

# Whitburn

Draft Regeneration Plan 2017-27

Updated August 2018



**Assets**

**Priorities**

**Action**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Why Regeneration Plans?

The Community Empowerment Act 2015 states that all Community Planning Partnerships in Scotland must develop plans for those communities which experience the poorest outcomes. These plans must identify local priorities and detail actions to be taken to reduce inequalities. In West Lothian thirteen 'regeneration areas' have been identified, of which Whitburn is one. All of the identified regeneration areas have data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

This plan has been created by the Whitburn Regeneration Steering Group. The group was brought together with the specific purpose of creating this long term plan for the area and it is made up of people from local community groups, council services and other agencies who work or live in Whitburn. The diagram on the right details all the partners who are involved.

The plan has been created by using information from a number of sources. Firstly, community views have been gathered through a process of local engagement and consultation. The engagement data has then been collated and considered alongside statistical information from sources such as the Census, Scotpho and SIMD, and the local knowledge of the partners on the steering group.

This is a living document covering the next ten years and will evolve and develop with the community. The plan describes how we are going to work better locally and in partnership. It summarises the consultation taken place so far and set out a number of actions to be

taken to create positive change in the community. In addition, this plan links to other areas of work which we know affect or will have an impact on Whitburn. Examples of this include the Anti-Poverty Strategy for West Lothian, the Learning Community Plan and the West Health Locality Plan.



# HISTORY OF THE AREA

Whitburn is situated almost exactly half way between Scotland's two biggest cities. The M8 is situated immediately to its north. Whitburn was originally a small farming and weaving community as has appeared on maps since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The main road was made into a turnpike in 1753, where tolls were charged for its upkeep. By 1796 the population had grown to 500 and a post office had opened. At this time agriculture and hand loom weaving were the main sources of employment for the area.

In the 1600s the Baillie family built Polkemmet House, which is situated a little to the west of Whitburn and was then developed over the succeeding centuries. A stone beside Brucefield Kirk is named the 'Barracks Stone' and this dates back to 1766.

Weaving developed further in the 1800s as a main source of employment. Whitburn unlike the other settlements in the central belt was relatively unaffected by the large scale industrialisation through the 1800s. A railway station was built on a branch line at East Whitburn in the 1860s. One feature from this time is the Burgh Hall, built in 1830 which was complete with an attractive clock tower.

Deep coal mining began in Whitburn around 1900. This resulted in a population influx in the town as people were attracted by the new mining jobs. An average of 5,000 men were employed in eight deep pits to the east and west of Whitburn at the end of World War II. However, most of these closed in the 1950-60s. The largest pit in

the area was Polkemmet Colliery situated to the south-west of Whitburn. During World War I, this employed 1,500 men and raised to 2,000 at the peak at 1960. Polkemmet employed more miners for longer than any other Scottish pit and its pithead baths were known to be the second largest in the country.

Levi Strauss & Co opened a factory in 1969 employing 500 people and making 4 million pairs of jeans a year. However, in 1999 the factory announced its closure.

Following the miners strikes of 1984-5 the Polkemmet Colliery pit closed, due to severe flooding damage and never reopened. All evidence of the colliery building is gone and the coal bings, that were once prominent features, have been removed. On the site of the old Polkemmet Colliery, the town has been given a £500 million project for the 'Heartlands' development. This meant the regeneration of 600 hectares of derelict ground which involved the flattening of old bings. A new junction on the M8 was created.

Polkemmet Country Park was developed on the estate of Polkemmet House located to the west of the town. The country park opened in 1981 and now is home to woodland, a golf course, the Scottish Owl Centre, café, walking routes, and play area.

The heritage detailed above is a major asset to the town and contributes largely to the identity of the people of Whitburn.

## RECENT ACTIVITY IN THE AREA

It is important to note that the development of this plan is not starting at 'zero'— In addition to the mainstream public services which provide for the town, Whitburn already has an established community sector and there are plans to invest in the town which the plan looks to exploit and build on.

### **Community Groups**

There is a well-established and successful gala day in Whitburn, which is arguably West Lothian's largest gala day. This involves an army of volunteers undertaking preparatory and fundraising work all year round to provide this and the preceding Civic Week.

Whitburn Community Centre is one of the busiest community centres in West Lothian also, and it's management committee have a history of reinvesting its funds into the community, most notably, the creation of a soft-play area. They also provide large-scale events such as the Whitburn Christmas Cracker event and Santa Parade and have recently hosted the Whitburn Summer Lunch Club, which itself is supported by a number of groups and services.

Whitburn and District Community Council is also a very active Community Council and has been involved in a number of projects over recent years. They also have created a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) called 'Onward Whitburn' to allow them to manage community benefit funds from a local windmill.

Whitburn Community Development Trust delivers Community Information and Support Service, including IT buddying support, five-days a week from its premises in Whitburn's town centre. They are also part of a wider consortium of West Lothian community development organisations which have brought significant funding (c. £250k) into the area.

This is allowing the town to have it's own full-time development worker, employed and managed within the community. Part of their role is to help develop wider community capacity and community projects / activities. The CDT also supports the Remembrance Day parade in Whitburn.

Whitburn Traders group has been re-established and they are very pro-active in trying to create a community amongst the local traders and, in particular, improve the town centre environment. They are participating in the Carnegie Trust's Twin Towns scheme which has led a twinning of Whitburn with Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire.

The Friends of Polkemmet group has recently been re-established which will look to work with and enhance the council's provision of the park going into the future. Polkemmet Park is seen as one of the main assets to the town in terms of its ability to draw in visitors and money into the local economy as well as an excellent outdoor facility for residents to utilise.

Whitburn also has a very successful Brass Band (currently 7th best in the world), established Junior and youth football setup amongst other sports.

The Pentecostal Church in Whitburn also initiated the Foodbank in West Lothian which provides a vital service to many hundreds of residents. The other churches also provide support and host a number of self-help groups.

This is by no means an exhaustive list—Whitburn also has a very successful Brass Band (currently 7th best in the world), and other music bands, established youth and junior football teams, and other sports including martial arts.

## RECENT ACTIVITY IN THE AREA

### Heartlands

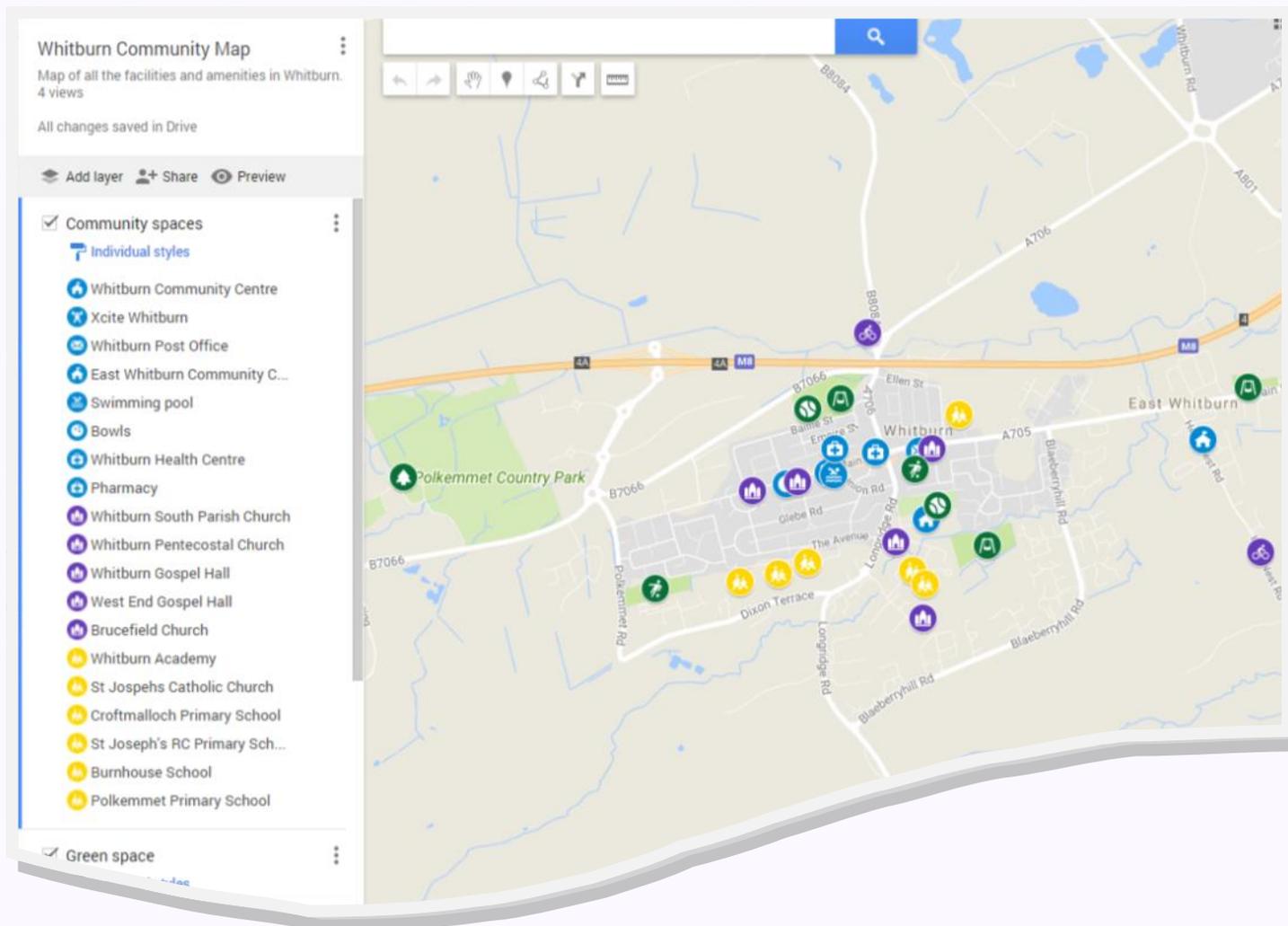
There is also the matter of the huge investment and development around the town in the Heartlands project. At the time of writing the housebuilding element of the development is developing pace, after a difficult recovery following the 2008 global financial crash. Planning permission for some development has been granted within the business/industrial area, which has the potential to create thousands of jobs within the town, whilst Oil States has already established itself there. Capital programme

### Other Investment

There is a significant level of funding being invested into the creation of a Partnership Centre in Whitburn which will house various services within it and also transform the look of the centre of Whitburn.



# AREA PROFILE: interactive map



## Community Map

This is Whitburn interactive community map. It can be found on our here:

[www.cragroup.co.uk/whitburn](http://www.cragroup.co.uk/whitburn)

Click on the icons to find out what's happening there.

# AREA PROFILE

## OUR COMMUNITY

**10,900**

Estimated population of Whitburn<sup>1</sup>



### Life expectancy



77.6yrs Whitburn

77.9yrs West Lothian

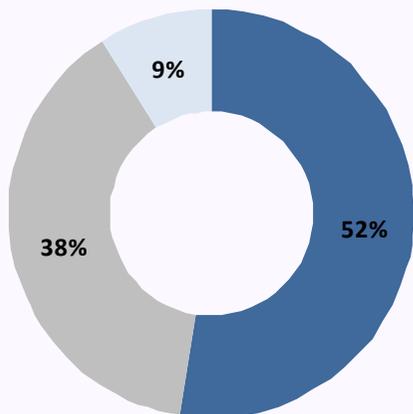


78.8yrs Whitburn

80.5yrs West Lothian<sup>2</sup>

## Community assets and strengths

- Polkemmet Country Park
- Heartlands housing and economic development
- Access to green space
- Heritage of the town



- Owner occupation
- Social rented
- Private rented



There are 5,112 dwellings in Whitburn, with 97% occupied.<sup>1</sup>

## OUR COMMUNITY CHALLENGES



**10%** of young people are not in education, employment or training compared to the West Lothian average of 7%<sup>4</sup>



**32%** is the percentage of children in poverty in Whitburn and Blackburn compared to West Lothians 22%<sup>5</sup>



**17%** employment deprivation. However 60% of Scotland's jobs are within an hours drive time.<sup>4</sup>



The annual median income is **£26,109** compared to West Lothians **£32,994**.<sup>3</sup>



**5 out of the 13** Neighbourhoods in Whitburn are within the 20% most deprived in Scotland according to the SIMD.<sup>4</sup>

Sources: <sup>1</sup>Census Data 2011; <sup>2</sup>Scotpho 2011; <sup>3</sup>Local Level Average Household Income Estimates 2014; <sup>4</sup>SIMD 2016; <sup>5</sup>Campaign to End Child Poverty 2018

# PLACEMAKING IN WHITBURN

Whitburn was identified as a regeneration area in the West Lothian Regeneration Framework 2014-2034. This identified that regeneration areas as those settlements which had datazones (or neighbourhoods) ranked in the bottom 20% across **Scotland/West Lothian**.

In Whitburn, a large-scale community and stakeholder planning exercise called a 'charrette' was undertaken in 2015 funded by the Scottish Government and the council. This recognised that an approach that looked at the planned and potential investments for the town as a whole was required.

The purpose of the charrette was to integrate the various elements of planned investment and activity into a single cohesive masterplan for the area to:

- maximise investment through providing decision-makers with an evidence based, holistic plan for the town to inform resource allocation and attract external funding;
- create a shared vision for the town and wider Whitburn area, in particular, to inform planning for the town centre and partnership centre;
- better link and integrate the Heartlands development and Polkemmet Country Park with the town centre; and
- ensure effective community involvement in regenerating the Whitburn area, and provide a basis for future community engagement for the development of the town.

This involved a series of planning workshops which looked to involve residents and representatives from community groups, local services, voluntary sector organisations, and regional and national

agencies. Whilst there was a focus on the town centre by virtue of pulling the various stakeholders together, there were many actions that were outwith the town centre, meaning the resultant 'Placemaking in Whitburn' masterplan which came out of the charrette covered a wider town approach.

To implement the masterplan, the existing Town Centre Management Group agreed to take on and implement the town-centre specific actions with a newly created Whitburn Regeneration Advisory Group taking on the rest of the plan.

A review of the masterplan was undertaken and presented to the Whitburn and Blackburn Local Area Committee in February 2018 which is available on: <http://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Dg%8Fp%80%8F>

Whilst the masterplan was comprehensive in scale, there was nevertheless a focus on the spatial planning elements and focus on the economic side of regeneration, at the expense of a focus on the 'people' side. Given the purpose of regeneration plans is to tackle inequalities and improve the quality of life for those in the bottom scoring datazones, for which the spatial/physical planning can contribute to, the Whitburn Regeneration Group agreed that a priority in future needs to be exploring 'supporting the disadvantaged'.

Therefore, the activity within the priorities in this plan consist of both a reflection of the work that is continuing to take place and how partners are planning to address the gaps identified.

# CREATING PRIORITIES

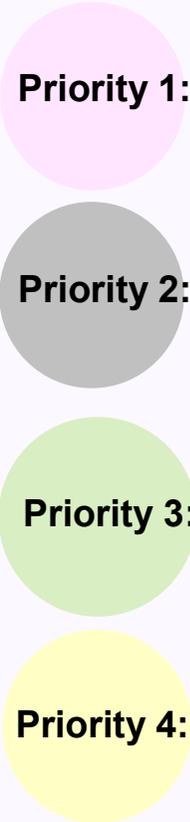
The Whitburn Regeneration Group was established in 2016 following the Placemaking in Whitburn masterplan being finalised. Its purpose was to action and monitor the masterplan, with the exception of the town centre actions which the pre-existing Whitburn Town Centre Management Group. In addition to the relevant council services from the Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration service, it consisted of representation from Community Planning Partners such as NHS Lothian, West Lothian College and the main community groups in the town: the Community Council, Community Development Trust, Community Centre Management Committee and, latterly, the Traders group.

This group has also involved other services over specific parts of the plan and new initiatives such as Police Scotland, Education and Operational Services in the council.

This plan has tried to cover two elements:

1. Pulling together the existing projects in the town and theming these into the priorities based on what they are trying to achieve. This will hopefully also give the various groups and individuals involved a sense of where their efforts fits into the 'bigger picture' and how they complement other activity.
2. Recognising that the previous masterplan had a focus on economic and physical regeneration and, in line with the purpose of regeneration plans to tackle inequalities, more focus going forward needs to be on trying to improve the wellbeing and chances of those experiencing poverty.

Therefore, the priorities below reflect this. As this regeneration plan is a 'live' document, these priorities will be reviewed as local circumstances changes such as future engagement exercises identifies new concerns or opportunities.



**Priority 1: Promoting the town and making it more attractive**

**Priority 2: Reducing inequality and tackling exclusion**

**Priority 3: Improving communication, partnership working and community activity**

**Priority 4: Increasing active health**

## PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS: Priority 1: Promoting the town and making it more attractive

Priority 1A	Regeneration Plan Priority 1: Promoting the town and making it more attractive		
<p><b>Key Issues /needs identified:</b> Whitburn has suffered many of the challenges of ex-industrial communities over the last thirty years which has had an impact on some people's perception and self-perception of the town. This extends in particular, to the town centre in terms of its makeup of shops and the condition of the local environment.</p>			
<b>Current position :</b>		<b>Outcome:</b>	
<p><b>How this fits into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b> Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business</p>			
Actions	Partners	Timescale	Update
Implementation improvements to the entrance to Whitburn from East Whitburn funded by both Town Centre Improvement Fund, complimenting the works on the East Whitburn end of the road also being undertaken by CSGNT.	Planning Services Central Green Network Trust Woodlands Trust		
Review of the 2018 community clean-up which involved groups and residents targeting specific areas within the town.	Traders Group Community Council		
Installation of lamppost banners in the approach to the four ends of the town centre.	Economic Development		
Installation of new heritage themed gateway features at the five main entrances to the town.	Economic Development Whitburn Town Centre Management Group Heartlands		

# PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS: Priority 1: Promoting the town and making it more attractive

<b>Priority 1A</b>	<b>Regeneration Plan Priority 1: Promoting the town and making it more attractive</b>		
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<b>Current position :</b>		<b>Outcome:</b>	
<b>How this fits into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Update</b>
Undertaking of capital improvements to the landscaped areas around the town centre and ongoing maintenance of these areas by Whitburn Community Council.	Whitburn Community Council		
Installation of capital improvements to the bedded area at Market Place.	Town Centre Management Group (WTCMG)		
Support the re-use of vacant and under-utilised properties in town centre through continued dialogue with property owners and potential developers.	Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration		
Re-establishing the site of the old Miners Welfare through supporting the community via Onward Whitburn to acquire the site and bring the area back into Town Centre Improvement Fund and Cowdenhead windfarm.	Onward Whitburn WTCMG		
Full utilisation of Town Centre Improvement Fund allocation for Whitburn and the developer contributions resulting in increased vibrancy of town centre	WTCMG	2018 -2023 (TCIF)	
Completion of new Partnership Centre building at the town cross.	Construction Services, Customer and Community Services, Whitburn Partnership Centre Community	2019	

## PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS: Priority 2 Reducing inequality and tackling exclusion

<b>Priority 2A</b>	<b>Regeneration Plan Priority 2: Reducing inequality and tackling exclusion</b>		
<b>Key Issues /needs identified:</b> Like other regeneration areas, Whitburn has been identified as such because it has a number of areas which score poorly on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). To tackle regeneration, we must look to support and enable people and families whose are the least advantaged within the community to improve their life circumstances.			
<b>Current position :</b>		<b>Outcome:</b>	
<b>How this fits into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b> People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances; We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities.			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Update</b>
Utilisation of statistical profile of the area to better determine social outcome priorities	Regeneration Group Whitburn Services Group	Autumn 2018	
Engaging with people experiencing poverty to better identify how services and the wider community can support them locally.	Regeneration Group Local schools Whitburn Services Group	Spring 2019	
Undertake engagement exercise with services to better understand and document the needs of the parts of the community they work with, and the gaps/opportunities in provision	Regeneration Team Whitburn CDT	Exercise completed by September 2018	
Support the development of volunteer-based projects which can help support identified community needs	Whitburn Services Group Whitburn CDT	Projects identified by March 2019	

## PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS: Priority 2 Reducing inequality and tackling exclusion

Priority 2B	Regeneration Plan Priority 2: Reducing inequality and tackling exclusion		
<p><b>Key Issues /needs identified:</b> Like other regeneration areas, Whitburn has been identified as such because it has a number of areas which score poorly on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). To tackle regeneration, we must look to support and enable people and families whose are the least advantaged within the community to improve their life circumstances.</p>			
<p><b>Current position :</b></p>		<p><b>Outcome:</b></p>	
<p><b>How this fits into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b> People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances; We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities.</p>			
Actions	Partners	Timescale	Update
Apply for funding for a Citizens Advice Bureau advisor to have a full-time presence within the town.	Whitburn CDT Citizens Advice Bureau		
Investigating the potential for a ‘time bank’ model of volunteering in Whitburn	Whitburn CDT		
Investigate the potential for developing a community based project in the town to support disadvantaged young people	To be determined	To be determined	To be determined
Review the funding support provided to Playbuddies which was to support them to grow their group and increase healthy eating and play elements within their sessions.	Regeneration Playbuddies		
Identify any opportunities for partnership working and any additional services that the new Partnership Centre may offer	Whitburn Services Group		
Support the Community Information and Support Service delivered by Whitburn CDT with a view to broadening the types of support it can provide to residents.	Whitburn CDT Regeneration Group		

## PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS: Priority 3: Improving communication and partnership working

Priority 3A	Regeneration Plan Priority 3: Improving communication, partnership working and community activity		
<p><b>Key Issues /needs identified:</b> As an ex-mining and industrial town, Whitburn has a tradition of well established community groups and clubs. To help promote awareness of these, and other activity in the town, the Placemaking in Whitburn masterplan identified the need for better information sharing and communication between groups and between services, with the community.</p>			
<b>Current position :</b>		<b>Outcome:</b>	
<p><b>How this fits into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b> We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities</p>			
Actions	Partners	Timescale	Update
<p>Developing an online presence to promote activities and celebrate community achievements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting up of Community Facebook page that the four groups will have joint administration of</li> <li>Setting up of a community website, supported by Carnegie Trust UK</li> <li>Developing the online community map as a common store of information on services and activities and to use it via other online mediums i.e. building into webpages, sharing on Facebook pages etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Whitburn Community Council Whitburn Traders Whitburn CDT Whitburn CEC Management Committee Carnegie Trust UK</p>		<p>'This is Whitburn' page now in operation with the four main community groups accessing and using it. 744 likes as of August 2018.</p>
<p>Development of the reinstated Harrison Hut</p>	<p>Whitburn Traders</p>		
<p>Encourage and support partnership working through information sharing via the Whitburn Services Group meetings and subsequent electronic sharing of updates to other services and groups.</p>	<p>Regeneration</p>		
<p>Developing a Welcome pack for Heartlands residents</p>	<p>Heartlands/ Council</p>		

# PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS Priority 4: Increasing active health

Priority 4A Regeneration Plan Priority 4: Increasing active health			
<p><b>Key Issues /needs identified:</b> One of the assets identified in the ‘charrette’/masterplanning process for Whitburn was the amount of green space it had as well as its relatively close proximity to neighbouring towns. The Development Framework within the masterplan has been used as a basis for the council and partners to invest in the town’ infrastructure to connect it to other places in ways which are environmentally friendly and support better health.</p>			
<p><b>Current position :</b></p>		<p><b>Outcome:</b></p>	
<p><b>How this fits into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b></p>			
Actions	Partners	Timescale	Update
<p>Upgrading of the west section of the Town Walk which will remove various fencing from along the path, replace the path surface, redevelop some shrubbed areas and make a formal link with the Heartlands residential area. This funded by Sustrans</p>	<p>Operational Services Sustrans</p>		
<p>Installation of cycle paths connecting Whitburn with Greenrigg, Armadale and Bathgate.</p>	<p>Operational Services Sustrans</p>		
<p>Walking Football Project - Weekly sessions at Whitburn Community Centre aimed at keeping people aged 50+ or anyone who due to a lack of mobility or for other reasons are not able to play the traditional game.</p>	<p>Whitburn CDT West Lothian Youth Foundation</p>	<p>August 2019</p>	
<p>Education role for community groups in promoting the use and benefits of the green spaces and path/cycle networks within the town.</p>	<p>Whitburn Community Council  Whitburn Traders  Whitburn CDT  Whitburn CEC Management Committee</p>		

# PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS **Priority 4: Increasing active health**

<b>Priority 4A</b>	<b>Regeneration Plan Priority 4: Increasing active health</b>		
<b>Key Issues /needs identified:</b> Polkemmet Country Park has been identified as one of Whitburn’s main assets for the town in terms of a recreation space and attraction for visitors outwith the town and indeed West Lothian, particularly due to its proximity to the M8. Through working with park users, the community and community groups, there is opportunity to develop the park to the benefit of the town economically as well as it’s image			
<b>Current position :</b>		<b>Outcome:</b>	
<b>How this fits into the Local Outcome Improvement Plan:</b> We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Update</b>
Reform the Friends of Polkemmet Group Review the recent Easter Event Constitutionalise the group	Friends of Polkemmet Ranger Service Whitburn CDT Whitburn Community Council	Short Term	Constitution finalised in May.  Acknowledgement of the need for new members
Explore potential projects to improve the Park for the benefit of the local community and visitors to the Park – Look at the possibility of securing external funding Encourage and enable more people to take an interest in the Park through the Friends group Consider organising events for the benefit of visitors to the Park and as a potential revenue stream.	Friends of Polkemmet Ranger Service	Medium Term	List of potential projects in progress.  Current funding opportunities have been obtained
Continue to improve the Park for the benefit of the community and visitors. Protect the heritage and biodiversity of the Park.	Friends of Polkemmet Ranger Service	Long Term	

## STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

This plan will be updated as the communities priorities change over the next 10 years.

- The plan is fluid in that it will be developed on an ongoing basis. This is likely to mean that new action and themes will be added and some initial actions and themes drop off.
- Whilst engagement and consultation have helped to shape the initial actions and themes opportunities to consult and engage community members will be built in to help to keep the community up to date.
- The Plan itself will be updated each year to update the community and partners and refresh the plan going forward.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Useful links:

#### Placemaking in Whitburn webpage:

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/whitburn>

#### Placemaking in Whitburn masterplan:

[https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/10774/Placemaking-In-Whitburn-Final-Report-8-December-2015/pdf/Placemaking\\_In\\_Whitburn\\_Final\\_Report\\_8\\_December\\_2015.pdf](https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/10774/Placemaking-In-Whitburn-Final-Report-8-December-2015/pdf/Placemaking_In_Whitburn_Final_Report_8_December_2015.pdf)

#### 'This is Whitburn' Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/This-is-Whitburn-567158246996570/>

#### 'Your Community Whitburn and Blackburn' Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/yourcommunitywhitburnblackburn/>

REGENERATION  
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