

**DATA LABEL: PUBLIC**



**COUNCIL EXECUTIVE**

**WL2028 YOUR COUNCIL YOUR SAY - PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report provides the Council Executive with an update on the feedback received from respondents to Phase 1 of the WL2028 Your Council Your Say public consultation, and provides an update on the key dates and activities associated with Phase 2 of the public consultation.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council Executive notes:

1. The update on the engagement process and results on the responses received to the Phase 1 consultation;
2. The key dates and activities associated with Phase 2 of the public consultation.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| I. Council Values   | Focusing on our customers' needs, being honest, open and accountable, providing equality of opportunity, developing employees, making best use of our resources, working with other organisations.                            |
| II. Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equalities Issues, Health or Risk Assessment) | The council is required to approve a balanced revenue budget for each financial year. Audit Scotland and CIPFA best practice guidance recommends medium term financial plans are prepared for at least five years in duration |
| III. Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers   | No implications at this stage.  |
| IV. Impact on performance and performance indicators  | Ongoing government restraint has implications for the council's budget and performance.   |
| V. Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement  | The revenue budget provides resources necessary to help deliver the Single  |

		Outcome Agreement. Effective prioritisation of resources is essential to achieving key outcomes.
VI.	Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	None
VII.	Consideration at PDSP	Based on initial assumptions, it is forecast that West Lothian Council will have a very significant revenue budget gap of approximately £47.1 million over the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28.  The public consultation will assist in the prioritisation and allocation of resources to activities that have the greatest impact, whilst ensuring balanced budgets for the five-year period to 2027/28.
VIII.	Other consultations	None at this stage.

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D.1 Background**

On 24 June 2022, the Council Executive approved the three stage West Lothian (WL) 2028 Your Council Your Say public consultation approach. Phase 1 of the consultation commenced on 24 June 2022 and closed on 31 July 2022. The results of this first phase are reported in Section D.3.

At that time of the Phase 1 consultation the council was projecting a budget gap of £38.4million over the five-year period. Following further developments in the Cost of Living crisis and related cost pressures on energy costs the budget gap has increased to £47.1million over the five-year period 2023/34 to 2027/28, with a budget gap of £36.5million over the three-year period 2023/34 to 2025/26.

The Phase 2 consultation will be open for a six-week period from 7 October 2022 until 20 November 2022. The results of the Phase 2 consultation will be reported to Council Executive, proposed for 20 December 2022, with proposals for Special PDSPs to be scheduled in January 2023 to allow elected members to consider the responses received at the Phase 2 stage.

The Council budget setting meeting in February 2023 will set the Corporate Plan and 5-year financial plan 2023/24 to 2027/28, a 3-year detailed revenue budget 2023/24 to 2025/26 and agreement on taxation levels for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

The Phase 3 consultation on the 2026/27 and 2078/28 budget proposals will be progressed during 2023/24 prior to the Council budget setting meeting in February 2026.

### **D.2 Engagement Approach**

The council used a range of methods to promote the consultation and to engage with customers, staff and partners on the consultation. The Phase 1 consultation document was included as a pull-out in the Summer Edition of Bulletin which was delivered to all

households from 11 July 2022. An online version of the consultation was promoted via the council's website and social media channels, specific questions are being posted on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and directing users of these platforms to the full online survey, and key partners received details of the consultation with links to the online consultation.

Parents received the link via Group Call and as in previous consultations the council delivered an engagement programme with specific groups over the consultation period to support the groups in their participation.

Global emails were also issued to staff and Heads of Service were asked to encourage all staff to participate and for reminders to be issued at the senior management team and team meetings within their service areas.

### **D.3 Phase 1 Results**

The council received 5,045 responses from a wide range of stakeholders, with the majority of responses being received via the online survey. The response rate for this first phase compares favourably to the total number of responses received for the Transforming Your Council 2017 (TYC), which received 7,026 responses and Delivering Better Outcomes 2014 (DBO), which received 3,467 responses.

The majority of the respondents (81.5%) are identifying themselves as individuals, with the remainder identifying as employees (17.3%) and groups/organisations (1.2%). The names groups/organisations identifying themselves in the response are listed below:

Blackridge Community Council; Dechmont Community Council; Eliburn Community Council; Polbeth Community Council; Kirknewton Community Council. Bathgate Thistle CFC; Boghall Drop-in Centre; Braid House; Community Inclusion Team; Cyrenians; Daisy Drop In; East Calder Children's Gala; Family and Community Development West Lothian; Leopo Monroe LTD; MacMillan; OPAL-Bathgate; Pathways; Pie O' My; St Michael's Parish Church; Skills Development Scotland; STP; Triple P; Uphall Golf Club; Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian; West Lothian Community Race Forum (WLCRF); West Lothian Litter Pickers; Xcite West Lothian Leisure

Headline information on the responses is summarised below:

1. What are the best parts about living in West Lothian – Access to open spaces, parks and green spaces; shops and services; and transport links are identified as the best parts.
2. What parts of your community needs to be improved – Access to community facilities; availability and reliability of public transport; and access to open spaces are identified as the areas needing improvement.
3. What are the most important issues for your community – Access to health care; economy and the costs of living; and crime and community safety are identified as the issues that are most important for the community.
4. What are the most important issues for you – Access to healthcare; my mental health and wellbeing; and my physical health are identified as the issues that are most important for individuals.
5. Council Commitments – Connect, Empower and Deliver are considered to be good commitments and the council must put them into action and demonstrate achievement.
6. Corporate Priorities – The majority of respondents to this question (87%) agree that these are the right priorities, although there is some change in the ranking and the ranking between 2 and 3; and 5 and 6. A number of respondents feel that Housing

and Homelessness could be added as a priority; and that the council must demonstrate achievement in the priorities.

7. To reduce costs, please tell us if you think that we should – The strongest support is for the council to sell properties and assets; close some buildings that have low usage; and empower local groups and communities to deliver some services.
8. To reduce costs, do you think that we should – The strongest support is for the council to invest in online services, and increase the number of services that are accessible through the website; and continue to provide telephone and face-to-face access to services for those who do not or cannot access digital services.
9. What is your preferred way of engaging with the council on the future of council services – The strongest support is for online survey and social media, with only limited support for in-person public meetings, focus groups and road shows; only limited support for paper surveys.

The number of respondents to each question varies, with the highest response to questions 1- 4 above. Further details on the results are set out in Appendix 1.

The council has received over 14,000 individual comments to the Phase 1 consultation questions and officers have reviewed the individual comments, considered the merits of the measure and suggested a response from the following options.

1. The respondent feels that this is important to them/their community /The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal.
2. The respondent feels that this is not important to them/their community / The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal. /.
3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make.
4. The council is already doing this.
- 5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work.
- 5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit.
- 5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities.
- 5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed.
6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.
7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.
8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisations.

The analysis of all of the comments is available to view online on the council's website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/WL2028](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/WL2028).

#### **D.4 Phase 2 Consultation**

In line with the previous Transforming Your Council (2017) and Delivering Better Outcomes (2012) consultations, officer proposals have been developed on potential budget reductions and/or changes to services to balance the council's financial position over the 3-year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.

As officer proposals, Council Executive is not being asked to consider and/or approve these potential budget reductions at this stage. However, the results of the Phase 2

consultation will be reported to Council Executive, proposed for 20 December 2022, with the full detail of the proposed budget savings measures for the 3-year period 2023/24 to 2025/26 and responses from the Phase 2 consultation being considered at Special PDSPs to be scheduled in January 2023 to allow elected members to consider prior to the Council Budget setting meeting in February 2023.

In addition to the officer proposals, the Phase 2 consultation will also seek views on council tax levels. The council's future budget estimates assume increases in council tax of at least 3.5% each year, and the consultation seek views on how the council would find additional income to bridge any increase in the budget gap if council tax levels were below 3.5%, as well as views on whether there would be support for a higher than 3.5% council tax level if this was spent on key identified priorities.

The engagement approach deployed for the Phase 1 consultation will be repeated, however additional steps will be undertaken to increase the level of response across all groups and partner organisations. The main activities and planned key dates for the Phase 2 consultation and next steps up to the Council Budget meeting in 2023 are set out below.

Activity	Start	Finish
Phase 2 Consultation	Fri 7/10/22	Sun 20/11/22
Phase 2 Results to Council Executive	Tue 20/12/22	Tue 20/12/22
PDSPs Savings Proposal Review Meetings	Jan 2023	Jan 2023
Council Budget Meeting	Feb 2023	Feb 2023

## **E. CONCLUSION**

Based on initial assumptions, it is forecast that the Council will have a significant revenue budget gap of approximately £47.1 million over the five-year period 2023/24 to 2027/28, with a budget gap of £36.5million over the three-year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The WL2028 Your Council Your Say public consultation will assist in the prioritisation and allocation of resources to activities that have the greatest impact, whilst ensuring balanced budgets for the five-year period to 2027/28.

It will also create a positive basis for future engagement, which would also start a dialogue with stakeholders on some of the more complex and demanding aspects of future policy, and establish key operational objectives that will drive sustainability and underpin service change in the years ahead.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Council Executive – Public Consultation Approach 2022 – 24 June 2022

Appendices/Attachments: Phase 1 Consultation Results Overview

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**Graeme Struthers**  
**Depute Chief Executive**  
**4 October 2022**



# WL2028 – YOUR COUNCIL, YOUR SAY

## Our Future: Summary Report

### Abstract

A summary of the findings and recommendations from a public consultation on the Council priorities for the period 2023 to 2028

# Welcome

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*A public consultation in June – July 2022 was held to ask local people to help set the priorities for the council by telling us about what is important to them and their family.*

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## Background

Like all local authorities in Scotland, West Lothian Council faces constrained funding and substantial cost increases in the next five years. The council had projected a budget gap of £38.4 million over the next five-year period at the time of the Phase 1 consultation in June 2022. Following further developments in the Cost of Living crisis and related cost pressures on energy costs it is anticipated that the funding gap for years 2023 to 2028 will now be £47.1 million. This means that the council, along with the West Lothian community, will have to make difficult decisions about local services.

Although the next five years are expected to be extremely challenging for the council, we also understand that local people and businesses are experiencing difficulties from the Cost of Living increases and the residual impact of the global Coronavirus pandemic.

The council remains committed to meeting the needs of local people and high performance across all areas of service delivery.

In preparation for the challenges ahead, we want to work with our community and partners – in shaping the future of Council services in West Lothian.

**This report provides a summary of the feedback from the consultation on Our Future – the first in a series of planned engagements to help the council to become more sustainable and meet the challenges ahead.**

*Graham Hope, Chief Executive*

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# Summary

## Overview

1. The council held a public consultation on Our Future, to help set council priorities for the years 2023 to 2028. The consultation asked people to:
  - ▼ To tell us about the **services** they think local people want and need in the future;
  - ▼ Identify the **priorities** that will help West Lothian be a better place to live, work, learn and visit;
  - ▼ Identify some **principles for change** that will help us to transform the way the council works;
  - ▼ Understand how they think we should address the **funding gap** of £38.4 million<sup>1</sup>;
  - ▼ Understand how people want to **engage** with the council moving forward.
2. **Response rate:** A total of **5,045 people** responded to the consultation that was open for 6-weeks (from 24 June to 31 July 2022). This total comprised; 81.5% who were responding as members of the public, 17.3% who were responding as council employees and 1.2% who were responding on behalf of a group or organisation. The council received a total of 14,004 individual comments from respondents.
3. **Engagement approach:** the council utilised a range of methods to engage with customers, staff and partners including, a pull-out in the council's quarterly newsletter to homes, an online survey, face-to-face interviews with some residents and paper copies were also made available in council offices.

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<sup>1</sup> The forecast funding gap has now increased to £47.1 million due to projected increases in energy prices and other cost increases

## Consultation Feedback – Key Findings

### Your Community

4. **The best parts about living in West Lothian:** when asked what people value most about living in West Lothian, the top three responses were; the (1) open spaces, parks and green spaces, the (2) access to shops and services and the (3) transport links.
5. **The parts of your community need to be improved:** when asked what people want improved in West Lothian, the top three responses were; (1) community facilities, (2) public transport and the (3) access to open spaces.
6. **The most important issues for your community:** when asked what are the issues that are most important to the community, the top three responses were; (1) health care, (2) economy and the cost of living and the (3) crime and community safety.
7. **The most important issues for you:** when asked what are the issues that are most important to individuals, the top three responses were; (1) health care, (2) my mental health and wellbeing and the (3) my physical health.
8. **Improvements:** respondents offered suggestions (in comment boxes) on how they felt the council can improve, or how the lives of people living in the community can be improved through changes or re-prioritisation. This included suggestions in relation to;
  - ▼ improvements in learning and teaching;
  - ▼ increasing social housing;
  - ▼ improving infrastructure in areas that had seen significant development;
  - ▼ improving Street cleanliness and the appearance/maintenance of public parks and green spaces;
  - ▼ protecting and preserving open and green space from development.

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### Council Commitments and Priorities

9. **Our Commitments – Connect ► Empower ► Deliver:** the council proposed three commitments for how we will work with our customers, staff and partners and these received a mostly positive response. Some suggested ways that the council could better put these commitments into action.
10. **Our eight Priorities:** the council asked if our eight priorities are still right for West Lothian and 87% of respondents agree. Some suggested how they could be better ranked or presented and some respondents suggested amendments to specific priorities and the inclusion of Housing and Homelessness as a standalone priority.

### Council Transformation and Costs

11. **To reduce costs, what we should change:** when asked how we can reduce our expenditure, the top three responses were; (1) sell some council properties and assets (2) close some buildings that have low usage and (3) empower local groups and communities to deliver some services.
12. **Charges that could be increased:** respondents felt that the council should consider the impact that Cost of Living increases were having on households before increasing any charges for services. There were some suggested areas where costs could be reviewed/introduced, including:
  - ▼ fines for littering and dog fouling;
  - ▼ licensing and planning processes charges;
  - ▼ costs for after/wrap around care;
  - ▼ introducing car park charges.
13. **To reduce costs, how should services change:** when asked how we can reduce our expenditure, the top responses were; (1) Invest in our online services and (2) Increase the number of services that are accessible through the website. There were concerns in the comments in relation to the negative impact that a “digital by default” approach to service provision may have on some parts of the community.
14. **Other opportunities to reduce costs:** respondents offered suggestions (in comment boxes) on how they felt the council can reduce costs, including:
  - ▼ Changes to the council structure, streamlining departments and management reductions;

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- ▼ Changes to council governance and procedures to empower staff/customers and reduce bureaucracy;
- ▼ Increase hybrid working to reduce operating costs;
- ▼ Decrease or remove hybrid working to improve staff productivity.

## Next Steps

15. The council will continue to analyse the detailed comments provided in the consultation and use this information to shape future plans and services, including the new Corporate Plan 2023/25 for the council, due to be published in February 2023.
16. The next consultation will take place in October 2022 on officer budget reduction proposals for the next three years (2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26). At the same time the council will be seeking views on Council Tax which is used to help fund local services.

# Response to the Consultation

## Response Rate

17. The consultation was open from 24 June to 31 July 2022 and received a total of **5,045 responses**. Most respondents engaged through the online survey, but we also received paper survey responses.

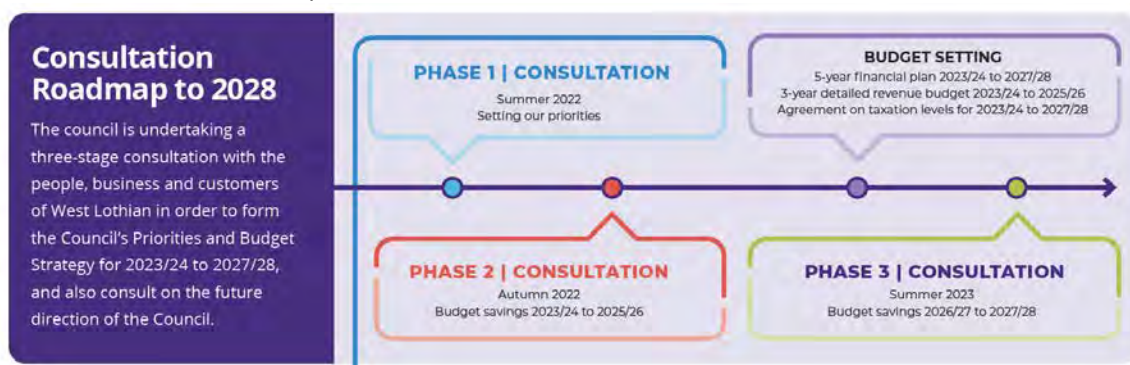
Total number of responses	Online survey responses	Paper survey responses
5,045	4,646	399

18. A good proportion of the paper responses came from our in-person survey collection with target customer groups, with the remainder coming from the Bulletin pull-out that was issued to West Lothian households in July 2022.

## Engagement Approach

19. The council has a good track record of engaging the public, staff and partners on corporate and financial planning. We understand that in order to assure the long-term sufficiency of our planning and service provision we must engage our stakeholders in the decision-making process.
20. This consultation – Our Future – was focused on understanding what people want and need from the council. It is part of three-phase consultation approach that the council has developed to form the basis of our corporate and financial planning for the years 2023 to 2028. The Consultation Roadmap provides more detail on the three phases.

21. *Consultation Roadmap*



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22. The engagement approach used was wide ranging, with targeted messages through various methods to raise awareness and prompt participation. To ensure accessibility the consultation surveys were available online and in print and there were campaigns for specific groups that included in-person consultation response gathering. The consultation was also promoted directly to staff and partners through email and correspondence.
23. The council utilised a range of methods to engage with customers, staff and partners:
- ▼ The consultation was included as a pull-out in the Summer Edition of Bulletin (the council's quarterly newsletter, delivered to every household in West Lothian);
  - ▼ An online version of the consultation was promoted via the council's website and social media channels;
  - ▼ Questions from the consultation were posted on the council's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts to increase the reach of the consultation and signpost users to the full online survey;
  - ▼ Parents and council tenants were notified of the consultation via text message;
  - ▼ Community Planning Partners, Community Councils and other organisations and groups received direct email communications inviting them to participate;
  - ▼ Council staff were notified via global emails and team meeting updates/reminders.

### Response Rate Comparison

24. The council has undertaken previous public consultations on our priorities and transformation/budget setting plans. The response rates, as they compare to the current consultation programme, are set out below:

Public Consultation 2022 (WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say)	Public Consultation 2017 (Transforming your Council)	Public Consultation 2014 (Delivering Better Outcomes)
5,045	7,026	3,467

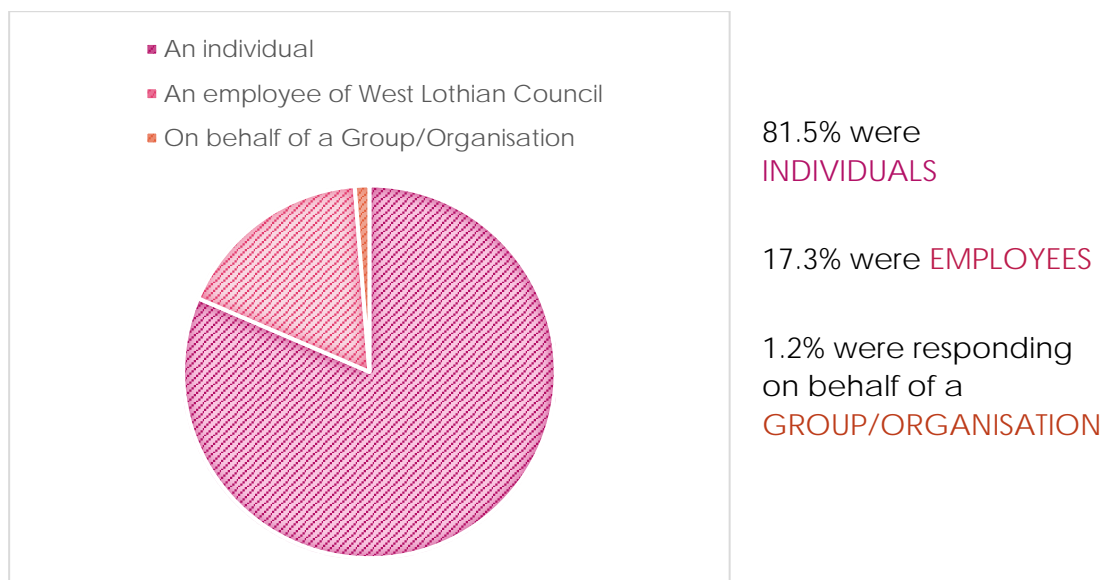
25. Both the Transforming your Council and Delivering Better Outcomes consultations covered council priorities, five-year officer saving proposals and

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council tax options in a single consultation. Whereas, this most recent consultation did not include saving proposals or questions about council tax (planned for Phase 2). It instead focused on achieving a better understanding of what people need and want from the council. As the first step in a three-phase engagement programme, the most recent consultation generated a good level of response, one that the council will seek to build upon in Phases 2 and 3, which concentrate on the budget strategy and transformation proposals.

### Respondents

26. The majority of respondents were individuals, those who live, work or visit West Lothian. The council also received responses from respondents who identified themselves as Council employees, but it should be noted that over 70% of Council employees also live in West Lothian.



27. The council aims for an inclusive approach, with targeted engagements to ensure representation and diverse views captured through the consultation. It is vitally important that we engage the public, in particular, on our priorities and proposals for change and that we use their feedback to shape future service provision. This is why the council continues to use a broad range of media to promote the consultation and continues to offer paper consultation surveys in order to ensure that we involve as many people and sections of the community as possible.
28. Gaining a good response from council staff is also important as they have a lot of knowledge and experience that will be key to shaping and delivering any transformation proposals that emerge from the full programme of engagement that the council has planned.

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### Groups and Organisations

29. The council invited key partners, community groups, and other organisations to participate in the survey. A total of 28 named Groups/Organisations (as identified in the survey response) took part in the consultation.

**Community Councils:** Blackridge Community Council ♦ Dechmont Community Council ♦ Eliburn Community Council ♦ Polbeth Community Council ♦ Kirknewton Community Council

**Other organisations:** Bathgate Thistle CFC ♦ Boghall Drop-in Centre ♦ Braid House ♦ CH ♦ Community Inclusion Team ♦ Cyrenians (3) ♦ Daisy Drop In ♦ East Calder Children's Gala ♦ Family and Community Development West Lothian ♦ Leopo Monroe LTD ♦ MacMillan (2) ♦ OPAL-Bathgate ♦ Pathways ♦ Pie O' My ♦ St Michael's Parish Church ♦ Skills Development Scotland (2) ♦ STP ♦ Triple P ♦ Uphall Golf Club ♦ Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian ♦ West Lothian Community Race Forum (WLCRF) ♦ West Lothian Litter Pickers ♦ Xcite West Lothian Leisure

30. Many of the named Groups/Organisations (as identified in the survey response) received direct emails/letters inviting them to take part in the consultation. The council will continue to encourage partners, community and representative groups to contribute to our consultations. This ensures that we take into consideration different views and potential impacts on our partners in decision-making and future planning processes.

### Individual Respondents

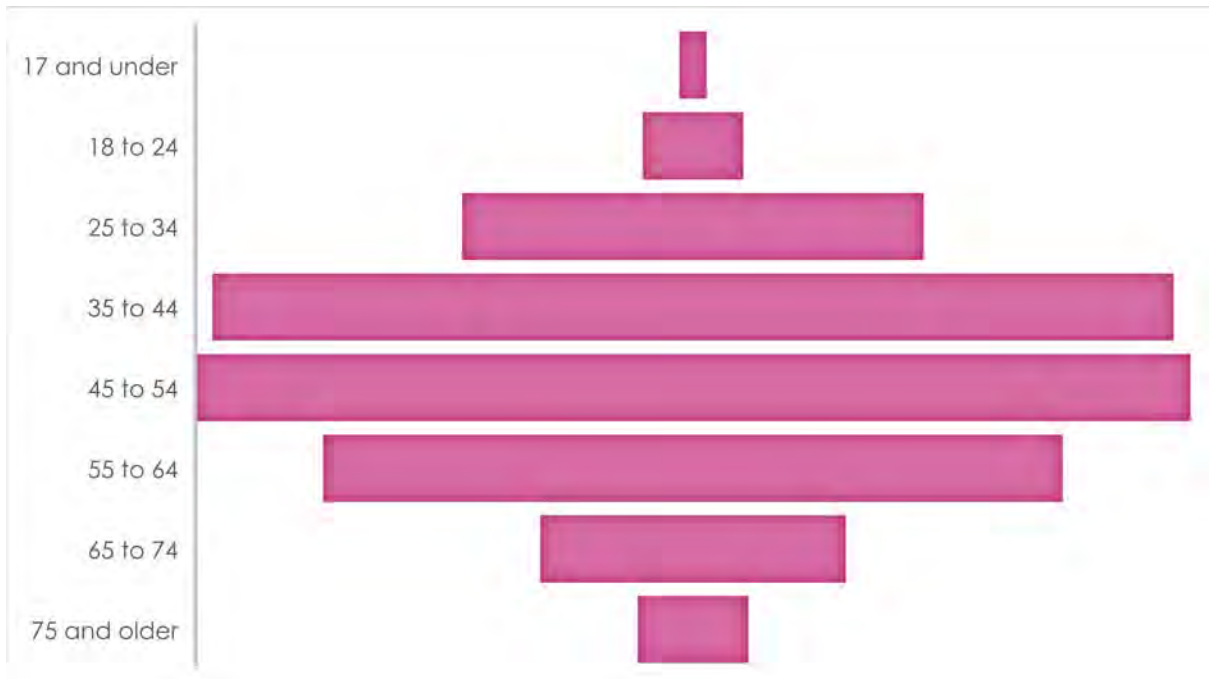
31. Respondents had the option to provide information about them as part of the response to the survey. This information will be used by the council to understand how successfully we are engaging with different groups across the community and how we might improve upon those engagement methods moving forward.
32. **Gender:** the highest number of respondents were women:

Women	Men	Identify their gender in another way	Preferred not to say
66.8%	28.0%	0.4%	4.8%

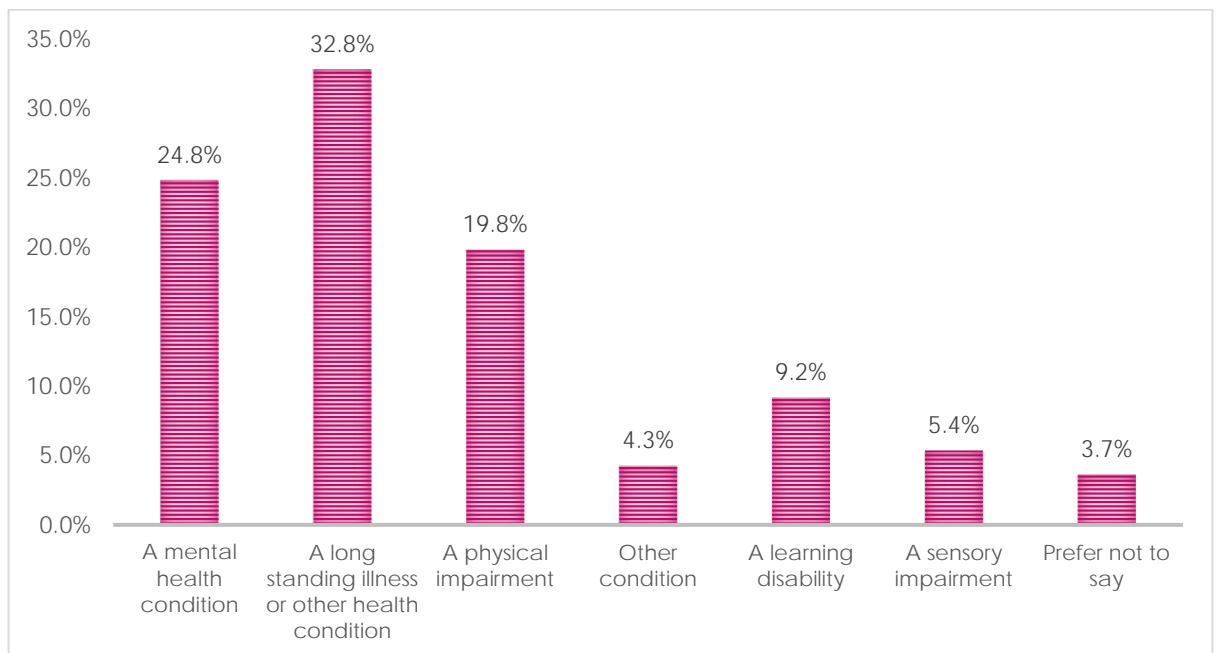


WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

33. **Age:** 48 was the average age of respondents, with an age range of 11 to 92 years. The age profile by band is set out in the chart below:

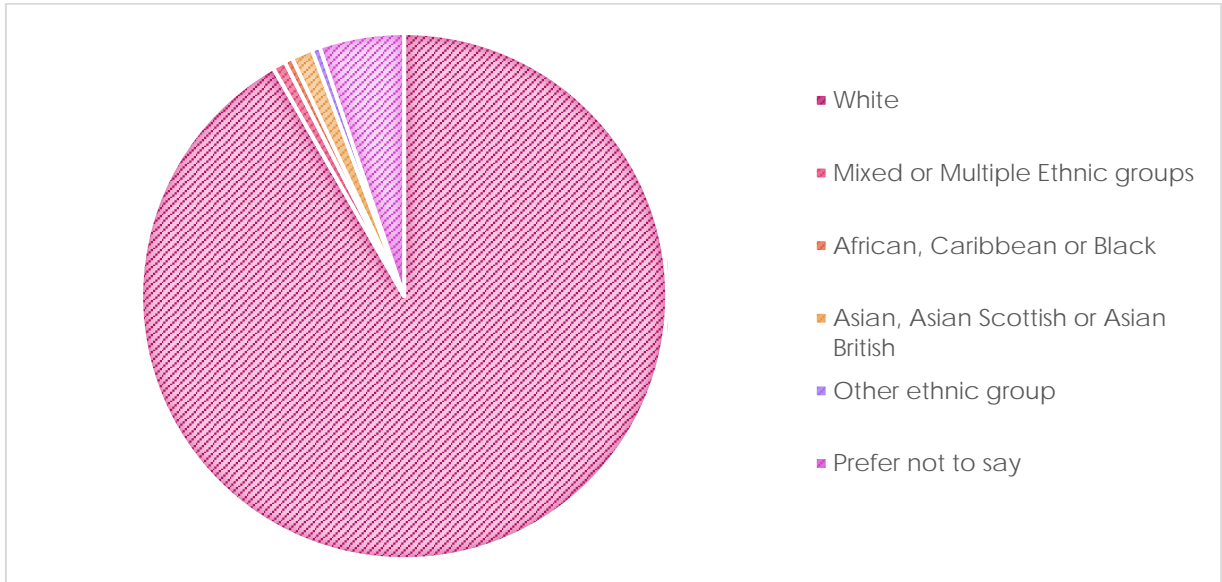


34. **Disability:** a total of 16.5% of respondents consider themselves to have a disability. Of those who identified as having a disability, some respondents elected to provide details of their condition:

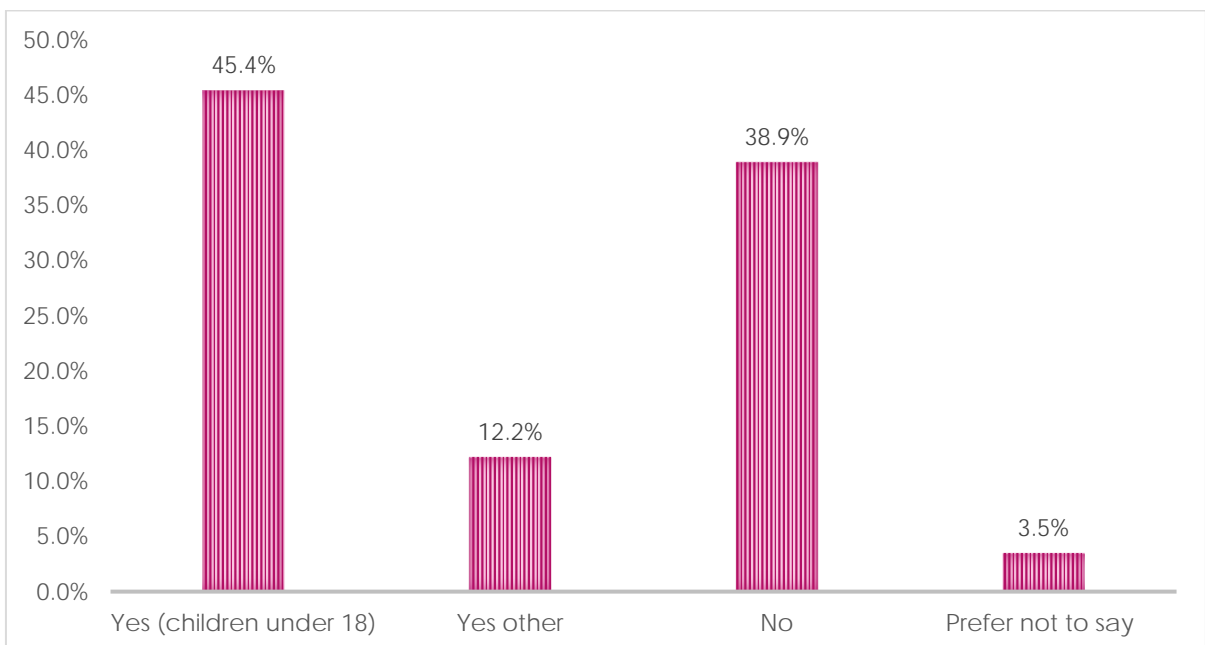


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35. **Ethnicity:** the biggest proportion of respondents were White (91.7%), with responses also from Mixed or Multiple Ethnic groups (0.8%), African, Caribbean or Black (0.5%), Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British (1.3%), Other ethnic group (0.5%) and Prefer not to say (5.2%).



36. **Caring responsibility:** over 57% of respondents to the survey have a caring responsibility.



## WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

### Towns / Village

37. The council asked respondents to tell us their town or village in their survey response. This information is intended to be used to analyse need and improvements that are required in the different towns and villages in the area.
38. 34 towns and villages in West Lothian were named by respondents. The highest proportion of respondents come from the larger settlements; 30.5% from Livingston, 16.5% from Bathgate, 8.6% from Linlithgow, 7.0% from Whitburn, 6.4% from Armadale and 5.5% from Broxburn.

Town/Village	Number of respondents	Town/Village	Number of respondents
Livingston	1,014	Pumpherstoun	24
Bathgate	549	Addiewell and Loganlea	18
Linlithgow and Bridgend	286	Longridge	13
Whitburn and East Whitburn	233	Dechmont	12
Armadale	211	Greenrigg and Harthill	12
Broxburn	182	Uphall Station	11
East Calder	106	Westfield	10
Fauldhouse	97	Torphichen	9
Winchburgh	77	Breich	4
West Calder	76	Philpstoun	4
Blackburn	75	Threemiletown	4
Uphall	66	Newton	3
Mid Calder	53	Avonbridge	1
Polbeth	36	Ecclesmachan	1
Stoneyburn and Bents	35	Strathloanhead	1
Blackridge	30	Wilkieston	1
Seafield	28	Outwith West Lothian	15
Kirknewton	25	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>3,322</b>

# Consultation – Your Community

## Purpose of the Consultation Questions about “Your Community”

39. The council wants to know which services local people value most, those that they feel contribute to making West Lothian a great place to live, learn, work and visit. With the forecast budget constraints in the years ahead, the council wants to work with the community and partners to prioritise the services that make a real difference to local people and their families.
40. With a strong commitment to continuous improvement and track record of high performance, the council is always looking for ways to make council services better. A key part of this consultation was finding out how to improve services and co-design service provision for the future with customers, partners and staff.
41. The council received thousands of comments about the things in West Lothian that make it an attractive place to live and how that may be improved.
42. There were five questions contained in this section of the consultation:
  - ▼ Question 1: What are the best parts about living in West Lothian?
  - ▼ Question 2: What parts of your community need to be improved?
  - ▼ Question 3: What are the most important issues for your community?
  - ▼ Question 4: What are the most important issues for you?
  - ▼ Question 5: Comment on the things that you feel are most important to you or your community (open text field for additional comments)
43. There were **7,352 comments** received relating to the questions in this section of the consultation.
44. Each comment has been categorised – assigned to an appropriate council service and topic – analysed and responded to by a Chief Council Officer. The information contained in this section will be used to influence and shape the development of council services, transformation proposals and the budget strategy in the next five years. A detailed breakdown can be viewed in Appendix 1.

## Question 1: What are the best parts about living in West Lothian?

45. The council asked what it is in “your community that matters most to you and how you think it can be improved”. The purpose of this question was to collate feedback that would help the council to understand local needs and preferences now and in the future.

46. The number of participants: 4,933

Attribute	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Only Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Open spaces, parks and green spaces	2,906	1,579	273	68	44	32
Shops and services	2,414	1,969	332	88	45	30
The transport links	2,548	1,714	385	105	79	52
Job opportunities	2,212	1,546	693	115	182	80
The location (e.g. proximity to major cities)	1,659	2,235	662	183	104	35
Culture and leisure	1,638	2,124	754	171	116	43
The people / community spirit	1,692	1,884	868	192	136	62
The night life	320	844	1,605	687	1,237	97

47. By aggregating those who responded “Very important” and “Important”, we can understand what people feel is best about West Lothian:

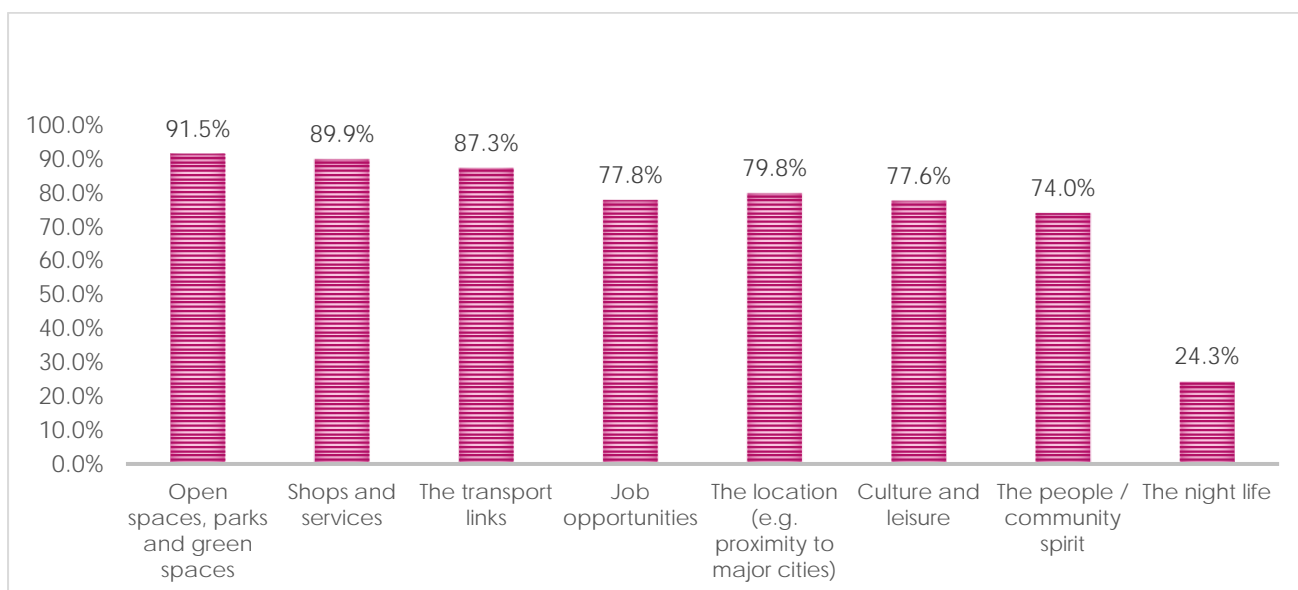


Chart: Best parts about living in West Lothian

## WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

48. Respondents also provided **961 comments** in the “Other” open text field in the consultation survey. These comments often elaborated on individual’s rating of the options in the survey question, and, alongside the data returned in survey, help our understanding of why certain aspects of community life are important to people.
49. Some respondents expanded on the preferences they had selected (from the list) and why they were important to them/their family, this includes:
- ▼ Open spaces, parks and green space: this is a common response theme to several questions in the consultation, local people greatly enjoy the open space of West Lothian and see it as important to their quality of life and the quality of life of their family.
  - ▼ Access to shops and services, including public services and schools: access was cited as one of the benefits of living in West Lothian, but also, the quality of some of those services was seen as a strength of the area.
  - ▼ Transport Links, Job Opportunities and Location, i.e. close to major cities and major towns: undoubtedly, West Lothian’s proximity to the two largest cities in Scotland has been a major draw for people moving into the area or those choosing to stay. That proximity, alongside the transport links, was seen as increasing the level of economic opportunity for local people.
50. Many respondents suggested ways that West Lothian could be improved for them/their family, this includes:
- ▼ Retention/protection of open and green space in West Lothian;
  - ▼ Growth of infrastructure and services in areas with large housing developments (Winchburgh, East Calder and Armadale, for example);
  - ▼ More affordable housing and/or a better mix of housing provision for lower income households;
  - ▼ An increase in opportunities for young people and increase in youth provision and activities out with school;
  - ▼ Improvements in the appearance (weeds, etc.) and cleanliness of communities.

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## Question 2: What parts of your community need to be improved?

51. There are always ways to improve. To help us prioritise future support and expenditure, the council asked respondents to tell us the things that communities most want to see improved in their towns and villages.

52. The number of participants: 4,818

Attribute	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Only Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Community facilities	2,480	1,751	390	62	50	24
Public transport	2,570	1,461	549	77	68	25
Access to open spaces	2,519	1,558	499	66	52	25
Availability of jobs and economic opportunities	2,141	1,848	556	75	68	46
Opportunities for learning and skills development	2,117	1,875	556	77	68	37
Shops and services	1,988	1,958	595	120	66	19
Access to culture and leisure	1,738	2,013	748	116	68	28
Digital connectivity	1,811	1,694	873	135	99	69
New housing	1,542	1,136	1,092	263	614	78

53. By aggregating those who responded "Very important" and "Important", we can understand what people feel needs improvement in their community:

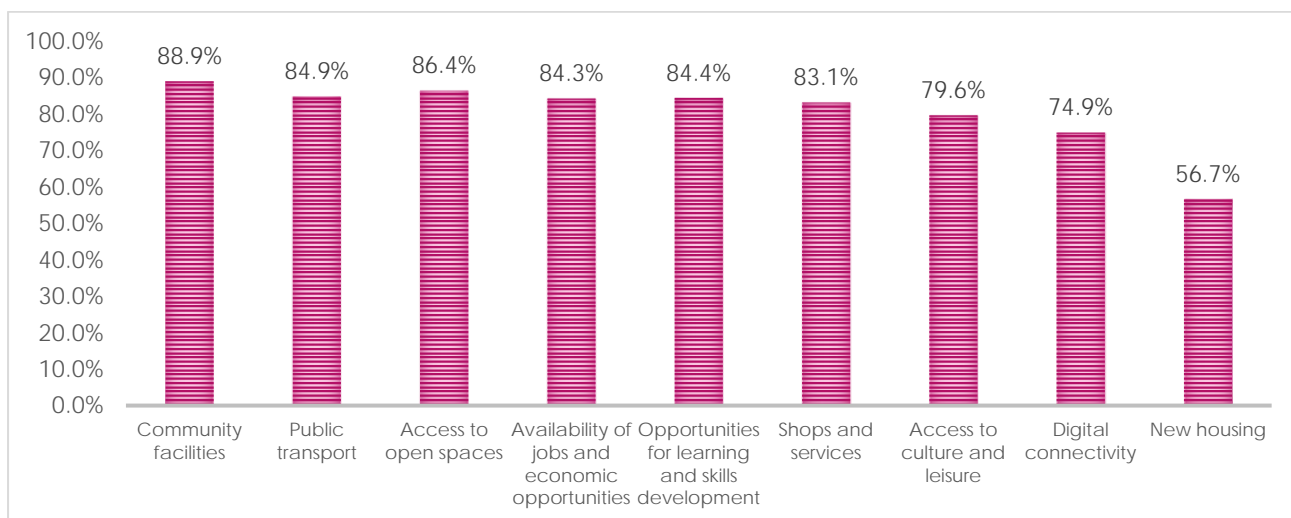


Chart: What needs to be improved in West Lothian

## WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

54. Respondents also provided **810 comments** in the “Other” open text field in the consultation survey. Again, the comments were either used by respondents to explain their choices or to state what they feel needs to be done better by the council.
55. Ceasing or reducing new housing development in order to protect the local environment (green and open space) and maintain the character of towns and villages was an issue that attracted a number of comments, but not all consistent:
- ▼ Some respondents who have moved to West Lothian or to a new development feel the infrastructure (public services, health services, transport, etc.) has not grown sufficiently to support households in certain large-scale housing developments;
  - ▼ Some respondents who identified as being born in these towns/villages felt that the developments had changed the character of their community and impacted on their access to services, e.g. GP surgeries, dentists. Also, ability to rent social housing and buy private housing was seen as a challenge for some parts of the community, more so than in past years.
56. Other suggested ways that West Lothian could be improved for respondents and their family, includes:
- ▼ Some respondents want more social and affordable housing to be built in West Lothian, including prioritising social housing developments over private housing development, and;
  - ▼ An increase in community, culture and leisure activities in the local area, with a particular focus on young people and families;
  - ▼ Improvements in the appearance and cleanliness of communities;
  - ▼ Improvements in the condition of the road network and footpaths
  - ▼ Greater access to community facilities;



## Question 3: What are the most important issues for your community?

57. The council provides a wide array of public services and works in partnership with many other public service providers to support positive outcomes for local people in relation to employability, poverty, health care and community safety. We asked respondents to the consultation to tell us what they think is most important to the community.

58. The number of participants: 4,688

Attribute	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Only Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Healthcare	3,721	773	91	5	11	20
Economy and cost of living	3,451	995	127	22	10	13
Crime and community safety	3,117	1,119	254	46	23	33
Education and schools	2,984	1,044	378	51	85	46
Pay and wages	2,765	1,294	380	39	30	71
Social care	2,589	1,441	397	42	39	64
Poverty and inequality	2,632	1,292	462	64	50	67
Housing	2,100	1,367	773	141	129	52
Unemployment	1,826	1,652	774	103	71	127
Climate change	1,657	1,459	900	223	232	80
COVID 19 recovery	1,553	1,513	941	191	265	89

59. By aggregating those who responded "Very important" and "Important", we can understand what people feel are the most important issues for the community:

## WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

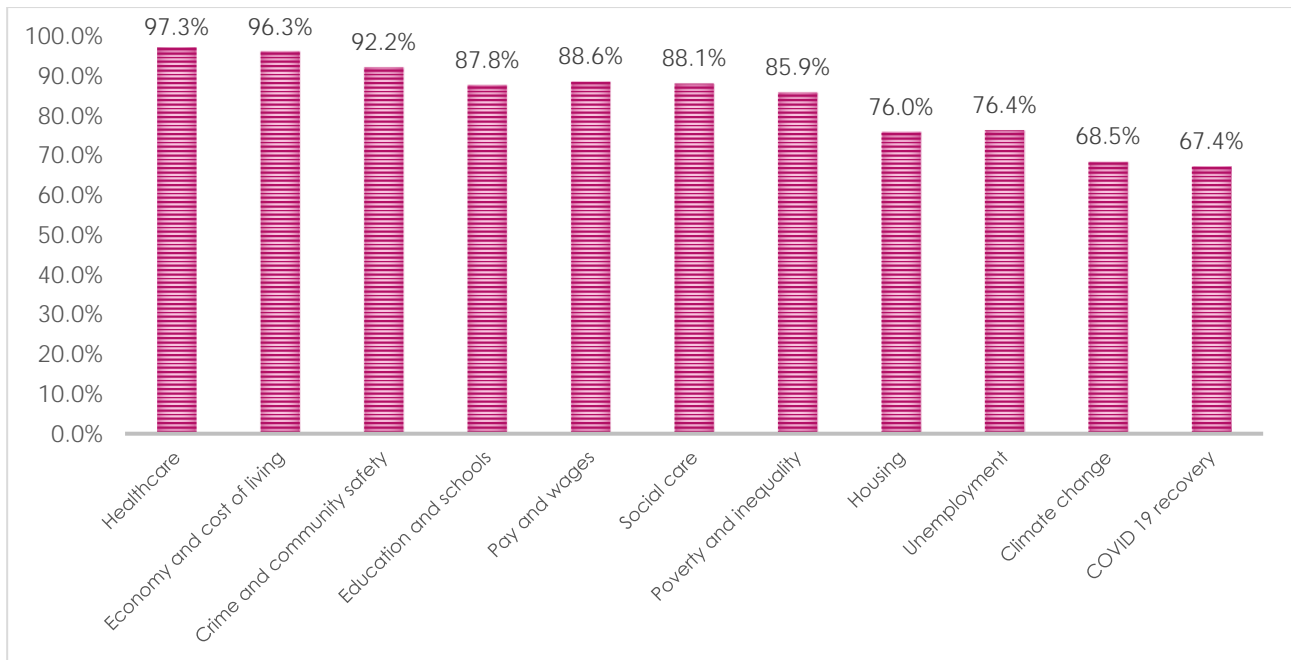


Chart: The most important issues for the community

60. Respondents also provided **435 comments** in the “Other” open text field in the consultation survey. Again, the comments were either used by respondents to explain their choices or to state what they feel needs to be done better by the council.

61. Many respondents commented on things that they felt were important in terms of improvement or expansion, this includes:

- ▼ Access to health care services, in particular GP surgeries being over-subscribed in named towns/villages (East Calder and Armadale, for example);
- ▼ The importance of schools, the curriculum and good quality learning and teaching were suggested by some respondents;
- ▼ Mitigating the Cost of Living crisis and support for low income families;
- ▼ Investment in the infrastructure and services in local towns to improve living standards for local people;
- ▼ Social care services for older and vulnerable people is seen as a priority for some sections of the community, in particular for those who access them directly or those who have a family member who access these services;
- ▼ A reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime (mainly low-level crime referenced) and greater visibility of the police in communities.

## Question 4: What are the most important issues for you?

62. In addition to what respondents think may benefit the community, the council want to know what matters most to individuals and how we can better support local people to live, learn and succeed. We provide services to every person who lives in West Lothian, from infants to older people.

63. The number of participants: 4,564

Attribute	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Only Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know
Health care	3,116	703	101	10	10	3
My mental health and wellbeing	2,928	780	177	21	26	5
My physical health	2,828	924	144	22	14	3
Paying my bills	2,881	809	160	29	42	9
My personal safety / anti-social behaviour	2,730	937	202	40	20	7
My employment	2,313	832	451	35	216	36
Social care	1,875	1,242	560	78	91	32
Public transport <sup>4</sup>	1,804	1,216	618	127	120	15
Housing affordability	1,966	933	623	86	227	24
My job prospects	1,773	1,045	671	73	242	32
My child's education	2,360	347	551	21	350	147
Climate change	1,399	1,199	802	179	257	40

64. By aggregating those who responded "Very important" and "Important", we can understand what people feel are the most important issues for individuals:

## WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

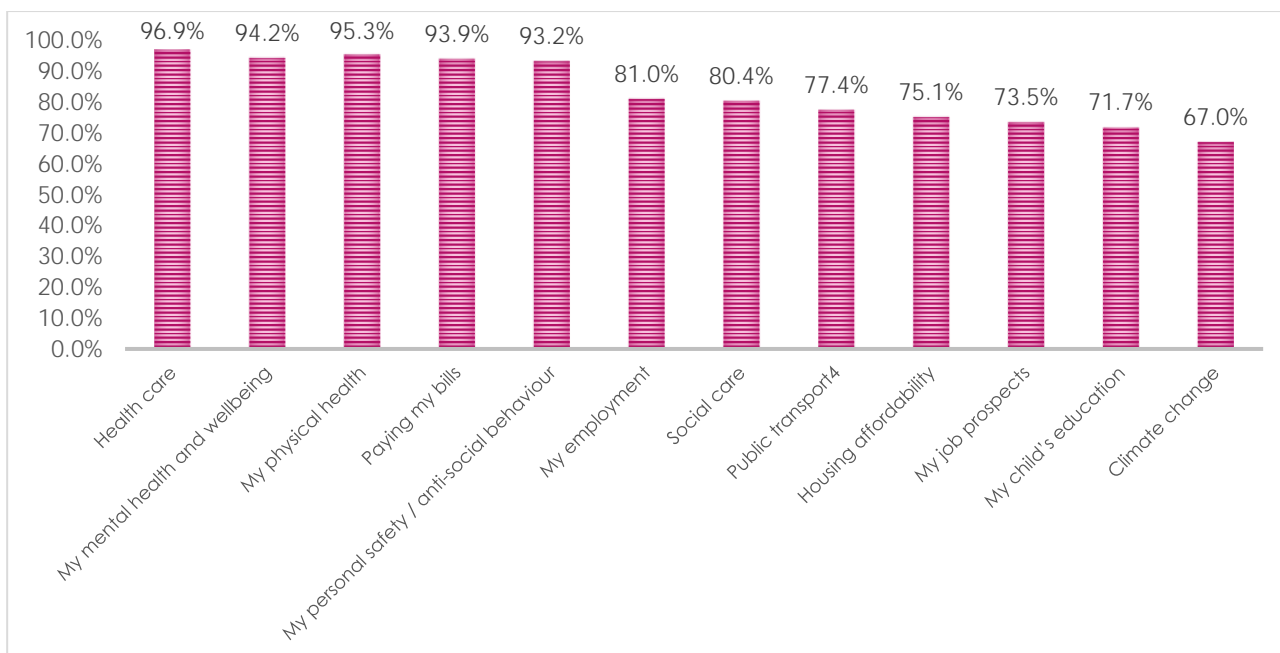


Chart: The most important issues for individuals

65. Respondents also provided **363 comments** in the "Other" open text field in the consultation survey. Again, the comments were either used by respondents to explain their choices or to state what they feel needs to be done better by the council.
66. Many respondents commented on things that they felt were important in terms of improvement or expansion and this generally replicated the things that were summarised in the previous questions (access to services, improvement or greater access to health and social care services, more investment in schools or greater access to ASN services for children and the appearance and cleanliness of local communities).
67. Also, a proportion of respondents want improvements in public transport, in particular, improvement in the reliability and availability of bus services in West Lothian and delivery of the train station in Winchburgh.
68. Some respondents want improvement in, or greater access to, health and social care services.

## Question 5: Comment on the things that you feel are most important to you or your community

69. This was an open text field at the end of the Community section of the consultation. It received a total **4,783 comments** from respondents, with people mentioning things that they think are valuable or that need to be improved:

- ▼ Education – improvements in primary and secondary schools and opportunities for children;
- ▼ Education – expansion in provision of after-school or wrap-around care to help parents;
- ▼ Education – activities for young people and youth work/facilities for young people to go to;
- ▼ Housing – access to social housing was a frustration for some respondents as was the standard and suitability of housing stock (e.g. more bedrooms needed due to over-crowding or bungalows/adapted properties);
- ▼ Community safety – reducing crime in local communities and increasing visibility of the police in towns/villages;
- ▼ Improving public transport – addressing the reliability and coverage of buses in particular;
- ▼ Street cleanliness and the appearance/maintenance of public parks and green spaces were cited as areas that required improvement by some respondents, in addition to;
- ▼ Roads condition and on-street parking in towns/villages;
- ▼ Housing developments and perceived erosion of green spaces and town/village identity due to large-scale developments was a concern for some respondents, as was community cohesion in some towns/villages – due to influx of new families;
- ▼ Some respondents felt that the infrastructure (schools, services, roads, transport network) had not grown sufficiently at pace to support development in West Lothian, with the Winchburgh train station cited as an example by some, or the lack of child care, or the “failure” to deliver partnership centres for Winchburgh and East Calder by others;
- ▼ Support for employability and good quality jobs in the local area;

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- ▼ The high street, specifically the range of shops in towns/villages with some feeling that there are too many take away outlets and not enough grocers or other types of shops;
- ▼ General access to and standard of health services, with GP surgeries in particular mentioned as a problem for some towns and villages.

# Consultation – Council Commitments and Priorities

## Purpose of the Consultation Questions about “Council Commitments and Priorities”

70. We already know that many local people are experiencing real financial hardship due to the national Cost of Living crisis. Many household budgets are being stretched beyond their limits due to the increasing cost of food and energy, for example, while household income is not increasing at the same rate. We also know that this impacts more on the most vulnerable in our community and will result in an increased demand for support from public services, including services provided by the Council.
71. The council has a similar challenge to many of those households throughout West Lothian. Unfortunately, there will be tough decisions ahead but we have a great deal of experience of successfully finding ways to reduce costs whilst protecting the most vital frontline services.
72. Our approach to balancing council budgets has been aided by regular and wide-reaching consultations with the community, which have generated huge response in the past. In recognition of the success of that approach, we again asked local people to take part in shaping the future of West Lothian and services.
73. We asked people to help us set our priorities and proposed some change principles that will help us to develop our transformation programme and budget strategy for the next five years.
74. There were eight questions contained in this section of the consultation:
  - ▼ Question 6: Comment on the three proposed Commitments (Connect ► Empower ► Deliver)
  - ▼ Question 7: Are our 8 Priorities still right for West Lothian?
  - ▼ Question 8: Rank our 8 Priorities in order of importance
  - ▼ Question 9: To reduce council costs, what should we change?
  - ▼ Question 10: Are there any services that the Council charges for that you think should be increased?

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- ▼ Question 11: Digital Services – to reduce council costs, what should we change
- ▼ Question 12: Changes to the Council (comment on our approach)
- ▼ Question 13: What is your preferred way of engaging with the Council?

75. There were **6,652 comments** received relating to the questions in this section of the consultation.

76. Each comment has been categorised – assigned to an appropriate council service and topic – analysed and responded to by a Chief Council Officer. The information contained in this section will be used to influence and shape the development of council services, transformation proposals and the budget strategy in the next five years. A detailed breakdown can be viewed in Appendix 2.



## Question 6: Comment on the three proposed Commitments (Connect ► Empower ► Deliver)

77. The council wants to work with customers, staff and partners to make services better. As a starting point for doing this, the council proposed three commitments for consultation:



Figure: The proposed Council Commitments

78. We believe that these are the right commitments for West Lothian but asked for comments in the consultation.

79. Respondents provided **1,405 comments** in the open text field in the consultation survey. A summary of the comments is contained in the list below:

- ▼ Many respondents feel that these are good commitments;
- ▼ Some respondents feel that the commitments are not meaningful as the council lacks intention to act on them;
- ▼ Some respondents feel that action – Delivery – was the most important thing for the council to focus upon;
- ▼ Some respondents feel that the council needs to improve our approach to engagement with the community;
- ▼ Some respondents felt that the council needs to improve our approach to empowerment for the community and/or staff.

## Question 7: Council Priorities – Are Our 8 Priorities Still Right for West Lothian?

80. The council re-committed to eight ambitious priorities following a large public consultation in 2017/18. We believe these priorities will continue to support improvement in the quality of life for everyone living, working and learning in West Lothian and will be the focus for council services, resources and staff in the next five years. However, we asked consultation respondents tell us if these should remain the priorities, or what or priorities should now be.



Figure: The Council Priorities (2012 to 2022)

81. 3,679 respondents, when asked if these eight were still the correct priorities for West Lothian:

- ▼ 87.0% responded YES
- ▼ 13.0% responded NO

## Question 8: Council Priorities – Rank Our Priorities

82. When asked to rank the priorities, 3,621 people ordered them from 1 to 8, with 1 being the highest and 8 the lowest:

83. The number of participants: 3,627

	Priority	Score	Ranking
1	Improving attainment and positive destinations for school children	21,403	No change
2	Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality	19,805	+1
3	Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years	18,663	-1
4	Improving the quality of life for older people	16,454	No change
5	Delivering positive outcomes on health	16,077	+1
6	Improving the employment position in West Lothian	14,604	-1
7	Reducing crime and improving community safety	13,706	No change
8	Protecting the built and natural environment	9,651	No change

84. Respondents provided **926 comments** in the open text field. A summary of the comments:

- ▼ A good proportion of the respondents who commented stated that they feel these continue to be the right priorities for West Lothian;
- ▼ A number of respondents disagreed with ranking the priorities and feel it forces people to choose between priorities that they view as equally important or interlinked/interdependent;
- ▼ A number of respondents feel that Housing and Homelessness should be named as a priority for the council;
- ▼ Some respondents feel that the focus on improving the quality of life and positive outcomes should be for all, as opposed to older people or young people, specifically;
- ▼ A small proportion of respondents commented that they found the ranking tool in the online survey difficult to use – this was investigated

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and no technical fault found. Though the use of the ranking tool will be considered for future consultations.

- Some respondents commented that the priorities are not meaningful as they do not contain enough information about what the council intends to achieve or how it will be measured.

## Question 9: to reduce council costs, what should we change?

85. Long-term spending public spending restraint requires the council to make efficiencies. Further funding constraints and increasing costs mean that the council will soon have to make decisions about service provision and how the remaining available funds are spent. Some options or principles for change were provided as part of the consultation.

86. The number of participants: 3,806

Attribute	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
Sell some Council properties and assets to reinvest in services	1,112	1,531	577	282	150	91
Close some buildings that have low usage in order to maintain others	968	1,696	597	273	125	87
Empower local groups and communities to deliver some services	890	1,744	626	255	141	70
Help people help themselves so that they have less reliance on public services	1,027	1,508	631	327	179	71
Review what we charge for services	1,072	1,392	662	379	164	75
Reduce funding and subsidies to other organisations	630	1,084	981	580	270	176
Change or reduce opening hours for some services	355	1,411	913	655	271	106
Reduce or stop delivering some services	228	584	957	1,169	597	169

87. For an approach to reducing costs, the strongest support was for; (1) Sell some Council properties and assets (2) Close some buildings that have low usage and (3) Empower local groups and communities to deliver some services – see below:

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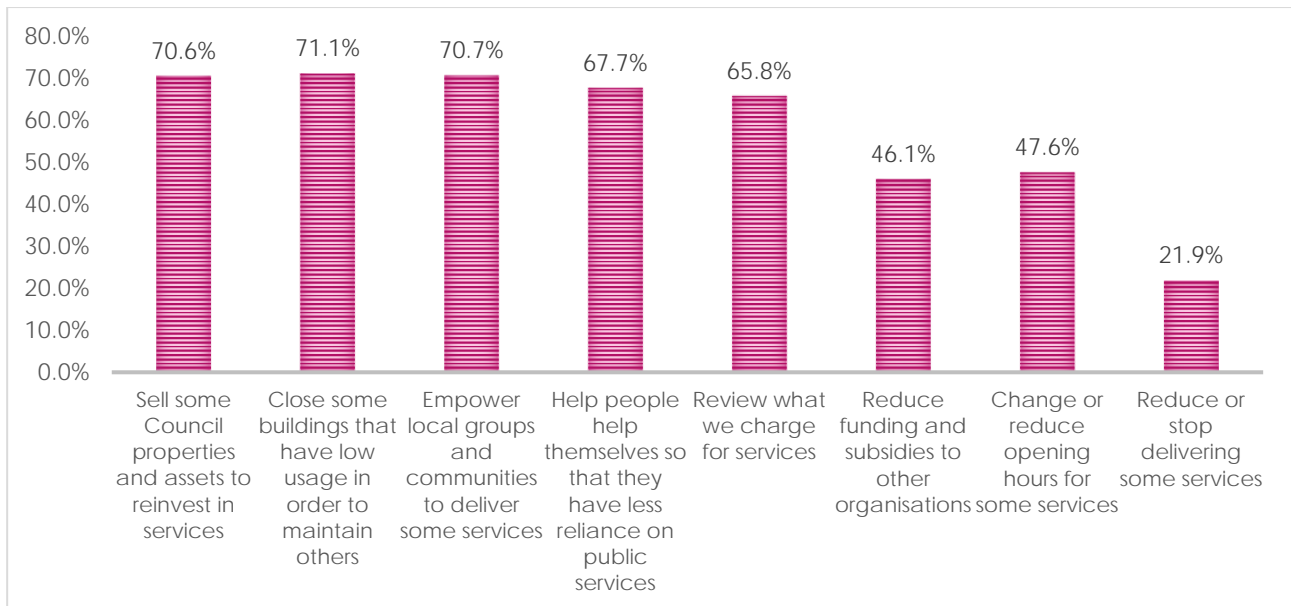


Chart: Reducing council costs

88. Respondents provided **944 comments** in the open text field. A summary of the comments:

- ▼ Some respondents commented that there was insufficient information on these measures and wanted more detail on what services or facilities would change, reduce or cease/close.
- ▼ Some respondents commented feel that these measures would have a negative impact on the council priorities.
- ▼ Some respondents commented that any increase in charges or council tax while, at the same time cutting provision, is incompatible and unfair to tax payers.
- ▼ Cost of Living increases and the burden on households were cited as reasons that the council should not increase charges.

## Question 10: Are there any services that the Council charges for that you think should be increased?

89. Respondents provided **1,052 comments** in an open text field, a summary of the comments are as follows:

- ▼ A proportion of respondents stated that they were not aware of what the council charges for and therefore did not feel they could answer this question.
- ▼ Again, Cost of Living was cited as a reason that the council should not increase charges.
- ▼ Some disparate suggestions for increasing or introducing charges, such as; fines for littering and dog fouling, licensing and planning processes charges, costs for after/wrap around care, introducing car park charges
- ▼ Some respondents feel that the introduction of charges for bulky uplifts has resulted in increased fly tipping and was an example of how charging had a negative impact on the wider community/standard of service.
- ▼ Some respondents commented feel that these measures would have a negative impact on the council priorities.

## Question 11: Digital Services – to reduce council costs, what should we change

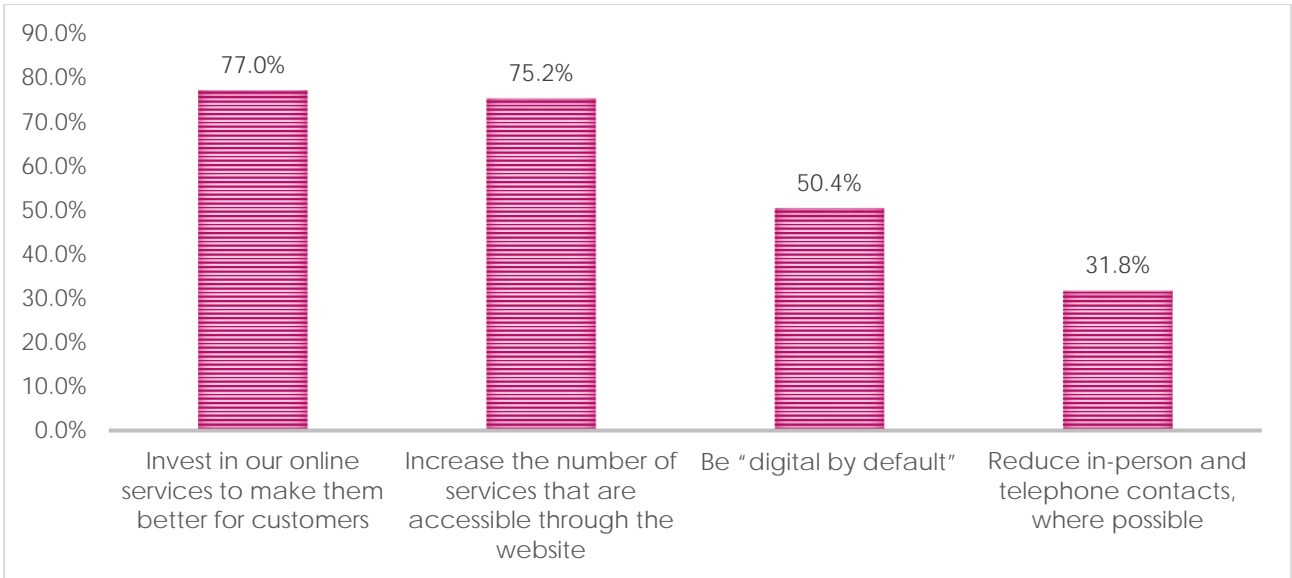
90. Increasingly, people are choosing to connect and transact with service providers online. This is often cheaper and more convenient for customers. A large number of council services can be accessed online and many processes can be completed entirely through digital means. This is often the preferred way to access council services.
91. The council set out some options in the consultation for how we may continue to support digital service provision moving forward and asked respondents to rate them.
92. The number of participants: 3,704

Attribute	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't Know
Invest in our online services to make them better for customers	1,052	1,373	451	154	78	41
Increase the number of services that are accessible through the website	1,000	1,366	414	225	103	38
Be "digital by default"	662	920	630	612	248	70
Reduce in-person and telephone contacts, where possible	386	620	626	935	559	37

93. For an approach to reducing costs and improving digital options the strongest support is for; (1) Invest in our online services and (2) Increase the number of services that are accessible through the website.



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94. Respondents provided **1,140 comments** in the open text field. A summary of the comments:

- ▼ Overwhelmingly, the most common response was that older people and some vulnerable people would be disadvantaged by "digital by default" council services and that in-person and telephone contact needs to be maintained.
- ▼ There is support for digital services though, so long as the option for customers to "speak to a person" remains.
- ▼ Some respondents feel that the council website needs improvement to support greater digitalisation and improved access to services/information.

## Question 12: Changes to the Council (comment on our approach)

95. We are working to make the council a more efficient organisation. Steps have already been taken to improve service delivery and reduce costs. In the consultation, some of the actions taken so far were provided for comment, such as:

- ✓ Review structures to make management efficiencies
- ✓ Digitalise internal processes to reduce costs
- ✓ Invest in technologies to automate some council processes
- ✓ Reduce the number of operational buildings
- ✓ Increase hybrid and flexible working arrangements for staff
- ✓ Invest in electric vehicles to reduce operating costs

96. Respondents provided **1,185 comments** in the open text field on the approach taken so far and other things that they believe we should be doing to become more efficient. A summary of the comments:

- ▼ Changes to council employees' terms and conditions, including rates of pay and overtime and offering redundancy to reduce staffing levels;
- ▼ Changes to the council structure, streamlining departments and management reductions;
- ▼ Changes to council governance and procedures to empower staff/customers and reduce bureaucracy;
- ▼ Increase hybrid working to reduce operating costs;
- ▼ Decrease or remove hybrid working to improve staff productivity;
- ▼ Increase staff productivity through improved management or changing sickness absence policy/pay;
- ▼ Some respondents agreed that the council was taking the right steps with the measures that had been outlined in the consultation.

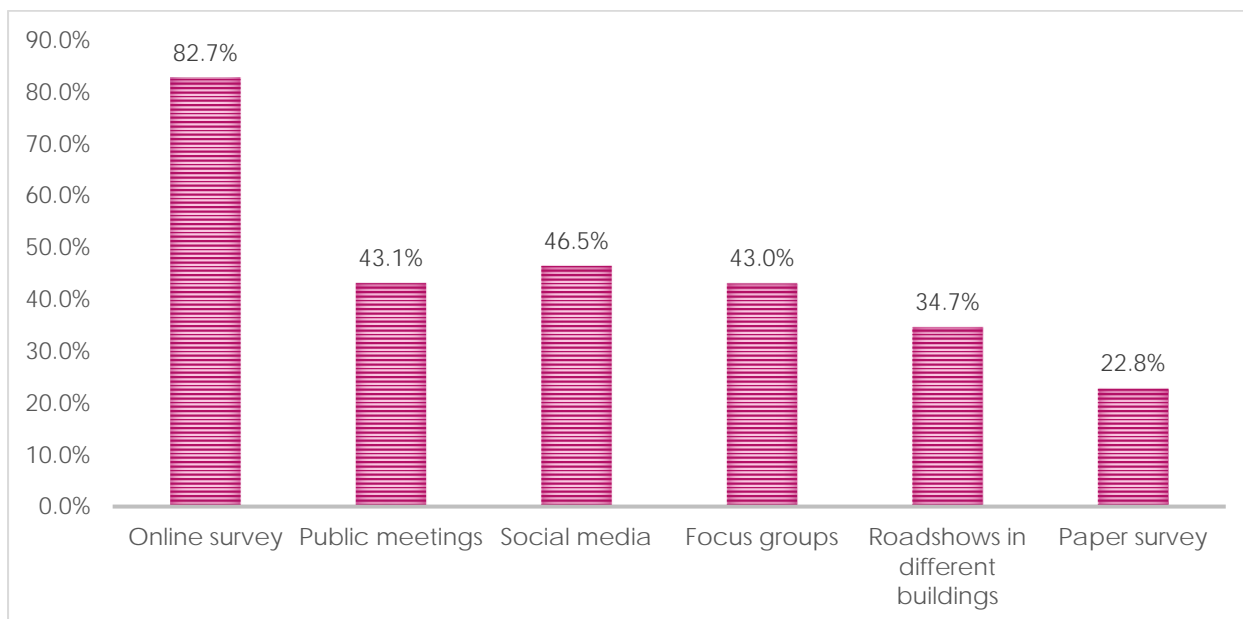
## Question 13: What is your preferred way of engaging with the Council?

97. This consultation is the first of three engagements that the council is undertaking to set future priorities and address the funding challenges in the next five years. As such, we wanted to know peoples' preferred way of engaging with the council and set out some options for consideration.

98. Number of participants: 3,640

Attribute	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Online survey	1,303	1,242	320	107	89	17
Public meetings	328	957	945	460	259	32
Social media	415	960	688	510	357	30
Focus groups	259	1,009	982	398	235	63
Roadshows in different buildings	202	820	1,029	524	300	74
Paper survey	179	486	682	809	741	26

99. In terms of engagement, this mirrors the way that people typically prefer to access and respond to council consultations with the strongest support for online surveys.



## Next Steps

100. The council will continue to analyse the detailed comments provided in the consultation and use this information to shape future plans and services, including the new Corporate Plan 2023/25 for the council, due to be considered and approved in February 2023.
101. The next consultation will take place in October 2022 on budget reduction proposals for the next three years (2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26). At the same time the council will be seeking views on Council Tax, which is used to help fund local services.
102. The comments and ratings provided through this consultation will be used as a valuable source of information for council officers and elected members in the next few years. More immediately, we will:
  - ▼ Use the ratings and comments about the things in West Lothian that are important to the community and/or need to be improved to influence service design and delivery and resource prioritisation;
  - ▼ Use the comments on the proposed council commitments to re-develop the council's values, appraisal process and performance management system to ensure that they are embedded in the delivery of our services and actions of staff;
  - ▼ Use the ratings and comments on the existing council priorities to refresh our priorities for the next five years and develop our next Corporate Plan (2023 to 2028);
  - ▼ Use the ratings and comments on options for cost reductions to develop the council transformation proposals (subject to consultation in Phase 2 – October 2022) for the next five years;
  - ▼ Use the ratings and comments on digital services to shape our next Customer Strategy and digital transformation proposals for the next five years;
  - ▼ Use the ratings and comments on engagement options to shape the next phases of this consultation programme.
103. The council will also share the feedback and suggestions that relate to other organisations with the appropriate partners, for example, NHS Lothian and Police Scotland.

# Appendix 1

## Your Community – Consultation Analysis

**Each of the comments was reviewed and responded to by one of the council's Chief Officers. A breakdown of the responses is set out below:**

1. The respondent feels that this is important to them/their community
2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal.
3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make.
4. The council is already doing this.
- 5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work.
- 5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit.
- 5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities.
- 5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed.
6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.
7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.
8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisations.
9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question.

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Summary Analysis for “Your Community” Section of the Consultation

Each comment has been categorised – assigned to an appropriate council service and topic – analysed and responded to by a Chief Council Officer. The information contained in this section will be used to influence and shape the development of council services, transformation proposals and the budget strategy in the next five years.

Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Public transport	17			553		4			12	4	53		643
Education, schools, curriculum, attainment and positive destinations	488	5	1	78	4	14	3	6	24	5	7		635
Open spaces, play areas and parks	136	5	2	401	2	7	1	20	14	3	3	1	595
Planning, infrastructure, community building and services	95	60	1	16	25	2			62	2	286	1	550
GPs, dentists and other health services				19							516		535
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	7		2	382	2				10	11	113		527
Availability/affordability of social housing (including rent)	7	1		219	18			1	4	29	8	9	296
Community engagement, community spirit & Community Wealth Building	177	22		4	4	2		1	54	1	14		279
Employability and jobs	209		1	2					23		22		257

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Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Youth and community activities	16	1		160		1	2	2	33	4	6	1	226
Cost of living and support for lower income families	2		1	170		1	1		6	1	30		212
Social services for older and vulnerable people				174				4	15	2	16		211
Affordable housing (private sector)	18	10	2	38	1				12	1	126		208
Roads, street lighting, footpaths and parking	3			127	1	14	3	1	3	18	17		187
Culture and leisure	41	2		96		8		5	15	7	9		183
Support for business	10	3		8	1				29	1	84		136
Community facilities and customer services	23		1	66					31	5	2	3	131
Roads and parking	3		1	94		5			5	15	6		129
Litter and street cleansing	2	1	1	110	1	1		4	5	3			128
Police, fire and other partners										3	120		123
Green space (planning and development)	26	24		1	1		2		53	1	9		117
Bins, recycling and bulky uplifts	4	6		53		3	10	3	5	15	3	1	103

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Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Mental health services				51					4		43		98
Climate change and energy efficiency	2	7	1	45		1	5		25	3	1		90
Council housing stock condition and repairs	4			56		1			2	20			83
Active travel (cycling and walking, etc.)	3			41		3				3	1		51
Council priorities and budgeting	3		1	25	6				8	2	5		50
Additional Support Needs (Education)	10			31			6			1			48
Comment on the survey	5		9							3		30	47
Council staff – terms and conditions	2			8	1			1	14	3	15		44
Council priorities	24	1	5	1	1				8		1	1	42
Properties and facilities				10		5	1		16	1	4		37
Wrap around care	1			4		2			7		22		36
Early Years education and support	17			9	4		1		1	1	1		34
Equalities and inclusion	5			4					15	4	3		31



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Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Council Tax and charges		1		6	3	4	1		3		11	1	30
Council governance and decision making	3	3		9					3	9	2		29
Health and wellbeing	1			10					3	1	13		28
Benefits	1			10					2		11		24
Community empowerment and the third sector	11	4		2					9				26
Licensing and events	1				1				7	2	8		19
Council facilities and opening hours	2			8					5	2			17
Digital Transformation - accessibility and digital services	7	6							2				15
Council buildings and opening hours				4			1		5		3		13
Council staff – training and performance	3			4				1	2				10
Council website and social media	2								7	1			10
Operational Services – staffing				2						3			5

WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Council procurement				2					1	1			4
Criminal and youth justice				1							3		4
Council structure				2						1			3
Reduce funding and grants				1					2				3
Council fleet, including electric vehicles				3									3
Transformation – service review and re-design									3				3
Regulatory services									1			1	2
School meals											1		1
Transformation programme & approach									1				1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,391</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3,120</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>1,598</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>7,352</b>

# Appendix 2

## Council Commitments and Priorities – Consultation Analysis

**Each of the comments was reviewed and responded to by one of the council's Chief Officers. A breakdown of the responses is set out below:**

1. The respondent advised that they agree with the proposal.
2. The respondent advised that they either did not agree or did not believe the council should consider the proposal.
3. The respondent advised that they had no comment to make.
4. The council is already doing this.
- 5a. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because the council is required by law to deliver this work.
- 5b. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is likely that the costs of this proposal would outweigh the benefit.
- 5c. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it is not consistent with the council's values and priorities.
- 5d. It is proposed that this suggestion is not taken forward because it has been previously considered and will not be progressed.
6. The respondent suggested an improvement. Officers will consider how this could be developed.
7. The respondent's comment was either not relevant to the question, inappropriate and/or contained personal and sensitive information.
8. This suggestion is out with the responsibility of West Lothian Council. Where relevant, we will forward these comments to our partner organisations.
9. The respondent made a comment on the survey question

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Summary Analysis for “Council Commitments and Priorities” Section of the Consultation

Each comment has been categorised – assigned to an appropriate council service and topic – analysed and responded to by a Chief Council Officer. The information contained in this section will be used to influence and shape the development of council services, transformation proposals and the budget strategy in the next five years.

Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Digital Transformation – accessibility and digital services	292	596	8	139					100	38	1	4	1,178
Council Tax and charges	62	406	96	50	21	18	1	2	110	4	54		824
Council commitments	436	58	23	50			3	1	67	30	6	42	716
Council priorities	199	30	6	4			1	1	57	11	1	24	334
Bins, recycling and bulky uplifts	1	4	1	45	2	6	25	56	44	41	2		227
Council priorities and budgeting	9	5	15	88	21	1	2		38	5	16	3	203
Council staff – terms and conditions	8	4		81	8	18	10	5	29	14	23	2	202
Community engagement, community spirit & Community Wealth Building	85	19		8			1		81	5	2	1	202

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Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Education, schools, curriculum, attainment and positive destinations	47	9		41	4	8	8	9	12	16	15		169
Council structure	4	13		104		5	2		8	8	3	1	148
Comment on the survey	11	2	38	4					4	2		80	141
Open spaces, play areas and parks	11	2		81		3	1	6	10	6	8		128
Community facilities and customer services	5	16	1	47	1	2	1		29	13		3	118
Social services for older and vulnerable people	1	1		83		1		2	24		6		118
Availability/affordability of social housing (including rent)	2	3		56	5	1	2		16	11	15	2	113
Council buildings and opening hours	7	4	8	6		15			71				111
Council fleet, including electric vehicles	57			20	4	6	18			105			
Council governance and decision making	16	4	2	22		1		1	18	22	12	1	99
Community empowerment and the third sector	62	29		3			4		24			1	123

WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Transformation programme & approach	16	26	18	3					32	1	1		97
Public transport	1			56	1	1	2		21	1	7	1	91
Council staff – training and performance	4			49					14	9		1	77
Cost of living and support for lower income families	1	5	1	49	2				7		10		75
Roads, street lighting, footpaths and parking	1		31			3	1	5	24	7		72	
Planning, infrastructure, community building and services	13	10	1	3	7	1	1		12	3	21		72
Properties and facilities	1	2		10		5			45	1	1		65
Climate change and energy efficiency	1	4	1	26		1	1		28		2		64
Council housing stock condition and repairs	1		39	3				8	5	2	3	61	
GPs, dentists and other health services	1	1		3					3		53		61
Employability and jobs	27	6		2					11		9		55

WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	6	3		20	1	1			4	2	11		48
Litter and street cleansing	1		29		3		3	6	1	1		44	
Roads and parking		23	1		2	1		8	3		38		
Transformation – service review and re-design	2								33	1	2		38
Culture and leisure	6	2		12		2	2	2	2	1	8		37
Police, fire and other partners	2			1			2		1	1	30		37
Youth and community activities	2	17			2	1	6	1			29		
Early Years education and support	3	1		6	9				7		2		28
Council website and social media	2	2					1		22				27
Mental health services		16					6		5		27		
Reduce funding and grants	3	2	6	1	1			9		1		23	
Affordable housing (private sector)	1		1	6					4	2	8		22
Additional Support Needs (Education)	3	1		9			5			2			20

WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Benefits			2					1	1	16		20	
Council facilities and opening hours	2	3		6					7	1			19
Green space (planning and development)	3			1			2	10		2		18	
Operational Services – staffing		9		1			3	3			16		
Active travel (cycling and walking, etc.)	6			3		2	2	2		15			
Support for business	2			1					7	1	4		15
Licensing and events		8					2		2		12		
Council procurement				6				3	1	1		11	
Health and wellbeing		3		1		1	2		2	1	10		
Wrap around care			2			1		1		4		8	
Planning charges									6		1		7
Equalities and inclusion		3					2	1			6		
Regulatory services	2				1			1		2		6	



WL2028 – Your Council, Your Say

Categorisation	1	2	3	4	5a	5b	5c	5d	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
Social Policy – charging	2						4					6	
Transformation – income and charging							6				6		
Criminal and youth justice									4		4		
Transformation – benchmarking and innovation	1					3				4			
School meals							2				2		
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,352</b>	<b>1,284</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>1,426</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>1,092</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>6,652</b>