

factfile 2009
www.westlothian.gov.uk

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.

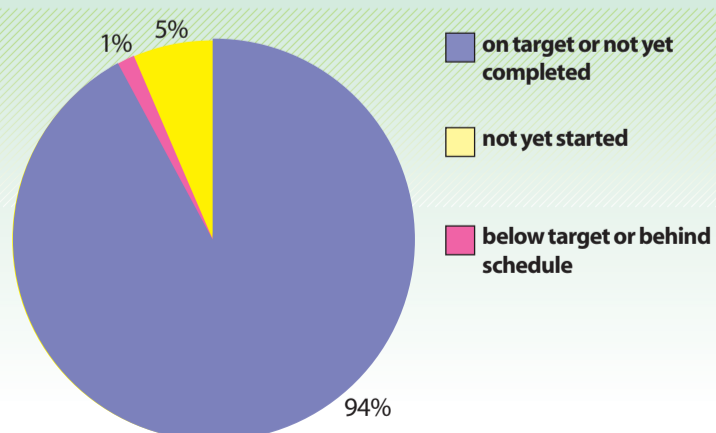


Peter Johnston
Leader of West Lothian Council



Alex Linkston
Chief Executive

Corporate Plan 2007/11 - overall summary



Summary	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.

Improving opportunities for young people



Improving opportunities for young people means developing their skills and helping them to become active in their communities and 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.

5-14 Attainment

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

Standard Grade (SG)

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.

Highers

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.

Transition to work

We worked towards our target of increasing the % of young people progressing to work, training, and further and higher education, as well as working in partnership with more than 500 employers to provide quality work experience of one week or longer for our pupils.

Improving the learning environment

A qualified teacher now leads all pre-school education provision in West Lothian. We opened a new Early Years' Centre in Addiewell, an investment of £850,000, to improve the quality of pre-school facilities and deliver multi-agency support for pre-school children.

In 2009/10 we will...

Open Armadale Academy and Deans Community High School; focus on young adults in the 'more choices, more chances' group; focus on literacy and core skills learning for adults, to improve their chances of sustainable employment; open the new Bathgate Swimming Pool; implement the West Lothian Cultural Strategy to ensure that the cultural entitlement of all citizens is met.

facts

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

Protecting our environment and 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.

Council housing

In 2008/09 work started on 248 new council houses for rent on four sites across West Lothian. Last year we spent £28 million on capital works to our tenants' homes.

Housing need

Permanent homes were found for 44% of the people presenting as homeless. This is an increase of 7% since last year. 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.

Safer neighbourhoods

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.

Managing waste

Last year 34% of all waste collected was recycled. Community Recycling Centre (CRC) recycling rates increased from around 40% to 51%. Signage at CRCs was improved.

Flood prevention

During 2008/09 we invested £330,000 to reduce the risk of flooding in West Lothian and to deal 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.

Our external environment

Last year we invested £2.5 million in the Open Space Strategy, we dealt with: 681 litter complaints, 260 graffiti incidents, 247 abandoned vehicles, 1,592 fly-tipping incidents and 869 reports of dog fouling. We also replaced 954 obsolete street lighting columns, replaced or repaired 1,600 road signs and upgraded 15 traffic light installations.

Road safety

Last year we invested £165,000 and implemented 11 road casualty reduction schemes as part of our 'Accident, Investigation and Prevention Programme' which targets casualty reduction. We invested £300,000 in 13 projects including pedestrian crossings, new footpaths, traffic calming and safer streets initiatives.

In 2009/10 we will...

Start to build a further 415 new council houses for rent, expand the out-of-hours Noise Nuisance Service to operate seven nights a week, invest £3.6 million in maintaining and improving our roads as part of our 10-year Asset Management Plan; invest over £2.4 million in improving and upgrading open spaces and sports facilities in West Lothian.

facts

- We invested £2.5 million in the Open Space Strategy.
- We invested £330,000 in reducing the risk of flooding in West Lothian.

Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities

The 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. '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.

Adult and child protection

During 2008/09 there were 152 referrals designated as Adult Protection cases, 100% of which had an allocated social worker. An inspection of services to protect children in the West Lothian Council area took place during 2008. The inspectors reported very positively on services to protect West Lothian's children and young people.

Working for older people

We 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.

Housing and Council Tax benefit

During 2008/09 we dealt with 1,309 more new claims and 5,203 more 'change of circumstances' notifications compared to the previous year. The average number of days taken to process 'change in circumstances' notifications was eight days and 28 days for new claims exceeding our targets of 10 days and 36 days respectively.

People with learning disabilities

Respite provision has been developed to increase the number of people who can receive a respite package per year at Burnside. Last year the new replacement unit for Deans House, which provides residential accommodation and care for adults with learning disabilities, was completed.

Culture, community learning and development

A new website was developed in partnership with the West Lothian Community Health and Care Partnership (CHCP) www.westlothianchcp.org.uk/bop for the Books on Prescription service, which aims to assist people to help themselves with targeted medical conditions. More than 11,000 people took part in arts activities in West Lothian and we played a key role in developing the first Bathgate Music Festival.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

In 2008, we 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.

In 2009/10 we will...

Start the conversion of a further sheltered housing complex in Bathgate to provide 28 additional housing-with-care tenancies; reduce our target for longest waiting time for assessment to six weeks; move the Local History Library to new custom-designed premises; and open a new library within the Fauldhouse Partnership Centre.

facts

- ❖ OT service carried out 3,484 assessments.
- ❖ The Community Equipment service delivered 17,526 pieces of stock disability equipment.

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.

Economic strategy

Key objectives towards the goal of growing and strengthening the West Lothian economy are outlined in West Lothian Economic Partnership's current economic strategy.

Property market

The commercial property sector continued to expand in 2008/09 despite the downturn. Elements Square, Livingston, opened in October '08 and the office sector has also seen growth.

Employment change

Latest annual employment statistics (ABI 2007) show total jobs in West Lothian at 74,700, a slight fall from the previous year. The figure predates the worst of the current economic downturn and the total jobs are likely to be lower when 2008 figures are released.

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.

Supporting business and encouraging new business

In 2008/09 we assisted 855 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): 142 received consultancy support and 24 received project grants. Some 447 jobs were generated by the start-ups and growing SMEs.

More choices, more chances

We support young people leaving education; last year key workers supported 50 statutory winter 2008 leavers from Whitburn Academy and Deans Community High School.

Tourism strategy

A new public/private sector partnership tourism development company, Visit West Lothian, was established.

Improving opportunities

Last year Community Learning and Development provided 1,300 adult-learning opportunities through 86 courses and the Adult Basic Education (ABE) service supported 450 students to participate in a range of group activities.

In 2009/10 we will...

Assist 280 new business start-ups and 250 small and medium-sized firms, improve people's skills to benefit the local economy; deliver training to 300 West Lothian residents; support the development of our town centres; and promote West Lothian as a visitor destination.

facts

- ❖ We helped 1,781 jobseekers, 774 of whom subsequently found a job.
- ❖ We assisted 855 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Contacts:

Business Gateway 01506 777400 or text BIZ to 60777
Access2Employment 0800 0329768 or text JOBS to 60777
email: enterprise@westlothian.gov.uk

website : www.westlothian.com

Planning for population growth



The West Lothian Local Plan was adopted by the council in January '09. The plan provides an up-to-date framework for guiding development proposals and determining planning applications.

Planning applications and building warrants

The number of planning applications submitted during 2008/09 was 1,106. During the year, 74% of the applications were determined within the statutory time period, 5% lower than the previous year. Amongst the planning applications granted was that for a crematorium at Starlaw, between Bathgate and Livingston.

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 we received 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.

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 of £163,000 has been allocated on the basis of competitive bids.

In 2009/10 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 work with Network Rail to ensure the delivery of the Bathgate to Airdrie Railway; progress implementation of the West Lothian Local Plan and start work on a replacement plan.

facts

- ❖ **Work started on the new £7.2 million Fauldhouse Partnership Centre.**
- ❖ **Work started on a £5 million revamp of the Burgh Halls in Linlithgow.**



Financial round-up for 2008/09

This round-up provides a 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. Contact www.westlothian.gov.uk/Council_and_government/695/financeinfo

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 2008 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 revenue 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, maintaining and repairing 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.

In 2009/10 we will...

- ❖ **Invest another £89.2 million in our General Services capital programme and £37.1 million in our Housing capital programme.**
- ❖ **Deliver further revenue budget savings of £2.8 million.**
- ❖ **Continue to develop a medium-term budget strategy for 2010/11 to 2012/13 which aims to balance budgets in the very difficult future financial climate.**

facts

- ❖ **We paid 92.8% of invoices within 30 calendar days of receipt.**
- ❖ **At the end of the financial year we had collected 93.98% of council tax due for that year (and will continue to rigorously pursue outstanding income due).**
- ❖ **In 2008/09, we made efficiency savings of over £6 million, which were used to maintain or improve delivery of council services.**