









Monitoring the West Lothian Economy

February 2018

Key West Lothian updates at a glance

Indicator	Measure	Comparison with last month/quarter	Comparison with the same month/quarter last year	
Unemployment	1.7% (1,950)			The number of claimant count jobless in West Lothian for January has increased by 100 on the previous month. West Lothian's unemployment rate of 1.7% is less than the Scotland rate (2.4%) and the Great Britain rate (2.0%).
Claimant count rate ranking in relation to other Scottish council areas	Lower than 24 council areas and higher than 7 authorities			Of the 32 Local Authorities in Scotland, West Lothian's unemployment rate is lower than 24 authorities - equal with three other authorities (Argyll & Bute, East Dunbartonshire and Eilean Siar) - and higher than just 7 authorities.
Youth unemployment	3.0% (445)			The youth unemployment rate (18-24 year olds) in West Lothian for January is 3.0%. The number of young people who are unemployed remains equal to the previous month.
Number of house completions	180 in quarter to Dec 2017			Number of completions in July to Sept 2017 period 121 Number of completions in Oct to Dec 2016 period 131

Commentary

The latest national and local economic and labour market figures do not provide a clear cut message as to where we are heading. On the positive side, the last two quarters has seen UK productivity grow faster than at any time since the 2008 recession. The number in-work also increased by 88,000. However unemployment for the three months to December increased slightly, the first such increase in two years.

Scottish data is also mixed, with the jobless total increasing by 14,000 and the number in work falling by 30,000. However, the Scottish unemployment level is still below that of a year ago and is low by historic standards. So it will be interesting to observe whether the weakening of the labour market is a blip or the start of a trend.

The local jobless figures based on the claimant count show an expected seasonal increase in the claimant total. However, the January 2018 figure is below the January 2017 level. Youth unemployment continues to be below the Scottish level.

A recent FSB report has suggested that there is a significant variation in economic performance in West Lothian with Linlithgow appearing to out-perform Almond Valley Scottish Parliamentary Constituency. More detailed analysis of the source data reveals that the apparent gap can be explained by demographic factors and higher participation rates in full-time education (rather than a gap in economic performance).

Economic Indicators

A number of new data releases over the last quarter provide an insight into the general state of the local economy – though more often than not providing a retrospective analysis rather than the current picture or future prospects. The latest job data is for 2016, and does not incorporate any recent jobs growth or job losses.

Employment and Jobs

West Lothian Residents in employment — The latest employment estimates for the year to Sept 2017 show an increase in the number of residents that are economically active and in work compared with the previous year:

- An estimated 93,200 West Lothian residents are economically active (up from 93,100);
- 89,100 residents are in some form of employment (an increase from 88,800);
- 79,400 are employees and a further 9,100 self employed;
- West Lothian has an employment rate of 76.0% which exceeds the rates for both Scotland and Great Britain.

West Lothian Residents in employment - Oct 2016-Sep 2017 period			
	Males	Females	Total
West Lothian numbers	46,100	43,000	89,100
West Lothian (%)	80.2%	72.0%	76.0%
Scotland (%)	77.3%	70.7%	73.9%
Great Britain (%)	79.3%	69.8%	74.5%

Source: ONS annual population

Jobs based in West Lothian — The latest estimates for 2016 indicate that:

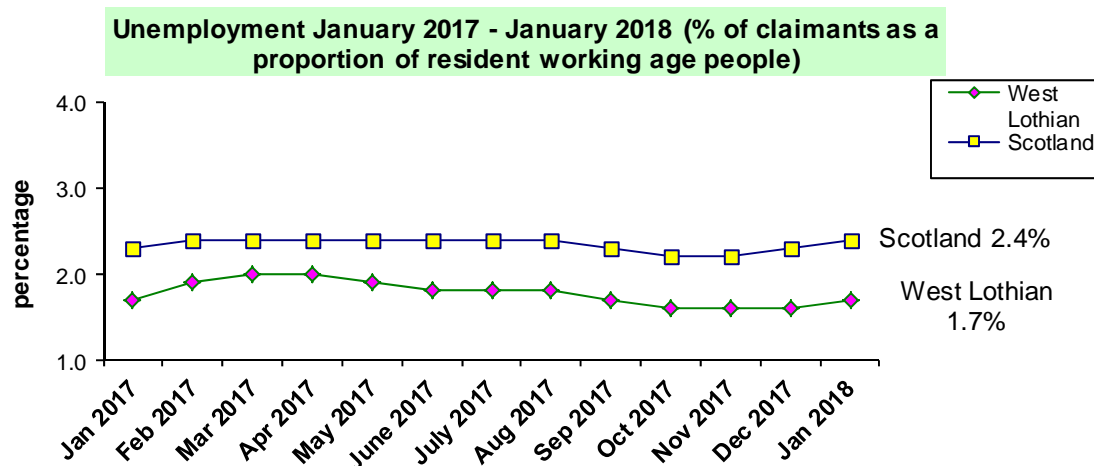
- 77,500 jobs are located in West Lothian a reduction of 500 from 2015. (the total includes employees and owner managers/employers)
- Of the 76,000 employee jobs, 68.4% are full-time; compared to 66.7% for Scotland and 67.8% for GB
- West Lothian has a lower proportion of public sector jobs than Scotland as a whole.
- The total employment in 2016 represents an increase of 1.4% from 2010. The Scottish jobs total increased by 6.5% (an additional 152,000) over the same timeframe, whilst the Edinburgh jobs total increased by 10.0%
- The net increase in jobs for London between 2010 and 2016 was 19.4% (an extra 800,000 jobs)

Jobs based in West Lothian 2016				
	Employment	Employees	Full-time	Part-time
Total jobs	77,500	76,000	51,500	24,500
Production	9,300	8,700	8,100	500
Construction	5,500	5,000	4,500	600
Services	63,200	61,800	38,700	23,200

Source: BRES 2016 (Figures rounded to nearest 100)

Unemployment

The latest unemployment data for the UK based on the preferred government measure (ILO), shows that the number of people out of work in the UK was 1.47 million (a rate of 4.4%) in the three months to December 2017.



Source: ONS claimant count

Unemployment

The latest claimant count unemployment figure of 1,950 (1.7%) compares with 2.4% for Scotland. By historic standards the claimant jobless number and rate are low. The Claimant Count includes both individuals who are claiming JSA and those unemployed people claiming or transferring on to Universal Credit.

The current West Lothian position relative to Scotland and other local authorities is in part affected by the phasing of Universal Credit full roll-out. The partial roll-out of Universal Credit in West Lothian commenced in November 2015. The full roll-out is scheduled to commence in mid-2018. Universal Credit supersedes existing benefits, which do not currently contribute towards the Claimant Count figure. The Claimant Count figure for West Lothian is likely therefore to increase as Universal Credit full roll-out gathers pace, irrespective of any changes to the local economy and labour market. In East Lothian where the full roll-out commenced in March 2016 the claimant count has increased from 1.6% to 2.9%.

WARD UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is higher in the West of West Lothian, and lower in Linlithgow and the East of the area. ONS use small area population data which result in an overestimate of the rate for Bathgate and underestimate for Whitburn and Blackburn.

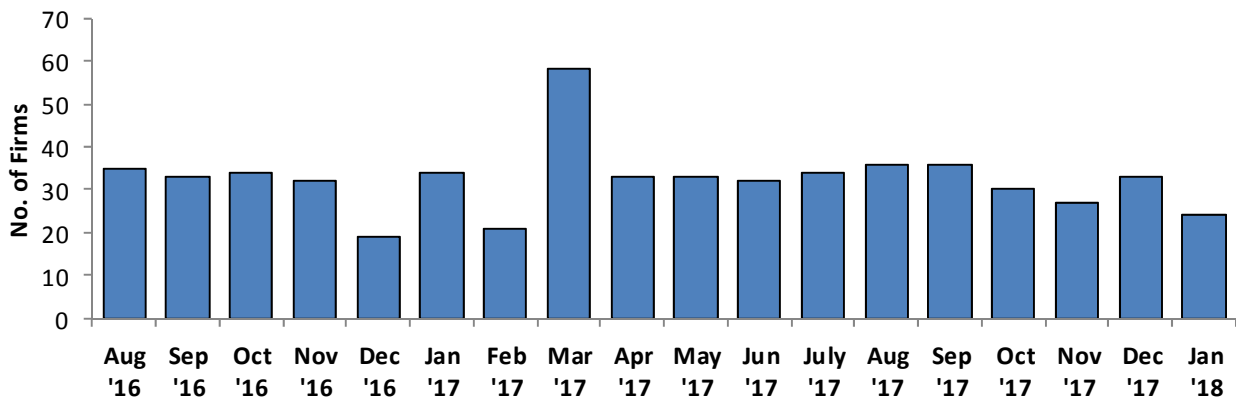
Multi Member Ward	Male claimants	Female claimants	Total claimants	
	number	number	number	rate
Armadale and Blackridge	135	60	195	2.0
Bathgate	165	80	245	2.0
Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh	110	55	165	1.3
East Livingston and East Calder	150	85	235	1.7
Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley	125	60	185	1.7
Linlithgow	60	25	85	0.8
Livingston North	130	80	205	1.4
Livingston South	200	95	295	1.7
Whitburn and Blackburn	235	110	345	2.2
West Lothian	1,305	645	1,950	1.7

Source: ONS claimant count — January 2018

Start-ups

Start-ups supported provide a measure of the general level of entrepreneurship. The total number of business starts supported by Business Gateway in 2016/17 was 407 (target for the year was 400). During 2017/18 the monthly start-up rate has been remarkably consistent, and 294 start-ups have been supported to date.

Business Gateway service new firm starts - August 2016 to January 2018



Source: West Lothian Council, February 2018

Planning Update

Proposal of Application Notices (PANs):

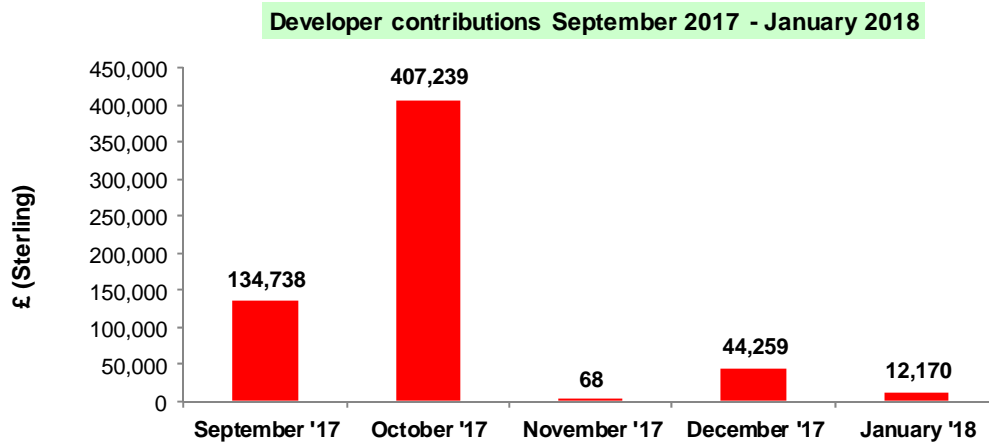
- 0083/PAS/18 - Broompark Holding Limited – Pre-application screening notice for village expansion of 660 houses, woodland creation and associated Infrastructure at Broompark, East Calder
- 0078/PAC/18 - Achadonn Properties Limited – Proposal of application notice for residential development with associated access, parking, landscaping and engineering works at former Brickworks Lower Bathville Armadale

Planning applications for new residential development:

- 0057/P/18 - Gladman Developments Ltd - 6.5 has residential development and associated access, engineering at Clarendon Farm, Linlithgow
- 0127/FUL/18 - Avant Homes (Scotland) Ltd - Erection of 110 houses with associated works (revised layout to replace that granted under planning permission)
- 0068/FUL/18 - Almond Housing Association - Erection of 7 houses and 18 cottage flats with associated works at Polbeth Road, Polbeth

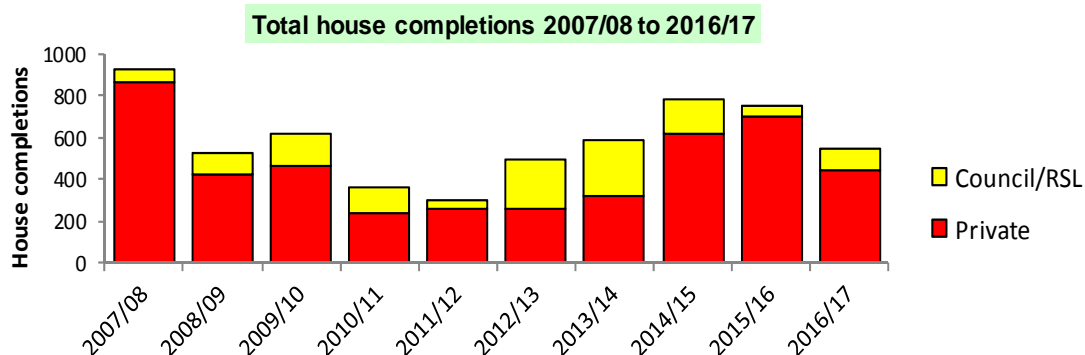
DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions for the years 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 totalled respectively £3.3m, £3.5m, £4.8m and £3.5m.



Source: West Lothian Council, February 2018

The number of house completions in January was 24. The equivalent figure in January 2017 was 28. The total for the first six months of 2017/18 is 282, lower than for the previous four years.



Source: West Lothian Council, April 2017

You can find economic information about West Lothian at any time on our website at <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2034/Facts-and-Figures>. We have also produced a publication entitled *West Lothian Economic Profile*. This document provides the key facts for investors, businesses, entrepreneurs and anyone with an interest in the local economy at: https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/3887/West-Lothian-Economic-Profile/pdf/economic_profile-2016-online-lo.pdf

If you need help with interpreting this data, or require additional statistics or economic information, please contact Kenny Wheeler on 01506-283100 or at kenny.wheeler@westlothian.gov.uk