



Annual Report 2020/21

(April 2020 to Summer 2021)

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Introduction

The last 18 months have been unlike any other. The Covid-19 pandemic has loomed large over all our communities, changing the way we work and increased pressure on our communities.



In the Spring of 2020, a national lockdown was enforced because of Covid-19. This left many people in West Lothian feeling vulnerable, lonely and isolated, facing financial worries, unable to get food for their families and worried about their health and well-being.



West Lothian Council, Community Planning Partners, Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) and the wider third sector took a leadership role and responded positively by working at pace to provide a coordinated response to provide help and support to vulnerable individuals and communities across the local area. The Third Sector played a crucial role in the emergency response, often initiating actions at a

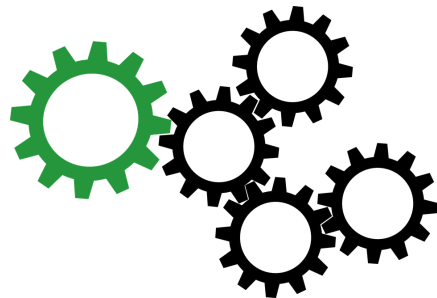
community level and working with statutory partners such as West Lothian Council and the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) to support those in need.

Through necessity it has opened up new ways of working for many and for some that will be a permanent part of how services are delivered going forward.

The work reported to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP tends to focus on the £944,000 Voluntary Organisations budget and the £450,000 Modernisation and Improvement Fund administered by Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration, as well as smaller grants such as the gala and Pensioners and the associated partnership work. However, this is only one part of the overall investment, support and partnership working that goes on. This report tries, for the first time, to broaden that out and provide an overview of the funding, support and partnership working that takes place across a number of Council Services. It is not meant to be an in-depth analysis, as much of the activity captured here is reported in more detail to other PDSPs and fora and that is the right place. It is, however, an attempt to show the range of partnership work that goes on and how some of that has been shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is not a definitive picture as links, networks and partnership working take place all the time and is not always captured easily. Similarly, with funding, there is much more investment that supports the Third Sector and Council to deliver than the investment that goes into the third sector through Council. The key importance of how the Third Sector is able to draw down funding from external funders is recognised on all sides and that this helps to deliver key support to our local communities whether geographically or thematically. This is something that needs to be better understood going forward and something Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) will be looking at to provide a clearer picture of the full impact of the sector. Understanding the impact of the sector is also not simply about the ability to attract external funding it is also about what the funding is for, namely how they improve the outcomes for their users in whatever sector they operate. This is something generally recognised and is no doubt captured individually or thematically but not looked at in the round.

West Lothian Council and the Third Sector have worked closer than ever before and strengthened existing processes and relationships. This partnership approach is not just about funding but also about planning strategically to ensure a joined-up approach so that available resources best targeted to deliver for our communities.



In terms of defining the Third Sector for the purposes of the report this includes local community based organisations groups (mainly charities but some unincorporated), West Lothian wide groups, national charities operating within West Lothian, Community Development Trusts and other social enterprise models etc.)

This is the first time this information has been pulled together in one place and it is hoped that in doing so it will provide a useful and informative overview. Indeed on the investment and funding side alone there is around **£43M** (mainly 2020/21 but some in the current financial year looking slightly beyond 20/21) referred to within the report across all sectors that include grant awards, commissioned work etc., in particular the work delivered through Social Policy to support the care sector.

The feedback received will help shape future reports and provide insight to what people find useful and not so useful, anything else that could be included and indeed if it is something people would like to see in future years.

Voluntary Sector Overview – Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian

Sharing knowledge and information exchange

The Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian is the recognised Third Sector Interface in West Lothian. It is one of 32 across Scotland that represents and supports the sector both in terms of organisations but also volunteering. Throughout the crisis, VSGWL



worked closely with West Lothian Council to coordinate communications and help to jointly provide the best possible support to individuals and communities. VSGWL surveyed third sector colleagues about the support that they might be able to offer during this crisis and published a Directory of Services, including contact details, on their website. This was enhanced with information gathered by West Lothian Council about informal groups that came together locally, this was also incorporated into the online Directory.

The frequency of Third Sector Strategy Group (TSSG) meetings increased significantly during the pandemic with monthly meetings scheduled to share best practice, knowledge and identify risk and opportunities. TSSG held a virtual session for the Clerks from the Equalities and Human Rights Committee to help inform the Committee's Inquiry into the impact of Covid-19 in Summer 2020.

VSGWL chaired an important Covid-19 recovery summit to showcase the work of the third sector during the pandemic. The online event attracted 100 participants, including elected members, MPs, MSPs and a host of third sector partners. The event received very positive feedback and wide-spread recognition of the importance of the sector in the economic and social recovery and the partnership approach required to create a new West Lothian.

Coordination of volunteering opportunities



Over 1200 people from across West Lothian signed up to volunteer during the crisis. VSGWL created a volunteering database that allowed them to manage and respond to requests from partners for volunteers. They signposted individuals to their online Directory of Services which has details about all organisations providing help and support during the crisis.

Individuals have secured opportunities with a range of third sector partners helping with food parcel deliveries to those in need, PPE supplies to carers, medicine pick-ups and support as ward helpers in St John's. It is hoped that individuals will be able to secure long term volunteering opportunities post Covid-19. One particularly positive (and unexpected) outcome has been the number of individuals expressing interest in volunteering as trustees. Over 60 people have been sign-posted to third sector partners to help with the important role Boards play in governing and supporting voluntary organisations.

To support the vaccination process VSGWL was able to call on volunteers across West Lothian to support the mass vaccination work at the Pyramids, Bathgate. Working closely with NHS Lothian, VSGWL coordinated the astonishing public response to this volunteering support. We ensured a team of 'meet and greet' volunteers were present at three shifts per day, 7 days per week from February 2020. There were over 1674 shifts undertaken with individuals contributing over 5800 hours of volunteering support. This work was recognised by supportive Motions in the Scottish Parliament and locally by West Lothian Council.



Helping to secure third sector funding

To help support the response, it is estimated that around £900,000 of emergency funding and grants has been provided to West Lothian voluntary organisations from sources including Scottish Government and West Lothian Council. VSGWL has played an important role in highlighting all available funding for the sector. While this funding has proved extremely welcome, there is concern about the long-term sustainability of these monies and the work still required in the months ahead, particularly as much of the emergency funding has been exhausted.

£52,000 VSGWL Covid-19 fund, WLSEN and National Lottery partnership

VSGWL and West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSEN) made a successful bid to partner with The National Lottery to provide a £52K emergency fund to support local, grass roots organisations and groups that responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. The fund was launched in May 2020 inviting organisations to apply for grants of £600 – £2,400 to help them with their plans to support local communities. VSGWL worked at speed to process applications and ensure monies distributed quickly.

The evaluation report captures the approach taken and the successful outcomes in helping those in most need in local communities with help during the crisis. In particular, the evaluation shows how organisations used funds awarded to provide support focussed on increasing health and wellbeing, reducing isolation, reducing poverty and reducing digital poverty.

TSI Network and Covid-19 lessons learned

Along with five other Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs), VSGWL worked with Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) on a TSI Covid-19 learning project. ESS gathered case studies and research on the direct role played by TSIs, third sector and communities in the covid-19 response. They also captured information on what's worked well and lessons learned. Locally, interviews with key stakeholders from West Lothian Council and IJB were secured and their contributions were included in the final report presented to the Scottish Government in Spring 2021.

Value of collaboration

Key learning from the pandemic is the collaboration that worked well at all levels from grassroots community groups to local and national government. Barriers were removed and silos were broken down, allowing effective, agile and responsive delivery of services where needed. The issue now is how this can be translated into sustainable system-level change and prevent a creep back to `business as usual`.

Working collaboratively and innovatively can help to make best use of limited resources but this must include communities. Co-production can be achieved however communities need to be supported by trusted organisations with improved lines of communication with national and local government as well as the wider public sector locally. The Third Sector is ideally placed to do this.

The pandemic has proved that localism and place was the right focus. Approaches like Community Wealth Building, Community Empowerment, Community Asset transfer etc. offer a fantastic opportunity as we move forward and build on this increased partnership working and volunteering that we have seen over the last 18 months at a local level where the Third Sector is often best placed to deliver that support.

West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSN)

Social Enterprise Network (WLSN) are the other West Lothian wide umbrella body. WLSN is jointly funded by WLC and VSGWL and work closely with them to provide a members network to support existing and developing Social Enterprise's and provide a range of services to their members to grow the sector and develop sustainability. The focus is broadly around advocacy, engagement, capacity building, research and looking at the green recovery going forward. They link members to funding (such as Just Enterprise) and other vital sector information thought contacts to Senscot and Social Enterprise Scotland and help develop national strategy.

They work closely with and complement the work of Business Gateway in term of Social Enterprise support and Development.

During 2020/21 as mental health became a clear area of rising concern, due to COVID-19, they have taken a lead on developing the Mental Health Network, a network of local mental health organisations. This is looking at the experience of the Food Network to see what lessons could help develop support around mental health. To support this work £100,000 has been allocated by West Lothian Council and led by Health.

Partnership and Strategic Working

Whilst funding is vital for any organisation delivering services, partnership working and sharing of expertise is also vital to bring together the knowledge and to shape strategy and policy to have the best chance of getting it right within finite resources. The establishment and development of the Third Sector Working Group to link between the Council and the Third Sector has been vital to much of the work reported to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP in recent years; in particular around the funding streams scrutinised by the PDSP.

This approach is reflected across a wide range of partnership structures, from the Community Planning Partnership Board to community level and the development of locality plans where the Third Sector is key to planning, sharing best practice and taking actions forward based on where the gaps are. This maximises the ability for limited resources to be best targeted to address the key priorities for our communities. Below shows some examples of where this takes place:

- Community Planning Partnership
- Third Sector Working Group
- PDSPs (allows for one representative of the recognised voluntary sector interface)
- Community Safety weekly and 6 weekly Tasking/Tactical
- Children and Families
- Older People Forum
- Community Learning and Development Steering Board
- HYPE Steering Group,
- Trusted Professionals Network,
- DYW Steering Board,
- Anti-Poverty Steering Group
- West Lothian Macmillan Cancer Support Advisory Board
- West Lothian Anti-Poverty Task Force
- West Lothian Anti-Poverty Practitioners Group
- West Lothian Debt Forum
- Energy Advice Group
- Child Poverty Reference Group
- Rapid Rehousing Transition Board (oversees the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan)
- RRTP Health and Wellbeing Working Group
- RRTP Housing Support and Housing First Working Group
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan Working group
- Access Forum
- Community Justice
- WL Digital Inclusion Partnership
- West Lothian Local Alcohol Licensing Forum
- The 13 local regeneration planning groups in the bottom 20% SIMD Data Zones
- Community Education Associations (35 supported by council officers)

Investment

As noted in the introduction, the focus for the Voluntary Organisations PDSP has tended to be on the budgets administered by Economic Development and Regeneration and regularly reported to the panel. In terms of funding administered by West Lothian Council this is only a relatively small part overall with many other services providing funding to the third sector with Social Policy by far the biggest contributor.

Below gives a broad overview of funding and partnership working across a range of services and provides a flavour of the vital role the third sector plays in helping our communities.

Economic Development and Regeneration

In 2020/21 **£2,195,845** went to community organisations through the service all through application based on programmes detailed below.

Also referenced is the **£1,327,861.50** committed to Third Sector Groups for work in 2021/22 and £1,996,728.50 awarded in 2019/20 for work in 2020/21.

At the start of 2020/21 the **£944,000** Voluntary Organisations budget was allocated to 23 organisations as part of a one year rollover. This was right at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the priorities from that were used to guide the new grant process delivered in consultation with the Third Sector Work Group to support groups in 2021/22.

The Third Sector Community Support Fund (with some additional funding from other funding streams) saw 29 West Lothian Third Sector Organisations awarded a total allocation **£1,154,728.50**. A further **£285,000** of funding was allocated in 2020/21 to further support the 29 organisations to help with core costs and allow more funding to support COVID-19 recovery. This meant a total **£1,412,988.25** was allocated to support work being delivered in 2021/22 from a mix of 2020/21 and 2021/22 funding.

The Modernisation and Improvement Funding also allocated **£170,728.50** to groups in 2019/20 for work in 2020/21 to help them modernise but was offered due to timing to allow them to best use that funding for the purposes of support the COVID response.

A further **£96,570** from the hardship fund was allocated to support the recovery in 2020/21.

Additional Scottish Government Funding was received to support the **Young Persons Guarantee** to help young people into employment. In **2020/21 £108,459** was awarded to four organisations to support this programme and in **2021/22** another **£173,733.50** has been awarded to seven applicants.

West Lothian Development Trust - The Service also administers the wind farm monies through a Trust and awards funding to local community organisations in eligible areas. In 2020/21 eight awards were made to local groups to the value of **£103,816**.

Town Centre Fund - £2.484M capital fund from the Scottish Government supported around 170 projects over 2019/20 (£1.826M) and 2020/21 (£658,000) for projects to be delivered within 2020/21 and completed by mid 2021/22. The Council allocated funding on a ward basis for projects to be delivered either directly by community organisations (Third

Social Policy

In **2020/21** a total of **£29,755,481** was paid to third sector bodies through commissioned services, grants, spot purchase, block payment etc. In Adults and Older People services, there was **£20.3m** expenditure on care homes, care at home, supported accommodation, day care and other related services such as advocacy and carer support. In Children & Families, there was **£9.5m** expenditure on external placements for children, care for children with disabilities, supported accommodation, and other support to families.

There are several new programmes that came in during the period that provide key support:

Winter Protection Fund is a national programme developed to mitigate social harm posed by the concurrent risks of COVID-19, winter cost of living increases and EU exit, as well as to promote equality and human rights. Locally **£150,000** has been allocated to fund the '**Return of Children to West Lothian**', this multi-disciplinary approach with the third sector, **The Rock Trust, Open Door, Action for Children, Bethany** along with internal WLC partners allows support and accommodation packages for the planned move of young people back within authority.

£40,000 has been allocated to **Lifelong Links**, an accredited approach delivered to children and young people who are looked after away from home. The intervention enables young people to maintain meaningful contact with family members and significant people throughout the time they are away from their family and ultimately throughout their lives. **Children 1st** receive funding from the **Family Rights Group** to pilot this approach in West Lothian and have done so successfully.

£9,700 has been allocated to **Mellow Ready** to support engagement with risk taking vulnerable young people on the edge of care who have experienced various trauma triggers to divert them from negative choices and avoid teenage pregnancy etc.

£30,000 has been allocated for the purchase of 500 on-line Triple P Licences to allow for parenting groups to be provided virtually.

Mental Health Development

Coming out of COVID mental health has become a key area for focus. West Lothian Council received funding from the Scottish Government to be used to deliver new and enhanced community based mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children, young people, their families and carers. It is hoped that this funding will become an annual award.

The Council decided to work through the PSP and with the Third Sector to deliver this support. The result saw **£127,750** allocated in 2020/21 to support this between January and March 2021, with a further **£511,000** made available for delivery in 2021/22 to deliver new and enhanced community based mental health and emotional wellbeing supports and services for children, young people, their families and carers. This included awards of **£50,000 to Safe Families; £37,000 to WLYAP** and **£37,000 to Children 1st**.

A West Lothian Council grant of **£383,250** has been identified for the Mental Health PSP, which will be led by **Children 1st** in partnership with **Action for Children, Carers of West Lothian, Family and Community Development West Lothian Safe Families, Signpost, Wellbeing Scotland, WLDAS, WLYAP and Firefly**. This will meet the growing demand for mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families to improve and sustain emotional health and wellbeing.

The **Wellbeing Recovery Group (WRG)** have identified an increase in demand for mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families. An accessible, multi-agency support approach based on need will ensure there is 'no wrong door' for anyone seeking support, ensuring a soft introduction to the service and collaboration with partners to meet that person's needs.

A new **West Lothian Mental Health Providers Network**, modelled on the Food Network approach, has been allocated **£100,000** by West Lothian Council, in December 2020, to develop a partnership approach to coordinate local mental health support. Our NHS partners are the commissioning lead for this with WLSN supporting the local Mental Health organisations.

Vulnerable Due to Young Age Public Social Partnership has been designed to involve the third sector earlier and more deeply in the design, commissioning of and delivery of services which will support Young People who are identified as Vulnerable Due to Young Age. **WLC Social Policy, WLC Housing, The Rock Trust, Action for Children, Bethany Trust and Open Door** manage an overall budget of **£946,644**. This has been proportionately split between all third sector agencies with referrals from, but not limited to: Social Work, Youth Justice, CYPT, Housing, Education, Health, West Lothian College and also between providers services.

Domestic and Serious Assault Team (DASAT)

The **Domestic and Serious Assault Team (DASAT)** work alongside several third sector agencies to support women and children affected by domestic abuse and or sexual assault. These groups include, **West Lothian Women's Aid, Shakti Women's Aid (Edinburgh), River Kids, Wellbeing Scotland, The Foodbank, The School Bank West Lothian**

Early identification of allocated support workers from **Action for Children** and **Open Door** also allow joined up work with Social Work, the young person and their care provider to develop a transition plan for the young person leaving care and moving into supported accommodation.

Education and Sport

The Education Service works with Third Sector providers in a number of areas and includes a major contribution to West Lothian Leisure. Below shows some of that funding with **£5,047,156** committed in 2020/21. There is additional monies through PEF for example that is not included in this as well the **£577,000** School Counselling monies referred to below of which some of the funding, as noted is going to Third Sector partners..

Also listed is funding in 2021/22 of **£189,000** that went to Third Sector organisations from

The School Counselling funding of **£577,000** from Scottish Government includes elements of work being delivered by voluntary organisation partners in the following way:

Wellbeing Scotland – Primary school counselling service for all primary schools for children aged 10 years and up.

All secondary schools (including The Skills Centre) have been provided with **£25,000** to procure their own school counselling services. Cedarbank receives **£10,000** to procure a specialist therapist for pupils with significant learning needs. This means that currently, our secondary schools are working with 4 main providers locally, namely: **SMILE, Your Space, TCS (Therapeutic Counselling Services) and an independent provider for Cedarbank.**

In 2020/21 **CLD Youth Services** administered 15 awards to £62,381 in grants to 11 organisations, this was £43,181 WL Council budget and £19,200 from the Scottish Government 's Youth Work Education Recovery Fund.

More recently in 2021/22 from the £541,000 available to suppose the summer programmes for our young people £189,000 went to Third Sector organisations.

£20,000 from the Voluntary Organisations Budget is available each year to support Playgroups who can apply and receive an annual grant if they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. In 2020/21 12 local organisations benefits from this funding.

Playgroups and the Blackburn Family Centre also provide funded placements for eligible 2 year olds (funded separately from the ELC expansion monies per place).

Active Schools and Community Sport

Opportunities to participate in sports and physical activities have been significantly constrained through the pandemic and participation rates have dropped, particularly amongst key target groups. In these challenging times, the value of sports and physical activities to physical and mental health and wellbeing, however, has never been more apparent.

Community sports clubs, their members and volunteers are a fundamental, and often unacknowledged, part of the third sector landscape in West Lothian. Funding is currently provided through **the Sporting Grants scheme**. In 2020-2021 it was recognised that Covid had impacted all sports clubs and organisations and in order to support the return to sport, small recovery grants were made available. 32 sports clubs received a grant of £250 each. There were also 16 additional grants awarded giving a total allocation of **£49,775**.

Sports clubs and organisations were also provided support via the West Lothian Club Network across 2020/21 with 83 attending workshops to help with the return to sport. These were themed following a consultation with clubs.

The Network is made up of 43 'Accredited' and 12 'Verified' Sports Clubs. WLC also fund and support Clubsport West Lothian which is an independent body that represent local clubs, individuals and associations and allocate small grants. There is also a 'Partnership Network' which includes representatives from sports clubs and organisations (third sector) who have paid staffing, West Lothian Leisure, Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport and other relevant partners from across the sporting landscape in West Lothian.

An additional **£45,000** was provided to the Council by sportscotland to supplement the wider Get Into Summer investment. AS&CS has extended this provision into a project called 'Beyond Summer' which will support community clubs and partners to continue to make provision for target populations and build in sustainable models.

Also, in terms of Third Sector delivery of sport locally West Lothian Council awarded West Lothian Leisure **£4.87M** in 2020/21.

Anti-Poverty Service

Food Insecurity has been a significant area of support prior to COVID-19 but has been central to the COVID-19 response.

In 2020/21 the council received £1.045m as its share of Scottish Government Funding to alleviate food insecurity during COVID-19. This was topped up with £177,000 from the Third Sector Hardship Fund to create a fund of £1,222,000. From that funding there was focus on the development of existing strong partnership work on food insecurity which had been mapped out prior to COVID-19. £150,000 previously committed to support the development of a food network, was used to support the COVID-19 response, for example allowing small organisations to apply for membership to Fareshare which provides surplus food to community groups.

West Lothian Food Network grew from 26 to 39 organisations, with the Food Bank the lead partner, received **£756,499** in 2020/21 which has supported over 4,000 people every week to access food.

Looking ahead West Lothian Council committed **£1.2M** for 21/22 and 22/23 in February 2021 with **£596,811** committed to the Food Network in 2021/22.

Housing and Homelessness

From the core Homeless budget of **£70,000** was paid to Bethany Christian Trust and from the ADP/RRTP money there was payment of **£96,563** to Cyrenians and **£35,250** to Rock Trust in 2020/21.

Environmental

The Council's NETS, Land and Countryside and Planning work closely with national third sector groups like the **Green Action Trust** (GAT), though this work has been affected by COVID but will pick up again moving forward. GAT (and the predecessor organisations CSFT / CSGNT) have worked with the Council for a number of years and are able to access external funding to help develop and deliver local projects around West Lothian. This well-established partnership has helped identify and secure significant additional external funding towards supporting these projects and representatives attend several related planning groups, including Local Biodiversity Action Plan Working group and Access Forum.

New links to **Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust** has started to develop over the Shale Trail implementation as they hosted the Project Manager for this £300,000 (LEADER/HLF) project and they are delivering some of the WL 'Climate Emergency' Fund projects.

West Lothian Litter Pickers

There are a number of volunteer litter picking groups operating within West Lothian. Currently the most prominent of these is West Lothian Litter Pickers (WLLP). Officers have built a good relationship with committee members of WLLP and meet with them on a quarterly basis. These meetings have allowed joint working to resolve various issues. The Council has provided **£30,000** worth of equipment (litter picks and bag hoops) to the group in the last 18 months and continues to provide clear plastic refuse sacks for the litter they collect. The Council also meets the landfill costs of disposing of the litter collected by the group.

The large membership and regular litter picking events of WLLP and other groups has created various operational challenges for the Cleaner Communities team and the council has provided **£165,000** in one off, time limited funding to help support the service and resolve these challenges. This has allowed the recruitment of dedicated staff to uplift the rubbish collected by WLLP and other litter picking groups. This funding will also contribute to the increase in disposal costs resulting from groups litter picking areas that WLC staff would not normally cover.

Other support and funding

More generally, there are also small pots of funding to support our older people with a treat at Christmas with **£29,000** allocated to support this each year as well as other dedicated funding that is distributed such as the Elected Member Disbursement funds.

Business Gateway Third Sector Support

Business Gateway has a full-time dedicated officer who delivers high quality customer focused business advice and support to a varied portfolio of existing and new start social enterprises in West Lothian. Support is tailored to the needs of individual organisations and includes advice on areas such as business planning, finance raising, grant and loan applications, property, community benefit leases, asset transfers, income generation, governance and sustainability. In addition, the service signposts and refers social enterprises to the wider network of support programs available both locally and nationally. Business Gateway also works closely with the **West Lothian Social Enterprise Network** (the recognised body promoting, supporting and developing social enterprise in West Lothian) to ensure network members receive the business support they need.

From April 2020 to the end of March 2021 Business Gateway supported 93 social enterprises in West Lothian to assist them with their business planning and sustainability, as well as assisting them to access the range of specialist advice and funding that became available in response to the COVID 19 pandemic.

From April 2021 to the end of September 2021 Business Gateway supported 43 social enterprises across West Lothian. During this time 16 organisations have also received specialist business support and advice from the Business Gateway service on Community Asset Transfers.

In addition, council officers work closely with Third Sector organisations in area such as Community Asset Transfer and supporting funding applications. They are currently working with the TSSG to develop suitable training opportunities for the sector with a view to putting this in place for in 2022.

The development of Community Choices has seen in the case of the Blackburn Pilot, £25,000 distributed to a number of local third sector groups to deliver small local projects identified by the community. A second pilot planned for Craigshill is likely to see funding similarly going to small scale community projects delivered by locally based community groups. This will develop further as the use of community choices evolves and is rolled out across various service areas.

Conclusion

As evidenced, the partnership work between West Lothian Council, Community Planning Partners and the Third Sector is well established and the effects of COVID-19 have strengthened relationships. It will be vital to consolidate and build on these going forward. The sheer scale of the work all partners have delivered has been incredible. It has also brought other significant hurdles around:

- Concerns around income generation and longer-term financial uncertainty;
- Increased demand for services and capacity issues;
- Volunteer drift and staff burnout;
- Mental health and well-being issues facing staff and volunteers; and
- the extent and impact on inequalities and exclusion in disadvantaged communities

There has been a huge range of different and complex challenges facing the third sector during the pandemic. Responding at pace and moving to providing many services digitally was one of the early challenges.

There is little question of the importance of the Third Sector across all the areas of work set out in this report. It is also clear that investment will remain central to what can and can't be delivered and over what time frame.

Opportunities

Investment will always be vital to how this can work. It is clear that during the last 18 months significant additional funding has been accessed to support the response and whilst welcome and important in delivering this support to our local communities. This has often increased capacity within organisations, but much of the financial support was one off funding. This is likely to mean that the overall funding available going forward will reduce across the board (Scottish Government, Lottery/Trusts, Council and UK) due to a number of one off sources of funding that have come through during COVID-19. Whilst this should be expected where one off funding happens, it does mean that some of the works and services that are being delivered with that will need to identify other sources of investment or other ways of delivering. This report primarily focusses on funding that has come through West Lothian Council but more work is needed to better understand the funding also brought in by the Third Sector both locally and nationally to deliver those services. This is a piece of work VSGWL will be looking to do in the coming year.

A better understanding of this will help not just by providing a better picture but offer the opportunity for better alignment and conversation in planning activities, be that around match funding or developing partnership applications. The pandemic has shone a light on levels of funding the sector receives and the need for more investment is crucial to work together to better support local communities and those in need. The question of collaboration and collaborative funding applications is an area that may need more investigation with some funding streams looking specifically at this approach and clearly address strategic priorities. This may attract larger pots of external funding, probably something that has not been developed as much as it might have.

As part of moving forward there are developing frameworks and approaches that offer a way of empowering our communities and ensure the local economy works for all. The developing work around Community Wealth Building, for example as West Lothian Council has firmly committed to that approach along with existing areas coming out of community empowerment, such as asset transfer, community choices as well as developing further the strategic approach and partnership working set out here will provide the basis for making sure our communities needs are met.

Summary of Annual Report

£43,000,000

across all sectors covered in this report

Voluntary Sector Gateway



1200

people signed up to volunteer during the crisis

Approx. **£900,000** emergency funding provided to Vol Orgs by Scottish Government and West Lothian Council



£52,000 National Lottery emergency funding administered by VSGWL Covid-19

Partnership & Strategic Working



Over 40 partners groups involve representatives of third sector organisations.

Housing and Homelessness

£201,813
paid out



- **£70,000** paid to: Bethany Christian Trust
- **£96,563** paid to: Cyrenians
- **£35,250** paid to: Rock Trust

Environmental



West Lothian Litter Pickers

£30,000 of equipment provided in the last 18 months.

Continue to provide clear plastic refuse sacks.

£165,000 one off, time limited funding to help support the WLC Cleaner Communities team to uplift rubbish collected.



Economic Development & Regeneration

£5,520,435
total grants paid out



Voluntary Organisation budget(23 Groups) **£944,000**

£170,728.50

Modernisation & Improvement Fund

3rd Sector Community Support Fund

£1,154,728.50

(29 Groups)

£285,000

Additional Core Cost Funding



£2,480,000

Town Centre Funding

£96,570

Hardship Fund

Young Persons Guarantee



20/21 **£108,459**

21/22 **£173,733.50**

West Lothian Development Trust

20/21 - **£103,816**



Pensioners Xmas 2020/21

£29,000 towards a meal or event



- supported **93** social enterprises with business planning and sustainability.
- supported in 2021/22 (to date) **43** social enterprises.



16 organisations have received specialist business support/advice on Community Asset Transfers.



Anti-Poverty Service

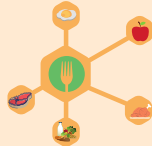
£2,106,499
paid out



£150,000

to support development
of food network during
Covid-19

West Lothian Food Network
grew from 26 to 39
organisations



£756,499 in 2020/21
£596,811 (£1.2M total up
to 22/23) committed to
the Food Network in
2021/22

Social Policy

£29,755,481
total grants paid out



£20.3 Million

on care and carer support for Adults
and Older People.

Children & Families, £9.5m
expenditure on external
placements for children, care for
children with disabilities,
supported accommodation, and
other support to families.



£9.5 Million



Supported the national
Winter Protection Fund

Locally **£150,000** has
been allocated to fund the
'Return of Children to
West Lothian'.



Education

£5,236,156

+ £577,000 shared between schools some of
which may be paid to 3rd Sector

2020/21 CLD Youth
Services administered
15 awards to **11** orgs.

£62,381

(£43,181 WLC & £19,200 ext.)



£189,000

for summer
programmes 2021/22

Support Playgroups

£20,000



Sporting Grants scheme 2020/21

£41,775

• 32 sports clubs grants
• 16 additional grants

Provided to the Council by
sportscotland - Get Into Summer
investment.

£45,000

2020/21 West Lothian Leisure
awarded:

£4.87 Million



The School Counselling funding of
£577,000 delivering:

- Wellbeing Scotland – counselling
service for all primary school
children aged 10 years +
- All secondary schools (including The Skills
Centre) have been provided with **£25,000** to
procure school counselling services. Cedarbank
receives **£10,000** to procure a specialist
therapist for pupils with significant learning
needs.



Mental Health Development

£1,122,000

+ £946,644 shared between 3rd sector



£127,750

allocated in 2020/21

In 2020/21 **£511,000** was made available
got community based mental health services for
children, young people, their families and
carers. **3** projects funded = **£124,000**

£383,250

has been identified
for the Mental
Health PSP



West Lothian
Mental Health
Providers Network

allocated

£100,000



Budget

£946,644

for Vulnerable Due to Young
Age Public Social Partnership
split between all third sector
agencies

