

West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plan Annual Report 2019/20



Introduction

This annual report highlights progress in achieving the ambitions set out in the West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the local (regeneration) plans in 2019/20, using key performance data and case studies. The report also highlights the ways in which the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) involved communities in service design and delivery.

Although this report largely covers the period prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it will also touch on the impact this has had on communities and how we will move forward as a partnership. Whilst we wish to acknowledge and celebrate achievements made throughout 2019/20, there is no doubt that this unprecedented situation has had a huge impact on our communities and on the CPP and our priorities may now look different.

Throughout 2019/20, the CPP worked to develop a new LOIP, one that was more focused on the key, complex issues that can only be tackled through working in partnership. Although a draft new LOIP was discussed by the CPP Board in March 2020, this work has been put on hold while the CPP looks to fully understand the impact the pandemic will have on our priorities going forward.

This annual report therefore refers to the set of 8 outcomes from the existing LOIP (2013-2023). These are aligned to four key themes – set out on the next page.

THEME



- ### OUTCOMES
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
 - Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life
 - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities



- We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities
- Our economy is diverse and dynamic and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business



- We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities
- People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances







- We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment

Note on Performance Data: A suite of performance indicators (PIs) have been identified to allow the CPP to measure progress in achieving our eight LOIP outcomes. These PIs are regularly monitored by the Community Planning Steering Group and CPP Board. This annual report includes a snapshot of key PIs to illustrate how we are doing. 2019/20 data has been included where this is available; however sometimes there is a delay in data availability. Where 2019/20 data hasn't yet been published, the latest available data is provided. It should be noted that in some cases, publication of 2019/20 data has been delayed due to the pandemic. Targets have been identified for each PI to give a clear sense of what we are aiming for and to allow us to assess whether we are making as much progress as we should be. The targets are set to be achievable and realistic.

1. LOIP – How are we doing?

Health & Wellbeing

PI	Data	Target	Trend	
% of children in poverty	26% (2017/18)	22%	Changes in modelling over the last couple of years - difficult to compare to previous year	
Premature mortality rate (European age standardised rate per 100,000 population >75)	434 (2018/19)*	411	Similar to Scottish rate (432) but an increase from 2017 (410)	
Proportion of last 6 months of life spent at home/community setting	89% (2019)*	89%	Slight increase on 88% in 2018/19, reflects Scottish trend	
Number of applicants where homelessness is prevented	496 (2019/20)	400	Exceeding target of 400	

**Some Health and Social Care data is not yet available due to COVID-19. Latest available data is provided. In some cases, latest data is available for the calendar year only.*

Case Studies

Child Poverty

The CPP has a robust Anti-Poverty Strategy in place which acknowledges the significant challenge of reducing child poverty. A child poverty reference group has been established and the first Local Child Poverty Action Report for West Lothian was also published in 2019. In the short-term, we will optimise service provision that targets poverty mitigation e.g. income maximisation, food poverty/insecurity. In the medium-term, a preventive approach to poverty will be embedded in partnership plans. In the longer term, we are working towards a West Lothian where fewer people experience poverty, no-one experiences destitution and where everyone has the opportunity to build a future free of poverty.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, council services, third sector and businesses responded to the increase in food insecurity. 33 community food providers have worked collaboratively to form a West Lothian Food Network and developed a centralised community food hub where all donated foodstuffs are located and distributed. This has ensured no family has experienced extreme hunger over this period. Over 4,000 people every week, including families with children, have been supported by receiving food parcels, chilled meals and frozen foods. Alongside this support, children who are eligible for free school meals have been able to receive a packed lunch or a hot meal. Recognising the further strain on family finances the pandemic has placed on families, the council has also allocated £10 per child (5635 children eligible through free school meals/school clothing grant criteria) over the summer holidays in order to provide wider, whole family support to low income households.

The Anti-Poverty Task Force is reflecting on lessons learned, gaps identified and new collaborative ways of working and this will be reflected in refreshed action plans. e.g. the next Local Child Poverty Action Plan.

Health and Wellbeing Partnership

A **new Health & Wellbeing Partnership** was set up in February 2019 to embed a preventative focus in the core work of the CPP and to ensure health inequalities and prevention is taken forward as a shared priority as part of a wider 'whole system' CPP approach to issues like poverty, housing, education, employment and transport. The group is chaired by NHS Lothian and involves a number of service areas and partners. It has been agreed that the group will focus on a small number of key priorities (mental wellbeing, homelessness and health and alcohol and addictive behaviours), however as the pandemic has had a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of our communities and will have an impact on long-term health and health inequalities, work is ongoing to ensure that the focus of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership (and wider CPP groups and strategies) aligns to COVID-19 recovery priorities.

The group are responsible for two **whole systems approach projects** – one around Prevention and Remission of Type 2 Diabetes and one focused on a whole systems approach to public mental wellbeing. A whole systems approach is an ongoing, flexible approach that involves working with communities and stakeholders to understand a public health problem locally and to identify and test solutions. Separate working groups have been established for both projects and both are currently considering what a whole systems approach will look like post-COVID.

Housing First

The West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) 2019-2024 was approved in June 2019. The plan set out a clear vision for the transition to a rapid rehousing approach in West Lothian, including a greater focus on prevention of homeless, a reduction in the use of B&B accommodation and the delivery of a Housing First model. Housing First provides ordinary, settled housing as the first response for people with multiple and complex needs beyond housing. This involves working in partnership with agencies to help and support homeless applicants to move into and sustain their tenancy using a person-centred support model. Support providers work to the principles of active engagement and respectful persistence and all cases remain open even when engagement is low.

West Lothian's Housing First model was developed by the council in partnership with NHS Lothian and the third sector during 2019/20 and is funded through the West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Partnership. A new ten-person project focusing on the needs of people with addictions and mental health issues commenced at the end of 2019/20, with two people receiving a service. There is also funding available for the continuation of Housing First for Young People. This is an eleven-person project delivered through the Rock Trust and Almond Housing Association and has been operational since 2017. Partners also wish to scope the establishment of a future Housing First project based on the needs of women/domestic abuse.

Economic

PI	Data	Target	Trend	
% working age adults in work	77.8% (2019)	75%	Increase from 2018 and above Scottish level	✓
% school leavers entering positive destination	94.81% (2018/19)	94%	Continued improvement – figure similar to virtual comparator and Scottish levels	✓
% 18-24 yrs claiming JSA/UC	4.8% (Q4 2019)	5%	Historically, West Lothian has had high levels of youth unemployment; however, rates have become closer to Scottish levels	⚠
Total number of jobs	78,000 (2018/19)	75,000	No change from 2017/18	✓
% employees earning less than the Living Wage	14% (2019)	17%	A positive improvement from 18% in 2018 and lower than Scottish average	✓

These PIs set out the economic and employment position in West Lothian pre-COVID. Data is being regularly monitored to ensure that the CPP has an up-to-date understanding of post-COVID economic conditions in order to provide proactive support to local people and businesses and to anticipate and prepare response to possible job losses. The existing partnership arrangements set out below mean that partners are well-placed to support local people and businesses in this most difficult time.

Case Studies

PACE

Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) is an additional, practical and results-focused service delivered by Skills Development Scotland, Job Centre Plus, West Lothian College and Scottish Enterprise, to co-ordinate support to tackle larger-scale redundancies and help people find work quickly. As an example, in February 2020, PACE organised an information and advice session for all employees from API Foils facing redundancy, to hear about support available and to speak to an advisor. The aim of the session was to minimise the time people affected by redundancy are out of work.

West Lothian Jobs Task Force

The West Lothian Jobs Task Force (JTF) is a partnership comprising the Scottish Government, UK Government, Scottish Enterprise, West Lothian College and West Lothian Council. Prior to COVID-19, it had a target to create 450 high-value jobs by 2021 through job grant support. The job grant support targets firms in engineering, life sciences, technology, engineering and manufacturing. The growth support meets and exceeds the Living Wage minimum of £9 per hour/£18000 per annum. Posts

supported must pay at least £25,000 per annum and lead to formal qualification and/or career advancement. We supported 111 jobs as part of the JTF in 2019/20. Since June 2018, the JTF has supported over 400 higher-value jobs.

The work of the JTF is now more important than ever, due to the immediate and long-term economic impact of COVID-19. The financial and non-financial resources of the JTF will be used to try to mitigate some of the major economic challenges we will face. An Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (2020-2023) has been developed and the key priorities will be safeguarding at least 1,750 local jobs and creating over 500 higher value jobs. Local people will be supported to find new employment or training opportunities.

Access2employment

The Access2employment team, which sits within the wider Economic Development and Regeneration Service, supports individuals, via intensive 1:1 support and targeted support via employability training, personal development and work clubs. The service engages with clients aged 16 – 67, some provision is provided in school during the transition phase. The client group supported are those that present with a wide range of preventative barriers including mental health, substance misuse, low skills, health conditions and long-term unemployment. Support is also provided to those who have been made redundant through PACE. The service is delivered in a range of community locations based on the levels of unemployment and needs within the area. Support can also be provided to clients in work who are either struggling to earn enough or wish to look at more hours/ more sustainable employment. In 2019/20 the service supported 805 new clients with 408 progressing into a positive destination.

Alongside employability interventions the service supports clients intensively with personal development to overcome challenging barriers to ensure they are ready to begin thinking about progressing into employment or education. In addition to 1:1 support the service delivers a range of intensive and short courses aimed at developing employability skills. One example is the services Women n2 Work course, a 7 week personal development and employability course aimed at vulnerable women with multiple barriers who were looking to return to the labour market. The first three weeks of the course focus on confidence building, stress awareness, motivation, barrier removal and personal development. The last three weeks of the course are focused on employability, setting career goals, interviews, dealing with work situations and building support mechanisms for coping in work. Courses are also delivered that support Men and ESOL learners. In 2019/20 the service delivered 7 intensive courses - 4 Women n2 Work, 2 Men n2 Work and 1 ESOL n2 Work for the Syrian resettlement programme. 51 clients completed the courses and achieved a qualification.

Safer Communities

PI	Data	Target	Trend	
Antisocial behaviour incidents per 10,000 population	536.3 (2019/20)	Continuous improvement	Steady improvement from 584.1 incidents per 10,000 in 2017/18	✓
Deliberate secondary fires per 10,000 population	35.5 (2019/20)	Continuous improvement	Almost 10% decrease compared to 2018/19	✓
% Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) cases 8-17 years who do not become known to the Youth Justice Team within 12 months	2019/20 Q1 90% Q2 100% Q3 94% Q4 94%	80%	Exceeding target	✓

Case Studies

Community Participation

Involving communities so that they have a voice, can take part in decision making and be involved in planning events that affect them and their neighbours is important to encourage participation and help communities to develop ownership and joint responsibility of their neighbourhood. An example of this is the preventative work for Fireworks 2019 in Blackburn by the Blackburn Bonfire Night Action Group (BBNAG). This joint work minimised operational demand on all partner agencies, reduced deliberate fire setting and fire-related antisocial behaviour. As a result, they prevented accidents and injuries and informed the community on how to enjoy bonfire night safely. Around the Bonfire period in November 2019, there was a 34% reduction in deliberate secondary fires compared to the previous three years.

The BBNAG were able to achieve this by working together to make local decisions and providing an alternative educational programme for the children and young people. They produced leaflets, liaised with schools and community groups, worked with Crimestoppers and other partners to create positive relationships and diversionary activities with young people designed to reduce antisocial behaviour. Partner agencies provided firework retailers with safety advice to customers, inspected premises storing larger amounts of fireworks to ensure compliance with storage and selling legislation and uplifted unlicensed bonfires if deemed unsafe.

The BBNAG received a letter of acknowledgement from the Scottish Government praising the efforts of all those involved and for making the difference in the Blackburn community, helping to reduce antisocial

behaviour and making the community safer. It is hoped that the achievements Blackburn residents were able to make will encourage other local communities to do the same. By working together on local issues, communities can help to make a difference and influence change that works better for them in their localities.

Reducing Antisocial Behaviour

Due to the repeated incidence of increasing antisocial behaviour within the shopping centre at Livingston and the Asda store, a multi-agency meeting was convened to address the matter. The group included the Children and Young People’s Team, West Lothian Youth Action Project, Representatives from residential units, Children and Families, Youth Justice and Education, Planning and Economic Development teams. We carried out an analysis on the key issues, the participants of the antisocial behaviour and the direct peripheral players. We also looked at the infrastructure where the incidents were occurring and found that the bus station needed a high level of maintenance as much of it was in darkness and required light bulbs to be replaced. A dialogue took place with some shopkeepers about the participants accessing alcohol on some of the premises. It was found that a lot of activity in these premises was for young people to access wi-fi and to charge their phones, so the challenges of digital communication and possible solutions were explored. Shortly after this work began the centre went into lockdown with the pandemic however 50% of the preparatory work was completed and if the situation arises again we will pick up and take this forward. We will also build on the experience we gained from a similar project we carried out last year concerning antisocial behaviour in Blackburn.

Environment

PI	Data	Target	Trend	
CO2 emissions	5.8 (2018)	7	Exceeding target	✓
Household waste recycled	65.2% (2018)	56.3%	Increase on previous year – ranked 2 nd in Scotland	✓
% WLC housing stock compliant with Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing	89.6% (2019/20)	90%	Increase on previous years	✓
% reduction in emissions from council services and activities	16.5% (2018/19)	2.9%	Significant increase from 7% in 2016/17	✓

Case Studies

Partnership Activity to Tackle the Climate Emergency

West Lothian Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019. Significant work had already been carried out to reduce emissions in West Lothian and the council’s previously agreed carbon reduction targets had already been exceeded. Following the declaration, a short life cross party working group was established to agree the framework for the Climate

Emergency response, including a review of the Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan. It is the review of the strategy and associated plans which will establish realistic target and timescales for the council achieving net carbon zero by 2045 at the latest.

The CPP recognises that a partnership effort is required to build a sustainable, net zero carbon community and that this must involve all public agencies, the private sector and communities. It is important that the response to the Climate Emergency is community-led. The CPP Board themed a meeting around the Climate Emergency in September 2019 to begin discussions on the common challenges, opportunities and potential for collaboration and partnership working. A CPP Climate Change Seminar was held in late 2019 to continue this discussion in more depth and was well attended by partners, council services, community councils and local young people. A CPP Climate Change Action Plan was developed based on these discussions, identifying the short, medium and long term actions for how the CPP will work together to tackle the Climate Emergency. This will feed in to the development the new LOIP and the new CPP Climate Change Strategy.

The emerging Climate Change Strategy will have to recognise the challenges and opportunities which are presented by the COVID-19 and the aftermath of the pandemic in terms of carbon reduction. The environmental benefits of new ways of working have been widely reported but other issues such as reduced capacity on public transport may offset other advantages. Going forward the strategy will have to build on the benefits and mitigate the negative impacts.

Youth Engagement and Involvement

Youth engagement and involvement is also key to the West Lothian approach to the Climate Emergency. Pupils from local high schools were active participants in the CPP Climate Change seminar. West Lothian College also held a Sustainability Summit in March 2019 to raise awareness of the Climate Emergency amongst staff and students, to discuss how to combat climate change at West Lothian College and to announce their decision for “no single use plastic” from March onwards. The council’s Energy Manager and Community Planning Development Officer attended the Summit and delivered a workshop to students and staff, providing an overview of activities that the council and CPP are undertaking to tackle the Climate Emergency and also to carry out some engagement. The Mentimeter tool was used to gather information on where climate change ranks in young people’s priorities, what are the best ways to raise awareness with young people, what the young people would like to see happening locally to support climate action and how communities could be supported to do more. The information gathered provided valuable insight and will be used to shape the new LOIP and CPP Climate Change Strategy.

2. Locality Plans – How are we doing?

CPPs are required to prepare and publish locality plans for the areas experiencing poorer outcomes, setting out a plan for how outcomes will be improved within that area. In West Lothian, local plans have been developed to focus on communities where a significant proportion of that community lives within datazones in the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). 13 individual plans have been developed in the following areas: Addiewell, Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Bridgend, Craigshill, Dedridge, Fauldhouse, Knightsridge, Ladywell, Polbeth, Stoneyburn and Whitburn.

Steering Groups are in place in all of these areas, allowing representatives of community groups, residents, local public services and voluntary sector to work in partnership. Ward members for each area are also invited to meetings. The plans were initially shaped by the community and provide a good understanding of community assets, needs and circumstances. Input from partners brought local knowledge, experience and resource. It is hoped that partners will reshape their services to meet the needs of the community based on the local information and structures. The Steering Groups will update the plans as part of a continuous process reflecting changing community and partners priorities. The existing plans are bottom-up and in many cases community-led with a central role for key community organisations, which can enable community responses to community needs.

The SIMD was updated in late 2019 and whilst broadly in line with the areas previously identified, some new datazones have been recognised as being in the bottom 20% and others have moved in the other direction.

Review

Ongoing work is looking to more fully integrate the local plans to the LOIP and other strategic plans, such as the Anti-Poverty Strategy, in particular the ongoing effects of Covid-19 which has meant that a number of key strategic plans are being updated to reflect the changing circumstances. The updating of these will enable short and medium term responses to the pandemic being identified and added to the plans. This will, given the original starting point and the community planning requirements for the plans, provide an opportunity to review the structure, looking at areas such as reducing the cross over within areas for partners, take into account the very different nature of the 13 areas currently covered and how we incorporate changes into the process, e.g. SIMD data changes.

Town Centre Capital Fund

In 2019/20 there was a major focus on delivering the Scottish Government's Town Centre Capital Fund with West Lothian receiving £1.8M to be spread across all our towns. Over £800,000 was committed to projects in the areas covered by the local plans to support capital improvements. Projects were identified by these communities and delivered in partnership between community organisations and council services who worked together to deliver over 50 separate projects. Some these projects included improving local greenspaces and parks, local community facilities, growing initiatives, signage and street furniture.

Across the plans

Across the plans the Community Planning and Regeneration Team worked with communities and organisations on a range of projects, for example:

- Continuing to address bonfire related community safety issues in Blackburn;
- Early years work in Livingston;
- Supporting local business and development Town Centre spaces in the traditional towns of Bathgate, Whitburn and Armadale (utilising Council's TCIF funding of over £240,000 to support this work as well as additional external funding from Scottish Government to support these local businesses and town centres;
- Several gardening/growing projects; and
- Supporting and developing community organisations

Funding

Through the Voluntary Organisations funding 2019/2020 nine community-based organisations were awarded £294,610 to deliver services that supported the communities in eight of the areas covered by the plans, many of which are directly delivering activities identified through the planning process working closely with the Community Planning and Regeneration Team to support the plans.

Aspiring West Lothian legacy

Whilst the end of the Aspiring Communities project, funded through the Scottish Government's Aspiring Communities Fund was reported in the previous annual report, it is worth noting some specific positive legacies. Local groups were able to source additional new funding to continue and further develop the work started, working with the Council to achieve positive outcomes within these communities.

An example of this is the development of Polbeth Community Hub which has evolved into a key anchor organisation in the village, one which works

closely with Community Planning Partners and one which is looking to apply for an asset transfer of a previously underused community centre turning it into a vibrant community owned hub offering a huge range of services and a training hub to build capacity within the area.

Whitburn CDT have been able to attract additional funding to retain a local Development Worker through to develop the work started in the project

The effect of COVID-19 on the local planning areas

Towards the end of the reporting period the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic also impacted on areas covered by the local plans. The Community Planning and Regeneration Team, along with community organisations were required to quickly respond to directly support communities and individuals during the lockdown, in particular those vulnerable members who were required to shield. New community groups have been established, along with more partnership working and groups providing new services by adapting to suit the changing needs of their communities. Support with food, shopping and prescription pickups have been required and a newsletter was developed to provide support, information and to signpost people to services that were collated by into a local database of service provision. We have seen local volunteering grow to support this work with more local people offering their help. Communities and partners have highlighted areas that will be key to focus on, areas such as mental health and wellbeing. The impact and learning from this will help update and develop future planning in the short and medium term.

3. Community Involvement

Community Involvement in CPP structures

The Joint Forum of Community Councils in West Lothian was established in 2018 and recognised by the council as the representative organisation for community councils in August 2019. As well as having seats on various council committees, the Joint Forum now also has a seat on the CPP Board. The community planning team also regularly works with the Scottish Community Development Centre to consider the best ways to involve communities. This is informing ongoing discussions around wider community involvement structures.

Engaging on the new LOIP

The CPP began the process of developing a new LOIP in March 2019. It is important that the LOIP is based on an up-to-date understanding of local needs and aspirations and reflects community views. The CPP therefore drew on an extensive evidence base from across the partnership, building on a considerable amount of partner knowledge, data analysis and community engagement that had been carried out through the development of partnership strategies and plans (e.g. Anti-Poverty Strategy, Integrated Joint Board Strategic Plan/locality plans), and through the regeneration planning process. This informed the development of a draft set of focus areas for the new LOIP. A period of further community engagement was carried out to check that these were the right areas for the CPP to focus on. A simple consultation document was developed and circulated widely. Efforts were also made to go out to specific groups to gather views, such as the West Lothian Community Race Forum, Faith Group, Carers of West Lothian, Glitter Cannons, MSYPs, Voice of West

Lothian group. It was generally agreed that the focus areas were relevant and appropriate. Although a draft LOIP was presented to the CPP Board in March 2020, this has been put on hold while the CPP considers the impact of COVID-19. Community involvement will be key to fully understanding the impact and priorities going forward.

Citizen Panel

The Citizens Panel is one mechanism used by the CPP to identify people's views on various aspects of living in West Lothian and the services provided by the CPP. Quality of Life Surveys have traditionally been carried out with the panel every three years. This survey asks a wide range of questions around a range of issues about life in West Lothian. The latest Quality of Life Survey was due in 2019/20; however, this was put on hold while the panel was reviewed. It has been agreed that a full refresh of the panel will be undertaken before the next survey is carried out. This will ensure that the CPP has a more active Panel that is representative of the West Lothian population, in order to help improve engagement and survey response rates. The refresh activity was due to commence in spring 2020 but this has been put on hold due to COVID-19.

Equalities

The CPP continues to support community equality forums in order to gain an understanding of the diverse experiences of our communities. Third sector and community groups with a focus on equalities were also involved in the consultation on the new LOIP, including the West Lothian Community Race Forum, Faith Group, Carers of West Lothian and the Glitter Cannons. The equality forums also organise various activities to promote diversity in our communities. To mark Black History Month in

2019, the West Lothian Community Race Forum held a community event to celebrate cultural diversity and also carried out an online awareness-raising campaign in collaboration with West Lothian Council. The West Lothian Faith Group continued to meet regularly throughout 2019/20 and organised activities such as an interfaith walk.

Experts by Experience

As a key part of the CPP's Anti-Poverty Strategy, an 'Experts by Experience' group has been set up to gather the views of those who have experience, or know of someone, who has experienced poverty at some point in their lives. The success of the panel will create a better picture of poverty in West Lothian and inform our planning to tackle the major issues surrounding poverty. The group currently has ten members who provide regular input in a variety of ways to suit the needs of the members, e.g. by telephone, e-mail and face-to face meetings (prior to the Covid-19 crisis). During lockdown, contact has been maintained with the group with Zoom meetings and continued completion of surveys has been encouraged.

The Experts are encouraged to take part in research for the Advice Shop, (e.g. testing and providing feedback on a new online benefits calculator and budgeting calculator and an interactive map providing information and guidance to those experiencing food insecurity), have been provided the opportunity to attend events and assist with raising awareness of poverty, and have taken part in consultations (e.g. West Lothian Council's Food Growing Strategy, the Respectful Funeral initiative, implementation of the Period Poverty initiative). The consultation sessions allowed the participants to provide their views on the various projects and how plans would impact those in poverty, both negatively and positively. The Experts have also contributed to responses to government consultations, such as

the Scottish Social Security consultation about devolved Disability Assistance benefits.

It is also important that the voices of young people are heard and that they are able to, not only influence actions to reduce the cost of the school day, but are also able to speak about the impact of poverty in other areas of their lives. The Anti-Poverty service in collaboration with the council's CLD Youth team worked with a group of 8 teenagers from the Armadale Youth Forum to find out more about young people's lived experience of poverty. This initial group took part in poverty awareness training and one youth ambassador took on a role in co-delivering training in youth clubs across West Lothian. This consultation project ran from October 2019 to January 2020 engaging with a total of 164 young people to hear their views and gather information to inform the ongoing direction of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The consultation focused on young people's experiences of poverty and deprivation outside of school and 91% said that a lack of money made it difficult for them to take part in activities which led to feelings of isolation and exclusion amongst peers. Socialisation was identified as the main part of life affected by poverty for young people in West Lothian. Following the consultation period, a short video was filmed with 3 young people from the Armadale Youth Forum to present the findings and reflect on the approach to the consultation. The young people involved have identified 3 keywords to use going forward when engaging with young people about social issues; Learn, Think, Speak. The next stage was to involve young people in becoming peer advisors to help and support young people to have someone to talk to about issues relating to low income which were affecting them and their families and to help them access help and support. This project has been put on hold due to COVID-19. Discussions are underway on how this aspect will be moved forward.

4. Moving Forward

This report sets out the progress made by the CPP throughout 2019/20 in relation to the LOIP and local plans. Whilst it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the successes made by the CPP, there is no doubt that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on our communities and partners and we recognise that our priorities and ways of working may look a lot different in the weeks and months ahead.

Collaborative working has never been more important. We have already adapted our services in response to the pandemic and we now need to consider how we can work in new and different ways to tackle the challenges that lie ahead, building on West Lothian's solid foundation of working in partnership. The CPP's role in response to the crisis will be key to successful recovery and long-term resilience. This is an opportune time to reflect on how the partnership works and how we can strengthen it going forward, particularly in relation to how we work with communities.

Although a draft new LOIP was ready to be consulted on in early March 2020, this has been put on hold while the CPP considers what the key challenges for the CPP are likely to be going forward. The new LOIP will be refocused to reflect the impact of COVID-19 and how the partnership will work together to meet these challenges, in order to continue to improve outcomes and tackle inequalities in our communities. Work is also ongoing to review the local plans and to ensure that they are more fully integrated to the LOIP and other strategic plans, such as the Anti-Poverty Strategy.