



Murieston Community Action Plan

Research Report
Murieston Development Trust
Steering Group

March 2020



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1. Introduction and Background

1.1 Background and Original Drivers



Murieston is an attractive and leafy neighbourhood on the southern edge of Livingston in West Lothian. It is a popular location for families, retirees, and commuters travelling to both Glasgow and Edinburgh with easy access to the M8 and proximity to both major cities. Murieston is widely considered to be a comparatively affluent area of Livingston, rich in green space and amenities. There is an active and healthy local population and a number of local groups of interest for a range of ages.

Murieston Development Trust Steering Group emerged fairly recently out of the local Community Council as the potential driver of new initiatives in the area. The group recently commissioned Community Enterprise to develop a Community Action Plan for the area to cover a 20 year period from 2020 onwards. Opportunities for funding through an onshore commercial

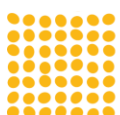
wind farm's community funds has prompted the Steering Group to consider what the challenges and priorities are for the area. To help guide them, the Group wanted to gather a wide range of views and opinions from across all sections of the Murieston community. By identifying key themes and priorities, the Steering Group along with other local partners, will be able to develop projects and initiatives that address short, medium and long term needs of local people. This project has received support through Local Energy Scotland funded by the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES).

Although the community benefits fund is not yet up and running, it will be available to benefit local groups and charities in the near future. The community benefits fund is likely to be able to support a wide range of costs and activities including equipment costs, running costs for local groups, staff or sessional worker costs, consultations, maintenance or refurbishment of community facilities. The community benefits fund will also fund community projects.

1.2 Organisational Context



The Murieston Development Trust Steering Group is made up of 6 local people who wish to represent the views of the community to West Lothian Council, businesses and other local groups. The Group currently meets on a monthly basis with the intention that the Group will evolve into a fully-fledged Community Development Trust in time, with a Board of representatives elected from a membership base of local people.



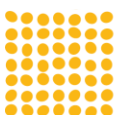
1.3 Methodology and scope of work

Engaging with everyone in the local community is a critical part of any Community Action Plan. Community Enterprise, alongside Steering Group volunteers carried out extensive and highly participative research from November 2019 - February 2020 to ensure there was plenty of opportunity to share views. Our programme included time spent getting to know the area, encouraging engagement and building a presence in the community.

The aim of the research was to build up both a quantitative and qualitative picture of what local people think. Analysis of the consultation programme method can be found in Section 3.

An outline of our methodology is as follows:

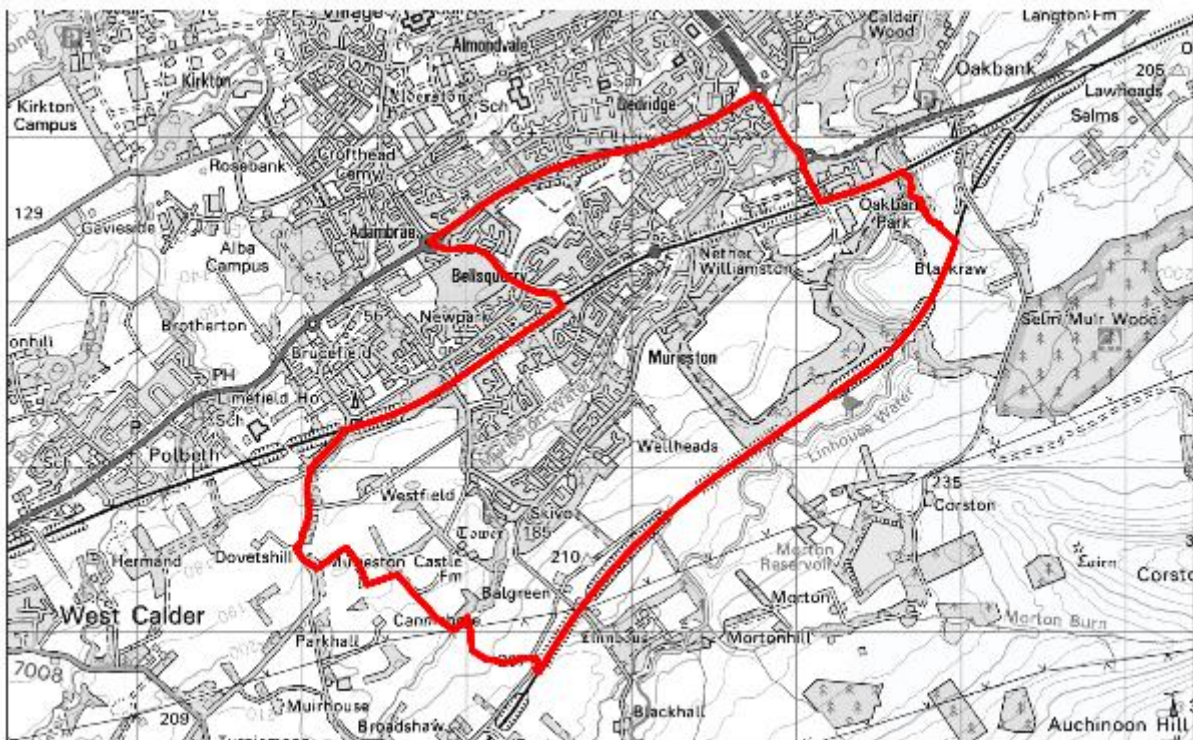
- **Demographics and statistics** - The use of a platform called Community Insight which pulls 20 different data sets together to identify the specific nature of the target community using data from the most recent census, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and others.
- **Asset mapping exercise** - The production of a map of the main assets in Murieston to understand the current level of provision. This is not an exhaustive list of every possible community space and activity, but an analysis of the most important ones.
- **Community survey** - This was undertaken to gather a broad range of community views about what people like and dislike about the area, and also what people would like to see happen in the future.
 - A campaign was launched in November with press releases through the Community Council and local group Facebook pages.
 - The well established Murieston and Bankton Community News Facebook was instrumental in promoting the survey online to its 2,865 followers throughout the consultation process. In addition, other groups (for example the Cricket Club, Bright Horizons and the Schools) distributed the survey through their networks.
 - Some door-to door leaflet drops were undertaken (see appendices for additional information) and at the train station during rush hours.
 - Posters were distributed throughout the community (at bus stops, the train station, along the Murieston Trail, outside the Co-op shop and cash machine)
 - Paper copy surveys were made available on request and made available at the Co-op Shop, the Medical Practice, Di's Diner, Du Beau Hairdressers and the dental practice with drop off points.
 - The survey was completed by 290 separate individuals but represented the views of 915 people.
- **Community Consultation** - Engagement more widely with the local community face to face was vital and a range of consultation methods were used to engage an estimated 100 people in conversation. Methods used were:
 - Street conversations, including at the school, train station and park
 - Burn's Supper event at the Cricket Club
 - Drop in at Murieston Village Hall



- **Stakeholder consultation** - Key local stakeholders and partners were interviewed at events, one to ones, and at a specific stakeholder meeting in the community centre. This was important to hear their thoughts on what's important to the community and to establish opportunities for partnership working in the future. 13 individuals were engaged with.
- **Focus groups** – Key beneficiary groups were engaged with through focus groups in order to gather more detailed feedback on their needs, ideas and views for the future. This included primary and secondary school aged children, and older residents at the 50+ Network plus some groups of interest including the Camera Club with a mixed adult membership.

2. Research

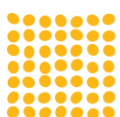
2.1 The Nature of the Area



Murieston is a residential district located to the South of Livingston. The Murieston Community Council area covered by the research is highlighted in the boundary map in red above.

Located approximately 15 miles West of Edinburgh and 30 miles East of Glasgow, Murieston sits close to the M8 corridor and as such has become a popular commuter area.

The growth of Murieston has been largely influenced by the growth of nearby Livingston town to the north, the fourth post war new town in Scotland. Designated in 1962, it is currently one of the fastest growing towns nationally and Murieston is one of 10 precincts around it. Historically, these precincts were once small settlements within open farmland: the area just beyond the southern border of Murieston is still largely agricultural.



As such, Murieston has to some extent retained a part village feel whilst also having the benefit of local amenities and services nearby. Anecdotally, it is recognised as one of the more affluent and attractive districts and a walk through the area reveals good quality housing with attractive, well kept gardens, quiet streets and cul-de-sacs and a number of leafy foot, cycle and bridle paths through mature green space. Key local amenities (a convenience store, train station with links to Glasgow and Edinburgh, vets, GP and dental practices, play parks, nursery, primary and nearby secondary schools) ensure that local residents are relatively well served and Livingston itself just a few minutes’ drive away or a 15-30 minute walk.

Its popularity, particularly among families is evidenced by the growth of housing development in the area, a new development at Wellhead Farm for example, is seeing the creation of 280 family homes where once there were fields. Many residents have lived in Murieston since the designation of Livingston and having brought up their families, now see Murieston as a perfect place to enjoy retirement. Younger family members consider themselves “born and bred” and many are now raising their own families there. However, it is recognised that this popularity also presents some challenges. The increase in housing and the number of commuters may have an impact on Murieston’s ‘village feel’ and its existing infrastructure and the sense of ‘community’ locally.

2.2 Demographics and Statistics¹

Below, statistical data for Murieston Community Council has been collated and reviewed. Unless otherwise noted, the figures below are from Community Insight, a specialist research tool which incorporates datasets from key social information sources including Census Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) and NHS.



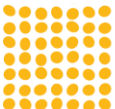
Population

There are 6,040 people living in the Murieston area. Murieston has a young population with less residents aged 65+, and more of working age or aged 0-15 than the average figures for Scotland.

Notably, Murieston has a higher-than-average level of working aged adults (66.9%) when compared to regional and national figures (64.3% vs. 64.4%, respectively). There are 4.5% less older aged adults (65+ years) compared to the average for Scotland and 2% less than compared to West Lothian as a whole.

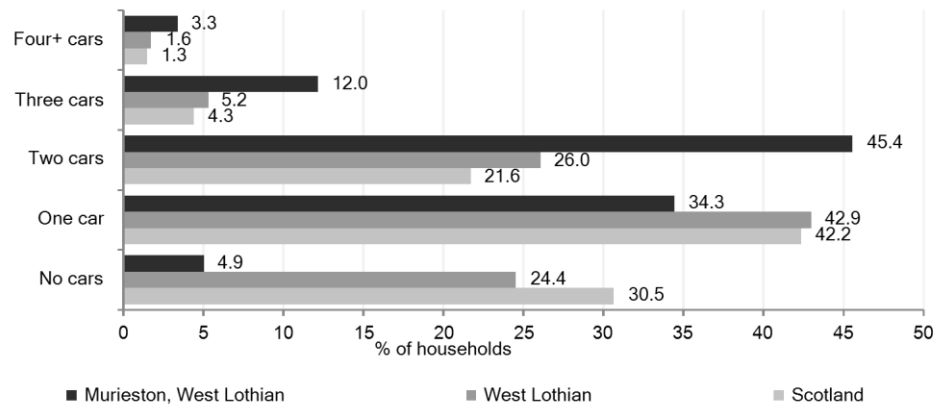
The population change in Murieston over the past 18 years can be seen on the graph below. Both West Lothian, and Scotland has seen a steady incline in population growth. The Murieston area however appeared to experience a sharp increase in population (8-10% increase) between 2001 and 2007 and has since remained largely steady with smaller shifts in population between years.

¹ Data is obtained from Community Insight software that collects data from over 30 databases including Census Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, NHS and others. Community Enterprise does not own any of the above data.





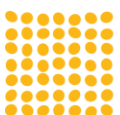
Car ownership locally is higher than the average for both West Lothian and Scotland. 45.4% of residents have access to two cars, and a further 15.3% have three or more cars within their household. In total, 95.1% of residents have access to at least one car.

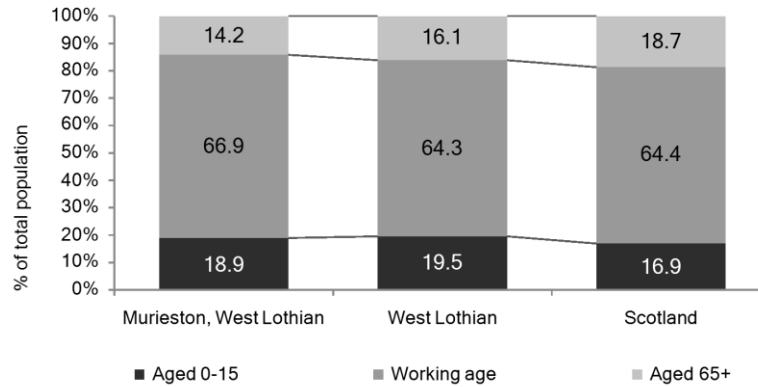


Murieston is located just off the A71 trunk road, lies approximately 5 miles south of the M8 and has easy access across the Central Belt and across to the M9.

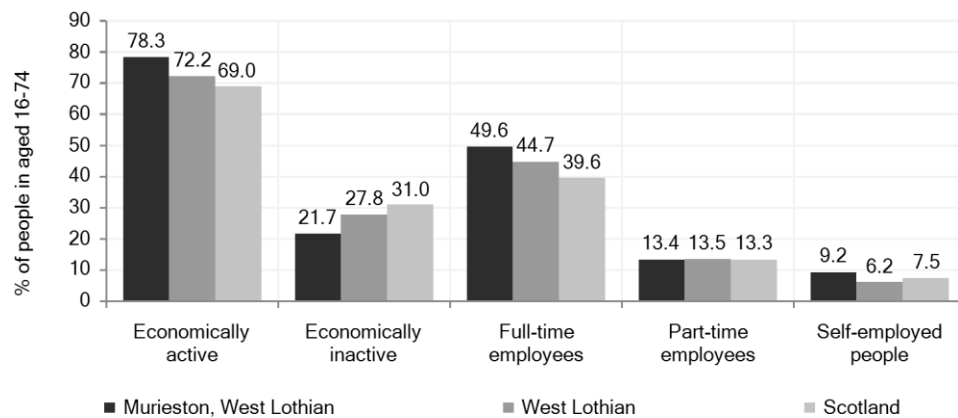
The area is served by Livingston South train station which lies on the Edinburgh Waverley – Glasgow Central line. Journey time to Edinburgh from Livingston South varies between express and slow trains (between 15 to 30 mins travel time). Glasgow to Livingston South travel time is around 50-65 mins. Trains in both directions are at regular intervals throughout the day and night. The line has recently been electrified and the station has been rebuilt. There are lifts and ramped access to both platforms as well as a connecting underpass between platforms. Livingston South station has a car park with 125 spaces and rack for 8 bikes. The car park is regularly full to capacity.

Bus route 9 links Murieston with the centre of Livingston and operates on a half hourly basis.

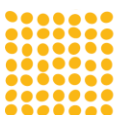
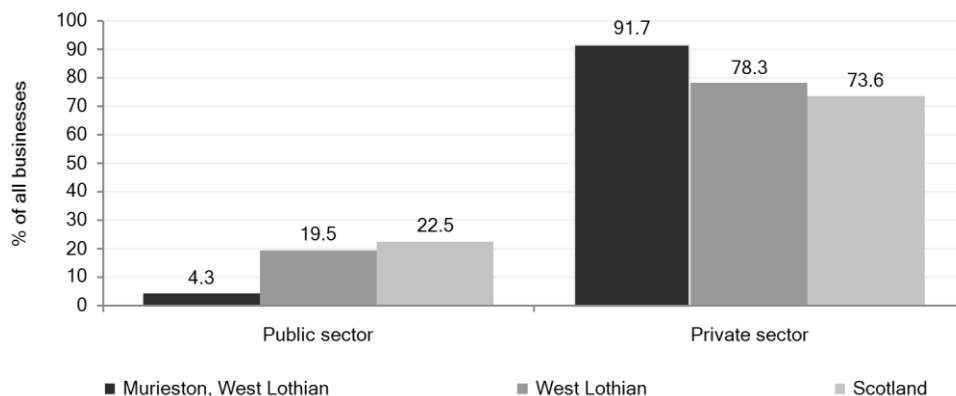




Murieston has a higher-than-average proportion of economically active adults when compared to West Lothian and Scottish levels (78.3% in Murieston: 72.2% in West Lothian: 69.0% in Scotland). Almost half of all adults aged 16-74 years are in full time employment and there is a higher-than-average proportion of self-employed people in the Murieston area (9.2%).



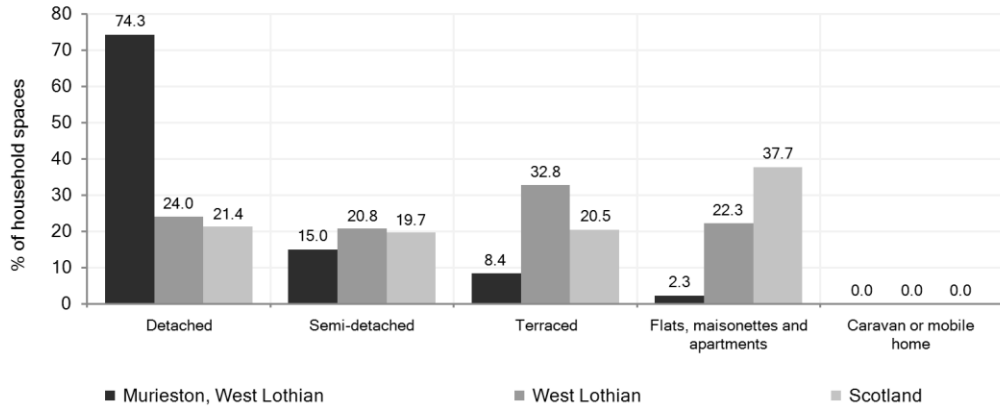
Murieston is largely a residential area with few commercial units. The overall concentration of businesses in the local area is calculated as a rate per 10,000 working age population, for Murieston this rate is 195. Almost all businesses in Murieston are private rather than based in the public sector (91.7%). This is over 12% higher than the regional average and over 18% higher than the national average.





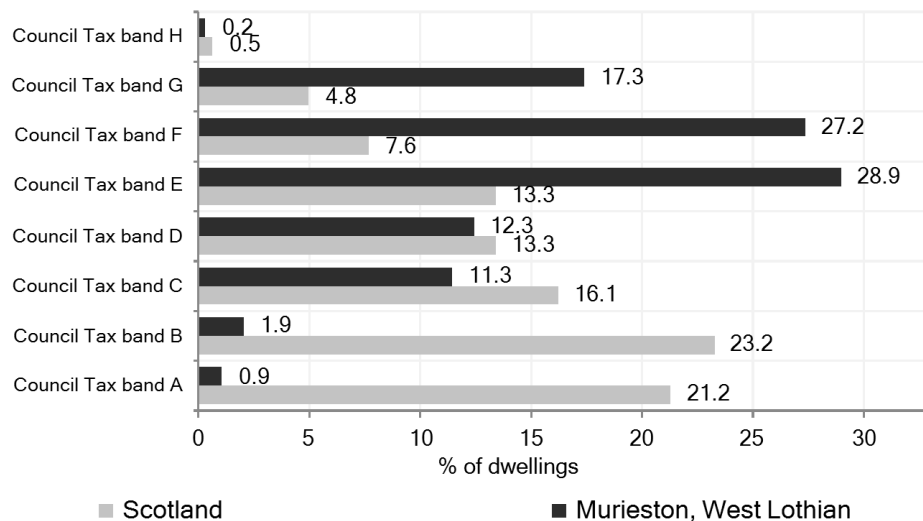
Housing

The majority of properties in Murieston are detached (74.3%) which is over 3x higher than the average for West Lothian (24%) and Scotland (21.4%). Locally, there is a lack of flats and apartments in the area with only 2.3% of properties falling within this category in Murieston.



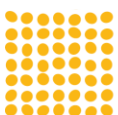
Owner occupied property is the norm with almost all households categorised in this way (92.3%). This is around 30% higher than regional and national levels.

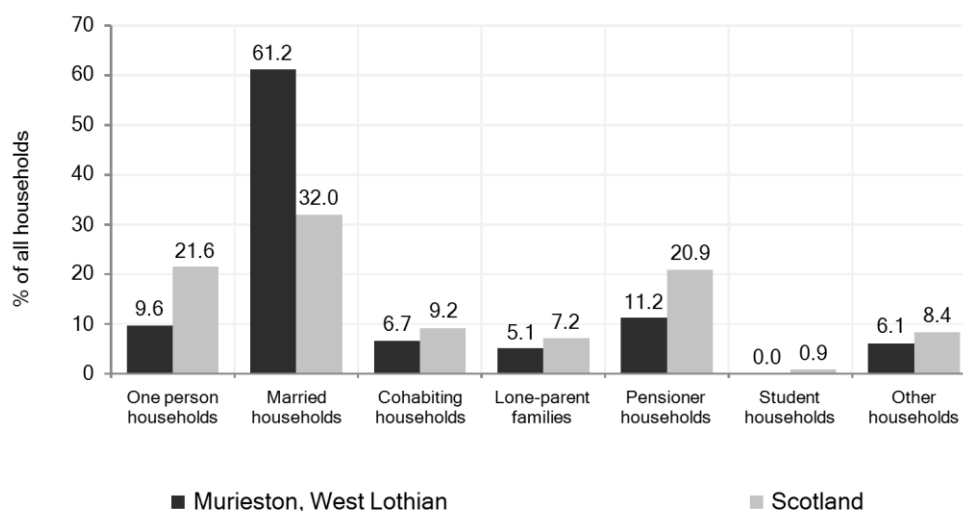
56.1% of all properties in Murieston are within Council Tax bands E and F. Only 14.1% of properties locally fall within the three least expensive Council Tax bands (A-C).



Families

The majority of households in Murieston are married (61.2%), almost double the national average. There are also considerably fewer one-person and pensioner households in this area (9.6% and 11.2%, respectively) than the norm across Scotland.





Levels of children in poverty across the Murieston area is low at 2.4% compared to 15.9% in West Lothian and 16.8% across Scotland.



Unpaid care levels in the Murieston area are slightly higher than the regional and national figures (0.1% and 0.3% higher, respectively). Unpaid care provided by children, however, is around half the level reported in West Lothian more generally.

Murieston Medical Practice offers local GP services to the area and there is a hospital (with A&E department) around 3 miles north of Murieston.

Life expectancy for both men and women in Murieston is higher than the regional and national averages (+3.52 years life expectancy for men in Murieston and +0.51 years for women). Whilst male life expectancy in the area remains lower than that reported for women, the gap between these figures in Murieston is markedly reduced (life expectancy gap of 1.04 years).

	Murieston Area (avg.)	West Lothian (avg.)	Scotland (avg.)
Male life expectancy	80.61 yrs	78.28 yrs	77.09 yrs
Female life expectancy	81.65 yrs	80.78 yrs	81.14 yrs

A number of benefits can act as indicators for the health of local residents². 9.8% of people in Murieston claim Attendance Allowance, which is 4.6% lower than the Scottish average. There is a lower proportion of PIP claimants locally when compared to average levels across Scotland, with 3.6% of the population claiming this benefit (6.7% nationally). This figure can be examined specifically for individuals who claim PIP for mental health conditions – which at 0.3% is considerably lower than the national average of 2.6%.

² Attendance Allowance is a benefit payable to people over the age of 65 who are so severely disabled, physically or mentally, that they need a great deal of help with personal care or supervision. Personal Independence Payments (PIP) are payable to those under the age of 65 who need help with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health or terminal ill-health.



These figures support previous indicators of a population profile that is younger, and healthier, than the Scottish average.

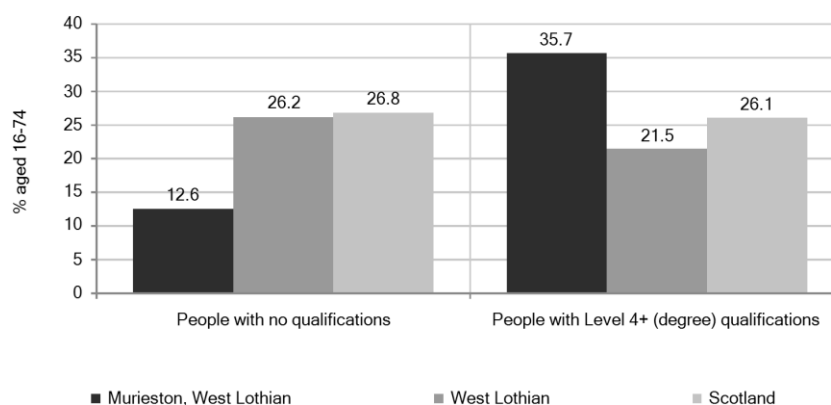


Education

Williamston Primary School is non-denominational and provides for stages Nursery – P7. The present roll is 395 in the Primary School and 63 in the Nursery. This school feeds into James Young High School which currently has a roll of 1130.

St. Ninian’s Primary School, and associated high school St Margaret’s Academy, provide Roman Catholic education services to the Murieston area and currently have a roll of 258³ and 1098 pupils⁴, respectively.

The proportion of people aged 16-74 years in Murieston with no qualifications is 12.6%, less than half the West Lothian and Scottish averages. Conversely, the number of local residents with Level 4+ qualifications (correlating to those with a Degree or higher) is considerably higher than the regional and national levels at 35.7%



Crime

Murieston has a generally low crime rate of 10.43 (per 1,000). The West Lothian average is 27.93 and the Scottish average is 30.4. The Bankton and Murieston area has the 4th lowest crime rate in the region.⁵



Environment

To examine the local environment of Murieston the ‘Access to Health Assets and Hazards’ (AHAH) index can be used. This measures how ‘healthy’ Environment neighbourhoods are by looking at accessibility and geographical determinants of health. It combines indicators under four different domains of accessibility⁶:

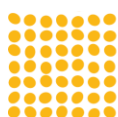
The table below show the score on each of the four domains of accessibility and the overall AHAH index score for Murieston. A **higher score indicates a poorer health-related environment** e.g. a low retail environment score

³ St Ninian’s Primary School Handbook, 2019-2020

⁴ St Margaret’s Academy Progress Report For Session 2018/19 (Standards & Quality Report)

⁵ ScotPHO, 2018 Crime rate Intermediate zones compared against Scotland

⁶ Indicators include: Retail environment (access to fast food outlets, pubs, off-licences, tobacconists, gambling outlets: Health Services (access to GPs, hospitals, pharmacies, dentists, leisure services) Physical environment (access to Blue Spaces, Green Spaces - Active, Green Spaces - Passive (total green space areas available to each postcode in a range of a 900-metre buffer prior to creating LSOA averages)) Air quality (three air pollutants (Nitrogen Dioxide, Particulate Matter 10 and Sulphur Dioxide))



indicates less access to 'unhealthy' retail establishments such as fast food outlets.

	Murieston measure	Scotland average measure
Overall Index	12.2	17.3
Retail environment	3.5	17.8
Health services	22.1	26.2
Physical environment	20.6	22.1
Air quality	2.8	3.0

From the table above we can see that generally Murieston is 'healthier' than the Scottish average across these measures. It should be noted, however, that access to health services and green spaces as well as air quality are similar to levels nationally indicating potential areas for improvement in the future.



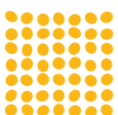
SIMD⁷

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. SIMD ranks small areas (called data zones) from most deprived (ranked 1 and coloured dark red) to least deprived (ranked 6,976 and coloured dark blue). The map below shows the Murieston area (highlighted in yellow) on the SIMD map.



Deprivation levels are measured against seven 'domains', namely; income; employment; health; education/skills; housing, geographical access to services, and crime. Across this area, most of these measures show fairly

⁷ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation <https://simd.scot/2016/#/simd2016/BTTTTT/14/-3.5028/55.8690/>

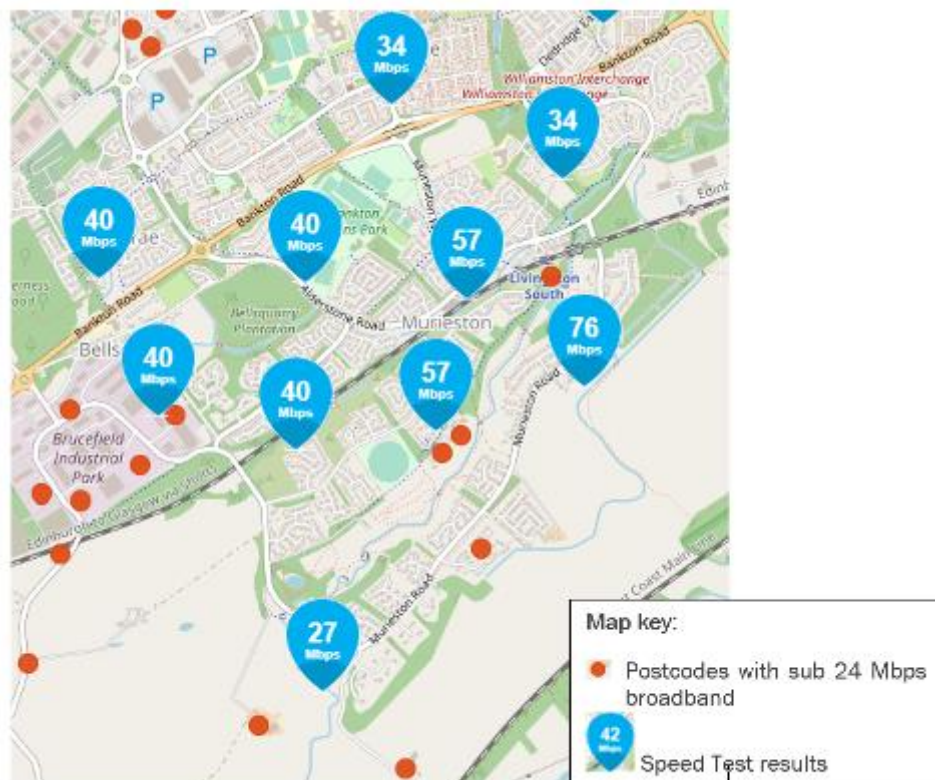


consistent levels of low deprivation. The exception to this is the 'geographical access to services' measure⁸: 59% of Murieston residents live within the 10-30% most deprived in terms of access to services. Of these, almost half (1692 people) fall within the 10% most deprived category. This pattern can be partly explained by the largely residential, suburban nature of the area. The lack of some services local to the Murieston area, as opposed to the wider Livingston community, could be contributing to this service deprivation profile.



Broadband

Broadband across Murieston varies: the south west of the area shows average download speeds considerably lower than that of other areas of Murieston.

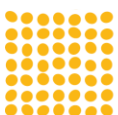


Average broadband download speeds across Murieston. Source: <https://labs.thinkbroadband.com/local/broadband-mac#14/55.8599/-3.5008/test/nonsupertest/>. Checked 24/2/2020.

2.3 Community Assets

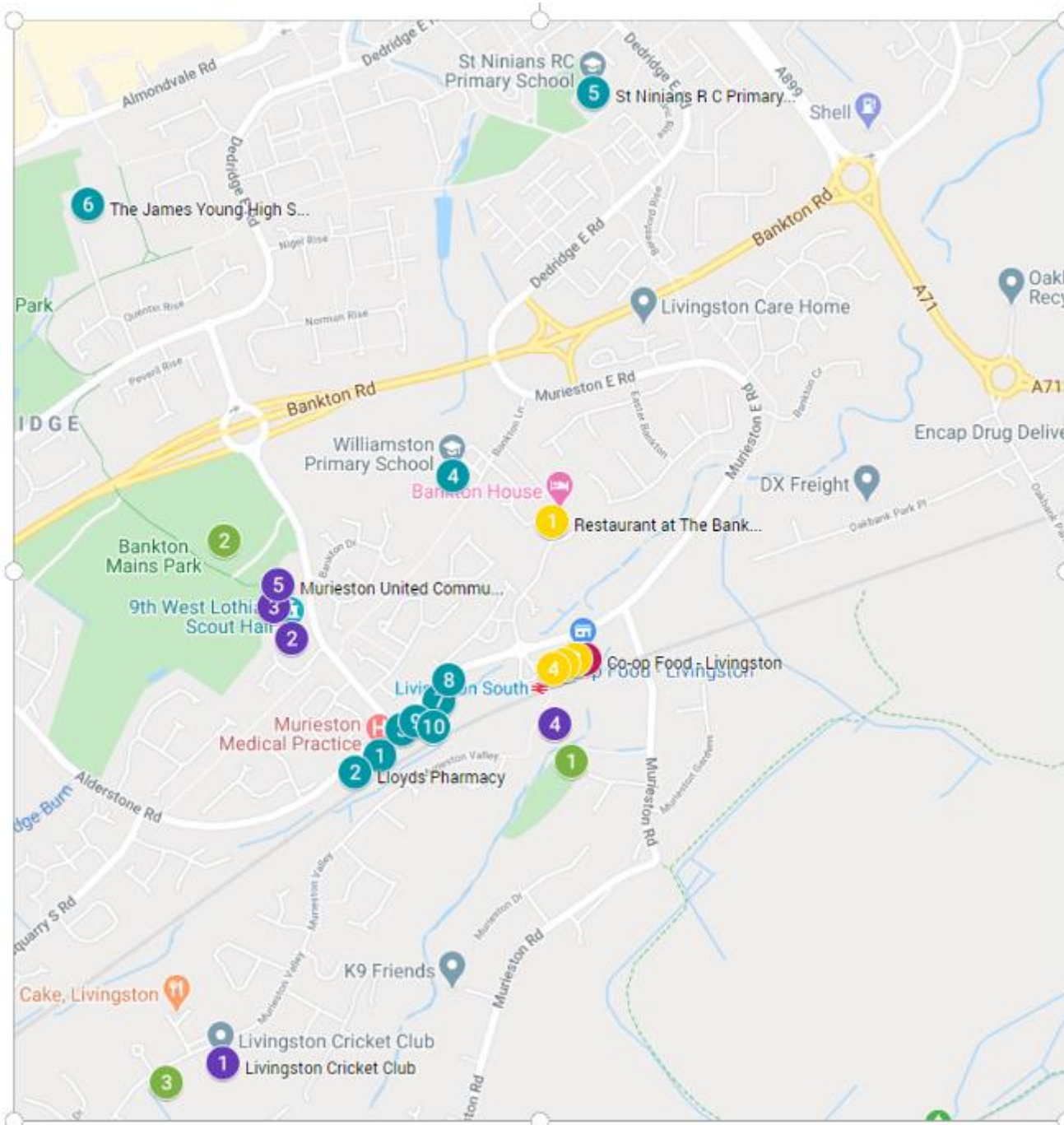
Murieston has a range of services available to its residents. Many are community assets such as the village hall and the maps below visually reflect the location of these assets and services within the community.

⁸ The 'Geographical Access to Services' indicator is based on a combined average of driving and public transport times to a variety of services including, a primary and secondary school, a GP, retail centre, and a post office.





Murieston Asset Map



Social / Community

- 1 Livingston Cricket Club
- 2 9th West Lothian Scout Hall
- 3 Bankton Mains Bowling Club
- 4 Murieston Village Hall
- 5 Murieston United Community Football Cl...

Services

- 1 Murieston Medical Practice
- 2 Lloyds Pharmacy
- 3 Lamond Veterinary Clinic
- 4 Williamston Primary School
- 5 St Ninians R C Primary School
- 6 The James Young High School
- 7 Bright Horizons Livingston Early Learnin...
- 8 Simply Play
- 9 Bankton Dental Practice
- 10 Livingston Chiropody & Podiatry
- 11 Du Beau Hair and Beauty Murieston
- 12 Aaron Michaels Barbers

Shops

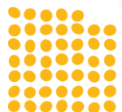
- 1 Co-op Food - Livingston

Food



- 1 Restaurant at The Bankton House Hotel
- 2 Supperbowl Bankton
- 3 Sapphire
- 4 Di's Diner

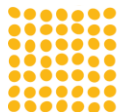
Play Parks



- 1 Play Park
- 2 Play Park
- 3 Play Park

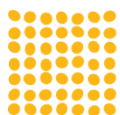



Community Buildings

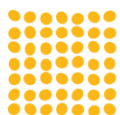
Asset	Overview	Availability	Key users
<p data-bbox="203 320 488 347">Livingston Cricket Club</p> 	<p data-bbox="752 320 1184 715">Community club owned. Cricket pitch, car park and club house. Club house consists of bar room, 2 changing rooms one of which can be opened up. Fully accessible. Membership based (2 tier: sport and social) over 100 members, most based in Murieston with around 10% from wider area. Membership is £5 pa. Groups tend to pay membership and get use of space free.</p> <p data-bbox="752 746 1173 842">The Clubhouse is in need of some refurbishment and an upgrade in the heating system.</p>	<p data-bbox="1211 320 1496 379">Available for members and non members</p> <p data-bbox="1211 411 1458 539">Social Membership costs £5pa, Sport costs considerably more.</p>	<p data-bbox="1523 320 2040 683">Cricket Club / Triathlon Group / Round Table / German Shepherd Association / Book Club / Gala group / Kids Go Wild / Camera Club / All Girls Sewing Group / Community Council / MEG / Knitting Group / Cricket Scotland / Breast Cancer Friends and Family / Junior band nights. Programme of events throughout the year including Beer Festival, Music Nights, Quiz Nights, Summer BBQ, Bake Offs and Kids' Discos.</p> <p data-bbox="1523 715 1989 810">The Club is keen to develop more community based activity and sees building improvements as key to this.</p>
<p data-bbox="203 874 551 901">9th West Lothian Scout Hall</p> 	<p data-bbox="752 874 1173 1070">Scout Hall used for scout group and a range of groups and activities including martial arts classes, choir rehearsal, wrestling competitions. Available for public hire for parties and events.</p> <p data-bbox="752 1102 1099 1166">The building is in fairly good condition.</p>	<p data-bbox="1211 874 1491 970">Available for hire outside of established groups and activities.</p>	<p data-bbox="1523 874 2033 1070">Scouts, monthly wrestling competitions, Sing in the City Choir (Thurs eve), TaeKwon-Do classes (Fri and Sun eve), Football Buzz, ABC Nurseries after school care (3-6pm Mon-Thurs, 12-6pm Fri) occasional public hire.</p> <p data-bbox="1523 1102 2033 1166">Space currently available for activities on weekday mornings.</p>



<p>Bankton Mains Bowling Club</p> 	<p>Clubhouse, bar and kitchen. Patio area. Outside bowling green with spectator seating. Adult Membership; £100; Senior Membership (60+) is £100.00; Social Membership (18+) is £25. Junior memberships are also available.</p>	<p>Can be hired by members and non-member for events (e.g. weddings, parties) at a cost of £50 (members) and £75 (non-members).Runs occasional social nights such as Quiz nights, Summer BBQs and Race nights. Holds 70 in main hall</p>	<p>Bowling club members, one off event hire by non-members.</p>
<p>Murieston Village Hall</p> 	<p>Council owned, committee managed. Building transported from Kirknewton in 2003. Two rooms, one slightly smaller than other - not adjoining. Reception desk and entrance area, toilets with baby changing facilities. Kitchen adjoining one of the rooms. Building surrounded by security fenced play area - . Wooden storage huts outside, which need to be moved and potentially replaced by concrete storage huts (funding application in progress). Access for those with limited mobility is an issue - car park some distance away and often full. Some refurbishment needed.</p>	<p>Largely booked up with regular groups. Available at weekends for one off bookings e.g. parties, meetings and events. Some availability weekday mornings and after 7.30pm on a Friday.</p> <p>Around 40-50 in each room.</p>	<p>50+ group / Simply Play after school club 5 days pw / Toddlers' Group 2 x pw) / Rainbows / Brownies / Guides / Church / Art Group / private hire for parties.</p> <p>There is an appetite to increase usage particularly through improvements to the building.</p>



<p>Murieston United Football Club</p> 	<p>Clubroom facilities, meeting room facilities and various 3G sports pitches. Range of youth, and adult teams. Available for public let when not in use by MUFC teams. Two tier pricing structure (youth and adult/peak and off peak times). The Club House hosts a pop up café with service limited to match days but is considering replacing this with a vending machine due to poor uptake.</p>	<p>Full size 3G Pitch (2 hour slots) Mon-Thur 10-4pm; Fri 10-10pm; Sat & Sun 4-10pm Half 3G Pitch (1 hour slots) – Same as Full size Pitch 5-a-side 3G pitch (1 hour slots) Mon-Thur 10-4pm and 9-10pm; Fri 10-10pm; Sat & Sun 10-10pm</p>	<p>Murieston United football teams. Other sports clubs and youth teams. Members of the public.</p> <p>MUFC is currently not particularly well linked with the community but would like to improve on this.</p>
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Community groups

In addition to the wide range of community assets detailed above there are a number of active community groups operating in the Murieston area, all of which support the development and delivery of activity and events. Some of these key groups are detailed below.

- **Murieston Community Council**

Murieston Community Council is an elected body of local people that represent the views of the community to West Lothian Council, business and other groups. Meetings are usually held monthly on the second Thursday of the month and are held at Williamston Primary School at 7pm. There are currently 12 members on the community council and 3 elected Councillor members. <https://murieston.communitycouncil.org.uk/>

- **Murieston Environmental Group (MEG)**

A Scottish Charitable group established in 2011, consisting of local residents from the Murieston area, MEG aims to improve outdoor spaces for the benefit of residents and the wider public, improve biodiversity and opportunities to use the facilities for educational purposes. It encourages participation in the stewardship of local natural spaces by the local community by organising a programme of volunteer days and fundraising activities. <http://www.meg.btck.co.uk/>

- **Murieston Initiative**

A community-owned charity that exists to manage the Murieston Village Hall (see above). This includes promotion, facilities management (including building and bookings). https://www.facebook.com/pg/muriestoninitiative/about/?ref=page_internal

- **Murieston United Community Football Club**

Formed in 1985, the Club was the first to become community owned in West Lothian in 2000 and is one of the most successful with over 400 active members, ranging in age from 5-70, Training takes place at the Club managed turf and astroturf pitches in Bankton Mains where there is also a Club House (see above). <http://www.mucfc.co.uk/>

- **Murieston 50+ Network**

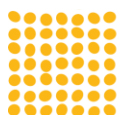
Part of the wider 50+ Network, the Murieston group has around 50 members who meet at the Village Hall on the first Tuesday afternoon of each month but in addition, organise a range of day trips and outings, theatre trips and other events. The main purpose of the group is to connect older people through a range of social opportunities to help promote health and wellbeing in later life and reduce isolation. The Network is run by a committee of volunteers. <https://westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk/>

- **Uniformed groups**

The 9th West Lothian Scouts Group (<https://www.facebook.com/9th-West-Lothian-Scout-Group-163061597047244/>), Dedridge and Murieston District Guides (including Brownies and Rainbows) (<https://fr-fr.facebook.com/pg/GirlguidingDedridgeAndMurieston/posts/>) and 5th Livingston Boys Brigade (<https://boys-brigade.org.uk/company/5th-livingston/>) all have a presence in Murieston. The Scouts has its own building (see above) whilst the Guides and associated groups meet in Murieston Village Hall.

- **Livingston Cricket Club**

Murieston is home to the Livingston Cricket Club which was founded in 1981 has around 100 members ('playing' and non playing/ social categories) and includes under 16s. Teams



practice throughout the winter with a summer of fixtures. As well as a pitch, the Club House (see above) provides changing and bar facilities. <https://livingstoncricketclub.co.uk/>

- **Murieston Parents and Toddlers Group**

Geared towards children aged 0-5 and their carers, this fun, friendly and informal group meets every Thursday morning in the Village Hall. The group is part of the Livingston South Community Church. <https://en-gb.facebook.com/Murieston-Parent-Toddlers-Group-334730976583976/>

- **Murieston Photographic Group/ 'The Camera Club'**

The Camera Club meets the first Wednesday evening of each month at the Cricket Club. It is a voluntary group of photography enthusiasts who share knowledge and learning through workshops, formal and informal. <https://www.facebook.com/muriestonphotogroup/>

- **Murieston and Bankton Community News Facebook page**

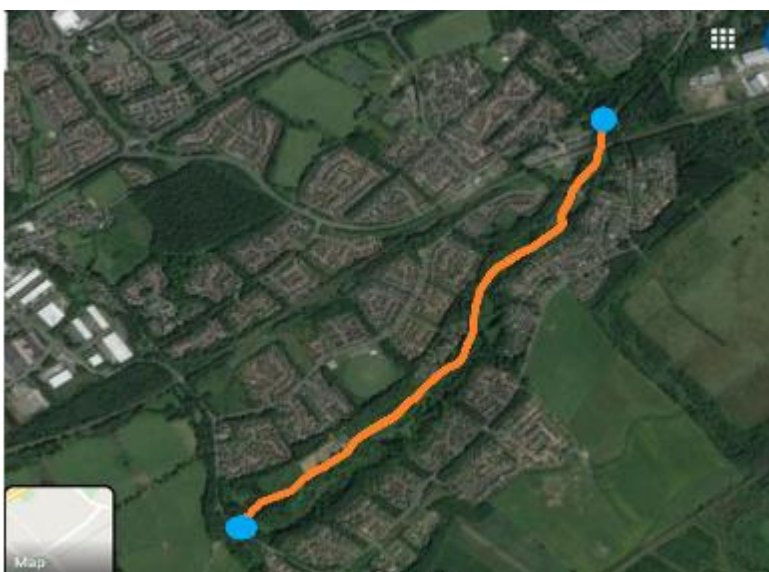
This Facebook page has been set up and run by local residents to share local news, events and information. The Facebook page has 2,865 followers and provides a good method for residents to interact with one another. <https://www.facebook.com/MuriestonCommunity/>

- **Livingston Round Table**

Although strictly a Livingston wide community group, the Table meets at the Cricket Club in Murieston twice a month with a number of members from the Murieston area. It was formed in 1978 but disbanded in 1999 to be resurrected in 2009. LRT is a social club with a social conscience and aims to make a positive difference to the local community. It undertakes a range of fundraising activities, including 'Santa Sleigh' each Christmas and since 2010, has distributed over £30k in funds to local groups and projects. <http://www.livingstonroundtable.co.uk/>

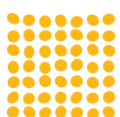
Community Green Spaces

In addition to these amenities and activities, arguably the jewel in Murieston's crown is the high quality green space and notably, the Murieston Trail. This stretches across Murieston and runs along the valley, beginning behind Livingston South station (although the path extends beyond towards Bankton) and ends at the Campridge Pond at the western edge of Murieston. This



tranquil trail follows Murieston Water, through mature woodland and meadows. With benches and scenic views along the way, as well as a play park, the trail is well used and very popular with dog walkers, joggers, cyclists and families.

To the south eastern edge of Murieston is the Linhouse 'Loop', a circular 4 to 5 mile high quality trail through dense woodland, copses and fields, connecting up to a path network beyond.



2.4 Policy context

As part of the Action Plan process, local policies and strategies have been reviewed and the following summarised as having a direct bearing. It will be important for the Steering Group to align its developments, where possible, with work already underway locally.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015⁹

The Scottish Government introduced this legislation in 2015 to help communities do more for themselves and have more say in decisions that affect them. The Government is committed to:

- funding community-led regeneration through the Empowering Communities Fund
- funding participatory budgeting through the £1.5 million Community Choices Fund, giving people more power to make decisions on spending in their local areas
- making it easier for communities to take over land and buildings in public ownership through asset transfer
- supporting community councils to represent communities' opinions
- giving communities the ability to request to participate in decisions and processes which are aimed at improving outcomes
- setting out best practice for public bodies to engage with communities via the National Standards for Community Engagement
- Providing guidance on common good property
- launching the Local Governance Review, to explore how local decisions are made and how local democracy is working
- supporting public service providers to work together and with local communities via community planning to shape and deliver better services

⁹ <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/community-empowerment-scotland-act-summary/>

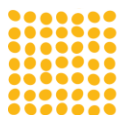
West Lothian Council Community Planning Partnership – Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2013-2023¹⁰

As a requirement of the Community Empowerment Act, WLC produced a ten year LOIP strategy setting out how community planning partners will work with local communities to improve outcomes for individuals, families and communities where inequality persists. The Plan sets out 6 priorities:

1. Early Years: “Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed”
2. Employment: “We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities”
3. Economic Growth and Recovery: “Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business”
4. Safer and stronger communities and reducing offending: “We live in resilient, cohesive and safer communities. People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances”
5. Outcomes for Older People: “Older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life”
6. Health inequalities and physical activities: “We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities” and “We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.”

¹⁰

[file:///C:/Users/Victoria/Downloads/West_Lothian_Local_Outcomes_Improvement_Plan_2013-2023%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Victoria/Downloads/West_Lothian_Local_Outcomes_Improvement_Plan_2013-2023%20(1).pdf)



West Lothian Integrated Joint Board (Health and Social Care Partnership) Strategic Plan 2019-2023¹¹

The plan developed by the IJB sets out its vision, priorities and intended outcomes over a 4 year period in relation to increasing wellbeing and reducing health inequalities health. 4 ambitions have been identified:

1. More care and support is delivered at home or closer to home rather than in hospital or other institutions
2. Care is person centred, with focus on the whole person and not just a problem or condition
3. There is more joined up working across professions and agencies
4. Citizens, communities and staff have a greater say in planning & delivering health and social care services

Underlying these priorities is the need for health care to change because of pressures on public budgets, the increase in the numbers of older people, the increase in numbers of people with long term, complex health conditions, a growing shortage of professional health care workers and a need to reduce pressure on primary care settings. The four strategic priorities in the plan are:

- Early intervention and prevention
- More integrated and co-ordinated care
- Effective use of resources and
- Tackling health inequalities

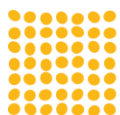
¹¹ [file:///C:/Users/Victoria/Downloads/West Lothian IJB Strategic-Plan 2019-23.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Victoria/Downloads/West%20Lothian%20IJB%20Strategic-Plan%202019-23.pdf)

West Lothian Council: Local Development Plan 2018¹²

The West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out how the Council sees the area developing over the next 10-20 years. Key to the area's success is ensuring all development contributes to and enhances West Lothian's vibrancy. It sets out planning priorities and proposals for West Lothian and any future planning applications for the area are assessed against the LDP. The LDP is intended to complement the aims and objectives of the LOIP (see above) and ensure an improved quality of life that lives, works and does business in West Lothian. Key aims of the plan are:

- Economic Development and Growth (eg driving tourism and supporting major developments in designated areas)
- Community Regeneration (eg development of brownfield sites)
- Sustainable Housing Locations (eg supporting the Council's new build housing programme)
- Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery (ensuring all essential infrastructure is provided to support population and economic growth: planning application will not be supported by the Council unless adequate infrastructure is evidenced)
- Town Centres and Retailing (eg promote the development of centres of towns and villages)
- The Natural and Historic Environment (eg protect and enhance the natural landscapes)
- Climate Change and Renewable Energy (eg promoting development in sustainable locations)
- Waste and Minerals (eg maximising recycling opportunities)

¹² [file:///C:/Users/Victoria/Downloads/West Lothian Local Development Plan - Adopted final Web Version Amended - 2020-01-08.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Victoria/Downloads/West%20Lothian%20Local%20Development%20Plan%20-%20Adopted%20final%20Web%20Version%20Amended%20-%202020-01-08.pdf)



3. Community and Stakeholder feedback



The consultation aimed to gain wide representation from the community by using a variety of approaches including:

- events
- online survey
- focus groups
- one to one conversations

A range of communication channels were used to inform and engage including:

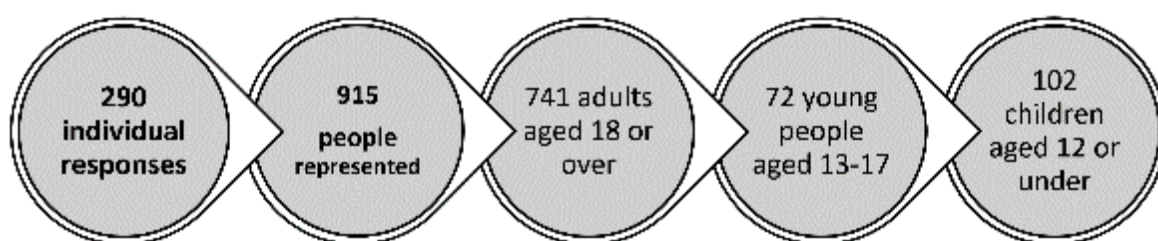
- press release
- social media
- posters
- leafleting
- word of mouth

The results of these are detailed in the following section.

3.1 Community Survey

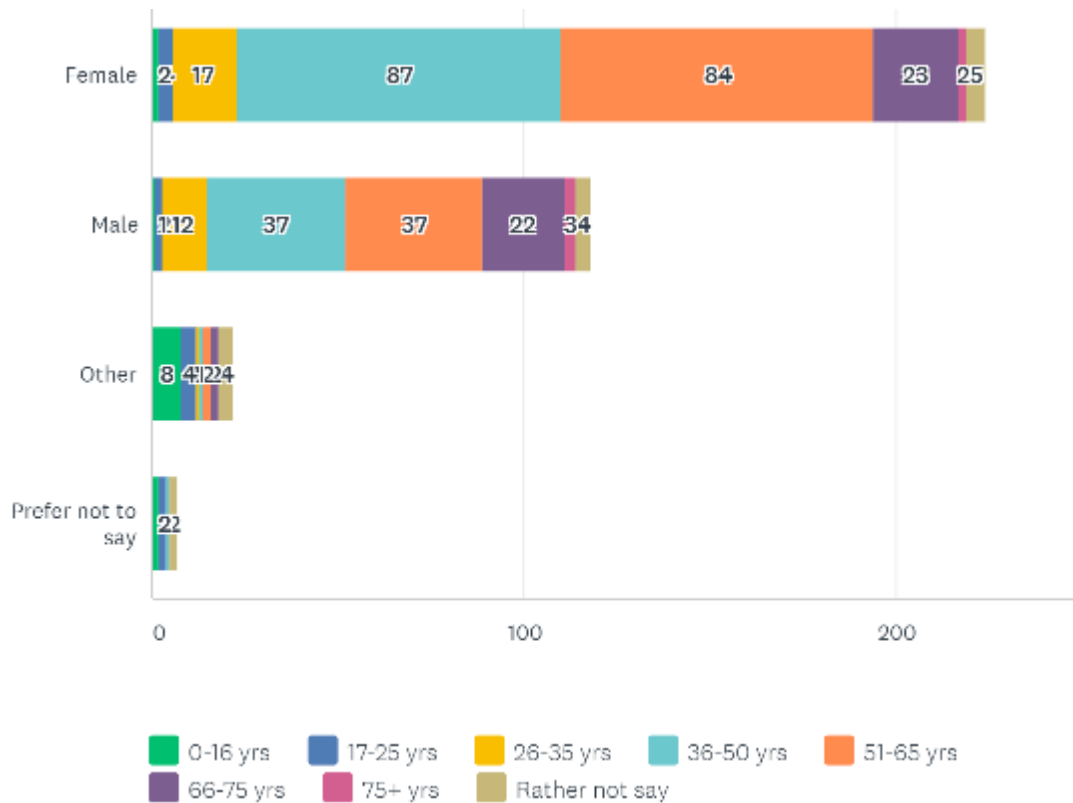
The community survey was available online from mid November 2019 to early February 2020. It was also available in paper copy format at various key locations in Murieston, including the Co-op Shop, Di's Diner, Du Beau and Murieston Medical Practice. At the time of reporting, a total of 290 individual responses were recorded. A significant number of these represented family groups rather than individuals and altogether, the survey represented the views of 915 people including children.

Profile

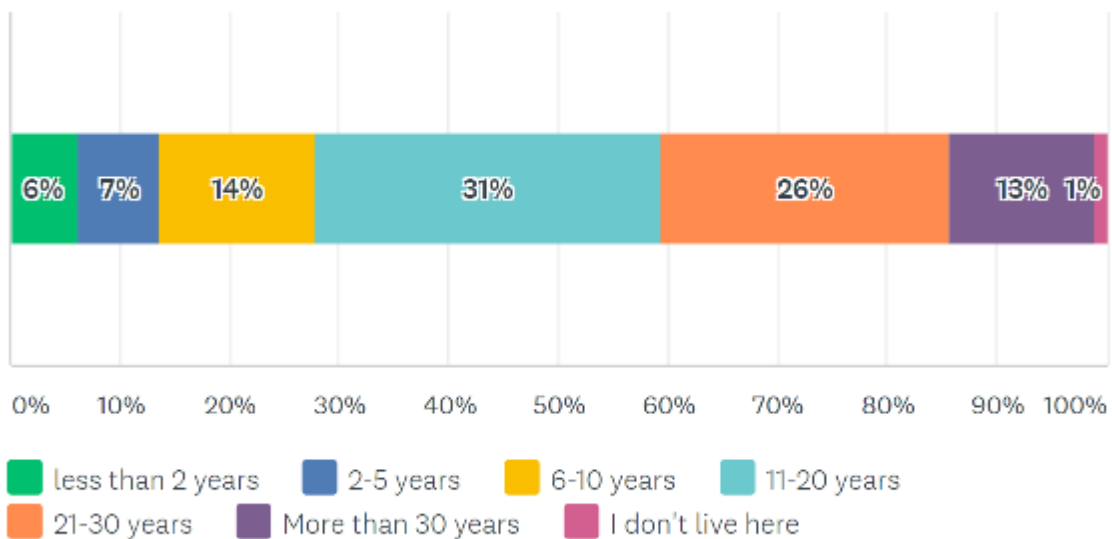


98% were local residents, 1% were visitors and 1% were people who worked in the area. Almost twice as many women as men took the survey and all age groups were represented although the 35-65 age brackets were most heavily represented.

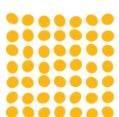




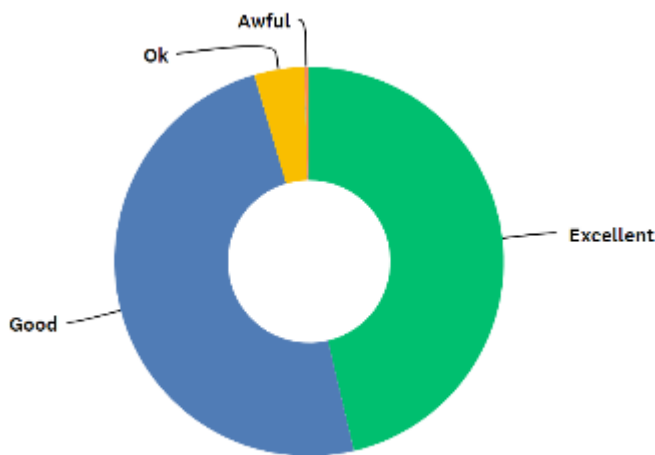
The majority of people have lived in the area between 11-20 years (31%) and 21-30 years (25%).



A significant 75% felt they would still be living in Murieston in 10 years' time, indicating a long term commitment to the area. Only 5% said they did not intend to stay and the remaining 20% were 'not sure'. Those who don't intend to stay gave their reasons as 'downsizing' 'loss of greenbelt' and 'being broken into.'

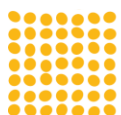
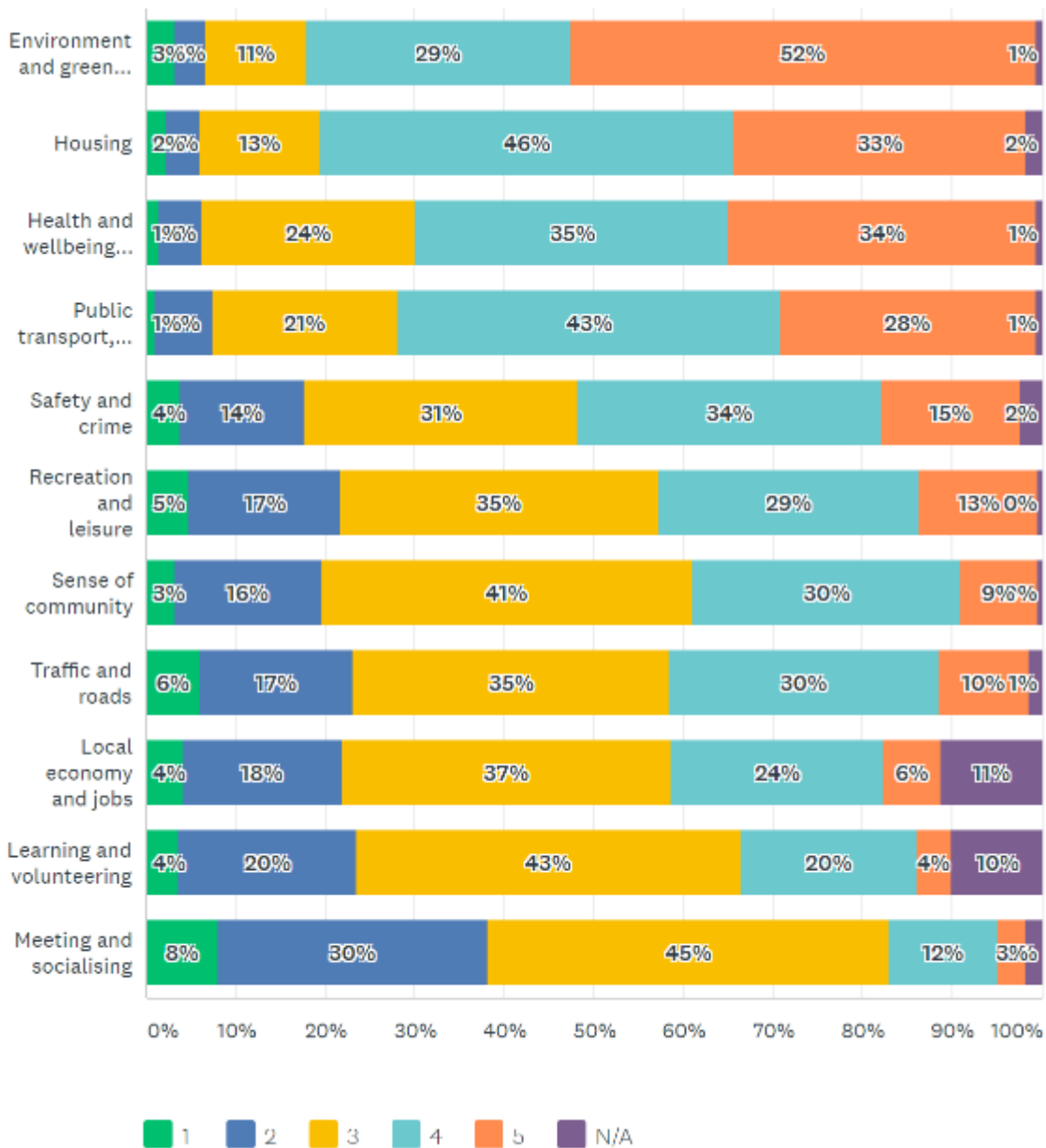


Rating Murieston



46% of people rated Murieston as an 'excellent' place to live overall and a further 49% as 'good'. Only 4% rated it as 'ok.' No-one rated it as 'awful'.

People were asked to rate specific aspects of life in Murieston from 1-5 (1 being poor, 5 being excellent). Environment and green space was rated most highly, followed by housing and in third place, health and wellbeing. Meeting and socialising was rated the lowest. The graph below shows the aspects from the highest rated to the lowest.



What people like about Murieston

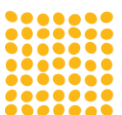
The results from the ratings were further supported by open comments. Asked which 3 things people like most about Murieston, in descending order:

Positive Aspects	% of people mentioning	Sample comments
1. Green space	65%	Green spaces and woodlands for everyone to enjoy Magical places
2. Trails, paths and walks	42%	I love the trails and the walks around Murieston Beautiful woodland walks Easy access everywhere on foot
3. Location / proximity to key services and amenities	36%	Rural feel even though you are on 5 mins from the shop Majority of services needed on doorstep e.g. health centre, vet, dentist Proximity to The Centre
4. Local amenities and services	35%	Parks for children The co-op is convenient Close proximity to retail and health services GP / Chemist / Co-op e.g. Schools Cricket Club
5. Peace and tranquility	28%	It is not a thoroughfare to other parts of Livingston I love the quiet of where I live Relatively quiet neighbourhood
6. Sense of community and neighbourliness	23%	Friendly neighbours Great sense of community Nice, respectful people
7. Ease of travel / access to transport	23%	Good transport links, enhanced by more regular bus service Close to Livi South train station & only 10 min drive to Livi North Convenient public transport
8. Quality housing	12%	The quality and space of housing Affordable house prices relative to Edinburgh Decent housing overall
9. Feelings of safety	11%	Safe, quiet environment
10. Attractive streets	9%	Generally well kept, clean area Exclusive residential area A pleasantly green and leafy part of Livingston to live in Fairly clean. Not too much litter.



“Having come from a very small town I was hesitant about moving to Livingston. I feel Murieston has a small town/village feel while also being so close to the centre of Livingston. I love that we have such amazing walks near us. We have lovely neighbours and am so glad we moved here.”

“I love Murieston. The green spaces of Bankton Park, Bellsquarry Woods and the Murieston Trail, along with excellent health facilities and good schooling, make it a great place to live. We are close to everything, from the shops to transport links. I moved here from England in 2001, and have brought my daughter up here. I can’t imagine living anywhere else.”



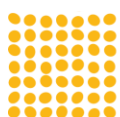
What people don't like about Murieston

In descending order:

Negaitve aspects	% of people mentioning	Sample comments
1. Over development	53%	<p><i>Victim of its own success with too many new built houses</i></p> <p><i>New housing developments with associated traffic, noise and stress on local services</i></p> <p><i>House building on green spaces</i></p> <p><i>Far too many houses are being built for the limited school spaces along with a small Dr surgery and Dentist</i></p>
2. Lack of social space	40%	<p><i>Lack of areas to hang out</i></p> <p><i>Limited places to socialise with or without kids</i></p> <p><i>Lack of cafe and social meeting places</i></p> <p><i>I feel Murieston really misses a local hub, whether that be a cafe or a family and dog friendly pub</i></p> <p><i>We need a nice cafe or bakery - somewhere for locals to meet</i></p>
3. Roads and traffic	31%	<p><i>Busier roads due to more residents</i></p> <p><i>Traffic volume and speeding</i></p> <p><i>The roads and pavements are in dire need of repair</i></p> <p><i>Drivers speeding</i></p>
4. Crime / safety issues	30%	<p><i>Break-ins seem to be on increase - makes you feel vulnerable</i></p> <p><i>Too many dogs off their leads</i></p> <p><i>Non existent lighting around the Murieston play park</i></p> <p><i>Lack of police presence</i></p> <p><i>Local jobs</i></p>
5. Local amenities and services	26%	<p><i>Lack of cafes and bars/restaurants</i></p> <p><i>No central community or hub. Its just a sprawling large housing estate now</i></p> <p><i>Not enough infrastructure (schools/doctors)</i></p> <p><i>Access to healthcare</i></p>
6. Poor maintenance / unkempt appearance	21%	<p><i>Public spaces are suffering from withdrawal of upkeep by WLC. Woodland poorly maintained.</i></p> <p><i>Verges left overgrown</i></p> <p><i>Grass and bushes overgrown in summer, icy paths in winter</i></p> <p><i>Woodland paths getting very muddy in the winter</i></p> <p><i>Amount of dog mess not picked up from paths and playing fields</i></p> <p><i>Litter and lack of litter picking- fly tipping</i></p>



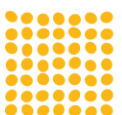
7. Poor public transport	19%	<p>Not enough trains at night returning from Edinburgh</p> <p>Public transport is poor. Trains can be cancelled at short notice. Buses are hourly and often do not turn up and there is no bus service on a Sunday</p> <p>Not enough bus links</p>
8. Parking at station / retail centre	17%	<p>Inadequate parking at Livingston South Railway Station both now and to meet future local needs Livingston South Park and ride far too small</p> <p>Lack of car spaces in car park resulting in local streets being used by train travellers as well as parents dropping and picking up of children from Williamston Primary</p>
9. Lack of community spirit	14%	<p>Lack of character ie a bland commuter community</p> <p>There appears to be a lack of community spirit and pride in the area</p> <p>I don't feel a sense of community</p>
10. Not enough for children and young people	11%	<p>Lack of places for teens</p> <p>Nothing for young people/ teenagers</p> <p>Young people need a place to go to keep them out of trouble</p> <p>Facilities for teens needed (not just football)</p>
11. Limited / expensive housing	5%	<p>Increase in number of unaffordable new houses</p> <p>Affordable 1st time buyer housing</p> <p>All housing 4 to 5 bedrooms, no downsizing opportunities</p>



“The amount of house building is getting ridiculous - it’s having an adverse effect on the green spaces, local amenities and infrastructure. I recognise people need housing but we seem to be a target for developers.”

“The car park at Livingston South Station is totally inadequate. I personally hear the angry residents complaining when commuters park at their houses. There will potentially be upwards of 200 more spaces required when the houses are completed on Murieston Road.”

“As Murieston expands the facilities do not seem to be growing with it and as a result I wonder if community spirit is not being nurtured - the community spirit that supports young parents, the elderly, the lonely etc.”



Future Challenges for Murieston

People were asked if they felt there was anything that may not be a problem now but may emerge in the future. 224 people submitted responses. Almost all of these related to concerns about overdevelopment and the subsequent erosion of quality of life as a result. Lack of green space, increase in traffic and parking, limited public transport, pressures on local health services, schools and other amenities were all cited. There were concerns that the housing being developed was all family sized and therefore limited opportunities to downsize or encourage a diverse, vibrant population. Some raised concerns about an ever growing reliance on cars placing pressure on existing roads and parking and affecting air quality. There were also concerns that if developments continued, Murieston itself would be 'swallowed up' by Livingston.

Following is a sample of comments:

Too many residents and not enough facilities

If ongoing building of homes continues, the wellbeing of individuals will be adversely affected, as will the environment. The ability to obtain GP appointments due to increased population and no local school choice again because of population increase. Community identity will disappear and uniqueness of area.

Over reliance on driving to station. Electric charging points needed.

Some long term residents are getting older, living alone and if not already they will become isolated with lack of community feeling in this area

Appreciate local green spaces but fear that these will be eroded due to pressure from developers and will, if not protected remove that element which makes Murieston an attractive place to live.

The attractive nature of the area will be compromised by large-scale house building. A direct road link to the A71 would be extremely bad in reducing quality of life.

Projects people would like to see in Murieston

Asked what 3 projects and initiatives people would like to see in Murieston, a total of 635 individual suggestions were recorded. In order of most mentioned to least, they were:

Project ideas	% of people mentioning	Sample comments
1. Café / bistro	69%	<p><i>Good quality local cafe/restaurant.</i></p> <p><i>A bistro - coffee day - meal night</i></p> <p><i>Community run café</i></p> <p><i>Community cafe to provide social hub</i></p>
<p>2. Environmental projects</p> <p><i>e.g. expansion of paths, better lighting, path maintenance, tree planting, community allotments / garden.</i></p>	53%	<p><i>Protect green spaces</i></p> <p><i>Plant tree screenings on Murieston road</i></p> <p><i>Improve the drainage on paths</i></p> <p><i>New, interesting trails with history facts/puzzles</i></p> <p><i>Planting 1000s of trees on every green space that's left</i></p> <p><i>Enhancing Murieston Trail</i></p> <p><i>Better signage along walking routes and a group to help maintain them</i></p> <p><i>Better lighting on paths and parks</i></p> <p><i>Community garden/allotments</i></p>



3. Additional parking and speeding restrictions	32%	<p>More parking for railway station</p> <p>Traffic calming measures</p> <p>Is there potential to expand the parking facilities at the station - perhaps in the bit by the path alongside the Alderstone Road?</p> <p>Speed bumps in the road... towards the school</p>
4. Facilities and groups for children and young people	22%	<p>More things for young children to do, clubs etc</p> <p>Youth centre</p> <p>Community evening hangout for older kids</p> <p>Larger play area for children</p> <p>Activity programmes for children / teenagers for example pottery activities / roller skating disco / arts / crafts</p>
5. More local amenities and services	15%	<p>More community orientated businesses/projects happening in the new retail units by the doctors</p> <p>Increase capacity at doctors</p> <p>More bespoke small local shops, e.g. Butcher, Bakery.</p> <p>Some local craft shops in the new centre</p>
6. More community spaces / improve existing facilities	14%	<p>Fund cricket club to build proper clubhouse.</p> <p>Better local meeting point .. Village Hall is inadequate</p> <p>More local activities/ classes etc (with more social spaces providing the space for these)</p> <p>Library space</p> <p>More diverse sport facilities</p>
7. More community groups / classes	13%	<p>Running club or reading club</p> <p>Meet up for lonely people possibly walking group / running group</p> <p>Things like yoga classes etc locally</p> <p>Local film and gardening clubs with community garden</p>
8. More bins / litter picks	11%	<p>More litter pick ups</p> <p>Better signage about dogs and dog dirt (some paths are full of dirt)</p> <p>Litter / dog waste bins beside benches</p>
9. Neighbourhood watch / increased police presence	9%	<p>Not sure how to prevent break ins during the summer, maybe more community policing or police notifying residence committees of known issues in the area</p> <p>Security or CCTV cameras</p> <p>More neighbourhood watch schemes</p>
10.= Local events	6%	<p>Entertainment/ music events would be nice</p> <p>More advertising for community events</p> <p>Galaday- local community run galaday</p>
10.= Older adult services / groups	6%	<p>More opportunities for older people to socialise locally</p> <p>Something for retired people who are still active.</p>



10.= Benches / picnic and BBQ area	6%	Benches erected around Walks e.g Linhouse Community bbq area Picnic area with benches and barbecue area Bankton Mains Play needs more than the 2 benches it currently has.
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“A local coffee shop that caters for everyone”

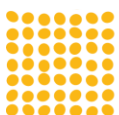
“Extension of existing paths and cycle routes through periphery of MCC area and linking into countryside beyond.”

“Traffic calming measures needed, especially in residential areas.”

“Limit any further development into existing green spaces.”

“Create a proper joined up village centre rather than a bunch of bland buildings.”

“Better use of Cricket club hall and Village Hall for community events/gatherings.”



A Vision for Murieston

Asked how they would like to be able to describe Murieston in 10 year's time, 228 responses were submitted. Using word tagging, the following key words were extracted as those most frequently mentioned, (the larger the word, the more frequently mentioned):

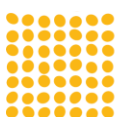


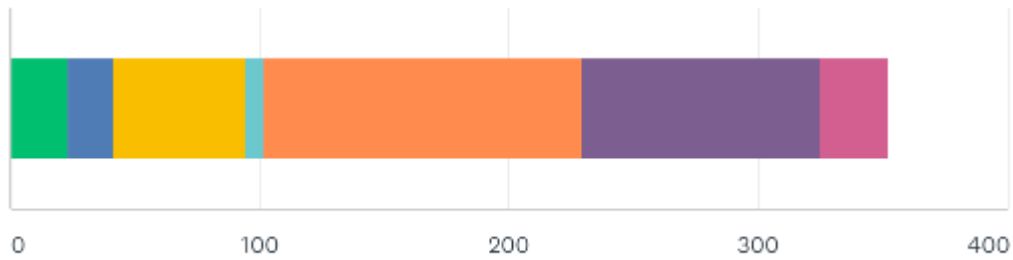
Reviewing the 'visions', the key aspects emerging were:

- A beautiful place with plenty of green spaces which are protected and preserved
- A safe place
- A place which is friendly, inclusive and community minded
- A place which enhances the quality of life for local people with good local amenities
- A place with a rural feel which is peaceful and lovely
- A place which has the best of both worlds: amenities of town but with ties to nature
- Active, vibrant and healthy
- The 'Jewel of Livingston'

Volunteering in Murieston

People were asked if they would like to be involved in these community developments. 50% would like to be kept up to date with what is happening and 37% would possibly like to be involved later on. 9% would like to become members of a new Community Trust, 7% would like to be involved in the steering group and 21% would like to become involved in some of the projects.





- Yes, I'd like to become a member of the Murieston Development Trust
- Yes, I'm interested in joining the Steering Group
- Yes, I'd like to become involved in some of the projects
- Yes, I'm part of a group that would like to discuss ideas further
- Yes, I'd like to be kept up to date with what is happening
- No, not now but maybe later
- No, I'm not interested

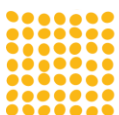
34 people left comments about the skills they could bring to this work. These were wide ranging and included architecture, construction, secretarial, hospitality, child care, accounting, building surveying, IT, events management, ecology, education and training, crafting, communication web design and copy writing, manual labouring, grant funding, change management, health care and volunteering.

3.2 Stakeholder Consultation

A number of stakeholders were approached to take part in the consultation (including local business representatives, elected members, community groups and schools). Those who took part in one to one conversations included:

- Cllrs Lawrence Fitzpatrick and Moira Shemilt
- Murieston United Football Club
- The Co-op manager
- The Cricket Club
- Bankton House Hotel
- Bright Horizons
- Simply Play
- Murieston Village Hall
- Murieston Medical Practice
- The 9th Livingston Scout Group
- James Young High School
- Williamston Primary School

Following is a summary of those views.

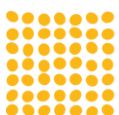


What's great about Murieston?

- Lovely place to be with plenty of green space and wildlife
- Lots of great walks in the area and Murieston Water is clean and attractive. MEG is instrumental in this
- Great space for children to enjoy the great outdoors and learn about nature
- Good level of community spirit – people care about the area and the environment - high level of local recycling. “Great community vibe” and friendly “people always say hello”
- The area has the highest spend on foreign holidays and on new cars in the UK indicating a good level of disposable income
- Good schools - 3rd best attainment rate in West Lothian
- Good transport links and the bus service is improving
- Easy to walk into central Livingston and access what you need
- Good access to both Glasgow and Edinburgh
- Good local health services with some room to grow
- A lot of highly skilled professionals
- Local population is relatively fit and affluent - people tend to be very active, including the older population. Bellsquarry has the longest male life expectancy in Scotland.
- Relatively low crime rate - the area feels a safe place to walk
- Good nursery / child care / after school care provision
- The Cricket Club is fantastic with a good programme of activity

What challenges are there?

- Local schools could be more connected to the area
- Resistance to change locally which may happen regardless
- No ‘heart and soul’ of Murieston – no central place
- Not many indoor places to take children and activities can be expensive
- Very limited places and activities for older children / teenagers which can cause conflict
- Litter and fires in the woods and vandalism on the football pitches
- Hard to know what’s going on locally- difficult to find information
- An ageing population which will increase pressure on social and health care especially for isolated and lonely “Elderly people aren’t visible in Murieston”
- Perception that people are well off but many have money worries, leading to marital and mental health problems. People don’t tend to ask for help.
- Childhood obesity - children not going out to play enough
- Car traffic is increasing
- Climate change - need to protect our environment eg use of plastics
- Perception that crime is on the rise - lack of police presence due to cutbacks



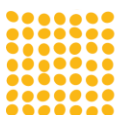
- No social space especially for young people. Typically, young people don't engage socially face to face and this creates problems of isolation and anxiety. Medical Centre has seen a significant increase 18-25yr olds with serious mental health issues
- Reduction in GP care but increase in demand - need to find alternative routes to health
- Lack of activities for GPs to 'socially prescribe' to patients
- Lack of outside investment in Murieston because it is low on the deprivation scale
- Fostering community spirit is difficult because so many people are commuters and go elsewhere for leisure and socialising
- There are no facilities which are entirely open to the community
- Lack of volunteers locally - some groups struggle

How do you think these needs could be addressed?

- Developments need to be sensible and sensitive
- Better promotion of what's going on in Murieston (groups, events etc.) - club and groups linking more effectively with the wider community
- Addressing loneliness in older people through befriending and clubs to get people out of their houses
- Give people reasons to get out of their houses and involved in the community in the winter months
- Protecting the local environment through environmental initiatives eg tree planting for carbon capture, skills development in land management for volunteers, making local venues more energy efficient and sustainable
- Increasing the number of health based activities locally eg. yoga, pilates, over 60s football
- GP Practice becoming more of a community based service rather than purely a medical one - new Community Link worker assigned to Murieston which could facilitate this - increase in social prescribing to community groups and activities
- Employers to put on local buses for employees to reduce car traffic
- Need a café / good social space for local people of all ages to get together but particularly for young people
- Recognise that teenagers need services too and tackle issue of bored teenagers head on

What plans or projects should be considered for the area?

- More activities and groups available locally
- Newsletter or webpage detailing local groups and events - improved usage of the community notice board in the Co-op shop
- Drop in sessions or a fayre day so local groups can promote their activities especially to encourage greater involvement from children and young people - Co-op may sponsor
- An indoor space for teenagers - casual and fun. There are plenty of spaces to 'hang out' but not in the winter and wet.



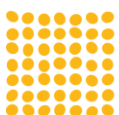
- A designated outdoor space for teenagers with (composite) seating and a fire pit
- More benches / seating at Bankton Retail, especially near Co-op
- A space for parents and young children eg soft play where parents can get a coffee and chat
- An attractive café with good food – possibly running some informal activities for groups eg book clubs, wine tasting, cooking demos, teen nights with open mic a couple of times a month - possibly linked to JYHS
- Climate change strategy for the area with volunteering and work skills development
- More intergenerational work to reduce isolation in the elderly – possible Bright Horizons link - opening up a library area for this purpose
- Investment in existing community buildings to be more accessible, more attractive and user friendly and more energy efficient. Better lighting around some of these places.
- Volunteer litter picks involving clubs, schools and other groups
- New outdoor play area at the Village Hall with a community garden
- Make use of the waste ground in Murieston for community benefit
- Updating GPs on social prescribing opportunities and referrals made to eg Walking Groups, Community Garden and so on
- Using the training room at the GP Practice for health based activities eg First Aid, Defib training etc.
- Developing the Cricket Club - this is currently an underused resource which could serve the community well and there is an appetite to improve and expand the existing programme
- Reinstate the fireworks display
- Run a local volunteering programme for all age groups but consider retirees who have time and experience – possible links with the Co-op shop

3.3 Focus Groups

A series of focus groups were carried out in the community. These aimed to capture the views of different demographics. Groups participating included:

- Pupil Council from Williamston Primary School (2 pupils from each class)
- Pupils from James Young High School (S1-S3 and S4 above)
- Members of the 50+ Network
- The Camera Club

The discussion points from each of the focus groups are outlined in the following section.



Pupil Perspective Group: James Young High School (mostly S1-S3)

The Pupil Perspective Group is an open, mixed year group which meets on a fairly regularly basis at the school to discuss topics of interest and relevance. The opportunity to discuss the Murieston CAP was highlighted to school pupils and on the day, some 32 pupils (mostly S1-S3 but with a couple of S4s) turned up to take part in the group session.

All the pupils attending lived in Murieston. One or two have lived in the area less than year but most for more than 5+yrs, a number of whom since they were born. A quick straw poll revealed that all of the pupils, without exception, rated Murieston as a 'good' or 'excellent' place to grow up.

Given the size of the group, pupils were asked to organise themselves into smaller groups and work through a series of topics set out on flip chart paper. These included good aspects of life in Murieston from their point of view, the not so good, what needs young people have in the area, what projects they would like to see / how they would invest money in the area and lastly, how they would like to get involved in the Action Place going forwards.



Good things about Murieston	Not so good things about Murieston
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a train station in Murieston, it is close • There is a shop • There is a local chippy, Chinese and Indian take aways • There are a lot of parks • Everything is in walking reach • Fields to walk your dog in • There is a car park beside the train station and the shops • Football pitches for training • Lots of woods • Lots of paths, no need to cross roads • Pretty ponds and places to meet up at and they freeze up in the winter so you can skate on them • Lots of underpaths to stand in when it is raining • It is a calm place to live • Safe community • Neighbours are friendly, usually • Neighbourhood watch areas • Hospital close in case of emergencies • There is a pub • Nice houses to live in • Good easy shortcuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bit dodgy • Chavs and bullying • Speeding • Litter • No Subways (food) • My dog got attacked at night and we couldn't see as there were no streetlights but we heard • Parks have too much babyish stuff • Not many dog poo bins, too much dog poo • So much rubbish lying around because on windy days it blows out of the bin • No toilets • Nowhere to sit and warm up when it is raining. There is only one place you can go and that's Innoflate and even that is filled with tons of babies • No enough pubs for adults to go to and to go and get lunch • No small cafes to go get lunch • Places for non-junkies to go at night • There are some junkie streets • Grass is never cut • Not enough seating in Murieston and places to hang out • Buses unreliable, bus not stopping at bus stop when I am there



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of clubs to go to for kids and teens • Innoflate is close by • School transport goes to Murieston, so if your parents have to work you can hop on the bus • It's fun • Interesting • No gang violence • School is in local area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not many clubs to join • Drugs • Cars park randomly • Dangerous parks • Not feeling safe seeing people on the streets • There's nowhere to go in the winter and we see much less of our friends then - only at school or if we go to the Centre in Livingston. • Not enough buses - we rely on our parents to take us • Not enough sports facilities - just football pitches
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What would you like to see happen Murieston?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juice Bar • Cyber café • Skate park, so we don't have to walk a mile X4 - Muri Skatepark • BIG library for young people • More fun things in the park, more modern day things • Tidy/Neat/Taken care of Murieston Trail • Have a Starbucks/Bubbletea or coffee shop at the train station • More dog poo bins that also have the packets to pick up and dog parks • Have better fences and walls • Jobs for 12-18 year olds like newspaper delivery etc • Volunteering for 12-15yr olds • Café or Diner, good for young to old people • Public swimming pool • A wall for graffiti (Legal) • Wall to paint and be repainted so you could start again - A place for people to paint and every month it gets painted white so we can start again....plz....! (My dream) • Community garden • Zip lines everywhere • Stables for horse riding (inc disability) • Elderly pub for socialising • More sports opportunities - not just football i.e. horse riding • Community or youth centre • Arcade • Places for young people to hang out X2- Night Club for teenagers • Homeless shelter but for animals and humans • Martial Arts centres • Fill the building next to GP • More buses • Young people hangout with CCTV just in case • Street lighting in underpasses • A new astroturf • Safe place for dogs to play • Gaming hub • More bins • Make a place for people to go when they are upset or want some peace



- Public toilets esp at Ashey Park
- Re-do cricket club and make more modern

Pupils indicated they would like to be involved in:

- Manning a stall at the Gala Day
- Litter picking
- Helping the Cricket Club redesign its space
- Advising the Development Trust Steering Group from a young people's perspective

Seniors Group: James Young High School (S4 Up plus Staff)

Good things about Murieston	Not so good things about Murieston
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General feeling very positive about area • Liked the quiet and wildness of the parks • Lots of walking trails • Places to walk dogs • Well maintained and looked after – mentioned the Round Table group as often doing community events and clean ups (soapbox rally, bouncy castle, gala days, dog shows) • Cricket club: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Used to do Fireworks displays but this stopped (suspected it was donation based and this didn't cover costs) ○ Gala day in summer with BBQ ○ Outside events with gazebos etc ○ Might know about it on facebook beforehand or hear about it on the day • Liked that the area didn't just look the same, houses had a bit of character and 'don't all look grey and the same'. • Liked that they had a local shop and some local services • Easy to walk, get bus or train to other places. Highlighted that they would go into Livingston town centre at weekends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a great sense of community – know neighbours but not much contact with wider 'Murieston community' • Stuff for younger children and retirees but not much for the 12-21 age range. Did mention, however, that they can easily access other areas which do provide things they like (this group were 17+ age group) • Lack of knowledge and poor communication about what's going on in the area. News tends to travel by word of mouth. • Poor lighting on paths (Bankton Mains park paths especially). • Path in Bankton Mains park really hard to cycle on – potholes etc • Play parks locally need updating e.g. Bankton Brae playpark (with input from local young people – last time the council updated it they added 3 useless things to the park). • Football pitch goals need replaced • Housing developments on greenbelt land – minimal ability of local community to have a say in this. Felt these were largely unaffordable homes and all looked the same. • Speeding on main roads • No response from Council on issues such as littering, speeding, etc. • Littering • Noise pollution • Limited community spaces locally to hang out – Village Hall is often booked with groups for younger kids or church (and weren't aware that this space could be hired for anything locally or how to do it). Don't use bowling club, scout hall. Cricket club recognised as more community focused but small inside - space was limiting.



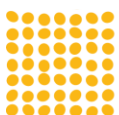
What would you like to see happen Murieston?

- Very supportive of café idea:
 - Thinks it should be run as a business rather than a volunteer type-community café. Fairly wealthy area with busy, working population - thought that volunteer lead would not work as well.
 - Extended opening hours (suggested that it would be better to open late for after work rather than an early morning start)
 - Dog friendly
 - Should be a business that is happy with having a community focus within the café.
 - Have comfy sofas, look nice, and be affordable to stay for a while.
 - Food – get Di’s Diner in to café!
 - Lending library/bookshelf/board games
 - Quiz nights
 - Possibly part-time jobs for young people/locals
 - Use empty building next to GP or another site?
- Not averse to having a youth voice on development trust etc but more interested in wider issues i.e. that affect Scotland rather than just Murieston e.g. environmental issues on a wider scale rather than littering locally.
- Volunteering opportunities – somewhere to go to where work experience or volunteering opportunities could be posted, asked for or shared. Very difficult to find these unless your parents have contacts. Felt that the Development Trust could be a way of linking local young people to projects etc. Notice board in café would also help with that – or local newsletter.
- Community garden – nice idea but only lasted a few weeks in the past, also concerned about people that hang out there at night etc.
- Speed bumps or cameras on main roads to reduce speeding of 100 miles+.
- Potentially support for training for young people in Glasgow and Edinburgh rather than delivering it locally i.e. work experience or classes that aren’t available in Murieston/Livingston.

Williamston Primary School (16 pupils)

Focus group undertaken with Pupil Council - 2 representatives from each class took part in the session with older pupils helping the younger children where needed.

Good things about Murieston	Not so good things about Murieston
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks, green space, fields and woods • Walking paths and bike trails • Walking everywhere, it’s all close by and safe enough to walk places e.g. school • After-school clubs and activities • The school is great, nice teachers and pupils are given chances to take on responsibilities • Close to friends • Nice people/it’s a friendly community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter/flytipping/broken glass • Dog fouling • Crime e.g. burglaries, graffiti • Teenagers hanging around, makes walking through parks etc feel unsafe • Broken street lights • Not enough stuff to do in parks • Not enough shops/village too small • Roadworks, cars speeding and parking issues • More benches • Not enough groups and activities for all ages but 9-10+ especially • Not enough recycling/overuse of plastic



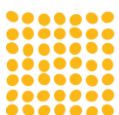
What would you like to see happen Murieston?

- More bins, dog litter bins and free dog waste bags at bins
- More and bigger parks and playpark activities:
 - Trampolines/Jellybelly
 - Skate park
 - Outdoor musical instruments e.g. xylophone
 - Zipline
 - Playpark upgrade at school to include:
 - Slides, climbing frames, seesaw, swings, more toys
- Community events, fayres, school fundraisers and gatherings
- More street lights
- More shops including sweet shop
- More classes and activities for kids:
 - Somewhere for kids to go
 - Art classes
 - Cookery classes
 - Clubs for little kids
- Litter picks and groups to clean up/improve look of Murieston – planting etc.
- CCTV and efforts to tackle vandalism
- Water stations across village and trail to fill up bottles/water for pets. Helps reduce plastic usage. More bottle banks.
- Groups and clubs in village do annual events to solve problems locally i.e. every summer do litter pick
- Projects to help the homeless
- Road improvements, speed bumps and cameras
- Swimming pool/waterpark
- Beehives
- Tackle bullying

50+ Group

Around 40-50 members attend social activities on a Tuesday afternoon at the village hall through the 50+ group. The group is mixed, more women than men and most attending on a regular basis are over 65. A quick straw poll revealed that around half the group are not resident in Murieston but travel in from other areas. Almost all of those voting rated Murieston as ‘excellent.’

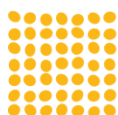
Good things about Murieston	Not so good things about Murieston
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and safe environment • Good housing • Lots of services and we have everything we need here; nurseries, bowling club etc • Good countryside nearby, greenspace and great for walking (“it’s like living in the country”) • Train station close by and good transport links, there are new buses being put on (“the number 27 into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New housing development; there are not enough services to accommodate the increase in population e.g. schools, nurseries. Car parking at the station is a particular issue - a number of us are unable to park near the village hall to get to the 50+ group • Lots of people moving into the area is likely to cause infrastructure problems as the roads are not wide enough



<p>Livingston is a boon”) and free buses for pensioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of greenspace and wildlife • It is easy to access health services with a good doctors’ surgery here • Safe place to live - very low crime rate • It’s a good place to live and we have everything we need • Good local amenities with all the key services needed (shop, pharmacy, station and so on) • We have a great friendship circle and take part in a number of activities together eg walking group • We know our neighbours and keep an eye out for each other, particularly the elderly residents • Quiet area • The village hall is well used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is hard to get a doctor’s appointment, waiting 2-3 weeks for a non-emergency appointment and this won’t get any better • The village hall is not big enough - we have a waiting list of 27 people but not enough room to accommodate them • The population is ageing and this will put a strain on health services • Parking is a huge problem in Murieston (mentioned by 5+ different people), train station in particular • Access to the village hall is a problem - lack of parking at one side and steep hill to walk up at the other – people have stopped coming here because of this • There are not enough places to socialise locally but there are lots of clubs going on locally • Paths and green spaces are not maintained as they once were: some of them are not safe to walk on with slippy leaves in the autumn and overgrown edges in the summer • Murieston is a reasonably affluent area but there is still hidden poverty that the statistics may not show. It would be interesting to see stats on the uptake of free school meals and there may be some social isolation among older people but this is difficult to quantify.
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What would you like to see happen in Murieston?

- Upgrading or rebuilding the village hall so it can host more activities for local people. We would like to see more investment in keeping the building clean and maintained
- Improving the parking situation to encourage those with mobility issues to come to the Village Hall
- Consider relocation of the community centre - building a new facility that is accessible to all in the community
- Would like to see a community café, a place to meet with friends other than once a week at a social club. The community centre is only open when groups are on so it’s not open as a meeting place
- Keep the paths maintained so it is pleasant and safe to walk
- A choir
- We would like to protect what’s already here. “Keep Murieston lovely.” “Keeping it green.” “Somewhere with a vibrant and diverse population.”



The Camera Club

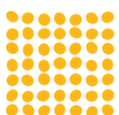
The Camera Club meets 1st Wednesday of the month in the evening. There are roughly 6-10 regular members. 5 men and 2 women were in attendance.

Good things about Murieston	Not so good things about Murieston
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet area • Good amenities in Murieston (vets, pharmacy, GP, nursery etc., hospital close by, rail links) • Good amenities nearby in and around Livingston (“there are plenty of pools, gyms etc.”) • Good walks and cycling • Good shopping (everything we need) • Good housing • “Nothing is too far away” • “Lack of a development is the plus” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrequency of the trains at the weekend • Car parking at Livingston South “it puts you off going into Edinburgh during the day” • The area has expanded: new housing developments will add pressure on the facilities • Lacks somewhere else to eat • Unsympathetic developments- especially housing
What would you like to see happen Murieston?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better woodland and path management in Murieston (this is no longer maintained to a good standard but is one of the main assets in the area) • Development of the Cricket Club House and car park • “Keep Murieston as it is” “Protect the Murieston Trail” “More people to get involved in the community” 	

Cricket Club Facebook postings

In December 2019, the Cricket Club asked its followers to answer three simple questions: what people like about Murieston, what they don't and how Murieston could be better. 24 comments were posted:

Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenty of areas to walk • We have everything on our doorstep from countryside to town, including Edinburgh and Glasgow by train. • Trail is brilliant best in West Lothian • Love the trail and feeling in the countryside. • I like/love the Trail and green spaces. • Green space and trails. • The green space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of local ‘social’ amenities (coffee shops, restaurants, pubs etc). • The new housing development, ruining the last uninterrupted view into the distant countryside. • I hate the current theft / people who are trying to break in. In our area more police activity required • I hate that people don't pick up their dog poo



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love the great walks/green areas on our doorstep • I like the people and beautiful environment. • I like the proximity to both good shopping facilities and lovely, open countryside. As an old age pensioner :- I also like the good transport links and find the local people to be mainly friendly. Overall, it's a good place to live. • Trails, river • Love the trail... best thing ever on our door steps • Close to a train station, continually hearing about • The train station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I least like the endless housing developments which encroach on those spaces. • Lack of coffee shops, restaurants. • Lack of restaurants • Dislike the vandalism/litter/broken glass/dog poo one can't miss seeing while out walking our great walks. • I least like the prospect of Murieston Road getting busier (I have to cross it). • I can't think of anything I dislike that's specific to Murieston. • Lack of sports facilities (excluding football pitches) • Hate ... the theft in this area • Thefts • The NIMBYs
Improvements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community project, maybe something like a community garden. • A restaurant/pub/ cafe with all day opening. • We need a good quality not over-priced all day restaurant/pub / café on the south side. We need a community café • I'd love a community cafe. • Lack of coffee shops, restaurants. • Community Café • Would love to see social amenities with events to bring people together, especially those who live alone to help tackle loneliness • I'd love a community cafe near the train station/village hall. • I saw in the Outer Hebrides the positive benefits that a good community cafe can bring to an area, but can appreciate that it's difficult to estimate likely support in advance of setting up, so could be the case that no-one will risk it. Local youth groups and football clubs do a great job working with youngsters. I would like to see the return of the Murieston Gala Day as it was a great community event. • Community cafe would be good ... but not sure if it would be supported enough? As most people are at work all day....?? • Rugby pitch or tennis court. • A foodbank 	

3.4 Community Event

A community event was held at the Cricket Club at the end of January. Around 25 people of mixed ages attended a Burn's Supper and this was used as an opportunity to engage people about Murieston present and future. A 'thoughts' wall was left up in the Club that evening and for the following two weeks or so for people to record their views on What's Good about the area / what's not so good and projects people would like to see.



Positives in Murieston	Negatives In Murieston	Ideas and Improvements
Good school	Bridle ways	A Gala Day
Outdoor spaces x 3	New houses impacting access	Dog training classes for children
The fireworks	No dance classes or dances for adults	Networking group for dog owners
Train station / Transport links x 3	Not enough youth groups	Educating people on responsible dog ownership
School and village hall	Fly tipping	Community café for older age groups / Befriending / things for older people - there may be people on their own
Walking opportunities / Lots of safe paths for walking / cycling x6	No signs for Deer Crossing where they are needed	Improve path from Easter Bankton to wildlife reserve
Good dog walks	No café for socialising x 3	Youth shelters
Cricket club x 2	Nowhere to play snooker	Local services
Walkable to vets and health centre	Lack of youth facilities	Better use of woodland for children / outdoor activities
Handy for railway station and buses to Edinburgh	Narrow path round school	Evening entertainment for local community
Doctor's Surgery	Pond but no fish	Activity groups for all
Good children's parks	Curtailed hours at the library	Path cleaning is on Dedridge side but not the other side of A71
	Speeding cars round main road / traffic speed	More bridleways
	Pressure on schools and services due to new houses	Fishing club and pond to take kids to - to keep them out of trouble
		Open a café x 2
		Reinstate the Murieston Trail around the Skivo Farm area
		Improve the path from Williamston PS down into Dedridge / under A71
		More police presence
		Baby group



4. Key Findings

4.1 Summary

Key findings identified through analysis of the research and consultation shows:

Assets

- Murieston is a relatively affluent community with a healthy, active population, good quality housing, a high proportion of working aged adults who are economically active, good levels of educational attainment, low crime rates and positive overall 'environment' scores.
- In the survey, 46% of people rated Murieston as an 'excellent' place to live and a further 49% as 'good'. Green space and housing were the most highly rated indicators.
- In the survey, the aspects local people value the most about Murieston are:
 1. the green space
 2. trails paths and walks
 3. location and proximity to key services
 4. local amenities and services
 5. its peace and tranquillity
 6. sense of community and neighbourliness
 7. ease of travel / access to transport
 8. quality housing
 9. feeling safe
 10. attractive streets
- Murieston is blessed with 'nature on the doorstep' being set in beautiful surroundings. There was wholesale appreciation of this throughout the consultation process and the community want this asset to be protected and maintained.
- Many residents of Murieston are attracted to the area due to the village feel on offer yet are still within close proximity to the assets and services available in a larger town with good connections to major cities.
- A high proportion of local residents see themselves staying in Murieston long term, suggesting a good commitment to the area.
- Research shows the population is educated with a high number of highly skilled professionals and that a positive number would like to be involved more in the community.
- There are a number of community buildings and local groups which facilitate important community activity and these have the potential to be developed.

Challenges

- The aspects people feel detract from the area are:
 1. over development
 2. lack of space to socialise
 3. increase in traffic
 4. crime and safety
 5. poor local amenities and services
 6. poor maintenance / unkempt appearance
 7. poor public transport
 8. parking at the station / Bankton Centre
 9. lack of community spirit
 10. not enough for children and young people
 11. limited / expensive housing



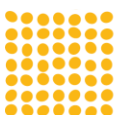
- The biggest challenge for Murieston identified through the survey was overdevelopment of housing. This is seen as a critical issue not only because of the pressures placed on existing infrastructure (eg parking at the station) but also because it fundamentally eroded the 'village feel' of Murieston. There were concerns Murieston was becoming 'one big, bland housing estate for commuters' rather than an engaged, diverse and inclusive community.
- There were deep concerns about the loss of green space to housing developments, access to the great outdoors being a key factor in why many people chose to live in Murieston.
- As a result, a significant number of people wanted to see Murieston 'protected' and largely 'kept as it is'.
- In the survey, 'meeting and socialising' was rated the lowest aspect of life in Murieston. Overwhelmingly, people wanted better space to socialise locally and would welcome a café / bistro / informal meeting space for all ages which would foster a sense of community and togetherness.

Green Space

- Many people consulted highlighted the need to protect and enhance Murieston's green space and wildlife and wanted to see more environmental projects taking place. This was the case across all age groups. Green space was the most frequently mentioned asset in the survey (65%) followed by the trails, paths and walks. Young people in the focus groups also cited the importance of green space and environmental initiatives.
- There was concern not only that green space was being eroded but that existing spaces were not being maintained adequately. People wanted to see more tree planting, better path and verge maintenance, less dog poo, more bins, more signage and information for trails and regular volunteer litter picks. 'Greening up' Livingston South Station and a sculpture trail were also suggested.
- Murieston Trail itself was seen as *the* local amenity to be protected for all local people to enjoy. The nursery, dog walkers, the elderly and teenagers all regarded the trail as a crucial asset which contributed to a number of positive outcomes.
- There was a good level of support for a community garden / growing area to compliment the green space. It was felt this would have a wide range of benefits and be of interest to all age groups.

Community Cohesion

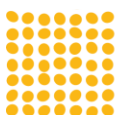
- There was a sense of pride about living in Murieston with high satisfaction rates. However, in the survey, 'sense of community' scored 7th highest out of 11 indicators reflecting that there was not a particularly strong sense of this locally. Whilst a number of people said they knew their neighbours well, this did not tend to extend further. This is perhaps unsurprising in an area with large numbers of commuters and high car ownership. The area is generally found to be friendly but lacks community 'heart and soul'.
- This is arguably reflected in perceptions about crime locally. Whilst local crime rate is in reality low, there is a perception that it is on the rise. Several suggestions were put forward for increasing Neighbourhood Watch schemes and more CCTV. This was also true of young people walking in Murieston. Better community spirit could enhance people's feelings of safety and security.
- There was a concern with a growing population, existing community spirit will be eroded and there was a need to reinvigorate this through more opportunities to socialise and participate in local activities rather than getting in the car to go elsewhere.



- The area has a strong, active community and voluntary sector delivering on a range of initiatives and activities. However, research showed that there is a tendency for groups to work in silos and were not particularly strong at promotion and engagement more widely. There was scope for more and better partnership working to develop and deliver projects.
- A number of existing community groups reported difficulties in recruiting and retaining local volunteers and some groups had folded as a result. More collaboration and harnessing of local talent (including young people) could drive momentum. A community group fayre, open days at community spaces, drop in taster sessions for groups, more engagement with James Young High School, a community newsletter / bulletin and notice board were all suggested as improvements in this area.
- There was a lack of community events to bring people together, for example the Gala Day, Fireworks Nights, a Christmas Tree, all of which people wanted to see locally.
- There is a growing proportion of retirees in Murieston and there was some suggestion (although no available data) of isolation and loneliness. It was suggested that community services and facilities need to take account of the older population, ensure they are accessible, available and inclusive and that older people should be given the opportunity to get involved in more intergenerational projects.
- The local population is generally robust and healthy but the local medical practice reported a significant increase in mental health related conditions: money worries, stress, marital issues were on the rise and largely hidden. Mental health among young people was also a concern with a sharp incline in rates of anxiety, depression and isolation some of which could be alleviated through community intervention.

Access to services and facilities

- People appreciated the local amenities available: access to medical services, local schools, a convenience store, the train station were all cited as positive aspects of local life but these were felt to be limited and even more so in the context of a growing population.
- Research showed that people liked the quietness and tranquillity of Murieston and were not in favour of major development but would welcome amenities that would enhance a sense of community and quality of life: a restaurant, a café / bistro that served dog walkers, the elderly, parents of young children and teenagers, an improvement to community buildings to make them more accessible and attractive and some retail additions such as a bakery and other artisan shops. A library was suggested by several people (including the focus group of young people) which could link in with book clubs.
- Meeting and socialising was the lowest scoring aspect of life in Murieston and is a contributing factor to the low sense of community. Strongly evidenced in the research was the lack of social space or 'hub' to meet informally and a lack of activities to get involved in at community level. There are a number of community run buildings but none of these are fully accessible for people to drop in, meet other locals and have a cup of coffee. People also wanted to see better outdoor socialising space: more benches, picnic and BBQ areas.
- Whilst people were in general against any further large scale housing developments, it was acknowledged that Murieston lacked housing for downsizers or first time buyers, leading to a lack of diversity in the local population with older and younger people moving away.
- Pressures on existing infrastructure emerged as a major theme in the consultation: lack of car parking spaces at the station, increase in (dangerous) traffic on the roads, difficulties getting GP appointments were cited as issues people felt were only going to get worse. The main solution put forward in the consultation was to stop further housing developments. Traffic calming measures, increasing parking spaces and improving roads were also suggested.



- Transportation is not a big issue locally. Over 95% of local residents have access to a car and over 60% to 2 cars or more. However, this in itself presented a challenge in terms of roads and air quality. There was a suggestion that Murieston needed to take a greener approach with support to increase active travel: better public transportation (more buses at the weekend and trains later in the evening) and improving the quality of footpaths to encourage walking. ‘Getting around’ for those who don’t own a car could be challenging: young people reported they rely on their parents to taxi them.

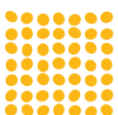
Children and Young People

- There is a higher population of people aged 0-15 than the Scottish average but there were not felt to be enough services and facilities geared towards young people.
- All school pupils (primary and secondary) consulted rated Murieston as a good or excellent place to grow up with nice streets, lots of friends to hang out with, plenty of paths to get around on foot and plenty of amenities in wider Livingston.
- Whilst there were outdoor spaces they could congregate (underpasses, the Asheys and so on), public spaces could be improved to make them more enjoyable: public toilets, more facilities in play parks geared towards older children, an art wall, better lighting and CCTV so they felt safer, less dog poo and more places to sit. Winter months were more difficult with nowhere to go and socialise.
- Some survey responses pointed to antisocial issues with young people such as fires and vandalism and some suggestion this needed to be tackled head on with dedicated outdoor space for teenagers.
- A café or ‘hang out’ hub was strongly supported by young people where they could socialise and buy refreshments but also take part in activities: music nights, games nights, a library space and so on.
- Young people also want opportunities to volunteer to learn new skills and take on some part time work to fit around studies. A high proportion were keen to see Murieston ‘kept beautiful’ and interested to be involved in environmental initiatives.

4.2 Recommendation: Themed projects under an agreed vision

The research carried out by Community Enterprise has led to themes and priorities being identified for Murieston. Overarching these themes and priorities should be the adoption of a vision for the village. A recommended vision for the community to agree on is outlined below.

“We live in a safe and friendly place with a strong sense of community, able to enjoy the best of both town and country and offering quality of life for all residents”



5. Draft Action Plan

Theme 1: The Great Outdoors

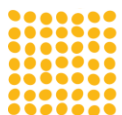
- Protect our green spaces

- Improve the quality of our green space

- Develop an Environmental Strategy

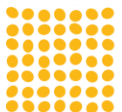
Projects:

- Block further large scale housing developments
- Maintaining and improving existing paths/ verges
- Extending path network
- More benches along paths
- Greening Livingston South station
- Planting more trees / encouraging more biodiversity
- Picnic / BBQ area
- Regular litter picks and more bins
- Support to MEG
- Trail information and signage



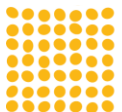
Theme 2: Amenities and Services

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better social spaces and shops	<p>Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Café / Bistro for all, including dog walkers• More parking at train station• Dedicated outdoor space for teens• Electric car charging points at station/ elsewhere• Better paths• More benches at Bankton Centre• More local shops serving locals (eg bakery) / fill Barden House retail unit• More dog fouling signage / bins / dedicated play area for dogs• Public toilets at the Ashey
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better roads, travel and parking	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved appearance	



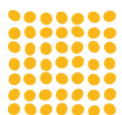
Theme 3: Community Cohesion

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve communication across the community	<p>Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community newsletter/ noticeboard / online news and events platform• Create forum for voluntary groups and hold a fayre to showcase local groups and venues• Welcome pack for new residents• Range of community events: fireworks night, summer BBQ, Christmas tree, Gala Day• Volunteering programme with time banking• Youth forum to give a voice to young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop community events for all	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop local volunteering	



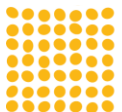
Theme 4: Community Resources

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve our community facilities	<p>Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community garden and allotments• Indoor space where young people are welcome and can hang out• Community shuttle bus to station to reduce traffic and parking pressure• Improvements to Cricket Clubhouse & Village Hall• A community 'art' wall – indoor or outdoor• Library resource• Community enterprises such as community run co-working space
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a Community Development Trust	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop community based ventures	

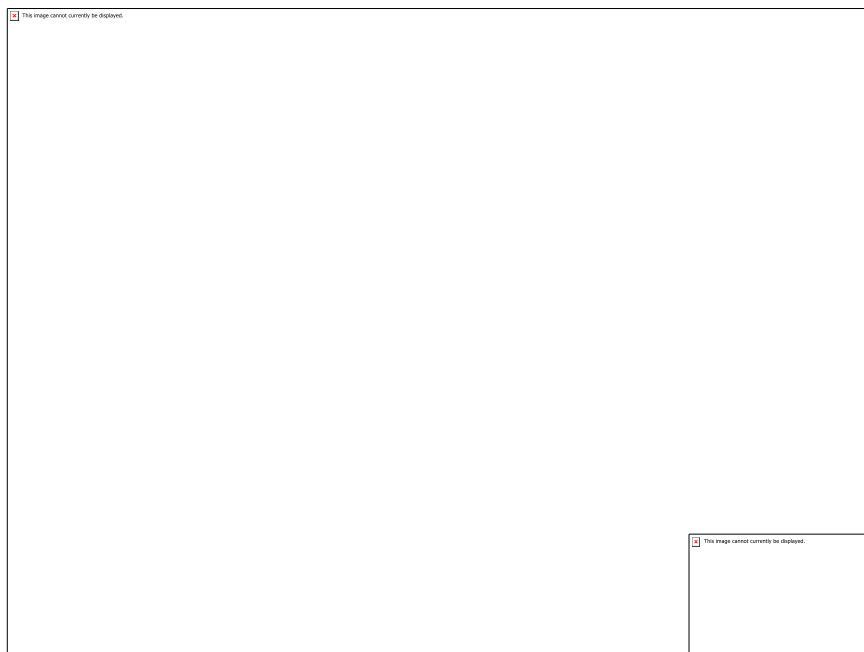


Theme 5: Health, Wellbeing and Opportunities

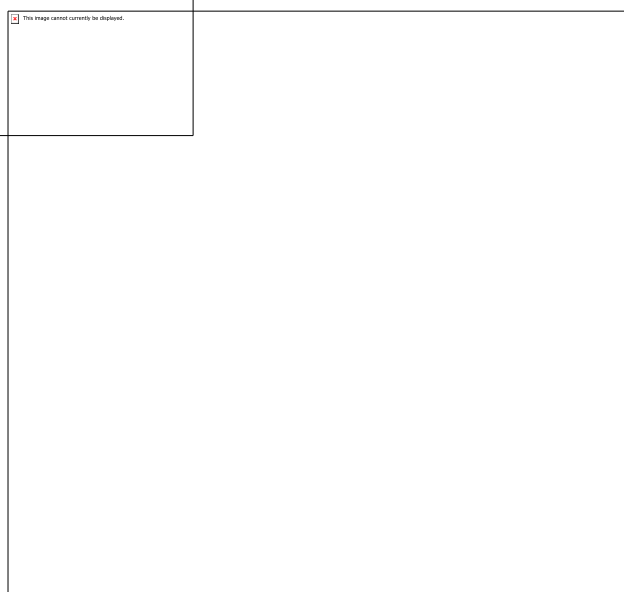
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More activities for all	<p>Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walking group / running club / baby massage / gentle exercise / gardening club• Music events• Encouraging active travel• Defibs and training• Better street lighting• More traffic calming measures• Neighbourhood Watch/ CCTV• Better links with GP practice for outreach work and 'social prescribing' locally
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Widen health improvement opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve community safety	



6. Sharing findings with the community



A final consultation and information drop in event was held at the end of February on a Saturday afternoon at Murieston Village Hall. Information boards displayed key findings of the research and consultation to that point and set out the suggested action plan. Around 31 people attended. Everyone broadly agreed with the findings and reflected that the action plan covered the most important aspects.



The themes and priorities were set out on tables for people to vote on their favourite priorities and specific projects. Each person was given one gold star (2 points) to place on the priority they considered most important and 2 further stars (1 point each) for their second / third choices. They were also given 5 small dot stickers to place on the projects they liked best.

The voting results were as follows:

Priorities	GOLD STAR		Scores
Protect our Green spaces	14 gold stars	2 coloured stars	30
Improve the quality of our green space	3 gold stars	7 coloured stars	13
Develop an environmental strategy	2 gold stars	1 coloured star	5
Better social spaces and shops	5 gold stars	5 coloured stars	15
Better roads, travel and parking	-	4 coloured stars	4
Improved appearance	-	1 coloured star	1
Improve communication across the community	-	-	0
Develop community events for all	2 gold stars	8 coloured stars	12
Develop local volunteering	2 gold stars	2 coloured stars	6



Improve our community facilities	3 gold stars	7 coloured star	13
Establish a Community Development Trust	-	2 coloured stars	2
Develop Community Based ventures	-	1 coloured star	1
More activities for all	-	7 coloured stars	7
Health improvement opportunities	-	2 coloured stars	2
Improve community safety	-	2 coloured stars	2

The 5 priorities scoring the highest are highlighted in yellow.

Scoring on individual project ideas was as follows (in descending order of those gaining 4 or more votes):

- Café / bistro (11)
- Maintaining the Murieston Trail and encouraging biodiversity (9)
- Greening Livingston South station (7)
- Path improvement (7)
- Block further large scale housing development (7)
- Traffic calming measures (7)
- More trails linking Murieston with areas beyond eg Pentlands (6)
- More parking at railway station (6)
- Improvements to the Village Hall (6)
- Local community noticeboard (5)
- More benches along the paths (5)
- Indoor space for young people to hang out (4)
- Improved Lighting along paths (4)

Finally, we asked people to write down on postcards any further suggestions to strengthen the action plan.

“I would like this group to have a long term environmental vision around green energy schemes and transport. Even if we are not sure how it can be achieved, there is an urgent need to make a commitment to a green future for our children.”

“More diverse housing” - whilst we may wish to block further large scale developments, Murieston lacks housing for smaller households. We need to consider finding a balance between housing needs and the impacts of further development. Older people want to stay in the community in retirement but can’t downsize: “we could move into smaller houses, thereby freeing up family homes so there wouldn’t be a need to build more.”

“Fly tipping control”

“Indoor pool and snooker facility”

“Improve / reinstate the ‘old’ Murieston Trail round the back of Skivo Farm”

“Good quality pub”

“Heritage projects / opportunity for people to learn about the history of the local area.”



7. Next Steps

The findings and recommended way forward set out in this report need to be carefully considered by the steering group. It is advised that members of steering group:

