

West Lothian Local Development Plan 2 Evidence Report

Schedule	16. Play, Recreation and Sport
<p>Information required by the Act and NPF4 regarding the issue addressed in this section</p>	<p>Town and Country Planning (Scotland) (Act) 1997, as amended:</p> <p>Section 16D(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a planning authority must assess the sufficiency of play opportunities in its area for children in preparing an Evidence Report. <p>The Town and Country Planning (Play Sufficiency Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 set out the form and content of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA); the persons who must be consulted in preparing the PSA; and the publication of the PSA.</p> <p>Regulation 9 Have regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any open space strategy <p>Other statutory requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forestry and Woodland Strategy <p>National Planning Framework 4 (adopted 13 February 2023)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy 21 - LDPs should identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages. This should be based on an understanding of the needs and demand in the community and informed by the planning authority’s Play Sufficiency Assessment and Open Space Strategy. These spaces can be incorporated as part of enhancing and expanding blue and green infrastructure, taking account of relevant agencies’ plans or policy frameworks, such as flood risk and/or water management plans. New provisions should be well-designed, high quality, accessible and inclusive. <p>This schedule aims not to repeat the content of other topics covered by the LDP2 Evidence Report. Other schedules which should be read alongside this schedule on Play, Recreation and Sport are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue and Green Infrastructure and Open Space Local Living
<p>Links to Evidence referenced in this schedule</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Lothian Council, West Lothian Open Space Plan 2020 - 2024 Sports Scotland – Facility Planning Model; halls, pools and synthetic grass pitches for West Lothian. 2023 National run Extract West Lothian council - Play Sufficiency Assessment Scottish Government, Active Scotland Delivery Plan West Lothian Council; Food Growing Strategy 2020 - 2025

Summary of Evidence

Purpose, scope and structure of this schedule

This schedule focuses on x within West Lothian. The schedule and its evidence are set out in the following sections:

1. Part 1 – Open Space
2. Part 2 – West Lothian Play Sufficiency Assessment

Part 1 – Open Space

- 1.1 The **West Lothian Open Space Plan 2020 – 2024** is a strategic overview for the provision, development, regeneration and management of Open Space within West Lothian. It also provides clear standards for assessing the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces, helping us to identify areas where open spaces are in good supply, where they are needed and where the quality of the open spaces offered needs to be improved. The Open Space Plan 2020-24 brings together information on urban parks, play areas, food growing, sports facilities, public arts, country parks, trees and woodlands, cemeteries, biodiversity/geodiversity sites, green and blue networks and the core path network.
- 1.2 The open space database can be used to create a summary of active open space provision and standards for each of West Lothian's settlements. This is a useful tool in considering the impact of new developments and in identifying priorities for new investment.
- 1.3 The plan contains a settlement review. This provides a simple spreadsheet and text that provide a summary of each settlement's open space provision, and its performance in relation to the quality, quantity, and accessibility standards. This is a useful tool in considering the impact of new developments and in identifying priorities for new investment.
- 1.4 Quantity is measured as the amount of open space available per one thousand people. West Lothian adopts the Fields in Trust recommend minimum standard of 6 acres (2.4 hectares) for 1,000 people. Quality is measured by individual site survey score, with the survey reflecting the full range of open space benefits. In summary, each site is given an overall score out of 75. A site with a score of 40 or above is considered 'fit for purpose' i.e. meeting minimum standard.
- 1.5 Accessibility is measured as distance to open space. The broad principle is that people should be close to at least some type of active open space, while it is reasonable that they may have to travel longer distances to reach larger, less abundant open space with more facilities, particularly if they live in small settlements or in the countryside. The 500m maximum distance that applies to play areas and Local Parks equates to roughly a 5 minute walk/2 minute cycle. It should be noted (for the purposes of the settlement review) that 'Playspaces' are play areas that are out with formal parks. In general all Local, Neighbourhood, District, and Country Parks also contain play areas.

Table 1 – Park Hierarchy, Accessible Woodland, and Play Area Hierarchy and Typical Features

Park Type	Feature
Country Park	Visitor Centre (including facilities)
	Ranger Service
	Unique facilities / attractions
	Offers diverse recreational use
	Offers diversity of habitat / landscape
	Offers signage / interpretation
	Provision of paths / access including waymarked routes
	Public transport connections
	Car park provision
	Country Park management
District Park	Offer diverse recreation use
	Offer facility for formal / informal sport
	Offer diversity of habitat / landscape
	Provide toilet facilities
	Provide changing facilities
	Provide Play Area
	Provide seating / litter bins
	Lit core path network
	Provision of paths / access
	Receives regular maintenance
	Car park provision (circa 36 spaces)
	Formal landscape features
Neighbourhood Park	Offer diverse recreational use (e.g. MUGA, Football Pitch, Fitness, MTB etc.)
	Provide Play Area (NEAP type, see below)
	Provide seating / litter bins
	Provision of paths / access
	Community event space
	Receives regular maintenance
	Formal landscape features
	Car park provision (typically 24 minimum spaces)
Local Park	Provide for limited local recreation use
	Provide Play Area (LEAP type, see below)
	Provision of paths / access
	Receives regular maintenance

Woodland Type	Feature
Accessible Woodland	Land under stands of trees, with, or with the potential to achieve tree crown cover of more than 20%
	Unrestricted open access or restricted but permissive access

Play Area Type	Feature
Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	For children 0-15
	Close to well used pedestrian route
	Well drained, reasonably flat, grass or hard surface
	At least 30m from nearest dwelling
	Sign indicating play area with contact details of operator
	Sign discouraging dogs
	Fenced if within 15m of road
	Minimum 9 unique pieces of play equipment
	Recognisable boundary
	Seating and litter bins
	Convenient and secure parking facilities for bicycles
Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	For children 0-12
	Close to well used pedestrian route
	Well drained, reasonably flat, grass or hard surface
	At least 20m from nearest dwelling
	Sign indicating play area with contact details of operator
	Sign discouraging dogs
	Fenced if within 15m of road
	Minimum 6 unique pieces of play equipment
	Recognisable boundary
	Seating and litter bins
Local Area for Play (LAP)	Primarily for under-6's
	Close to well used pedestrian route
	Well drained, reasonably flat, grass or hard surface
	At least 10m from nearest dwelling
	Sign indicating play area with contact details of operator
	Sign discouraging dogs
	Fenced if within 15m of road
	Minimum 3 unique pieces of play equipment
	Recognisable boundary

Sub-Category	Minimum Accessibility Standard	Minimum Size (Ha)	Population Guidelines
Country Park	10km	-	50,000+
District Park	4km	17 ha	10,000 to 50,000
Accessible Woodland	4km	20 ha	-
NEAP	1km	1,000m ²	-
Neighbourhood Park	1km	3 ha	2,000 to 10,000
Local Park	500m	1 ha	250 to 2,000
Accessible Woodland	500m	2 ha	-
LEAP	500m	400m ²	-
LAP	NA	100m ²	-

Table 2 Park Hierarchy Minimum Size and Accessibility Standards

- 1.6 There are over 100 formal urban parks in West Lothian. These include Local, Neighbourhood, and District Parks.
- 1.7 There are over 400 play facilities in West Lothian's parks and open spaces, catering for a range of ages and abilities. This figure includes public play areas, school play areas, facilities for wheeled sports, youth shelters, multi-use game areas (MUGAs), and kick-pitches. However, for the purposes of the Open Space Plan, play areas are all play facilities maintained by the council and publicly accessible i.e. excludes school play areas and any private play areas.
- 1.8 There are three Country Parks namely Almondell & Calderwood, Beecraigs and Polkemmet, together constituting some 597 hectares.

Open space provision in new developments

- 1.9 The Open Space Plan sets out the following, in terms of assessment of planning applications:

“When the number of proposed properties and location is known, proposed new developments of more than ten properties are systematically assessed by council Open Space Officers in relation to the open space standards, by considering the following questions:

If all questions are answered in the affirmative, or only question 3 is negative, there will be an initial presumption in favour of trying to satisfy active open space requirements through a financial contribution from the developer that will upgrade any existing facilities in the immediate locality that are not ‘fit for purpose’ i.e. off-site in another part of the settlement.

- *Will the relevant settlement continue to maintain an acceptable quantity standard with the anticipated increase in population?*
- *Are all proposed properties within accessibility standards of a play area and the various park types?*
- *Are all existing individual play areas and parks accessible from the new development fit for purpose?*

Active open space provision related to new developments may include:

- *only on-site provision of new facilities*
- *contribution to external sites within accessible distances*
- *contribution to improving overall West Lothian standards, or*
- *a combination of all three of the above features.*

Whatever the nature of the provision, the overall expenditure should directly relate to the developer financial contributions outlined in the Residential Development Guide (2018). In some cases where there is a clear understanding of the extent and features of local semi-natural open spaces or other passive open spaces, there may be investment in these spaces with agreement of all parties e.g. community woodland investment.”

- 1.10 The above shows the link between the Open Space Plan and the Residential Development Guide SG in assessing what open space provision is required for new development, including upgrading of existing open space assets through developer contributions.
- 1.11 The Open Space Plan is being refreshed by the council’s Open Space team in 2025. Any changes to the existing Open Space Plan will need to be considered in the preparation of the Proposed Plan. In addition, a Play Park Strategy is also being produced by the council’s Open Space team in 2025 and the detailed design requirements for play areas.
- 1.12 The provision of open space within new development and upgrades to and provision of links to existing open space are important, in terms of integrating new development into existing communities, and from a health and wellbeing perspective. Close liaison with the council’s Open Space will be required in the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Sports Scotland – Facility Planning Model; halls, pools and synthetic grass pitches for West Lothian. 2023 National run Extract

- 1.13 **Sportscotland** has undertaken national runs of the Facilities Planning Model (FPM) for:
1. sports halls,
 2. swimming pools and
 3. synthetic grass pitches (SGPs).
- 1.14 The FPM is a tool to provide an objective assessment of the likely demand for sports facilities. The key finding of the FPM are as follows;
- Average build dates of the three facility types are similar to the national average.
 - Courts, waterspace and full size synthetic pitches per head of population are higher than the national average.
 - All of the Council area is within the driving catchment of the facility types, not all is within a walk catchment.
 - Those living in the 10% most deprived areas have better walking accessibility for the three facility types than the Council average.
 - Most demand is met for the facility types. Unmet demand is mainly due to people without access to a car being outwith the walking catchment of a facility, but numbers are low.
 - The council is expected to be a net importer of visits to halls and pools, for full sized synthetic pitches import/export is balanced.

- Most facilities are expected to be operating with their capacity. Comparing the FPM outputs with actual throughputs is helpful for testing how comparable the demand figures are for West Lothian.

1.15 Key findings in relation to sports halls area as follows;

- Average date of build is 1993, slightly newer than the Scottish average of 1991.
- Courts per head of population (10 per 10,000) is greater than the national average of 7 per 10,000.
- All of the council area is within the drivetime of a 3-court sports hall, but not everyone can walk to one.
- More people (in percentage terms) from the 10% most deprived areas can walk to a hall (81%) than the Council average (70%). Despite this, levels of unmet demand are slightly higher in percentage terms, although overall unmet demand is low.
- Most demand is expected to be met (94% of demand). Unmet demand is mainly due to people without access to a car living outside the catchment of a hall.
- The council area is a net importer of hall visits (around 2000 a week in the peak period).
- Used capacity of halls at peak periods is predicted to vary between centres, most operate within their capacity, one is predicted to be full at peak times and 2 at a capacity of 80% or above.

Table XX - Annual Throughput & Percentage Utilised Capacity	Peak Period Hours	Annual Throughput	Percentage Utilised Capacity
Total council area		1,355,172	46
Individual Sites (projected annual th'put)			
ARMADALE ACADEMY	38	71,791	52
ARMADALE COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE	46	36,998	52
BATHGATE ACADEMY	33	31,956	25
BEATLIE SCHOOL (ASN)	33	16,238	54
BLACKBURN PARTNERSHIP CENTRE	46	71,308	100
BROXBURN ACADEMY	25	17,778	27
DEANS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	34	77,111	47
FAULDHUSE PARTNERSHIP CENTRE	45	61,176	96
INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	34	57,906	52
LINLITHGOW ACADEMY	32	49,800	63
OUR LADY OF LOURDES RC PRIMARY SCHOOL	45	44,959	71
ST KENTIGERN'S RC ACADEMY	21	15,235	28

ST MARGARET'S ACADEMY	37	36,941	41
STONEYBURN COMMUNITY CENTRE	45	20,516	32
THE JAMES YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL	40	60,786	58
WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL	37	27,855	78
WEST LOTHIAN COLLEGE	32	20,006	39
WHITBURN ACADEMY	33	39,414	39
WHITBURN COMMUNITY CENTRE	45	44,838	47
XCITE BATHGATE	46	115,281	38
XCITE BROXBURN SPORTS CENTRE	38	110,093	38
XCITE CRAIGSWOOD	46	89,076	49
XCITE EAST CALDER	37	57,911	80
XCITE LINLITHGOW LEISURE CENTRE	46	74,408	33
XCITE WINCHBURGH SPORT AND WELLBEING HUB (WINCHBURGH ACADEMY)	43	105,792	37

1.16 At council level used capacity in the peak period is predicted to be around 50%. There are variations suggested between the halls in terms of how busy they may be at peak times. Most halls are predicted to be operating with their capacity at peak times. One is predicted to be full at peak times (Blackburn partnership centre) and 2 at 80% or over capacity (Fauldhouse partnership centre and Xcite East Calder). The maximum peak period hours is 46, so some additional capacity could be created at Xcite East Calder by increasing opening times.

Swimming Pools

1.17 The data for the FPM run was finalised before the closure of pools in Livingston, Broxburn and Armadale. The data will be updated for the next national run in 2025. West Lothian has 21 swimming pools at 17 sites (this includes pools in Livingston, Broxburn and Armadale which are now closed).

Table XX- Annual Throughput & Percentage Utilised Capacity	Peak Period Hours	Annual Throughput	Percentage Utilised Capacity
Total council area		901,630	48
Individual Sites (projected annual th'put)			
ARMADALE ACADEMY	40	30,042	44
BROXBURN ACADEMY	25	12,791	38
DEANS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	40	79,834	75

FAULDHOUSE PARTNERSHIP CENTRE	47	54,711	46
INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	40	14,924	42
ST KENTIGERN'S RC ACADEMY	22	9,853	53
ST MARGARET'S ACADEMY	39	61,904	57
THE JAMES YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL	40	36,536	40
WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL	39	38,816	55
WHITBURN ACADEMY	25	13,483	32
XCITE ARMADALE SWIMMING POOL	46	70,666	40
XCITE BATHGATE	39	130,438	68
XCITE BROXBURN SWIMMING POOL	45	60,436	29
XCITE LINLITHGOW LEISURE CENTRE	47	70,746	57
XCITE LIVINGSTON POOL	46	65,056	44
XCITE WHITBURN	40	60,309	35
XCITE WINCHBURGH SPORT AND WELLBEING HUB (WINCHBURGH ACADEMY)	50	91,085	48

1.18 As noted previously, the FPM work commenced in advance of 3 of the above pools closing.

1.19 At council level used capacity in the peak period is predicted to be around 50%. There are some variations suggested between the pools, but most are predicted to have similar levels of used capacity at peak times and operating within their capacity. Key findings are;

- Average date of build is 1993, similar to the Scottish average of 1990.
- Waterspace per head of population (23sqm per 1,000) is greater than the national average of 14sqm per 1,000.
- All of the council area is within the drivetime of a pool, but not everyone can walk to one.
- More people (in percentage terms) from the 10% most deprived areas can walk to a pool (65%) than the Council average (53%) - although levels of unmet demand are similar (around 5%).
- Most demand is expected to be met (around 95% of demand). Unmet demand is mainly due to people without access to a car living outside the catchment of a pool.
- The council area is a net importer of pool visits (around 1000 a week in the peak period).
- Used capacity of pools at peak periods is predicted to vary between centres, but all are predicted to be operating within their capacity at peak times.
- The FPM work used data containing 3 pools which have since closed, which will change some of these outputs.

Synthetic Pitches

Table XX - Annual Throughput & Percentage Utilised Capacity	Surface	Annual Throughput - sharing – ie football using all pitch types	Percentage Utilised Capacity - sharing – ie football using all pitch types	Annual Throughput - not sharing – ie football using 3G only	Percentage Utilised Capacity - not sharing – ie football using 3G only
Total council area		218,322	24	228,032	25
Individual Sites (projected annual throughput)					
ALBYN PARK SPORTS GROUND / BROXBURN UNITED	3G	7,921	18	8,319	19
ARMADALE ACADEMY	3G	11,099	25	11,256	26
BANKTON MAINS PARK	3G	10,377	24	10,818	25
BATHGATE ACADEMY	3G	11,460	26	12,198	28
BATHGATE SPORTS CENTRE	3G	9,980	23	10,226	23
BROXBURN ACADEMY	3G	9,911	23	10,301	24
DEANS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	Sandbased	21,258	49	17,011	39
FAULDHOUSE PARTNERSHIP CENTRE	3G	8,250	19	8,304	19
INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL	3G	12,965	30	15,623	36
LINLITHGOW ACADEMY	Sandbased	19,242	44	18,200	42
LIVINGSTON FOOTBALL CLUB	3G	18,569	21	21,186	24
MURRAYFIELD PARK	3G	10,114	23	10,480	24
ST KENTIGERN'S RC ACADEMY	3G	10,793	25	11,146	26
ST MARGARET'S ACADEMY	3G	11,047	25	12,339	28
THE JAMES YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL	3G	9,479	22	9,860	23
WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL	3G	6,356	15	6,469	15
WHITBURN ACADEMY	3G	14,668	34	14,883	34
XCITE LINLITHGOW LEISURE CENTRE	3G	6,671	15	9,842	23
XCITE WINCHBURGH SPORT AND WELLBEING HUB (WINCHBURGH ACADEMY)	3G	8,161	9	9,572	11

1.20 At council level used capacity in the peak period is predicted to be around 20%. There are variations suggested between the pitches, but none are predicted to be full. There is minimal difference between the 2 scenarios – i.e. football using 3G surfaces only vs football using all surfaces. This is likely due to most surfaces being 3G in the council area. However, the demand information that is used is not up to date so these outputs should be treated with caution.

Key findings are as follows for synthetic pitches;

- Average date of build is 2012, the same as the Scottish average.
- Full size synthetic pitches per head of population (1.1 per 10,000) is greater than the national average of 1 per 10,000.
- All of the council area is within the drivetime of a full size synthetic pitch, but not everyone can walk to one.
- More people (as a percentage) from the 10% most deprived areas can walk to a full size synthetic pitch (61%) than the Council average (56%).
- Most demand is expected to be met (98% of demand). Unmet demand is mainly due to people without access to a car living outside the catchment of a pitch, but the overall numbers are low.
- Import and export of demand is predicted to be fairly balanced.
- Used capacity of full size synthetic pitches at peak periods is predicted to vary between sites, all are operating within their capacity at peak times.
- The survey research that was undertaken to inform the demand data used was in 2007. There has been a significant increase in the use of synthetic pitches, particularly for football, since that time. Accordingly, we recommend that the outputs for this facility type are treated with caution.

Food Growing Strategy (2020 – 2025)

1.21 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 (CEA), Part 9, Section 119 requires each local authority to prepare a food-growing strategy for its area, to identify land that may be used as allotment sites, identify other areas of land that could be used for community growing, and to describe how the authority intends to increase provision, particularly in areas which experience disadvantage. Food growing strategies must be reviewed at least once every five years. Above and beyond these legal requirements, the overall purpose of this food growing strategy is to provide a rationale, establish key processes and identify significant actions which will promote and make it easier for people in West Lothian to grow their own food, principally in community food-growing settings.

1.22 Food growing sites are identified as ‘active open space’ within the West Lothian Open Space Plan and the strategy forms an annex to the overall Open Space Plan, which also informs the Local Development Plan.

1.23 There are currently 2 council and 5 private allotment sites, 9 community growing initiatives on public lands and 3 on private land and 1 social enterprise farm. Partnership working between third sector, public sector and private sector organisations is key to providing land and also skills, training and support for community food growing.

1.24 **The barriers** to community food growing have been identified through stakeholder feedback.

Barriers associated with setting up allotments and community gardens

- a. Identifying and securing suitable land
- b. Land contamination
- c. Costs of soil testing and Planning applications
- d. Site set-up costs
- e. Vehicle access, car parking, electricity, water supply, etc.

Barriers identified by individual stakeholders (in order of number of mentions)

- f. Lack of know-how / gardening skills
- g. Lack of time
- h. Lack of allotment plots, specifically
- i. Lack of wider community support for growing
- j. Lack of volunteers to set up growing sites/ projects
- k. No garden / space to grow
- Other:
- l. Cost of buying materials, tools, etc (for individuals)
- m. Lack of confidence
- n. Lack of information on where to grow
- o. Health issues

1.25 For over half the participants in the workshops, the main barrier was a lack of a suitable growing space.

1.26 **Identifying land for growing.** Categories of council-owned land that could be used for new growing initiatives are outlined in the strategy. Priority geographic areas have been identified by mapping the spatial distribution of existing food growing opportunities and identifying where the gaps are – predominantly in the west of West Lothian. A new standard of ensuring 5 allotment plots per 1000 households is defined, based on existing provisions and current waiting lists.

1.27 **Investment required to put the strategy into practice.** Establishing new sites and supporting food growing groups will require some resource – both capital, for infrastructure set-up, and time/revenue for officers to support groups. It is anticipated that external funds will be sought to cover the majority of costs for establishing new council-owned sites, however, some council commitment is required to lever in the substantial external funding required for setting up allotment sites in particular. This would take the form of a council commitment to cover set-up costs such as soil testing, planning applications, reasonable site access, drainage and fencing for new council allotment sites.

1.28 The strategy outlines a vision for 5, 10 and 20 years;

By 2025

There are more spaces to grow; including allotments, schools, unkempt gardens, underused space, rooftops, hospitals

Horticulture and food growing are promoted as career options

Ensure that there is a food growing and food skills education programme for all, especially in schools

There is a vibrant West Lothian growing network sharing skills and learning

By 2030

There are more spaces to grow; including all housing estates, all schools, all public spaces, every village

There is an abundance of free fruit in parks, green corridors and greenspaces with people confident to pick their own and use their harvest

More local seasonal food is consumed by West Lothian residents

Food growing recognisably delivers outcomes in other policy areas such as mental health, climate change and community regeneration

By 2040

There is a cost effective, sustainable and genuinely accessible community growing space within walking distance of every household, with a true sense of community in all areas

We have a social enterprise of seasonal food boxes being delivered across West Lothian using farm and community garden produce and as a result we use less plastic packaging

All school children have basic skills in food growing - "leave school knowing how to make a pot of soup"

Community growing is taken into consideration in all aspects of council policy development

- 1.29 In terms of allotments, as a general rule the council would expect residents to be no more than 4km from their nearest allotment site in West Lothian, following the same standard as District Parks.
- 1.30 From the map below, it can be seen that there is a gap in allotment provision in the west of West Lothian around Armadale, Bathgate, Blackburn, Fauldhouse and Whitburn, with some smaller gaps around North East Livingston, Pumpherston, Uphall and South-East Livingston.

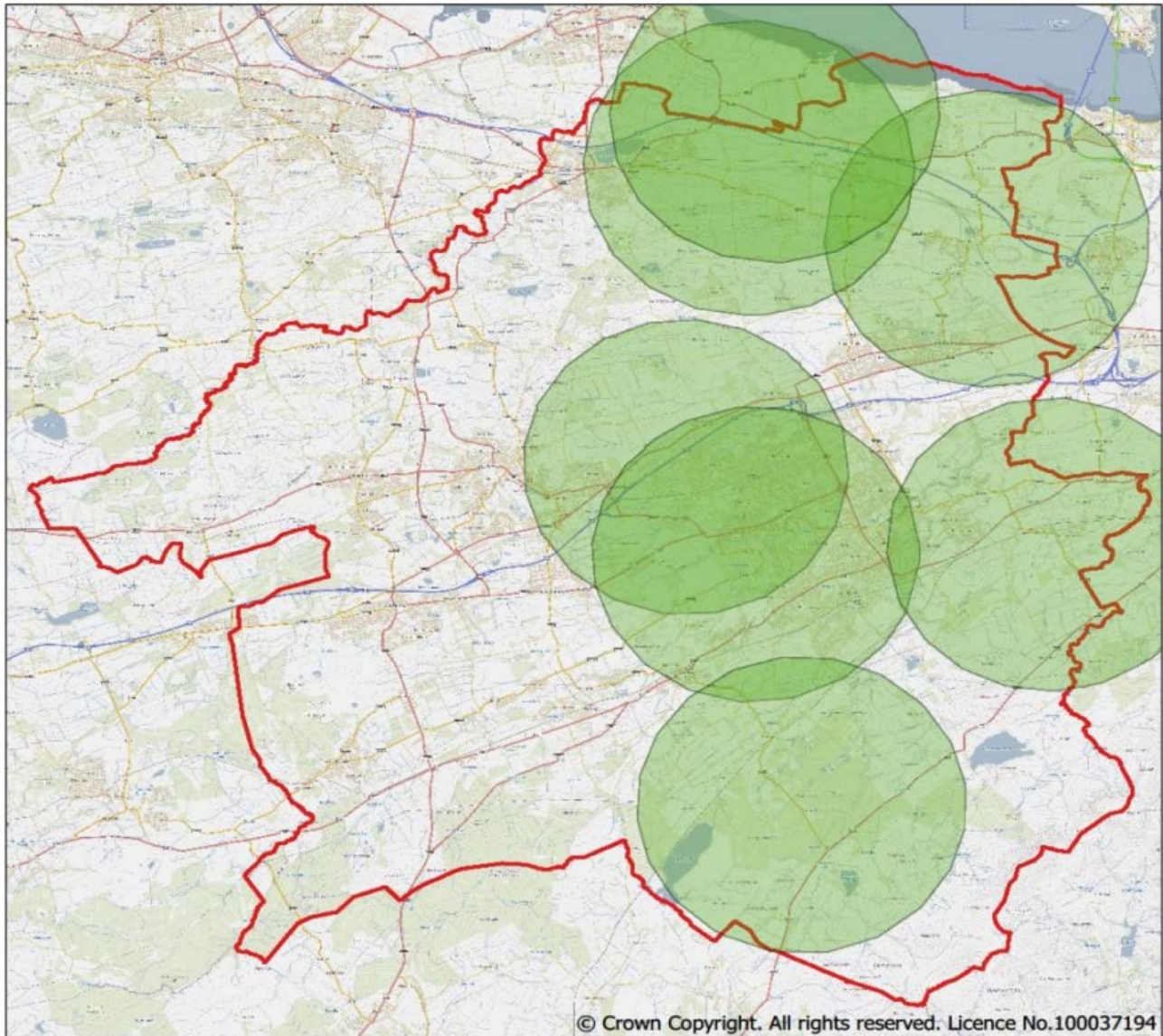


Figure 1 - All existing allotment sites, with 4km buffers

Part 2 - West Lothian Council – Play Sufficiency Assessment

2.1 The goal of the PSA is to gather insight into where children play, assess the quality of these spaces and determine if they effectively meet the needs of young people. This will allow any gaps in provision to be identified and addressed. The findings from the PSA will be used in preparation of the next Local Development Plan.

2.2 The key findings from the PSA are as follows;

- The minimum standard acreage of outdoor play space is met in less than half of localities
- Overall quality of formal parks has significantly improved since 2020
- 2 out of 104 formal play parks are not fit for purpose, reduced from 11 in 2020
- Children are generally more satisfied with play spaces than adults
- Having play spaces and outdoor areas close to homes is important
- Areas for improvement:
 - Equipment to keep all ages entertained, particularly older children
 - Accessibility and play for those with disabilities and additional needs

- Maintenance
- Provision of toilet facilities and seating
- Quality and provision of play equipment being designed into new housing developments
- Geographic disparities
- Public access to free outdoor sports pitches

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

As part of the Play Sufficiency Assessment, West Lothian Council conducted two sets of surveys in preparation of the PSA. The first, named 'How good are our outdoor play spaces are and how can we make them better?', involved one survey of under-18s and another of adults. These surveys ran from June to August 2024. The survey for under 18's attracted 744 responses and the survey for adults attracted 415 responses.

Summary of the findings or direct to PSA findings.

A survey 'How good are our outdoor play spaces for children? - A survey for adults' ran between June 2024 to August 2024. Whilst the majority of the survey for adults focused on adults views on the provision of outdoor space for children, a question was inserted to gauge views on 'Are there any comments you would like to make on the provision of sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages?'

The survey attracted 415 responses, whilst not everyone answered this question, it still attracted over 200 responses.

Main themes relating to the provision of sports, play and outdoor recreations for all ages include;

- Activities that satisfy the needs of older children can also satisfy the needs of adults.
- It is felt the needs of younger children are well catered for, but not older teenagers and adults.
- Outdoor gym equipment such as hag.com was mentioned frequently.
- The fact that fitness equipment constructed by the Council in Bathgate was set alight and vandalised was highlighted as a problem.
- There are not enough sports centres, classes fill up too quickly.
- More wheelchair accessibility / consideration given to mobility scooter users.
- The cost of accessing sports facilities and fitness classes was frequently noted as a barrier to exercise and noted a gap in well maintained free equipment.
- A field to play sport like football, cricket etc is really missing in Calderwood.
- Having an outdoor facility that you can use even when it's raining makes a huge difference. A responder grew up in the Philippines where some areas are poor but they're still able to build basketball courts that's still holding up after years and years of being used.
- Although there are lots of woods in Livingston north nothing ties them together – a bike and running / jogging / walking route would be great.
- More walking trails in general.
- Dismay was expressed at the closing of swimming pools and community centres.
- There is an under use of school sports pitches as they are behind fences and cannot be used by the whole community e.g. 3G pitches.
- Would love mini-golf or a putting course, indoor badminton, netball, basketball, table tennis
- Poor provision for multiple sports only ever really for football. No facilities for toilet or changing.

- Create orchards, plant fruit bushes and shrubs, give opportunities to learn to forage and connect with nature. More engagement and visibility of the West Lothian Rangers, more open space events should be arranged for people of all ages throughout the year.
- On a positive note, a responder expressed gratitude for living in Linlithgow where there is lots of outdoor space and access to nature, eg canal, loch, the peel. A different responder is appreciative of the new facilities in Winchburgh and another responder appreciated the woodland area and orchard walk in Breich.

Statements of Agreement / Dispute

This will include statements from stakeholders highlighting their agreement or the areas they dispute.

Summary of Implications for the Proposed Plan

This will cover what the evidence means for the plan, e.g. the spatial strategy, the Delivery Programme or plan preparation.

Based on the evidence the proposed plan is required to:

- Review open space policies in light of the finding of the Play Sufficiency Assessment and forthcoming Open Space Plan. A key component of this review would be to increase the health outcomes by ensuring natural and built environments are improved, with more equitable access to opportunities for play and recreation.
- Protect against the loss of outdoor sports facilities and a quantitative and/or qualitative loss of children's outdoor play provision.
- The incorporation of well designed, good quality provision for play, recreation, and relaxation that is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development and existing provision in the area. The inclusion of include new streets and public realm designed to be inclusive and enable children and young people to play and move around safely and independently, maximising opportunities for informal and incidental play in the neighbourhood
- Incorporation of food growing areas into developments.
- Require new, replacement or improved play provision to i. provide stimulating environments; ii. provide a range of play experiences including opportunities to connect with nature; iii. be inclusive; iv. be suitable for different ages of children and young people; v. be easily and safely accessible by children and young people independently, including those with a disability; incorporate trees and/or other forms of greenery to vii. form an integral part of the surrounding neighbourhood; viii. be well overlooked for passive surveillance; ix. be linked directly to other open spaces and play areas.
- Require new or enhanced play or sport facilities will provide effective management and maintenance plans covering the funding arrangements for their long-term delivery and upkeep, and the party or parties responsible for these.