電話：0131 242 8181

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ (ਬ੍ਰੇਲ) ਨਿਰੂਪੀ ਨੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਸਿਰੀ, ਟੇਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਫਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖਾ ਵਰਗੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰਿਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਟਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ : 0131 242 8181

یہ معلومات بریل (انگریز کے رسم الخط)، ٹیپ، بڑے حرف کی خطاط اور کمیونٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبانوں میں دستیاب ہے۔
برائے مزید جاننے یا درخواستیں کے لیے 0131 242 8181 پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Informacje te mogą być przelozone na jezyk Braille'a, dostepne na tasmie magnetofonowej lub wydane duzym drukiem oraz przetlumaczone na jezyki mniejszosci narodowych.
Prosimy o kontakt z Uslugami Tlumaczeniowymi pod numerem 0131 242 8181.

Text phones offer the opportunity for people with a hearing impairment to access the council. The text phone number is **01506 651115**. A loop system is also available in all offices.

Published by West Lothian Council.

Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002

West Lothian Council publishes a range of information online and on paper. The council has developed a Publication Scheme to show what information we make available to the public and the formats it is available in. Copies of the Publication Scheme are available at libraries and Council Information Services (CIS) centres. It is also available online: www.westlothian.gov.uk

westlothian.gov.uk