

## Tough times ahead for council

The current financial situation is set to have a major impact on council finances.

The squeeze on public finances announced in the April national budget is expected to severely hamper future spending plans for the council and other public bodies across the country.

Council Leader Peter Johnston said: "West Lothian Council operates from a sound financial base, with the delivery of best quality public services our first priority. But we are in the throes of a recession which is presenting us with major challenges and this downturn is likely to have a sustained impact on public services for many years to come.

"We have a balanced budget for this year, but we still don't know the exact impact of the national budget cut backs for the council. It is clear to us however that we will be facing significant reductions in the finance available to deliver our services.

"We also have a record investment programme of £93 million in our schools, roads and community facilities in the current year, but the

amount we will have in future years for investment is also certain to reduce drastically.” He added: “These are tough times for many people in West Lothian and across the country, with unemployment rising and problems with credit and in the housing market.

“West Lothian Council will continue to work with our partners to deliver efficiencies and to work more closely together to ensure we provide the very best quality local services possible from the resources available to us.

“We will also fully engage with our community to identify and agree core needs and establish service priorities and work to put these at the heart of the decisions we make for the future.” Further updates will be available in future editions of *Bulletin* and on the council’s website: [www.westlothian.gov.uk](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk)

## Finishing touches for new council homes

The first council houses to be built in West Lothian in 25 years have been unveiled.

West Lothian Council is currently building 248 council houses and the first tenants are set to move into the initial allocations in Boghall and Ladywell.

The houses are the first phase of a programme to deliver more than 700 new high-quality affordable homes for rent in the area by 2012. The new tenants will move in this month.

In total, 44 homes will be built at the Peel House site in Ladywell, 49 houses in Dixon Terrace, Whitburn, 87 in Wester Inch and 68 in Boghall (which are all due to be completed by November 2010).

The new homes will be a mixture of one- and two-bedroom flats, four in a block, semi-detached houses and bungalows suitable for disabled tenants.

Local companies have also benefited from the next generation of council homes.

As part of a strategy in partnership with Livingston-based house builder, Gladedale Partnerships (Scotland) Ltd, over £3 million of the work awarded in the first phase of the 248

new council house building programme has gone to local firms, which is around 25% of the total so far.

Plumbers JN Dunn from Broxburn and Bathgate firms Whiteside Builders and Kestrel Fencing are among those benefiting, along with many other local suppliers.

Frank Anderson, Executive councillor for services to the community, said: "The completion of these new council houses signals a landmark achievement for West Lothian Council and the people of West Lothian, given that they are the first council houses to be built in over a quarter of a century.

"I'm delighted that the first tenants will be moving in this summer and the building programme for the rest of the 248 homes is approximately six months ahead of schedule.

These impressive new homes will help contribute towards the creation of balanced, sustainable communities.

"These new homes will be affordable, energy efficient and accessible, which will meet the

aspirations of both our tenants and the wider West Lothian community for generations to come. We were delighted that, in building these new homes, we are able to support local businesses and local workers, especially in the current financial climate.

“As part of our New Build Housing strategy, we have aimed to have at least 20% of the contract spent on local companies. This is part of our ‘social responsibility’ and is something we will be looking for in all our future house building.”  
Ian Baird, Director, Gladedale Partnerships (Scotland) Ltd added: “We are delighted to have exceeded our original targets, with local labour and supplies now equating to 25% of the total value of this project, ensuring that the local community benefits even further from this significant investment in West Lothian.”

## Emergency exercise at Bangour

Police, fire and ambulance services are taking part in a major emergency planning exercise in Dechmont next month.

On Wednesday 16 September, the former Bangour Village Hospital site will be the location

for a Scottish Government-run exercise that enables the emergency services to practise with specialist equipment used in major incidents.

Around 700 people will participate, which will also involve a large number of emergency vehicles moving in and out of the site.

Local residents are likely to notice more emergency service vehicles than usual in Dechmont on 16 September. They are being advised not to be concerned but to avoid the hospital site for the day.

Alan Jones, exercise project officer, said: "This exercise will enable police, fire and ambulance personnel to train together in a realistic and challenging exercise scenario.

"We know Bangour is a popular dog-walking spot but as it's just for one day we hope this won't inconvenience local residents too much."

The Scottish Government runs a number of exercises each year as part of its efforts to ensure Scotland is prepared to deal with the consequences of any emergency

## Great Young Scots honoured

Six West Lothian young people have been honoured for their contribution to the community. West Lothian Council hosted a special awards ceremony at the Howden Park Centre in Livingston recently, to recognise those shortlisted for the National Young Scot Awards. The awards were designed to honour those who give up their time to help others, improve lives or surroundings.

Andrew Miller, Executive councillor for education, said: "It's tremendous for West Lothian to have six young people nominated for National Young Scot awards this year.

"Young people can unfairly get a bad reputation at times, and these six are fine examples of the good work done by many dedicated youngsters across West Lothian.

"They are superb ambassadors for West Lothian, and I'm delighted that we can recognise them for their achievements."

Robert Magee (18) from Bathgate won the Volunteer of the Year award for his work with

children with special needs, and Mark Nevin (21) from East Calder clinched the Heritage Award for his work on the country's historic buildings.

Melissa Marsden (17) from Breich was a finalist in the Community Award for making sure that children in care have a say in how they are looked after, while 19-year-old Seafield juvenile pipe band major Brendan Bennett from

Fauldhouse was shortlisted in the Arts category for promoting bagpiping.

It was a double triumph in the Homecoming Scotland Award as Livingston's Cassandra Oswald and Liam Dunn (both 17) were both finalists. Liam scooped the top award for his original artwork that summed up the essence of Scotland.

Double success for head boy Derek

A former West Lothian high school head boy has been chosen to lead the Scottish Youth Parliament.

Derek Couper (18) from Deer Park, Livingston, has achieved a double success, after being

elected as chair of both the West Lothian Youth Congress and the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP).

Former Deans Community High School head boy Derek is also the youngest young person to achieve the top SYP post.

Derek said: "The SYP started in 1999 in Edinburgh and is getting stronger every year. "We listen to young people and understand what issues are important to them and then campaign to try to make Scotland a better place for young people."

One of four West Lothian Members of the SYP, Derek is well known in his local area for his commitment and work on behalf of young people.

Executive councillor for education, Andrew Miller commented: "On behalf of West Lothian Council I would like to congratulate Derek on this fantastic achievement.

"I know him well through the valuable contributions he has made as head boy at Deans Community High School, so I am not surprised

his fellow MSYPs recognised what an exceptional young person Derek is."

Blown away by funding available

A fund has been launched to assist West Lothian communities tackle issues such as the environment, poverty and employment.

The West Lothian Development Trust Fund has been formed to distribute money received from existing and future wind farm developments in West Lothian, and is made up of representatives from West Lothian Council, local community representatives and wind-farm developers. Local organisations and groups who live near Black Law windfarm, Fauldhouse, currently West Lothian's only windfarm, are now being asked to submit applications for the money.

Greg McCarra, Chairman of the West Lothian Development Trust, said: "I'm delighted that residents of Fauldhouse and surrounding communities are being given the chance to improve and better its communities."

Tommy Lynch, Fauldhouse resident and member of the Trust said: "It's good to see the funds

being spent locally with the local community being involved in the decision-making process.”

Closing dates for applications are on 2 October and 27 November 2009

For more information or to download an application form, go to

[www.westlothian.gov.uk/windfarms](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/windfarms) or contact

Clare Summers on 01506 777137 or email:

[clare.summers@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:clare.summers@westlothian.gov.uk)

## West Lothian Local Review Body formed

A new council committee has been created to review the planning process

The new framework will enable consideration of requests for review of decisions on local planning applications taken by the council's Appointed Person, or non-determination by him/her, under the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 and regulations made thereunder.

Council Leader Peter Johnston commented: “The establishment of the West Lothian Local Review Body will ensure the council is progressing towards compliance with the new planning regime under the 2006 Act.

“Applicants who are aggrieved by a planning officer’s decision (or failure to decide on time) under that statutory scheme of delegations will have the right of appeal to the Local Review Body.”

Membership of the West Lothian Local Review Body will be from a pool of nine elected members, with Provost Tom Kerr as Chair and Councillor Gordon Beurskens as Vice-Chair. Meetings will be held every four weeks with the first meeting planned for 9 September. Members of the committee will undertake mandatory training.

## Investment in Schools

A massive investment of over £130million has been ploughed into West Lothian’s schools in recent years.

Replacement secondary schools have been built in Armadale and Deans, Livingston, at a cost of £60million. Livingston’s The James Young High and Inveralmond Community High with St Kents in Blackburn are being refurbished as part of a £60million project.

Other major works include: £6.3million sports hall at Linlithgow Academy; £2million extension at Bankton Primary in Livingston; £1.8million extension at Pinewood in Blackburn; £1million early years' centre at Addiewell Primary as well as a new classroom extension; £850,000 new hall at Williamston Primary in Livingston; and £600,000 nursery at Parkhead in West Calder. Executive councillor for education, Andrew Miller, said: "Good school infrastructure is vital if we are to deliver the high-quality education our young people deserve.

"This huge investment in our schools will allow us to meet the needs of West Lothian's growing young population and help us to continue to bring down class sizes."

In addition, there have also been extensions to a large number of schools, such as St. Margaret's Academy in Livingston, and primary schools including St Nicholas' in Broxburn, Livingston Village and Winchburgh/Holy Family.

Other investments include: a new speech and language facility at Murrayfield Primary in Blackburn; new synthetic turf pitches for three

secondary schools; and upgrading school Craft Design and Technology (CDT) departments. In the pipeline are: an extension for Blackridge Primary; a classroom extension and new hall for Longridge Primary; and a brand new Pumpherston and Uphall Station Community Primary School at Drumshoreland.

Civic Centre open for business

The vision of joined up public services in West Lothian is now a reality

Civic Centre open for business

The West Lothian Civic Centre in Howden South Road, Livingston is now open for business, and will offer council, police, courts and other public-sector partners in one central location. *As Bulletin* went to press, police had already moved to their new home at the Civic Centre, with a number of council services are preparing to transfer across.

West Lothian Civic Centre is thought 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.

Leader of West Lothian Council Peter Johnston said: "It has taken a tremendous amount of commitment and work to bring the vision of true joined-up partnership working to fruition. The West Lothian Civic Centre will lead the way in delivering both effective and efficient public services.

"The current unstable financial situation facing the council means that the Civic Centre will have a key role to play in terms of sharing resources, creating efficiencies and providing the best value possible for our citizens."

By late autumn, when the Civic Centre is fully operational, it will house around 1,000 staff including:

Council Headquarters.

Divisional Police Headquarters.

Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Court complex.

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

The Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Service.

Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service.  
West Lothian Community Health and Care  
Partnership.

Chief Superintendent of Lothian and Borders Police, Ronnie Liddle, said: "This is a really exciting time for West Lothian Division and, indeed, Lothian and Borders Police. The opportunities we will have, in terms of working really closely with our partners, are huge." Eleanor Emberson, Chief Executive, Scottish Court Service, said: "This centre offers huge potential for closer working between court staff and others in the justice system, especially the police and Procurator Fiscal but also with social work and education services. Better joint working across the justice system will give a better service to the local community."

West Lothian Council's Chief Executive Alex Linkston said: "Partners have worked together over the last three years to identify opportunities, build relationships and create an environment to maximise synergies such as criminal justice, community safety and emergency planning. Partners will continue to build on this innovative work to improve service provision."

Following extensive market research and consultation with users, the times of the council-funded 400 and 401 services are being altered slightly to suit hospital workers better.

The number of journeys per day will remain unchanged, and the services will be renumbered as 400 and X400.

Executive councillor for health and care, Ellen Glass, said: "The bus link between St John's and the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (ERI) is vital for many West Lothian workers and local residents. "As well as providing employment opportunities, the service allows people in West Lothian easier access to the ERI for hospital appointments and visiting loved ones.

"We have listened to the majority of people who use the service, and changed the service to better suit their needs. The new arrival and departures times will now tie up with the main shift start and finish times, which will be a great help to staff."

The first bus running to Edinburgh on weekdays will now leave slightly earlier at 5.55am, while the last bus returning to West Lothian will

continue to leave Edinburgh at 8.25pm. The times of services throughout the day have also been changed, with the majority of services now leaving at 10 past every hour instead of 20 past. Arrangements are being made for the new timetable to come into effect from late September.

Please pick up a timetable from any CIS office or either hospital, download a copy from the Transport section of the council website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk), or call Traveline 0871 200 22 33 for more information.

Teacher on the ball at Wimbledon

Andy Murray was not the only Scot having to handle the pressure on the courts of Wimbledon this year.

A West Lothian home economics teacher already has one Wimbledon final under her belt, unlike the unfortunate beaten semi-finalist Murray. Olwyn Roy from Inveralmond Community High School in Livingston is one of the sport's leading umpires and enjoyed her 25th consecutive year at SW19 this summer.

She reached the pinnacle of her career officiating at the Federer/Nadal epic final, at Wimbledon in 2007.

Her hero is Roger Federer, and Olwyn umpired his first ever grass match in Britain when he was just 16 years old. "But I didn't spot his potential," laughed Olwyn.

However, it's not all glamour. "You have to do so many days to get to Wimbledon and maintain your grade, which also means standing in the pouring rain at an under 10s event." she continued.

"I am also graded to call the lines and my specialty is calling the service line. I love it. "There's the added pressure of the Hawkeye electronic review system, but last year 80 per cent of calls were in favour of officials." West Lothian Council's director of education and cultural services, Gordon Ford, added: "What Olwyn has achieved is simply wonderful and she is an inspiration to budding local sport stars. Her achievement highlights that there is more than one way to take part in great sporting events."

## Change needed for hospital buses

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**Standing ovation for Howden Park Centre**

A flagship centre for the arts in West Lothian has been officially opened.

Council Leader Peter Johnston was joined by Ben Twist, chair of the Scottish Arts Council’s Lottery Committee, to perform the opening

ceremony of the transformed Howden Park Centre in Livingston recently.

The centre has undergone an ambitious £6 million redevelopment to create the second of three quality arts venues in West Lothian, alongside Bathgate's Regal Theatre and the Burgh Halls in Linlithgow.

A plaque was unveiled and guests enjoyed a unique promenade performance, featuring local arts groups and directed by Gill Robertson of Catherine Wheels Theatre Company and Ian Cameron of Plutot la Vie.

Council Leader Peter Johnston said: "This ceremony marks the arrival of a landmark venue that we believe will attract a high standard of performers and events to West Lothian.

"The new Howden Park Centre is a flagship centre for the arts in West Lothian. The facilities are first class and West Lothian Council is delighted to have a new local hub for arts and a destination venue for the whole of central Scotland to enjoy.

"Howden Park Centre highlights what can be achieved when we work in partnership with organisations like the Scottish Arts Council."

Ben Twist, Chair of the Scottish Arts Council's Lottery Committee, added: "The centre is not just an important venue in West Lothian, it's a key part of the Scottish arts scene.

"We were thrilled to contribute to Howden Park Centre but the real drive and desire has come from West Lothian Council.

"The vision, courage and determination shown by West Lothian Council has been first class and I congratulate them on completing Howden Park Centre."

For more information on the fantastic array of performances, classes and events on offer at Howden Park Centre visit:

[www.howdenparkcentre.co.uk](http://www.howdenparkcentre.co.uk)

Fox Fridays set to launch  
An exciting new club for young people is set to launch in West Lothian.

Fox Fridays will start at the newly completed Deans Community High School in Livingston when it opens in August.

Young people between 12 and 17 will be able to make use of the state-of-the-art sports' facilities and community wing at the school for free from

12.30pm to 7pm every Friday from the end of August.

Over £20,000 is being invested in the multi-activity programme.

Executive councillor for education, Andrew Miller, said: "Fox Fridays are a great chance for local young people to make free use of the superb facilities in the brand new Deans Community High School.

"It will offer a wide range of activities to suit most tastes, and we would also welcome any suggestions from the young people involved about what they would prefer to do."

Fox Fridays is another project established under the council's new strategy for tackling under-age drinking. West Lothian Council has allocated £250,000 over three years for a range of projects offering a positive alternative for young people, particularly on Friday afternoons and evenings. Police have reported that youth calls have fallen by 50% since the strategy started taking effect, with a 35% drop in vandalism and a 28.6% drop in minor assaults.

## Fun but no sun at No Messin

Almost 1,000 young people braved the downpours to make No Messin' Live! in Livingston a huge success.

The event at Inveralmond Community High School gave young people the chance to participate in a range of fun activities while learning more about rail safety.

Hosted in partnership with West Lothian Council, it included over 20 events such as a football tournament, boxing, wrestling, dancing and motorcycling.

Mark Henderson from Network Rail said: "The event was superb despite the soggy conditions."

## 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](http://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.

The Advice Shop is behind the Regal Theatre in Waverley Industrial Estate, Bathgate and it's open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 9am to 5pm; Wednesday, 9am to 1pm; and Friday 9am to 4pm. Telephone 01506 776444 or email: [advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk) to find out about local outreach sessions.

Pupils

praised for excellent attendance

West Lothian school pupils have been recognised for their dedication to their education.

A special award ceremony was held at the newly redeveloped Howden Park Centre in Livingston recently, to honour the pupils with the highest attendance records from every school in West Lothian.

Primary and secondary school leavers with the best attendance were invited to receive their awards in front of an audience of parents,

carers, and councillors, as well as representatives from schools and the council's education services team.

A total of 84 pupils received certificates and watches for their achievement, with eight managing the incredible feat of 100% attendance. An impressive 1,255 pupils in West Lothian also received certificates for achieving 96% or above attendance throughout their primary or secondary career.

Presenting the awards, Councillor Andrew Miller, Executive councillor for education, said: "These young people are a credit to West Lothian and I'd like to congratulate them all on their remarkable accomplishments.

"To achieve close to perfect attendance takes real dedication, and all the young people here today have clearly shown their commitment to their education.

"This level of reliability will help them succeed for the rest of their lives, as employers place great value on staff who are so dependable."

in brief

Watch your Blue Badge

Blue Badge holders in West Lothian are being warned not to let their parking passes run out. About 9,000 people in West Lothian hold a 'Blue Badge' which allows disabled people parking concessions .

Reminder letters are no longer being sent out, so badge holders are asked to apply for new badges at the start of the month on which the old badge runs out.

For more information, contact the council's Blue Badge line on 01506 775287.

New beginning for credit union  
Livingston Credit Union has a new home at the Centre in Livingston.

The not-for-profit service was originally established in the town in 1998 with the aim of helping people save and borrow money at low rates.

Flying the Flag

West Lothian has marked the first annual Armed Forces Day.

A special ceremony was held at West Lothian House in Livingston in honour of the occasion,

which aims to celebrate the work of the Armed Forces community.

#### News online

Visit [www.westlothian.gov](http://www.westlothian.gov) for local and council news, help and advice.

The website is packed with information and links including a new 'find my nearest' feature on the home page. Access services and pay bills at a time that is convenient to you.

#### Feel Good Festival

A festival of film, theatre and arts aims to transform social attitudes to mental health. The Lothian Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, or Feelgood Festival, runs from 1 to 22 October. For more information, see their website at [www.mentalhealthfestival.dreamhosters.com](http://www.mentalhealthfestival.dreamhosters.com).

#### Tasty amount for healthy foods

A worthwhile local healthy-eating project has benefitted from a tasty £150,000 grant from West Lothian Council.

West Lothian Food and Health Development (WELFEHD) was awarded £1.5million from a

variety of sources, the largest funding package ever secured by a local social enterprise.

### Forum races forward

The West Lothian Community Race Forum has chosen the key people to drive forward race equality in the area.

Nahid Hanif, Greg Ewing and Roland Manowski have been appointed as chair, vice chair and treasurer respectively.

The forum will be hosting a visit from the inspirational speaker Arun Gandhi, grandson of the late spiritual leader Mahatma Gandhi on the 8th October 2009. Details will be published nearer the time.

For more information, please contact Karen Cawte on 01506 281086 or email [karen.cawte@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:karen.cawte@westlothian.gov.uk)

### Police pilot in schools

Two West Lothian schools have been chosen to pilot a new partnership scheme with local police.

Both Bathgate Academy and Deans Community High School in Livingston are developing a community police 'campus' initiative, which will see an officer based in each school for a trial period.

Playgrounds get stamp of approval  
West Lothian's playgrounds have been given a very positive assessment by independent playground inspector Bill Dunlop.

He said: "It was pleasing to see that many playgrounds have been redeveloped since last year. The standard of maintenance is extraordinarily high."

To report issues with playgrounds telephone:  
01506 775000.

Royal Approval for West Lothian four  
Four outstanding West Lothian individuals were recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Broxburn paralympian Jim Anderson MBE received an OBE for services to swimming, while Colin Liddell from Linlithgow was given an OBE for services to business and to charity.

Mid Calder's Ronald Smith received his OBE for services to education, while Gillian Mitchell from

Kirknewton was awarded the MBE for her voluntary services work.

Licensing scheme for knife dealers agreed  
A new mandatory scheme for licensing knife dealers has been agreed.

For more information contact the Licensing Team on 01506 777187.

Male Volunteers wanted for Children's Panel  
The Children's Panel is looking for male volunteers who live or work in West Lothian to help them make a difference in the lives of vulnerable young people.

To find out more, please contact the CPAC support team on 01506 777241 or [cpac.support@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:cpac.support@westlothian.gov.uk)

Take action to reduce your carbon footprint  
By reducing your carbon footprint you can help the environment and save money too!  
There are many simple things that you can change to start your contribution to reducing global warming. Turn off lights and electrical appliances when not in use to conserve energy and turn down your heating.

Executive councillor for the environment, Robert De Bold said: "It's easy to make changes at home to reduce your environmental impact. Recycle paper and plastics, compost food and garden waste, reuse plastic bags when shopping, recycle old furniture and donate to charity shops are just a few ideas."

20/20 vision at Knightsridge

Talented pupils at a Knightsride primary school in Livingston scooped up a superb 20 awards in a national competition recently.

The picture perfect pupils won 20 of the top awards in Relationships Scotland's My Family design competition

Sounds good steps are being taken to reduce the volume of night noise problems in West Lothian.

West Lothian Council has now increased its successful Night Time Noise Nuisance Service from four nights a week to seven nights a week, 7pm to 4am, across the whole of West Lothian. The Noise Nuisance Service was set up as part of the Neighbourhood Response Team and aims to cut down on domestic anti-social noise and

behaviour. It has tackled nearly 1,500 complaints during 2008/09 and has issued over 500 noise-warning notices to residents since it began - making a real difference to many of our communities.

Executive councillor for services to the community, Frank Anderson, said: "Anti-social behaviour, of any kind, can cause upset and distress to residents, and it's an issue we continue to take very seriously.

"We actively encourage residents to report incidents of noise and I'm delighted that we are now able to provide this greatly enhanced service, seven nights a week.

"We are determined to tackle the problems of excessive noise and the often-accompanying anti-social behaviour. With the help and cooperation of our residents we can make a difference."

The team takes- complaints from residents who are experiencing problems with excessive noise from within their communities and can use a variety of measures to help put an end to anti-social behaviour, as well as providing a witnessing service .

Councillor Anderson added: "The Noise Nuisance Service is just one of the many initiatives that the council has introduced and we are beginning to see significant improvements in the reduction of anti-social behaviour across West Lothian.

"If residents have any concerns regarding anti-social behaviour, please contact the council on 01506 775000, your local police station or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111."

New home for old school equipment

Unused furniture from a West Lothian high school is on its way to the Caribbean to help communities affected by hurricanes.

West Lothian Council and the Surplus Educational Supplies Foundation joined forces to collect unused classroom equipment, which would normally have been scrapped after recent refurbishment work at Inveralmond Community High School in Livingston.

A 40 ft freight container, full of old desks, chairs, black and whiteboards and more, was picked up

last week from the school and will be shipped to Grenada.

David Miles-Hanschell, founder of the Surplus Educational Supplies Foundation, explained: "I was born and brought up in Barbados in the West Indies and when I heard of the destruction of the neighbouring island of Grenada I felt compelled to do something to help.

"With school closures, new builds and the continuous renewing of resources in Scottish schools I wanted to recycle these textbooks, furniture, computers and help those less fortunate.

"I am incredibly grateful to West Lothian Council for donating the equipment to my foundation which will be very much appreciated by the children in Grenada.

Mr Miles-Hanschell also thanked Inveralmond, Interserve Projects, and WH Malcolm Transport for their invaluable help.

Executive councillor for education, Andrew Miller, said: "It's a fantastic cause which will go a long way to assisting children in areas with high levels of poverty.

“The new facilities at Inveralmond will be superb but it is heartening to know that the old equipment is going to a worthwhile cause.”

Top education award for Lisa

A West Lothian school support manager has scooped a prestigious accolade.

Lisa Goodman from Deans Community High School in Livingston won the Education Supporter of the Year trophy at the Scottish Education Awards recently, in recognition of her unwavering dedication to helping young people in Livingston.

Highly regarded by education staff, students and partner agencies, Lisa devotes her time to the young people and the local community, including planning disco events for 12 to 16 year olds, fund raising activities and being a key part of West Lothian’s Looked After Children’s Team.

Andrew Miller, Executive councillor for education said: “After almost seven years at Deans Community High School, Lisa has firmly established herself as a popular and valued member of the team.

“I am delighted that her dedication to enhancing the care and welfare needs of pupils and young people within the community has been recognised at these prestigious awards.

“It’s clear to everyone that Lisa goes above and beyond her role and what is asked of her. For example, I know that Lisa’s volunteers her time to join the police during anti-social behaviour initiatives and speaks to young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol.”

He added: “Lisa strives to continually improve the learning experience of pupils who attend Deans Community High School and I’d like to offer Lisa my sincere congratulations on winning such a prestigious and important award.

“She is a fantastic role model for young people in West Lothian.”

All of the successful schools received a trophy, certificate and £1,000 cheque at a glittering awards ceremony in City Halls, Glasgow recently.

The Scottish Education Awards are now in their ninth year and showcase local schools and reward the hard work and commitment of all education staff in Scotland.

Funding boost for West Lothian's young people  
A pilot scheme aims to deliver more jobs  
for priority groups in West Lothian.

The council is leading on the development of a  
Future Jobs Fund (FJF) for West Lothian, in  
partnership with other local public-sector and  
voluntary organisations.

A pilot proposal has been submitted to the  
Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for the  
creation of 50 additional jobs in West Lothian  
from autumn 2009 onwards, with around half  
being created within the council.

The scheme aims to help priority groups, such as  
18 to 24 year olds, who have been out of work  
for a year, gain access to more job opportunities.  
Those who are successful in applying for jobs  
created under FJF will initially be employed for  
six months and receive support to find long-term  
employment.

Executive councillor for development and  
transport, Martyn Day said: "Given the current  
economic climate the creation of new  
employment is obviously great news, and we are

delighted that we are able to lead on the development of this worthwhile project.

“Although the initial work will aim to create around 50 new jobs, we will work to identify and develop a wider package of job creation from spring 2010, which will hopefully create even more.

“This initiative will provide training and access to the appropriate training. Those who complete the initial six-month course will have a better chance at progressing into a full-time job.”

The FJF is a Government initiative, which has been launched in response to the recession, aimed at tackling the negative impact on the jobs market.

Throughout the UK, £1 billion has been earmarked for the FJF over an 18-month period to March 2011, and both council services and partner organisations will be included in the West Lothian bid.

### Scrum celebration for Linlithgow Rugby Club

The achievements of Linlithgow Rugby Club have been recognised at a civic reception in their honour.

Provost Tom Kerr hosted the special event on behalf of West Lothian Council to mark the club's promotion to Scottish Rugby Union's National League One.

Local councillors and senior council officers, including chief executive Alex Linkston, joined Linlithgow's players, coaching staff, executive committee members, sponsors and their partners for the celebration.

Provost Tom Kerr said: "On behalf of the council, I'd like to congratulate everyone at Linlithgow Rugby Club on their magnificent achievement this season.

"Their promotion to the fourth tier of Scottish rugby is a superb accomplishment, and is the highest level reached by the club in its near 40-year history.

"It's particularly pleasing as they are a community club with strong ties to the Linlithgow area, and most of the players are local and have come up through the youth ranks. "The council has an excellent relationship with Linlithgow Rugby Club, and we hope they can continue to go from strength to strength."

The Provost also presented club president Gavin Brown and every player with a framed picture montage taken from various games throughout the year.

Top award for promoting diversity

West Lothian Council has scooped a prestigious award for promoting diversity.

The council clinched the sought-after Diversity Achievement of the Year trophy at the Municipal Journal (MJ) Achievement Awards 2009 in London recently. The MJ awards are designed to highlight and promote excellence in service delivery among local authorities, and this year received a record number of entries from hundreds of local authorities across the UK.

The council's application focused on West Lothian Diversity Week, and the wider impact of recent equality and diversity initiatives . Council Leader Peter Johnston said: "It's a great honour for West Lothian to be awarded the MJ's Diversity Achievement of the Year trophy.

"We are proud to be a council which doesn't just meet the minimum legal requirements – we want

to do all we can to ensure that we are positively promoting equality and diversity to our citizens.

“Initiatives such as Diversity Week, which saw over 1,000 people attend 16 events in November last year, have helped raise awareness of diversity issues both within the council and to the whole of West Lothian.”

Council equality officer Kenny Selbie added: “It is fantastic to win such a high-profile national award.

“This recognition has come as a result of the effort and creativity shown by everyone involved. Particular thanks go to the small group of volunteers who put the events together and who made the initiative such a success.”

The judging process included investigative presentations and interviews, showing the council’s leadership and business alignment on diversity.

The judges said of the West Lothian application: “The council looked at its duties to promote diversity and social cohesion in a holistic way and devised a wide-ranging and effective series of events and initiatives.

“The week achieved very impressive impact and value for money.”

## Take the Travel challenge

Give your car a break during travel challenge week 16 to 22 September – that’s the message from West Lothian Council

Councillor Robert De Bold, Executive councillor for the Environment, said: “During travel challenge week we would like people to give their car a break. We’re urging people, when it’s possible, to leave their car at home – especially on short journeys. Walking, cycling, car sharing and using public transport helps to reduce congestion on our roads. Also you will not have the stress of fighting your way through traffic and if you walk or cycle on short journeys you will also benefit your health.”

Pledge to make a difference, on even one day, you will be entered into a free prize draw to win one of 50 special travel challenge piggy banks. For information on car sharing or finding a walking or cycling buddy visit [www.tripsharewestlothian.com](http://www.tripsharewestlothian.com). Tell us your pledge now by email marked Travel Challenge to [communications@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:communications@westlothian.gov.uk) or post

your entry to Travel Challenge, Corporate Communications, West Lothian Council, West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, EH54 6FF.