

**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 21 September 2023

**BY:** Executive Director for Place

**SUBJECT:** Local Economy Strategy

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update on the development of a new Local Economy Strategy for East Lothian.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the content of this report and the current position in relation to the development of the new strategy; and,
- 2.2 To note that the appended evidence report is a draft document under review and as such can be expected to require further refinement.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The East Lothian Local Economy Strategy 2024-2034 (in development) will replace the East Lothian Economic Development Strategy 2012-2022 (refreshed 2018).
- 3.2 The strategy, and accompanying action plan(s), will be the key delivery document for the Grow our Economy objective in the 2022-2027 Council Plan, for the '*Prosperous*' theme within the East Lothian Plan 2017-2027, will support the development and delivery of Local Development Plan 2, and the ongoing development of the Council's key strategic development sites.
- 3.3 The strategy is being developed in the context of and to align with and support the delivery of the national and regional economic development goals and aspirations contained within the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) and Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF), including resilience, wellbeing and fair work, skills for rewarding careers, just transition to net zero, entrepreneurship, productivity, and innovation.

- 3.4 The development of the strategy will also consider wider alignment with the UK Growth Plan and Levelling Up agenda, with a focus on applicable UK wide policy, funding, and support.
- 3.5 Development of the strategy is overseen by the Connected Economy Group (CEG), one of the East Lothian Partnership's Strategic Groups, and is being supported by Stantec UK Ltd.
- 3.6 This strategy will identify a shared vision and a series of shared objectives, actions, and performance measures; developed in partnership with the key stakeholders in the East Lothian economy; which all of the local economy's stakeholders will work together to collectively achieve.
- 3.7 Its development is based on consultation and analysis of relevant data. It includes a focus on equality, inclusivity, and community wealth. It will be a 'smart growth' strategy that builds upon existing assets, takes incremental actions to strengthen communities, and builds long-term value to attract a range of investments.
- 3.8 It will set out a series of agreed policy interventions that take account of local context, as well as organisational capacity and resources, factoring in local priorities related to achieving increased job density, community wealth building and fair work, economic and business sustainability and resilience, innovation and productivity, and the climate and ecological emergency.
- 3.9 The strategy and associated action plan(s) will be subject to a monitoring and evaluation framework and is intended to be live document to be kept under ongoing development.

#### Summary of progress

- 3.10 Procurement of external specialist consultancy support for the development of the strategy took place during Q3/4 2022-23. Following an initial PIN, a two-stage process was followed leading to the appointment of Stantec in spring 2023.
- 3.11 Following their appointment, project refinement took place with Stantec during April 2023 to confirm the approach, timeline, and work plan. This was presented to the CEG on 28 April.
- 3.12 The period from May to August has focused on data and strategy review, stakeholder engagement, and community consultation. This included ward based community drop in sessions, business focus groups, internal ELC focus groups, a Community Wealth Building workshop attended by internal and external stakeholders, 1 to 1 discussions and interviews, and further engagement with external stakeholders, groups, and forums.
- 3.13 Summary reports have been provided to the CEG on 30 June and 25 August. The draft evidence report (Appendix 1) is the key output of this phase of the project and summarises stakeholder perceptions and next steps as at 25 August.
- 3.14 At time of writing, further engagement has been planned through September, including a workshop session with ELC Heads of Service and Executive Directors, and one with Elected Members. The work plan

(Appendix 2) sets out key dates and deliverables for the remainder of the project.

- 3.15 It is planned that a draft final strategy document will be presented to the CEG for input at the beginning of December, with the final strategy being presented to full Council early in 2024.

#### Draft Evidence Report

- 3.16 It should be noted that the appended evidence report is a draft document under review and as such can be expected to contain formatting issues, errors, inaccuracies, or otherwise require refinement. The report is arranged in four sections:
- 3.17 Section 1: Introduction, sets out purpose, approach, and structure;
- 3.18 Section 2: Area Overview, sets out the findings from the consultant's desk based review, providing an overview of East Lothian's geography; demographics; labour market; business composition; connectivity; visitor economy; equality & inclusivity and policy landscape;
- 3.19 Section 3: Stakeholder and Community Perceptions sets out the consultant's observations and findings from the community & stakeholder engagement activities, providing a summary of the comments raised in relation to East Lothian's policy landscape; place competitiveness; workforce skills; key sectors; strategic sites and community wealth building; and,
- 3.20 Section 4: Conclusions and Next Steps, sets out the key emerging messages and the proposed future phases of the strategy development process.
- 3.21 This paper identifies a number of significant strengths in the East Lothian economy, including a rapidly growing and well-educated population; a high quality reputation for its food & drink offer; attractive visitor destinations; natural resources and infrastructure that make the area well placed to target opportunities in renewable energy; high quality east-west transport links; and an active and engaged community and third sector.
- 3.22 The consultants note that their research has also identified a range of factors that could constrain the area's future development, including a shortage of technical skills; low business productivity; poor north-south connectivity links, and a shortage of immediately available business expansion land.

#### Community Wealth Building

- 3.23 As part of the development of the East Lothian Local Economy Strategy, we are seeking to embed the concept of Community Wealth Building (CWB) as a 'golden thread' throughout the objectives, projects, actions, and monitoring indicators of the Strategy.
- 3.24 The Scottish Government has adopted the internationally recognised CWB approach to economic development as a key practical means by which progress can be made towards realising their wellbeing economy vision outlined in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET).

- 3.25 A CWB approach arranges economic development activity around the concept of anchor institutions, large public, private, and third sector economic actors with significant purchasing power or employment bases, which if acting in socially just ways can deliver benefits to local residents.
- 3.26 The East Lothian Partnership has established a short life working group to help define Community Wealth in an East Lothian Context and work with partners to develop a CWB diagnostic and action plan for East Lothian.
- 3.27 The draft diagnostic and proposed actions are presented within section 3.6 of the report. It highlights progressive procurement, advancing fairer employment and labour markets, plural ownership of the economy, socially just use of land, and making financial power work for local places as the '5 pillars' of CWB for East Lothian.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The new Local Economy Strategy 2024-2034 will replace the East Lothian Economic Development Strategy 2012-2022 (refreshed 2018). The strategy, and accompanying action plan(s), will be the key delivery document for the Grow our Economy objective in the 2022-2027 Council plan and '*Prosperous*' theme within the East Lothian Plan 2017-2027.
- 4.2 Work undertaken to develop the strategy is likely to inform a revision to the Council's Top 50 indicators as they relate to the economy, economic development, and support for business.
- 4.3 It is anticipated that new duties may be brought forward by the Scottish Government that will compel local authorities and others to integrate CWB principles and plans into their economic strategies or local outcome improvement plans.

## **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report itself does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy. However, an Integrated Impact Assessment will be undertaken in respect of the new strategy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – none
- 6.2 Personnel – none
- 6.3 Other – none

## 7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix 1: East Lothian Local Economy Strategy Report 1: Evidence Paper (Draft) August 2023

7.2 Appendix 2: East Lothian Local Economy Strategy Work Plan August 2023

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<b>DATE</b>	08 September 2023



# East Lothian Local Economy Strategy

Report 1: Evidence Paper

Draft Report

DRAFT

On behalf of **East Lothian Council**



## Document Control Sheet

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Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed
1	August 2023	Draft	KD, KW, SF	KW, SF

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 In Spring 2023, East Lothian Council appointed Stantec to support the development and delivery of a Local Economy Strategy for East Lothian.
- 1.1.2 This strategy will identify a shared vision and a series of shared objectives, actions and performance measures; developed in partnership with all of the key stakeholders in the East Lothian economy; which all of the local economy's stakeholders will work together to collectively achieve.
- 1.1.3 It will include a focus on equality, inclusivity, and community wealth, and its development will be based on consultation and sound data. It will also be a 'smart growth' strategy that builds upon existing assets, takes incremental actions to strengthen communities, and builds long-term value to attract a range of investments.
- 1.1.4 It will set out a series of agreed policy interventions which take account of local context, as well as organisational capacity and resources, factoring in local priorities related to achieving increased job density, community wealth building and fair work, economic and business sustainability and resilience, innovation and productivity, and the climate and ecological emergency.
- 1.1.5 The strategy will be developed through the following four-phase approach:
- **assess:** which will explore the baseline conditions and long-term trends which will form the parameters within which the strategy will be developed.
  - **diagnose:** which will identify the overarching economic vision for the authority area, including the opportunities it should pursue and the challenges it should seek to mitigate.
  - **prescribe:** which will define and specify specific actions to support the delivery of this vision.
  - **monitor:** which will assess performance to plan, identifying and pursuing early mitigating actions to bring projects back-on-track when problems arise or when the external environment changes.
- 1.1.6 The purpose of this evidence paper is to set out the findings from the 'assess' stage of the work, providing an evidence base with which to support future discussions around the development of the shared vision, objectives, action plan and monitoring framework.

## 1.3 Approach

1.3.1 The paper draws evidence from:

- **Data review:** a review of socio-economic data sources pertaining to the East Lothian economy, including data from Scottish Annual Business Statistics, the Inter Departmental Business Register; the Annual Population Survey and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; Office of the Rail Regulator and UK Day Visitors Survey.
- **Strategy review:** a review of the key strategic documents pertaining to the East Lothian economy.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** the research team engaged with circa 100 stakeholders (this number does not include members of the public from public consultation events) across the local economy (see Appendix A or full details).
- **Community consultation:** seven public consultation events were undertaken across East Lothian over the course of June 2023, including events in Musselburgh, Prestonpans, Tranent; Haddington; North Berwick and Dunbar (see Appendix B for full details).

## 1.4 Structure

1.4.1 The remainder of this paper's structure is as follows:

- **Section 2 (Area Overview):** sets out the findings from the desk based review, providing an overview of East Lothian's geography; demographics; labour market; business composition; connectivity; visitor economy; equality & inclusivity and policy landscape;
- **Section 3 (Stakeholder and Community Views):** sets out the findings from the community & stakeholder engagement activities, providing a summary of the comments raised in relation to East Lothian's policy landscape; place competitiveness; workforce skills; key sectors; strategic sites and community wealth building.
- **Section 4 (Conclusions and Next Steps):** set out the key emerging messages from this work and sets out the future phases of the strategy development process.

## **2 Area Overview**

### **2.1 Preamble**

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this section is to outline the current socioeconomic characteristics of East Lothian. This allows us to reflect on the current situation and, along with Section 3, which sets out community and stakeholder perceptions of and aspirations for the East Lothian economy, will provide an evidence base to inform the development of a shared vision, set of objectives and action plan.

### **2.2 Geography**

- 2.2.1 East Lothian is a local authority area in east central Scotland, bordering Edinburgh to the West, Midlothian to the South-West and the Scottish Borders to the South. The administrative centre of the Council is Haddington, while the largest town by population is Musselburgh. Other large towns in the Council area include Tranent, North Berwick, Dunbar and Prestonpans.
- 2.2.2 The geography of the area is varied; the coastline is mostly low-lying, with sandy beaches attracting people from all over Scotland and beyond. Coastline features a number of small islands, including Craigleith and Bass Rock, which are visible from North Berwick. It's coastline includes the principal towns of Musselburgh, Prestonpans, North Berwick and Dunbar, and the communities of Cockenzie, Port Seaton, Longniddry, Aberlady, Gullane and Dirleton.
- 2.2.3 The northern area of the local authority is mostly flat and fertile and contains many of the Council area's principal settlements and major transport routes, including the A1 and East Coast Mainline. It includes the principal towns of Haddington and Tranent, and the communities of Wallyford, Blindwells, Gladsmuir, Athelstaneford, East Linton and Innerwick.
- 2.2.4 The southern area of the local authority is more undulating and lies in the foothills of the Lammermuir Hills. It includes the villages of Ormiston, Pencaitland, Gifford, Stenton and Oldhamstocks.
- 2.2.5 The major rivers flowing through the Council area include the Rivers Tyne & Esk, which rise in Midlothian and feeds the fertile farmland in East Lothian before emptying into the Firth of Forth at Belhaven Bay and Musselburgh respectively.
- 2.2.6 The Council area consists of six ward/area partnership areas, which each elect its own set of Council representatives and develops its own Local Area Plan. These are outlined below.

Figure 2.1: East Lothian Area Partnerships.



- 2.2.7 The main rail links in East Lothian are the East Coast Main Line (which runs from London to Edinburgh, passing through East Lothian), and the Edinburgh to North Berwick Line (which separates from the East Coast Main Line at Drem). Newcraighall Station, on the Borders Railway Line lies just outside of the area’s western boundary. East Coast buses operate bus routes to each of the principal towns, while Eve Coaches, Prentice Coaches and E&M Horsburgh operate local routes.
- 2.2.8 The local authority has a strong visitor offer, driven by its beaches, golf courses and coastal towns; anchor attractions (including the National Museum of Flight and Glenkinchie Distillery); and attractive rural countryside. It also has a strong energy infrastructure, including a number of on-shore and off-shore windfarms, Scotland’s last remaining active nuclear power station and strong grid connectivity infrastructure. Its largest private sector employers include Charles River (a clinical testing facility), EDF Energy (operators of Torness Power Station) and Tarmac (a cement manufacturer). Queen Margaret University lies within the local authority area, while Edinburgh College’s Brunstane campus is located within a mile of East Lothian’s boundary with Edinburgh.
- 2.2.9 Major new developments in the area include the Blindwells housing expansion, the Edinburgh Innovation Park site (including the Queen Margaret University Food and Drink Innovation Hub), and the Cockenzie and Port Seton Waterfront Masterplan, which will regenerate and bring new uses to the former coal fired power station site at Cockenzie.

## 2.3 Demographics

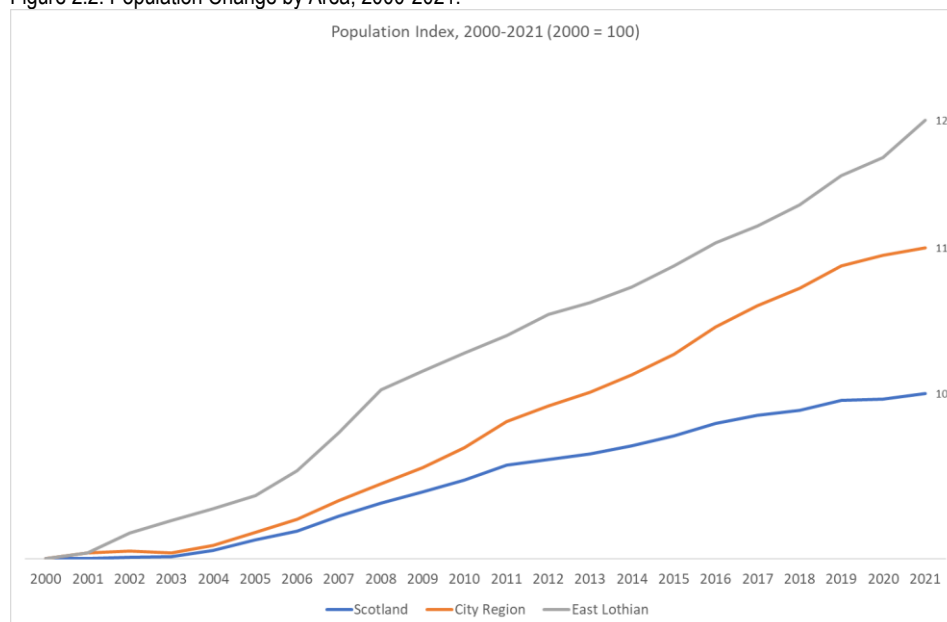
- 2.3.1 East Lothian’s population in 2021 was estimated at 109,600<sup>1</sup>, which represents a 22% increase in population since the turn of the century. This is significantly more than the 16% average growth rate experienced across the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region as a whole<sup>2</sup>, and the 8% average growth rate across Scotland.
- 2.3.2 This trend of above average population growth is forecast to continue, with the National Records of Scotland projecting that East Lothian’s population will rise by 14.3% between 2018

<sup>1</sup> National Records of Scotland

<sup>2</sup> This area also includes the City of Edinburgh, West Lothian, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and Fife

and 2043, compared to a growth of 6.3% across the City Region and 2.5% across Scotland as a whole.

Figure 2.2: Population Change by Area, 2000-2021.



Source: National Registrars of Scotland, 2023

2.3.3 East Lothian has a disproportionately higher proportion of people who are either below or above working age than the City Region and Scotland averages, and its dependency ratio (the number of non-working age people supported by each working age person) is therefore higher, with potential implications for the Council's school and social care budgets.

Table 2.1: Population Share by Age Cohort.

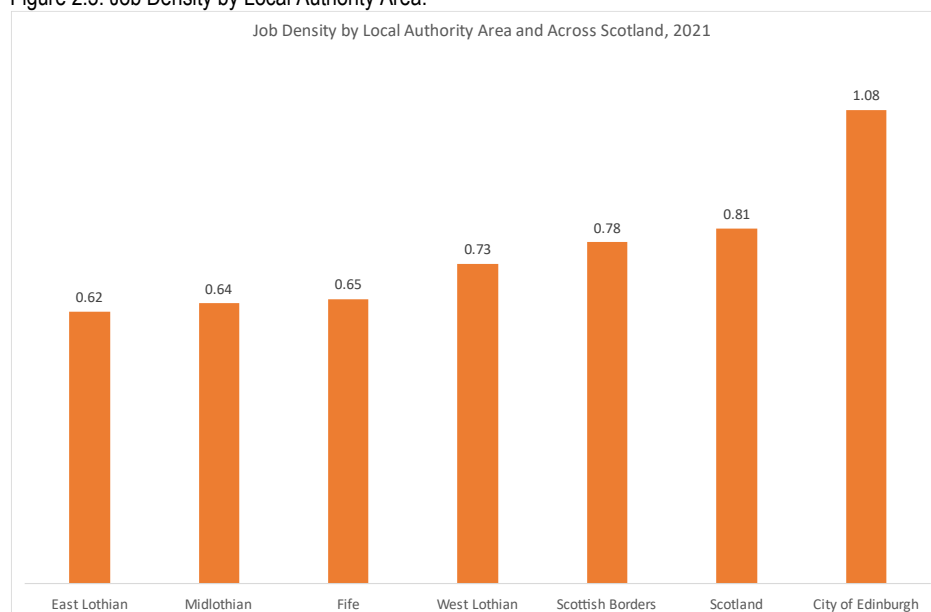
Qualification level attained	East Lothian	City Region	Scotland
0-15	18.1%	16.7%	16.6%
16-24	8.7%	10.4%	10.2%
25-49	29.9%	34.2%	32.6%
50-64	22.4%	20.0%	21.0%
65+	20.9%	18.7%	19.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Working age population (16-64)	61.0%	64.7%	63.8%
Dependency Ratio	0.63	0.55	0.57

Source: National Registrars of Scotland, 2023

## 2.4 Labour Market

- 2.4.1 East Lothian’s labour market is performing strongly and, according to data from the ONS Annual Population Survey (April 2022-March 2023), East Lothian has a higher employment rate than Scotland as a whole (76.1% vs 74.7%), a significantly higher rate of self-employment (10.9% vs 7.1%), and a comparable economic activity rate (both areas 77.4%).
- 2.4.2 However, many of East Lothian’s employed residents commute out of the local authority area for work, and not all of the economic benefits of this high level of economic activity are retained locally. This can be evidenced by ONS job density data, which shows that there are 0.62 jobs in East Lothian per resident of working age, which is the lowest figure of any local authority area in the City Region and is significantly below the City of Edinburgh figure of 1.06.

Figure 2.3: Job Density by Local Authority Area.



Source: Annual Population Survey, 2023

- 2.4.3 East Lothian’s workforce is in many respects better qualified than the Scotland and City Region averages. A higher proportion of its 16-64 year olds hold a formal qualification (95.6% in East Lothian, compared to 4.2% across the City Region and 92.5% across Scotland), and a higher proportion hold an SVQ Level 2 (National 5 equivalent) qualification or above (83.6% in East Lothian, 83.4% across the City Region and 79.6% across Scotland). However, the proportion of the population educated to SVQ level 4 (undergraduate degree equivalent) or above (48.5%) is below the Scotland and City Region averages (50.0% and 56.7% respectively).

Table 2.2: Highest Qualification Achieved by 16-64 Population.

Age	East Lothian	City Region	Scotland
SVQ4 +	48.5%	56.7%	50.0%
SVQ3 +	65.3%	70.1%	64.8%
SVQ 2+	83.6%	83.4%	79.6%
SVQ 1+	92.0%	89.0%	86.4%
Other Qualification	3.6%	5.2%	5.8%
No Qualification	4.4%	5.8%	7.8%

Source: Annual Population Survey, 2021<sup>3</sup>

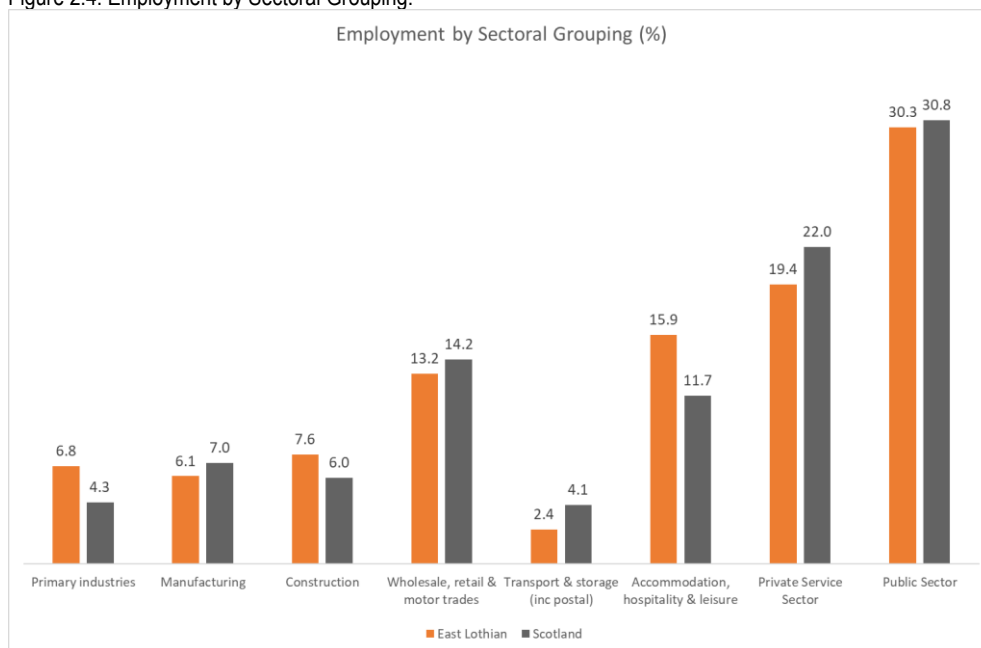
<sup>3</sup> This is the most recent year for which this data is available.



## 2.5 Business Composition

- 2.5.1 The figure below illustrates how the sectoral composition of East Lothian’s workforce differs from that of Scotland as a whole.
- 2.5.2 It shows the important role that tourism current plays in the local economy, with 15.9% of the workforce employed in the accommodation, hospitality and leisure sector<sup>4</sup>, compared to 11.7% across Scotland as a whole. It also shows the importance of primary industries<sup>5</sup> to the local economy with 6.8% of the local workforce employed in this sector, compared to 4.3% across Scotland as a whole.
- 2.5.3 However, the figures also show that the private services sector<sup>6</sup> accounts for only 19.4% of jobs in East Lothian, compared to 22% of jobs across Scotland. This is in sharp contrast to the neighbouring City of Edinburgh, where this sector account for 35.3% of all jobs, suggesting that this may be a sector where there is significant opportunity to create new employment.
- 2.5.4 A further example of such a sector is manufacturing, which currently accounts for 6.1% of jobs in East Lothian, compared to a Scottish average of 7.0%.

Figure 2.4: Employment by Sectoral Grouping.



Source: *Business Register & Employment Survey 2021*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Defined as including ONS Broad Industry Groups 9 (accommodation & food services) and 18 (arts, entertainment, recreation and other services)

<sup>5</sup> Defined as including ONS Broad Industry Groups 1 (agriculture, forestry & fishing), and 2 (mining, quarrying & utilities).

<sup>6</sup> Defined as including ONS Broad Industry Groups 10-15, (information & communications, finance & insurance; property; professional, scientific & technical services, and business administration & support services)

<sup>7</sup> Some broad industry groups have been aggregated by Stantec for ease of interpretation and to illustrate key local trends.

2.5.5 East Lothian’s business base is characterised by micro and small businesses, with 98.4% of all businesses in the local authority area employing 49 people or fewer.

Table 2.3: Number of Enterprises by Business Size.

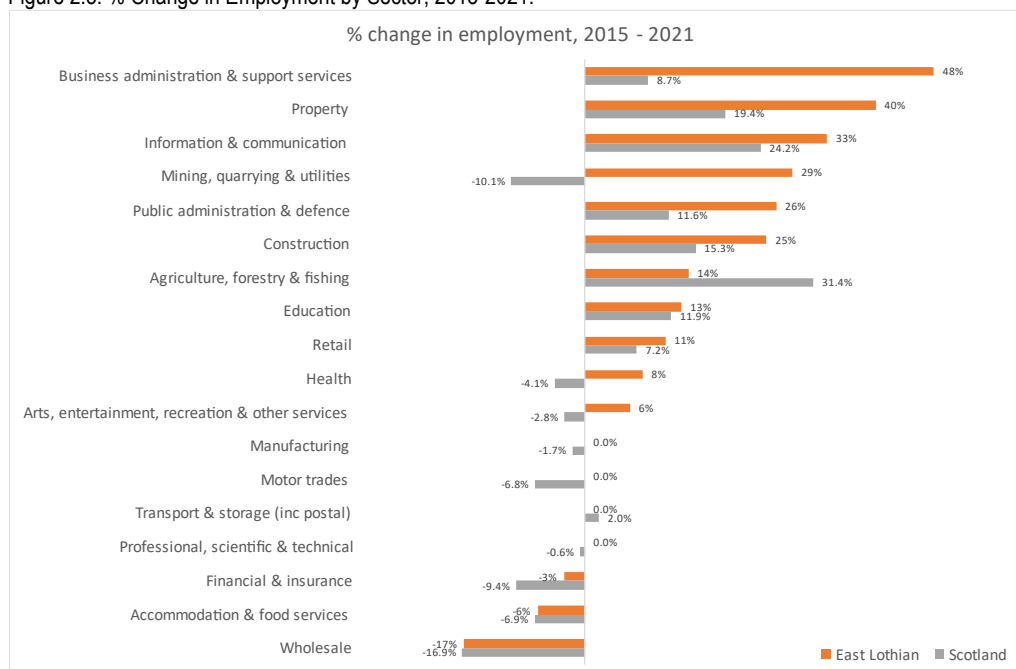
Age			East Lothian	Scotland
	Number <sup>8</sup>	%	Number	%
Micro (0 to 9 employees)	2,760	87.5	152,470	87.8
Small (10 to 49 employees)	345	10.9	17,775	10.2
Medium (50 to 249 employees)	40	1.3	2,730	1.6
Large (250+ employees)	10	0.3	675	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,155</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>173,655</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ONS Inter Departmental Business Register, 2022

2.5.6 The figure below shows the percentage change in employment levels experienced by a range of sectors between 2015 and 2021. As East Lothian’s population grew more rapidly than the Scottish average over this period, so too did total employment in the local area, with most sectors of the economy experiencing either a higher rate of growth or a slower rate of decline in East Lothian than across Scotland as a whole. The only exceptions to this rule were agriculture, forestry and fishing, which grew less significantly though from a larger base; and the relatively small transport & storage sector.

2.5.7 The three most rapidly growing sectors in East Lothian were all professional service industries, and included business administration & support services, property and information & communication. The only three sectors to experience declining employment over this period were the financial & insurance; accommodation & legal services and wholesale sectors, all of which also experienced a national decline.

Figure 2.5: % Change in Employment by Sector, 2015-2021.

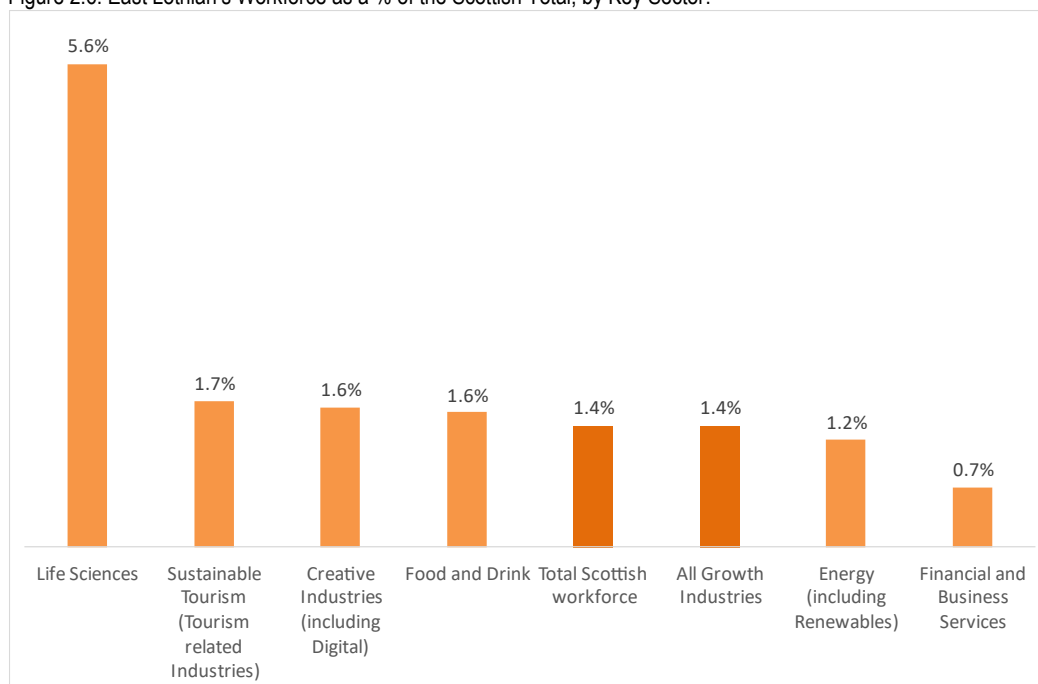


Source: Scottish Annual Business Statistics, 2021

<sup>8</sup> These figures have been rounded to the nearest five businesses to avoid the disclosure of information specific to any particular business.

- 2.5.8 East Lothian’s workforce makes a significant contribution to the development of the Scottish Government’s six growth sectors, accounting for 1.4% of the total growth industry workforce in Scotland, the same figure as its contribution to Scotland’s workforce as a whole.
- 2.5.9 A disproportionately high proportion (5.6%) of Scotland’s Life Science workforce is based in East Lothian, driven largely by the presence of the Charles River clinical trials facility near Tranent.
- 2.5.10 East Lothian also punches above its weight in terms of its contribution to Scotland’s sustainable tourism, creative and food & drink workforce, and has a total energy sector workforce which is broadly comparable in size to the Scottish average, however it’s contribution to Scotland’s financial and business services sector is significantly smaller, accounting for only 0.7% of the Scottish total.

Figure 2.6: East Lothian’s Workforce as a % of the Scottish Total, by Key Sector.

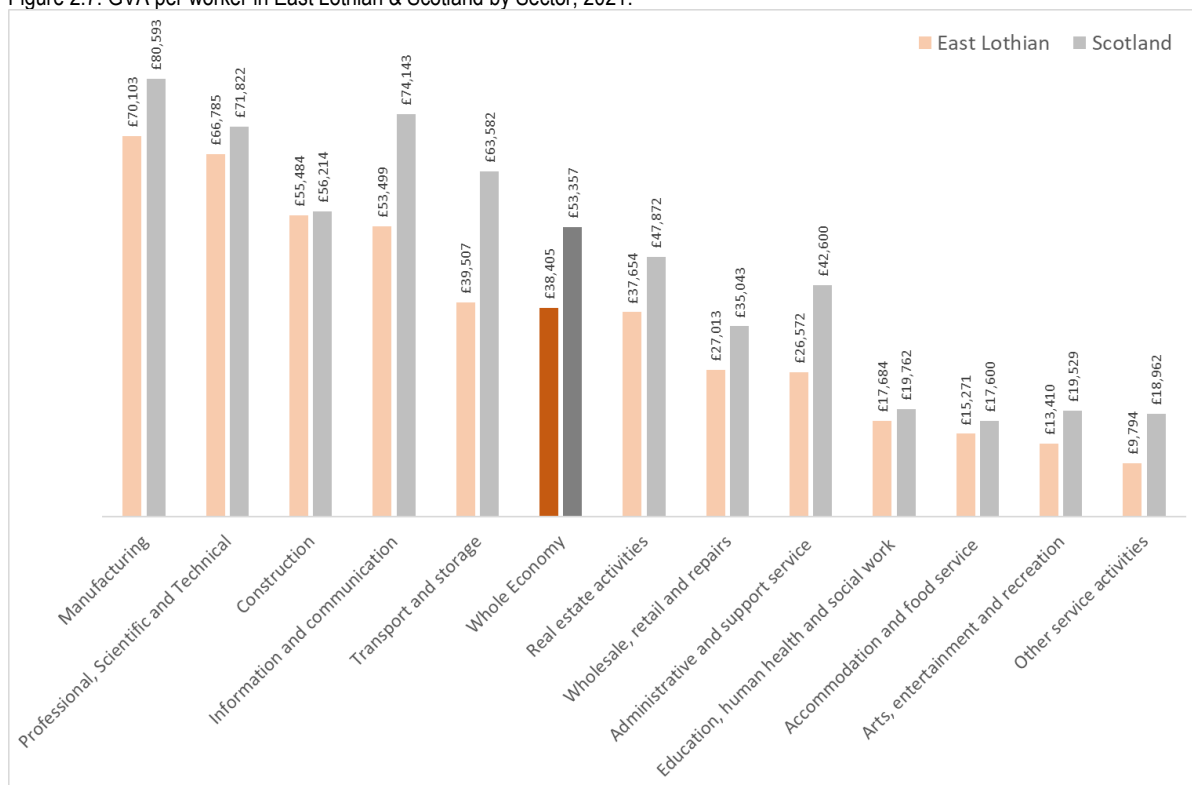


Source: Scottish Government Growth Sector Statistics & Scottish Annual Business Statistics, 2021

## 2.6 Productivity

- 2.6.1 In 2021, average GVA per worker (a common measure of labour productivity) across the East Lothian economy stood at £38,405, a figure significantly below the Scotland average of £53,357.
- 2.6.2 This productivity gap is a challenge across the East Lothian economy, with the area’s labour productivity lagging the Scotland average in every sector. The sectors in the economy with the highest levels of labour productivity were manufacturing, professional, scientific & technical activities and construction. The sectors with the lowest were accommodation & food services; arts, entertainment & recreation and other service activities.

Figure 2.7: GVA per worker in East Lothian & Scotland by Sector, 2021.



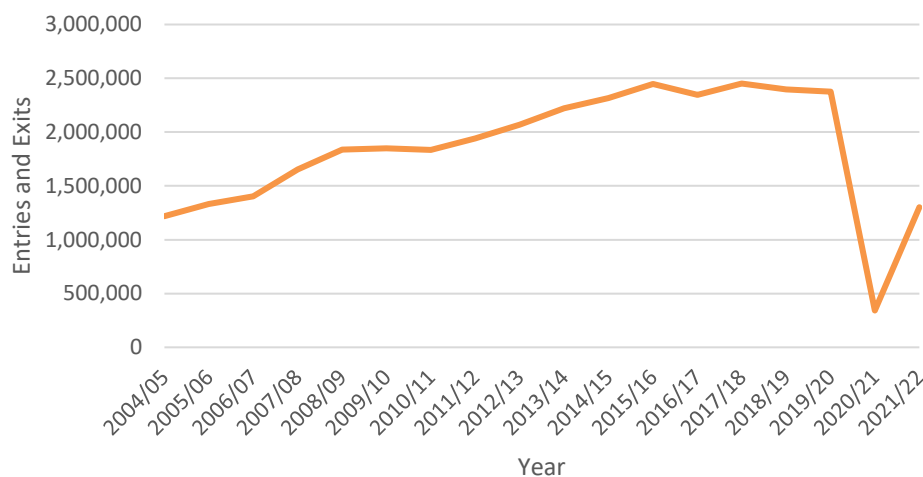
Source: Scottish Annual Business Statistics, 2021

## 2.7 Connectivity

2.7.1 The main form of transport in East Lothian is private cars. However, many also chose to use the rail network. There are currently seven railway stations in East Lothian, with a seventh (East Linton) scheduled to open in Spring 2024.

2.7.2 The chart below shows the annual estimates for the number of entries and exits from railway stations in East Lothian. It shows that the number of rail journey increased steadily between 2004/5 and 2014/15, then stabilised at approximately 2.5 million journeys per year until 2019/20, before falling back substantially following the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020. The number of passenger rail journeys recovered in 2021/22 but failed to reach pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 2.8: Railway usage data by year for East Lothian, based on estimates for entries and exits from railway stations.



Source: Office of Rail and Road, 2023

- 2.7.3 The table below shows total numbers of entries and exits in 2021-22 by station. It shows that North Berwick is the most used railway station within East Lothian, while Drem is the least used.

Table 2.4: East Lothian railway stations ranked in terms of usage, 2021-22.

Station Name	Entries and Exits	%
North Berwick	344,414	26.44
Musselburgh	266,928	20.49
Dunbar	252,348	19.37
Wallyford	151,702	11.65
Prestonpans	128,558	9.87
Longniddry	97,130	7.46
Drem	61,428	4.72

Source: Office of Rail and Road, 2023

## 2.8 Visitor Economy

- 2.8.1 Tourism is an important sector to the East Lothian economy, with the area receiving 1.37 million tourism visits in 2019, generating £279 million to the local economy and supporting 4,434 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs<sup>9</sup>.
- 2.8.2 Based on data from the Council's 2021 East Lothian Visitor Survey 35% of the visitors to East Lothian stayed overnight. The overnights contributed 85% of the revenue generated through tourism. The average length of stay in the county was 4.5 nights.
- 2.8.3 The demography of the visitors was mixed. While 55–64-year-olds accounted for 30% of the visitors, 25–34-year-olds only accounted for 10%. The youngest group surveyed, 16–24-year-olds, were also the smallest grouping, accounting for only 2% of the visitors.

Table 2.5: Breakdown of visitors by age group, 2020.

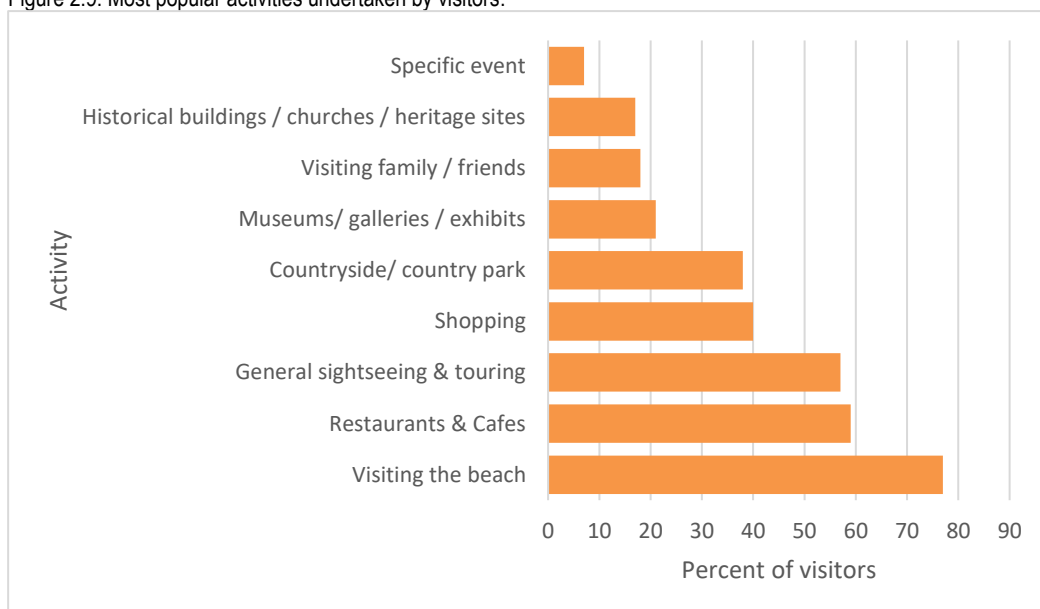
Age Group	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
%	2	10	18	19	30	18	3

<sup>9</sup> Source: Global Tourism Solutions STEAM Model. This figure fell significantly during the Covid outbreak and post-Covid data is not yet available.

Source: East Lothian Visitor Survey, 2021

- 2.8.4 In terms of visitor origin, 64% of the visitors came from within Scotland, 32% from the rest of the UK, and only 2% came from overseas. Edinburgh residents alone made up around 25% of all visitors. In terms of overseas tourists, the United States, Netherlands, and Canada had the highest representation, in that order, with the United States accounting for half of all overseas visitors.
- 2.8.5 In terms of activities undertaken, visiting the beach was by far the most popular. It is likely that the large number of Edinburgh-based visitors are making this activity popular. The second most popular activity was going to restaurants and cafes, followed by sightseeing and touring, and shopping. Over half (54%) of sampled shoppers reported visiting farm shops during their visit, highlighting the importance of local produce in East Lothian’s tourism strategy. In terms of geography, North Berwick was the most visited town in East Lothian, followed by Dunbar and Gullane.

Figure 2.9: Most popular activities undertaken by visitors.



Source: East Lothian Visitor Survey, 2021

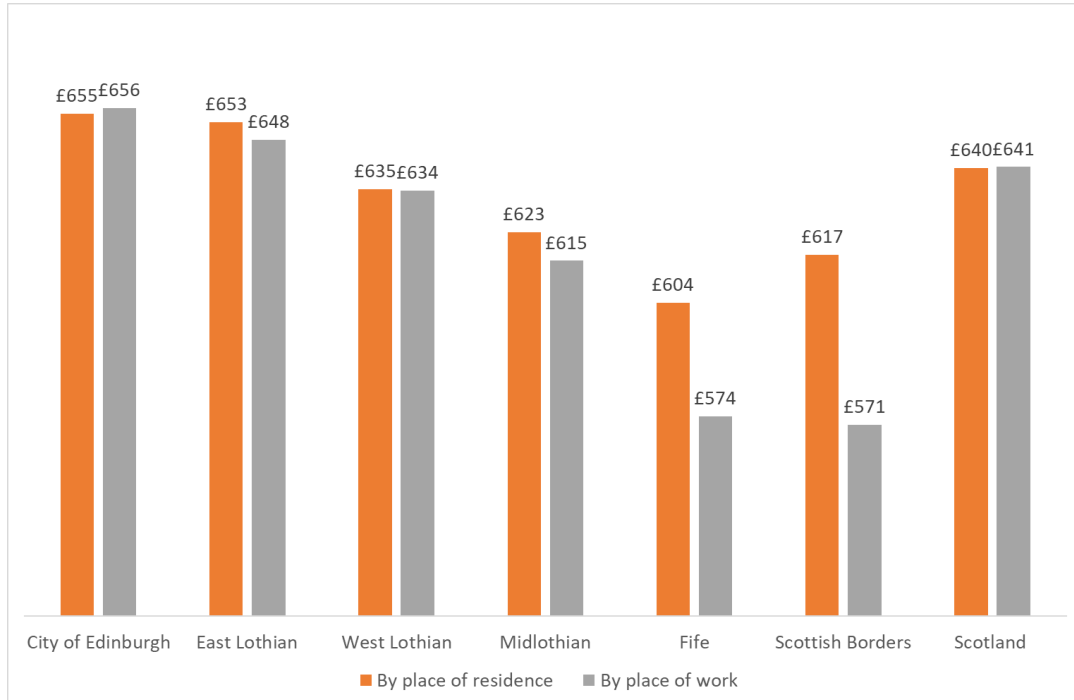
- 2.8.6 Caravan parks and camping (33%) were the most popular type of accommodation for overnight visitors, followed by rented accommodation (24%), hotels (19%), staying with friends or relatives (16%) and Airbnbs (6%). The average spend per day was found to be £63.54.

## 2.9 Equality and Inclusivity

- 2.9.1 The figure below shows average gross weekly earnings of residents and the workforce in each local authority area in the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region and across Scotland as a whole. It shows that East Lothian residents earn, on average, more than residents across Scotland as a whole, and more than residents in West Lothian, Midlothian, Fife or the Scottish Borders, though marginally less than City of Edinburgh residents.
- 2.9.2 The figures also indicate that, while the average earnings of the area’s working population is slightly below that of its resident population (suggesting that residents who commute to jobs in other parts of Scotland earn more than residents who work in the local area), this gap appears to be less pronounced than it is in other parts of the City Region. However, these figures are

based only on a sample of 1% of the total workforce, so may be prone to a degree of sampling error.

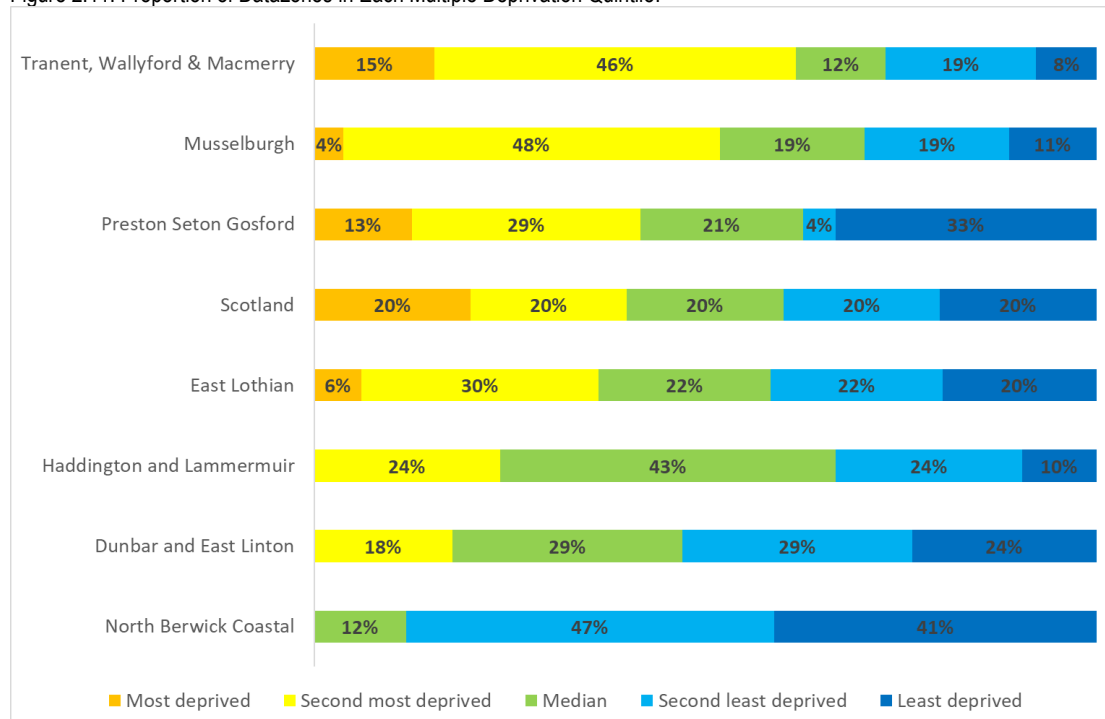
Figure 2.10: Median Average Gross Weekly (Full Time Workers, 2022).



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2022

2.9.3 Data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that there are proportionately fewer areas of severe multiple deprivation in East Lothian than across Scotland as a whole. For example, only 8 of East Lothian’s 132 datazones (6%) lie within Scotland’s most deprived quintile of communities, and only 48 (36%) lie within the 40% most deprived communities in Scotland. However, the index also shows a significant east-west divide across the local authority area, with the three ward areas to the west of East Lothian all experiencing a higher proportion of areas in the most deprived 40% of datazones than the Scotland average, and the three ward areas to the east of East Lothian all experiencing a lower proportion.

Figure 2.11: Proportion of Datazones in Each Multiple Deprivation Quintile.



Source: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2020

## 2.10 Policy Landscape

### Key Stakeholders in the East Lothian Economy

2.10.1 There are a variety of stakeholder groups with the capacity to contribute to the development of East Lothian's economy, including:

- **Community Representative Organisations:** including Community Councils.
- **Businesses:** including key employers such as Charles River Laboratories; EDF Energy and Tarmac; and SME businesses.
- **Third Sector Organisations:** including social enterprises, community co-operatives and charities.
- **Business Community Representative Group:** including Midlothian & East Lothian Chamber of Commerce; Scotland's Golf Coast; and East Lothian Food & Drink.
- **Skills Organisations:** Including Queen Margaret University; Edinburgh College and East Lothian Works.
- **Transport Providers:** Including rail operators; bus operators and transport infrastructure management organisations.
- **Developers & Land Owners:** including Hargreaves Land, the lead developer for the new community at Blindwells.
- **National Economic Development Agencies:** Including Scottish Enterprise, Scotland Development International, Skills Development Scotland and Scottish National Investment Bank.



- **Regional and National Governments & Partnerships:** Including SESTrans, SESPlan, Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee and the Scottish & UK Governments.
- **Utility Providers:** Including gas, electricity, water and broadband providers.
- **Council officers and elected representatives:** including Councillors, MSPs & MPs and Officers working in economic development, planning, employability; community engagement; poverty; environmental sustainability; education, tourism development; social care and transport/active travel roles.

2.10.2 This paper draws evidence from discussions with representatives from each of these groups, and it is envisaged that all of these groups will play an active part in the delivery of the Local Economy Strategy.

### Key Strategies & Policies

2.10.3 The East Lothian Local Economy Strategy cannot be delivered in isolation, and the vision, objectives and actions identified in the strategy will need to align with a variety of existing strategy and policy documents. These include:

- **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4 2023):** Scotland's guidance on national planning policy and priority developments, the document's vision is underpinned by the four overarching priorities of reducing inequality, tackling climate change, delivering inclusive economic growth and improving the health and wellbeing of residents. The Framework specifically mentions the opportunity to fulfil net zero ambitions and increase employment by utilising the Cockenzie Power Station site, potentially by utilising existing infrastructure by repurposing them. The framework also mentions potentially expanding the new Blindwells settlement in a sustainable fashion by connecting it to the net zero ambitions of Cockenzie.
- **Regional Prosperity Framework (2021-2041):** The framework is a statement of joint economic vision, ambition and priorities for South East Scotland. It was developed by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland Region Deal partners, and sets out a vision for the region to be a 'globally competitive, inclusive and sustainable economic powerhouse' and identifies four key priorities, namely, green regeneration, infrastructure for recovery and prosperity, visitor economy and culture and data-driven innovation economy. East Lothian is well-placed to benefit due to its growing manufacturing, energy, tourism, creative and food and drink sectors. The framework provides an avenue for the county to work with its partners to attract investment, create jobs and implement its net zero ambitions and community wealth building ambitions.
- **National Strategy for Economic Transformation (2022):** The strategy aims to help transform the Scottish economy by 2032 to create a well being society thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions. The key objectives are reducing child poverty, equitable growth, and a push towards fair work and net zero ambitions. A key link between this strategy and East Lothian economy is the expansion of renewable energy. Scotland currently has a renewable energy capacity of 12 Giga Watts (GW), and it has ambitions to expand this by an additional 26GW in onshore and offshore wind generation. East Lothian can take advantage of this strategy and re-establish itself as a major producer of energy.
- **Skills for a Changing World (2022):** The new five-year strategic plan for Skills Development Scotland, the key objective being facilitating and supporting the evolution of Scotland's approach to education and skills and enabling a more dynamic response to rapid changes taking place within the labour market, society and the Scottish economy. The policy aligns with East Lothian's needs for a dynamic shift in the kinds of skills

developed locally to keep pace with industrial needs, with one of the focuses of this strategy being eco-tourism and energy.

- **East Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP2):** The next local development plan is currently in the early stages of development, where public consultations to collect evidence occurred at the same time as the consultations for this evidence paper. Therefore, the document is likely to align in strategy to some extent with the Local Economy Strategy being developed as a consequence of this evidence paper.

## 3 Stakeholder and Community Perceptions

### 3.1 Preamble

- 3.1.1 Since June 2023, Stantec has been collecting stakeholder and community perceptions on key sites and activities around East Lothian. We have attended seven public consultation events, facilitated four business stakeholder focus groups, attended and facilitated two community wealth building workshops, conducted 1-2-1 calls with stakeholders, arranged focus groups with East Lothian Council officers and engaged with key groups and policy working groups.
- 3.1.2 This has allowed us to understand and gain knowledge of the priorities and preferences of a varied group which has supported us to inform the undertaking of this evidence paper. Feedback from these engagements were thematically analysed, providing understanding of East Lothian's economic competitiveness, skills development, and community wealth building. This analysis is laid out in the sections below.

### 3.2 Developing Economically Competitive Places

#### Creating Vibrant High Streets

- 3.2.1 There seems to be a community understanding of the importance of high streets to the local economy. Vibrant high streets would increase the attractiveness of the towns in East Lothian, reduce the need for residents to travel to Edinburgh to shop and become centres of employment. However, stakeholders feel that the high streets have lost some of their competitiveness.
- 3.2.2 Some opined that the number and variety of services on offer were limited. There seems to be a need for more permanent banking services, with post offices being overstretched. There also seems to be a trend of chain stores replacing local businesses, which could be due to the increasing cost of leases.
- 3.2.3 Another common issue in many towns seemed to be the challenges with parking and traffic near the high streets. In North Berwick, narrow pavements were also a problem proved to be a deterrent for many residents.

#### Developing Employment Land

- 3.2.4 Employment land in East Lothian is typically allocated on the basis of settlement development. However, stakeholders feel that not much is done to develop and promote such sites. Many thought that the low availability of serviced offices and light industrial spaces was a barrier to growth opportunities.

#### Improving Transport Connectivity

- 3.2.5 The challenges associated with transport connectivity was a key theme across East Lothian, whether the feedback is analysed geographically or based on stakeholder grouping. Generally, services seem to have not caught up to the growth in settlements. Buses to and from rural areas seem to be very limited. Moreover, while residents of the towns closer to Edinburgh agreed that bus connectivity to and from the city was adequate, connectivity between East Lothian towns was limited. For elderly residents who may not be able to drive and have a limited spending capacity, the bus service is vital. However, many such residents shared stories of being unable to access healthcare due to the availability and limited time schedule of the bus service between the towns. Many residents thought that an on-demand bus service or a subsidised taxi service would improve connectivity substantially.

- 3.2.6 Rail connectivity was also a challenge, not only for residents but for businesses as well. Residents shared the difficulties of travel due to the limited number of trains during the weekends. A particular concern was the lack of rail options for late hours. Businesses found attracting employees from Edinburgh difficult due to the limited bus and train services. However, there was the acknowledgement that adding more services may not be commercially viable for the service providers, so may need to be subsidised for it to work.
- 3.2.7 Moreover, businesses focused on Tourism also found it challenging to attract visitors with the limited transport connectivity. However, a previously trialled shuttle service between some distilleries and Edinburgh seems to have produced mixed results. Similar connectivity concerns were raised by those travelling to and from Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh College.
- 3.2.8 Cars are a necessity in East Lothian, particularly due to the limitations of bus and rail connectivity. However, car travel also has its challenges. There seems to be a need for more parking, particularly in Dunbar and North Berwick. However, residents generally do not favour the sight of car parks. At the same time, residents in these towns as well as others, such as Tranent, thought traffic near the high streets was excessive due to the space taken up by parked vehicles.
- 3.2.9 While active travel provisions are improving, stakeholders opined that not much was done to promote these routes. Moreover, retail sites and other services on active travel routes were limited, making long journeys on these routes challenging.

### **Improving Broadband Connectivity**

- 3.2.10 While East Lothian Council seems to be focused on alleviating connectivity issues, there seems to be a significant gap between broadband need and service availability. While rural areas of East Lothian are particularly affected, this seems to be an issue in some of the larger towns as well. Moreover, cell service also seems to be limited.
- 3.2.11 The connectivity issues in the area are affecting businesses. Single businesses find it very difficult to connect to broadband. The problem seems to be bad enough to deter new businesses to opening in the area.

### **Maximising the Potential of our Rural Communities**

- 3.2.12 The rural areas of East Lothian have a significant role to play in the local economy. These areas can support businesses in a number of sectors, from manufacturing to tourism to agriculture. Further, these areas can be attractive alternatives to city living for professionals—particularly given the rise of home and flexible working. However, the transport and broadband connectivity issues in East Lothian can be a major prohibitive factor in maximising this potential.

## **3.3 Developing a Skilled Workforce**

### **Meeting the Needs of our Businesses**

- 3.3.1 There seems to be a skills gap in East Lothian in several sectors. These include in the food and drink industry as well as in the energy and in heritage and tourism sectors. Manufacturing, construction, and social care are other sectors facing unfulfilled demand. The skills gap is due to a number of factors, including the lack of interest from young people in some professions, the lack of training opportunities and the difficulty of attracting and retaining staff due to transport issues.

- 3.3.2 There is a need for better collaboration between employers, schools, and training providers to address the gap. This could involve providing more work experience opportunities for young people, offering apprenticeships and other training programmes, and improving the transport linkages within East Lothian as well as to Edinburgh and beyond. There is also a need to making East Lothian a more attractive place for young people, by highlighting the benefits of living and working here, such as the good quality of life, the available green space and the community aspect.
- 3.3.3 In addition to the skills gap, there is also a gender imbalance in some sectors, such as in engineering and offshore energy. In terms of what is currently working well, residents acknowledged that social enterprise organisations such as The Ridge play an important role. However, there seems to be some concern that such organisations are not sufficiently resourced.
- 3.3.4 An interesting component of the engagement with stakeholders was a conversation on what an East Lothian of the future will require in terms of skills. Here, the development of new industries, such as aquaculture and agriculture technology, could create new jobs and opportunities for skills development. Moreover, the growth of tourism could create jobs in hospitality, catering, and other sectors. Further, there seemed to be some acknowledgement that skills development and growth opportunities cannot be considered in a vacuum without understanding the needs, wants and possibilities connected to the economies of Edinburgh and other neighbouring councils.

### Meeting the Needs of Our Communities

- 3.3.5 Residents from multiple communities voiced similar concerns about certain lacking in community infrastructure. One key theme was that community infrastructure, including NHS, dental and library services have not kept pace with the rise in population. Some of this can be linked to transport connectivity issues, but it seems that in many cases the new settlements cropping up in East Lothian do not have this infrastructure, thereby straining the load in older settlements. Residents also mentioned that many communities do not even have convenience stores in their area, necessitating the need to drive 'even for a pint of milk'. This theme further extends to other community infrastructure such as schools.
- 3.3.6 Another major issue in certain areas, such as Dunbar, seems to be the replacement of NHS dentist services with private providers in the high streets. Those who rely on public dentistry services now must travel further to find a dentist to register with, and then have reduced access due to bus and rail schedules as mentioned previously.
- 3.3.7 In terms of housing, there seems to be a shortage of affordable housing as well as properties with accessibility features for the elderly. As key workers cannot afford to live in East Lothian, they have to commute from the surrounding region. It seems any significant weather events, such as Beast from the East in 2019, can potentially block connectivity to Edinburgh which in turn can prohibit key workers from coming into work. This can cause social and elderly care systems to fail. As weather events become more frequent, finding affordable housing for key workers within East Lothian may become a matter of climate resilience.

### Broadening the Labour Pool

- 3.3.8 There has been significant investment from local and national government to support delivery of employability support services and initial labour market growth. During consultation it was found that East Lothian works is supporting development of young people, parents and adults learning/reskilling and training. In East Lothian there are two customer groups regarding employability services. Firstly, there are the individuals seeking to progress in the labour market and employers who can provide job opportunities. Support needs to be provided to these key groups to broaden the labour pool.

- 3.3.9 Presently in East Lothian, there is a threat of labour market shortages which has been impacted by many factors including the COVID19 pandemic, Brexit and increase in the cost of living. These factors have had an impact on poverty rates in particular in-work poverty. There has been an increase in numbers of economically inactive residents due to health and wellbeing issues.
- 3.3.10 Those individuals who fall in the category of long term unemployed need opportunities to work with public and third sector to create intermediate labour market opportunities. East Lothian works are pushing to action the creation of new innovative programmes to engage those furthest away from the labour market and support with multiple barriers that they face.
- 3.3.11 As part of the 'No One Left Behind Delivery plan' (which was shared during the consultation period) the aims and objectives look to align with the approach to national and local employability support in Scotland. This reflects the need to shape a more coherent employability provision that meets local need and supports good population health while aligning with East Lothians Local Outcome improvement plan 2017-2027 and National Performance Framework.

## **3.4 Strengthening Key Sectors**

### **Sustainable Energy**

- 3.4.1 East Lothian has great potential in pivoting towards onshore and offshore wind to replace the energy and employment gap left by the UK's necessary decision to close unsustainable fuel-based power stations. However, the industry currently cannot find a large enough talent pool to service the sector.
- 3.4.2 There are opportunities not only in energy itself, but in the construction of the infrastructure needed for energy production and storage. To keep the benefits locally, there must be a sustainable level of local talent willing and able to work in construction, but currently a skill gap exists that means such jobs are filled by people outside of East Lothian.
- 3.4.3 The industry itself is thriving, and the projects available are wide and varied. Moreover, there may be sustained decommissioning work to be found at the Torness Power Station for another decade or so.

### **Food & Drink**

- 3.4.4 Food and beverages are important sectors for East Lothian. The area is home to large distilleries, breweries, and a number of award-winning producers of fresh produce, seafood and dairy products. These industries already employ many, and have the potential to create new jobs and boost economic growth in East Lothian for years to come. Queen Margaret University also supports the sector, with plans for an innovation hub geared specifically towards food and drinks. Many believe that the internet and online shopping presents an opportunity for East Lothian food and drinks companies to expand their business.
- 3.4.5 However, stakeholders believe are finding it hard to hire or retain necessary talent. Some businesses have tried to fill specialist roles with workers from Edinburgh—after being unable to find local talent—but find it difficult to fill vacancies due to the troubles with transport connectivity. Similarly, many businesses cannot find workers to fill vacancies in low skilled roles because people cannot afford to live in the area and find public transportation to be challenging.
- 3.4.6 Another major issue faced by these industries is in finding buyers for their products. While the larger businesses have the customers, industry stakeholders believe that smaller producers also have fantastic product but have not been able to market this. The council's Food and Drink Action Plan has outlined strategies to support the sector promoting local products and



brands to a wider market, but stakeholders feel that much more can be done in this respect. Some stakeholders have also found it difficult to expand in terms of space as their businesses have grown.

## Tourism

- 3.4.7 The tourism sector in East Lothian generates over £38 million in visitor spend a year and offers a diverse set of experiences, such as golf, coastal walking, beaches, historic towns, bird watching and whiskey tasting. But there is potential for more growth. For that, there is a need for a coordinated tourism strategy that brings together all stakeholders, including businesses, the council, and the community. There is significant room for that strategy to focus on sustainable tourism that benefits the local economy.
- 3.4.8 Stakeholders identified a need to compete with Edinburgh by offering cheaper accommodation. Many pointed out that it would be easier to use the area's tourism offer and market it as an added value to those international tourists already coming in to experience Edinburgh. However, to do so, stakeholders felt there was a need to improve public transport links to make it easier for visitors to get to attractions around East Lothian.
- 3.4.9 Stakeholders saw an opportunity for the council to lead the development of the coordinated strategy and the joined-up marketing, along with providing more support to individual businesses in the form of grants.
- 3.4.10 In terms of sectors with potential, besides the sectors mentioned above, stakeholders felt that there was an opportunity to promote film tourism, as the area has been receiving more inquiries, as well as walking and cycling experiences with the necessary infrastructure.

## Support to the Wider Business Community

- 3.4.11 While the East Lothian Council offers support in the form of grants, financing and planning support, stakeholders from the business community have felt that more could be done to boost growth. For one, it seems that while opportunities for funding and financing are available—like the council's upcoming plans to roll out an innovation patient financing scheme and Scottish Enterprise support—many have complained of the rigmarole associated with applications. Businesses may not have the time to complete complex applications for funding, and often pay consultants to write these for them. However, this increases the costs associated with funding, which is particularly stressful when the economic climate is poor.
- 3.4.12 Various sources of funding and support also have their own set of requirements, which can be confusing and time consuming to navigate, increasing barriers to access. Moreover, the process of accessing the funds post application can be slow and bureaucratic, which can affect businesses' growth plans.
- 3.4.13 Stakeholders also believe that the lack of availability of serviced offices and light industrial spaces has been hampering growth. At the same time, with planning is often perceived as a bottleneck that is holding up development and investment opportunities. Some stakeholders understand that the council's resource crunch is a key reason for the bottleneck and want to offer resources to the Planning department to speed up processing times. However, current guidelines and potential conflicts of interest mean that this is currently not feasible.
- 3.4.14 The stakeholders we engaged with from the business community had some recommendations on how the council can support business growth. One of the was to create a central point for businesses to access information about funding and support. One of the features of this would be to provide streamlined funding application support. Another suggestion was to help improve the coordination between the different organisations that provide funding and support.

## Support to Community owned businesses & Third sector organisations

- 3.4.15 There are many community owned businesses in East Lothian who are all playing a key role in supporting the local community. The Ridge, in Dunbar, is the only successful community asset transfer which has taken place in East Lothian. This charity provides training and support to help people find employment in the local area and is supporting growth in the local community. East Lothian council has ambitions to support more community asset transfers and to use more of their vacant buildings to support third sector organisations in the area to deliver their integral services.
- 3.4.16 Following our internal focus groups with East Lothian staff, it was found that there is funding available through UKSPF and community led economy funding to build capacity within community organisations. It was highlighted that there are further funding streams that these organisations will be able to access, that is not available to the council and that this needs to be emphasised as further funding support however there are capacity issues for completing funding applications and further training needs to be given.
- 3.4.17 The business gateway service delivered by East Lothian Council, is a strong asset to the area and they work alongside many community owned businesses to support local areas in East Lothian. Over recent years, funding has been reduced and continuing to deliver this service has been limited in regards to monetary support but the team have continued to deliver guidance and advice and stretch their limited funding to reach businesses and third sector organisations. It was reported that a recent call for applications on a funding pot from the Scottish government to support local community businesses was over subscribed for around triple the amount of funding available. This is a reoccurring issue for businesses in the area.

## 3.5 Maximising the Potential of our Strategic Sites

### Cockenzie

- 3.5.1 There are plans in place from 2019, as laid out in the Cockenzie and Port Seton Waterfront Masterplan, to redevelop the area. The plans include the restoration of the Cockenzie Power Station into a visitor attraction and creative hub, the construction of new homes in the area and the creation of a commercial and retail space in the area, among others. Stakeholders from the larger community did not have much to say about the site, except for hopes that the iconic stacks of the Station can be repurposed can saved.
- 3.5.2 Overall, residents were keen to talk about other issues. However, the site remains an important one, particularly to promote future economic growth and local economy resilience. On that note, plans developing from within the council to source energy in the form of water-based heat network are particularly promising. There seems to be potential on the site to source enough heat to supply most of East Lothian and perhaps sell some to neighbouring areas, such as Edinburgh. This could also boost employment in the area and have some high spillover effects, with over 300 plumbers needed to connect homes to the heat network.

### Blindwells

- 3.5.3 Blindwells has for the most part received unfavourable attention from most consultees. While there is an overarching understanding for the need for more housing developments, given the sustained and rapid population growth, there is wide agreement with the fact that community infrastructure has not kept pace with the housing development, which seems to be the challenge for most new housing developments in East Lothian.
- 3.5.4 There has also been some criticism surrounding the type of housing being developed, with most agreeing that there is a shortage of affordable housing which has affected other sectors, such as retail and social care, as well. There seems to be agreement among the community and other stakeholders that council planners need to help the developers connect with the



local community, and there needs to be more structure in place around consent so that developers develop infrastructure in line with new development.

### **Edinburgh Innovation Park**

- 3.5.5 The Edinburgh Innovation Park is a planned mixed-use development being developed by Queen Margaret University and the council. It is envisioned as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in the food and drink sectors. Along with space for a world-class innovation and research hub, the site will also feature a new school, a commercial zone and active transport facilities. The anchor for the site will be the aforementioned Food and Drink Innovation Hub, run by the University.
- 3.5.6 There seems to be wide spread support for the site, given the acknowledgement by stakeholders that East Lothian has untapped potential in the Food and Drink sectors. It also ensures more education and research investment in East Lothian, which usually lags behind Edinburgh in investment and opportunity in education. One direct note by some residents is the hope for good bus connectivity to the site from across East Lothian as well as neighbouring areas.
- 3.5.7 The only negative perception about the site stems from stakeholders' belief that this is the only major recent investment in higher education, research and skills in the area. Given the need for workers in other skilled or semi-skilled sectors, such as in engineering, advanced construction, and heat networks, among others, stakeholders want more training and education offers to be developed within East Lothian.

## **3.6 Building Community Wealth**

- 3.6.1 As part of the development of the East Lothian Local Economy Strategy, Stantec is seeking to embed the concept of Community Wealth Building (CWB) as a 'Golden Thread' throughout the objectives, projects, actions, and monitoring indicators of the Strategy. To assist with this, Stantec has sub-contracted Matthew Baqueriza-Jackson to provide advice and guidance as to what CWB is and how it fits in local economic strategy, what is already happening around CWB in Scotland, what East Lothian Council and partners are already doing around CWB, and how CWB can be integrated across the East Lothian Economy Strategy.
- 3.6.2 The following section of the evidence paper details the key findings of the diagnostic undertaken by Matthew of CWB activity already happening in East Lothian, together with some initial actions for inclusion the Local Economy Strategy. This section of the Evidence Paper should be read alongside the diagnostic (which explains the concept of Community Wealth Building) and has been developed through the facilitation of workshops with the East Lothian Community Wealth Building Working Group in June and August 2023.

### **Existing Community Wealth Building Activity in East Lothian**

- 3.6.3 During the workshop, we looked to diagnose what East Lothian Council and partners are already doing around CWB, both in overarching terms and in relation to each of the five 'Pillars'. We have utilised the below tool and Red, Amber, Green ratings to make the assessment of East Lothian's baseline position.

Table 3.1: Baseline Position: Overarching

Activity	Assessment	Commentary
<b>Political Buy-in</b>		Community Wealth Building is seen by Elected Members at East Lothian Council as an important agenda for the future of the economy of the locality. It is recognised that CWB is framed by national strategy and potentially future legislation and is something that the Council and other partners need to respond to. There is a recognition that CWB is not something new and East Lothian Council, in particular has been working for years to maximise the impact of procurement spend, for example. CWB presents the opportunity to recalibrate what East Lothian is looking to achieve and bring together the 'Pillars' of activity coherently. There is a need to ensure that political parties, officers, and Anchor Institutions work together on realising the principles of CWB and the wider objectives of the Local Economy Strategy.
<b>CWB Working Group</b>		The workshop undertaken in July 2023 formed part of an existing meeting of the East Lothian CWB Working Group. Led by the Policy Team at the Council, but with strong departmental representation and from the wider public sector and third sector, the CWB Working Group appears to be a good vehicle to take forward CWB activities in the short term and to develop a CWB Action Plan. It is also a useful governance mechanism for informing the 'golden threading' of CWB through the longer-term Local Economy Strategy, and particularly in terms of its overarching objectives and principles and in specific longer term actions.
<b>Embedding CWB in Strategy</b>		The concept of CWB is not new in East Lothian – indeed East Lothian Council has been working on aspects such as Community Benefit Clauses for a significant period of time. There is however recognition that embedding it into strategy and everyday working within the Council and wider (Community) Anchor Institutions will take time. CWB requires a cultural shift across not only local politicians but also all staff within the local authority and wider (Community) Anchor Institutions. There is also a recognition of the need for communities to become aware of CWB and its potential impact on addressing local economic, social, and environmental challenges. There is also a need to reflect upon how CWB will have implications for the six area partnerships and upon existing projects around participatory budgeting, for example.

Table 3.2: Baseline Position: Progressive Procurement.

Activity	Assessment	Commentary
<b>Spend Analysis</b>		East Lothian Council utilises Spikes Cavell to undertake annual analysis of where procurement spend goes geographically, sectorally and in business type terms. There is an understanding geographically of the amount of money spent in East Lothian, the Lothians, and the wider Capital and South Scotland City-Region. East Lothian Council is also encouraging other (Community) Anchor Institutions to undertake such analysis, and which is framed by a new Procurement Strategy and an overarching objective for an 'East Lothian first' approach. There is a drive across the Council and wider (Community) Anchor Institutions to create new opportunities for the East Lothian business and third sector base in procurement in both East Lothian and the wider City-Region.
<b>Procurement Working Groups</b>		The Procurement Team at East Lothian Council and particularly the Head of Procurement is increasingly seeking to engage with other (Community) Anchor Institutions in the locality and across the Lothians to adopt the principles of the new Procurement Strategy. There is an opportunity to formalise such relationship development and influencing through a procurement specific working group.
<b>Community Benefit Procurement Frameworks</b>		East Lothian Council's new Procurement Strategy sets out coherently the types of wider outcomes that the Council and other partners (potentially) are seeking to realise through the process of procurement, including around contributing towards net zero and climate change and delivering community benefits. This is also accompanied by an emerging operational Community Benefit Procurement Framework which presents a clear path for commissioners to embed such considerations across the design of all goods and services. Despite the Framework, there is a recognition and honest reflection that the Council and other (Community) Anchor Institutions do not always know what the community wants when it comes to Community Benefits and that the delivery needs go beyond the provision of apprenticeships. There is also a recognition that the measurement of the impact of Community Benefits needs to improve and be evidenced as part of the contribution procurement makes to the addressing of wider local challenges such as skills.
<b>Local Market Making</b>		A key focus of the Local Economy Strategy for East Lothian is around creating the conditions that will enable local businesses and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to flourish and grow. This includes bringing employment sites into use, developing hubs and spaces for entrepreneurship and innovation and providing business support. This market development does however need to be linked to the process of procurement at East Lothian Council and other (Community) Anchor Institutions and the relationship between such Institutions and business needs to evolve so there is improved awareness of both what is being looked to be procured and what types of goods and services are available in the locality. There are a number of mechanisms that could be used to enable this to happen further, including the increasing of procurement thresholds, hosting more meet the buyer events, and using innovative methods of procurement. The Spend Analysis undertaken (1a) could also be utilised to identify particular sector gaps in local spend as a way of inspiring new entrepreneurship and product and service development.

Table 3.3: Baseline Position: Advancing fairer employment and just labour markets.

Activity	Assessment	Commentary
<b>Employee Mapping and Re-spend</b>		East Lothian Council has already undertaken some mapping work as to where their employees live, which provides useful evidence of the contribution made to the local economy, with other (Community) Anchor Institutions also undertaking such analysis. This analysis could however be widened out to identify wider information about demographics and inequality.
<b>Real Living Wage</b>		East Lothian Council and NHS Lothian are already accredited Scottish Living Wage employers as is the Third Sector Interface meaning that there is a strong commitment to ensuring that their workforces are paid fairly and have good terms and conditions. This condition to be Scottish Living Wage Employers also passes to the third sector as a condition of grant applications and awards. There is a significant opportunity to embed Scottish Living Wage principles and behaviours into businesses across East Lothian, both in terms of those procured to provide goods and services to (Community) Anchor Institutions and the wider business base.
<b>Workforce Health and Well-Being</b>		East Lothian Council already has some workplace policies in place around health and well-being and particularly around subsidised gym membership and access to healthcare. There is a recognition that this also links to procurement in that where possible the Council are looking to utilise in-house services and local providers to deliver such activities. This activity is also evident amongst other (Community) Anchor Institutions and through the activities of local voluntary and community sector organisations.
<b>Direct Recruitment</b>		Consultation undertaken as part of the development of the East Lothian Local Economy Strategy has identified key challenges around the skills of the local resident population. There is a particular mismatch between the needs of employers, including (Community) Anchor Institutions and the employability and vocational skills of residents. This means that direct recruitment from deprived neighbourhoods or of East Lothian residents can be a challenge. It is recognised that there is a need for upskilling in order for this aspect of CWB to be realised and also to contribute to related aspects and particularly local market making (1d). East Lothian Council recognises that the very nature of some front line services such as property maintenance are integral to a CWB approach through local employment opportunities and workforces.

Table 3.4: Baseline Position: Plural ownership of the economy.

Activity	Assessment	Commentary
<b>Local market understanding</b>		There is a strong understanding in East Lothian of the existing Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector in terms of who organisations are, where they are based, and the types of activities they undertake. In addition, there are strong relationships between East Lothian Council and the Third Sector Interface in terms of grant arrangements and the use of Council owned and managed buildings and assets by the Sector. The Third Sector Interface is also a key partner in the Community Wealth Building Working Group. As already detailed in 1(d), there is however a need to more effectively align the activities of existing VCSE organisations to upcoming procurement opportunities at East Lothian Council and other Anchor Institutions.
<b>Cooperative and Social Enterprise Formulation</b>		There is a key opportunity through the Local Economy Strategy to develop and grow businesses of all types in East Lothian, and including SMEs, Social Enterprise, Cooperatives and Voluntary Organisations. There are also significant opportunities to support this development and growth through utilising key sites such as Cockenzie and the Innovation Hub to host businesses of all types, and including social enterprise and cooperatives. There is a specific opportunity to create new more socially and environmentally responsible organisations that can build upon East Lothian's tourist identity. There is also an opportunity to create Social Economy organisations that fill specific gaps that both public sector organisations and the private sector face in the procurement of services. For example, there is potential scope for the development of Care, Food and Cleaning Cooperatives.
<b>Cooperative and Social Enterprise Support</b>		There is a recognition in East Lothian that the Business Gateway function is an effective means through which 'conventional' businesses (both large and small) can access business support. However, there is also a recognition that the nature of this support could be both widened in terms of the types of support provided such as around social value and environmental responsibility and in terms of the nature of organisations that receive support to also include Social Economy organisations. Specific support is needed for smaller voluntary sector organisations and recognising the role of the Third Sector Interface as a broker.

Table 3.5: Baseline Position: Socially just use of land.

Activity	Assessment	Commentary
<b>Community Benefit Clauses</b>		East Lothian Council has a long history in embedding Community Benefit Clauses into both procurement opportunities and development activities. Given the scale of housing development in particular, there is a need to develop the approach further and importantly more effectively measure the realisations and impact of such clauses and agreements.
<b>Land Ownership Review</b>		East Lothian Council is currently undertaking a review of assets that are owned and managed by the local authority, with a specific focus upon office accommodation and buildings that are no longer needed to deliver direct services. The review is also engaging with communities and the Third Sector Interface to identify their needs and aspiration and scope the potential for transfer and the sustainable management of assets into the future. There is a recognition that there needs to be more proactivity around vacant buildings and that transfer should not be restricted to the VCSE sector – instead there could be scope to create business hubs for small businesses or individuals working from home but who want the flexibility of office space with like-minded organisations. Any transfer, however needs to lead to the sustainable use and management of such assets.
<b>Community Land Trusts</b>		No work has been undertaken in East Lothian around the development of Community Land Trusts.
<b>Ownership Transfer</b>		Some work has already been undertaken in East Lothian around the transfer of assets from the Council and other (Community) Anchor Institutions to VCSE sector organisations. However, for the VCSE sector this has been challenging, given the condition of some of the assets, and the lack of available support to help them through the process of transfer. It has also been challenging for the Council, in particular, in ensuring that transfer is both realistic and sustainable. There is a need for support and funding to assist VCSE organisations in the process of sustainable asset transfer.

Table 3.6: Baseline Position: Making financial power work for local places.

Activity	Assessment	Description
<b><i>Outsourcing Review</i></b>		East Lothian Council has already recognised some of the challenges associated with outsourced services and their capability to deliver local economic, social and environmental benefits. There is a recognition that there is potential scope to bring services around waste and leisure back in-house, together with some other core services.
<b><i>Community Banks</i></b>		Like many areas across the UK, Community Banks have not been developed in East Lothian as a result of legislative challenges and the fact that such banks are often developed at city-regional or regional scale. However, recognising the many challenges that SMEs in particular face around accessing start-up capital and wider finance, East Lothian does have East Lothian Investments in place which provides finance to SMEs and other organisations to develop new and innovative activities.
<b><i>Pension Fund Influencing</i></b>		In the context of the Edinburgh Capital Region, East Lothian Council and other partners in the Pension Fund are seeking to influence investments – there has been a particular focus upon using Pension Funds to invest in social housing developments. Again, this is relatively difficult to influence directly at the local level.
<b><i>Credit Union Formulation</i></b>		East Lothian already has in place a branch of the Capital Credit Union and which is hosted by the Third Sector Interface. It is recognised that there is no need for the formulation of a further Credit Union – there is however a need to raise awareness of the existing Credit Union more effectively, particularly in rural communities.

## Proposed Actions for Inclusion in the Local Economy Strategy

3.6.4 The Local Economy Strategy should have Community Wealth Building aims and objectives and measures flowing through it. In broad terms, the Strategy should be looking to (it should be noted that these aims and objectives will be fleshed out in more detail as the Strategy development evolves):

- Ensure that all activities bring maximum local economic benefit for East Lothian.
- Seek to maximise the amount of spending undertaken with local businesses, SMEs and Social Economy organisations, and where not possible seek to maximise the local economic, social and environmental benefits delivered through spending.
- Seek to ensure that all organisations with a base in East Lothian behave in socially and environmentally responsible ways.
- Seek to harness the potential of East Lothian assets (human, financial, and physical) for the benefit of the East Lothian economy, organisations within East Lothian, and the people of East Lothian.
- Seek to maximise the benefit of development and inward investment for the benefit of the people of East Lothian.

3.6.5 In addition to having Community Wealth Building as a 'Golden Thread', the following medium to long-term actions should be included in the East Lothian Local Economy Strategy and for realisation in the next 10 years.

### **Action 1 – Support market-shaping for existing organisations**

East Lothian Council, through the Business Gateway should look to provide dedicated support, capacity-building and advice for existing local SMEs and VCSE sector organisations so that they can engage in procurement processes more effectively. The types of organisations engaged with should be framed by types of goods and services identified as 'gaps' in Action 6 of the CWB actions.

### **Action 2 – Support development of new Social Economy Organisations**

Again, using the Business Gateway and the Third Sector Interface, East Lothian Council and other (Community) Anchor Institution Partners should look to support the development of new Social Economy Organisations. The focus of these organisations should be again aligned to the goods and services identified as gaps in Action 6 of the CWB actions. They should also be focused upon activities which can potentially partly populate under-utilised assets in East Lothian, notably around addressing climate change, and in harnessing the opportunities presented by tourism.

### **Action 3 – Provide dedicated business support for Social Economy Organisations**

Utilising the Business Gateway and the Third Sector Interface, more support should be provided to Social Economy Organisations, and that goes beyond support around procurement. This should include access to advice around access to grant funding and sustainable asset transfer and management.

### **Action 4 – Enhance skills provision, work in schools and employability activities**

East Lothian Council and (Community) Anchor Institution Partners should look to undertake further work with young people in order to retain talent, address basic employability issues, and develop new entrepreneurial skills and enterprises. Retaining talent in East Lothian was identified as a key challenge during the community consultation for the Local Economy Strategy and the principles and



'pillars' of CWB should be a key way of retaining that talent, whether that be the creation of new enterprises or supporting young people into employment opportunities with suppliers.

#### **Action 5 - Development of East Lothian Employment Charter**

East Lothian Council, other (Community) Anchor Institutions, the Third Sector Interface, and the business sector should develop an Employment Charter for East Lothian. This would set out expectations for all employers based in East Lothian or delivering services through procurement around, pay, terms and conditions, health and well-being practices and other facets of being a good employer.

#### **Action 6 - Land Ownership Review and review of assets of other (Community) Anchor Institutions**

A review should be undertaken of all land in East Lothian to understand its ownership and to scope whether it could be utilised in more socially and environmentally responsible ways. Other (Community) Anchor Institutions should also undertake a review of their assets and scope their potential for use after usual operating hours, by Social Economy Organisations, and for sustainable transfer to other organisations.

#### **Action 7 - Asset Transfer Action Plan, with support for Social Economy Organisations**

Using the existing East Lothian Council Asset Review and the wider Land Ownership and Anchor Institution Asset Review, East Lothian Council and Partners should develop an Asset Transfer Action Plan which focused upon both VCSE organisations and SMEs and looks to provide support to Social Economy Organisations in the sustainable transfer of assets, and supports the creation of business hubs for both SMEs and large multinationals, whose workforce wants to work remotely but not from home.

## 4 Conclusions & Next Steps

### 4.1 Conclusions

- 4.1.1 This project has identified a number of significant strengths in the East Lothian economy, including a rapidly growing and well-educated population; a high quality reputation for its food & drink offer; attractive visitor destinations; natural resources and infrastructure that make the area well placed to target opportunities in renewable energy; high quality east-west transport links and an active and engaged community and third sector.
- 4.1.2 However, the research has also identified a range of factors that could constrain the area's future development, including a shortage of technical skills; low business productivity; poor north-south connectivity links and a shortage of business expansion land.

### 4.2 Next Steps

- 4.2.1 The next stages towards the development and delivery of the local economy plan will be as follows:
- **Evidence paper refinement & validation:** we will seek feedback from East Lothian economy stakeholders and will redraft this document to incorporate this feedback; new data as an when it is published; and the outcomes of the outstanding stakeholder consultations that are still in our diaries.
  - **Vision & objective setting workshop:** we will facilitate a workshop with local economy stakeholders to reach a collective view of what the future vision and objectives of the East Lothian economy should be, building on the evidence presented in this document.
  - **Develop actions 'long list':** we will prepare a long list of potential interventions that East Lothian can take to build on its areas of strength, address its areas of weakness, and respond to changes in the external environment.
  - **Identify priority actions;** we will facilitate a workshop with you to assess each of these long-listed options against the vision and objectives, and identify a short-list for inclusion in the strategy action plan.
  - **Further scope & define priority actions:** we will work with identified project leads on the short-listed projects to further scope and define these.
  - **Develop monitoring framework:** we will identify a set of performance measures that can be used to assess the impact of the proposed activities in delivering on the strategy's vision and objectives, together with a timescale and approach for measuring and reporting these.
  - **Develop strategy & action planning:** we will prepare a strategy and action plan setting out the outcomes of all of the tasks above.
  - **Strategy approval:** the strategy will be submitted to Council for approval at its February 2024 meeting.
  - **Ongoing monitoring:** we will continue to support East Lothian Council in the ongoing monitoring of the strategy up until Spring 2028.

## Appendix A Stakeholders Consulted With

List of groups and individuals we have engaged with:

Existing events and groups consulted
Community Wealth Building Working Group
Connected Economies Group
Rural Economy Group
Development Group
East Lothian Energy Conference
MSP's Business Forum

Business focus groups	
Who	Company
Aaron Johnston	Scottish Battlefield Trust
Alasdair Smart	Scotrail
Callum Mark	Fox Lake Adventures
David Sweeney	NG Offshore wind
Emma Bouglet	Scotland's Food Drink County
Gabe Fella	Hargreaves Land
George Mackintosh	Papple Farm Steading
Gordon Falconer	ZoT Engineering
Heather Baxter	Maple Cottage B&B
Jack Worden	Haddington Heritage and History
Joe Goldblatt	Battle of Prestons Trust
Kirsty Innes	East Lothian Tourism Attractions group
Martin Ward	HADFAB
Neil Christison	Visit Scotland
Rachel Syderserff	Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
Sir Francis Ogilvy	Winton Castle
Steve Mclean	National Museum of Flight
Steven Surgeon	Belhaven Brewery
Trudi Cueto	Carfrae Farm

1-2-1 contacts	
Who	Company
Alison Hood	EL Works - Team Manager, Education & Employability
Andy Stewart	ELC - PM - Blindwells and Regional Prosperity Framework (and Cockenzie)
Catherine Molloy	ELC - PM - QMU Hub/EIP
Douglas Proudfoot	ELC - Executive Director of Place
Graham Marsden	ELC - PM - Cockenzie development
Mark McMullen	Scottish Enterprise
Martin Hayman	ELC - District Heating Officer
Monica Patterson	ELC - Chief Executive
Peter Ford	Premium Bakery and Chair of CEG
Peter Forsyth	ELC - Rail & Active travel lead at ELC
Ray Montgomery	ELC - PM, Cockenzie site current activity

East Lothian Council - Internal discussion contacts	
Who	Role at East Lothian Council
Alan Stubbs	Roads
Alison Hood	Team Manager - Education and Employability
Andrew Mackenzie	Business Growth
Billy Agnew	Economic Development - Digital Connectivity and Prestongrange Heritage
Caitlin McCorry	Service Manager - Connected Communities
Caroline Rodgers	Customer Services - Library and Museums
Chris Hall	Development & Business Support Team Leader
Claire Dutton	Economic Development
Colin Gilmour	Senior Officer - Regeneration
Elaine Carmichael	Team Manager - Economic Development
Eleanor Hayman	Team Manager - Procurement
Ellie Dunnet	Head of Finance
Emma Brown	Connected Communities Manager
Gary Miller	Infrastructure & Procurement Manager
Jackie Gardiner	Economic Development - Tourism
Jamie Baker	Service Manager - Economic Development
Jayne Adamson	Community Development Officer
Katrina Cummings	Economic Development - Business Development Administration officer
Keith McDonald	Rent Income Officer
Lucy Higginson	Policy Officer: Poverty and Equality
Martin Hayman	District heating officer
Matthew Foulds	Economic Development
Paul Zocowski	Planning Department
Rebecca Pringle	Team Manager - Housing Strategy
Robin Edgar	Planning Department
Steven Newlin	Business Gateway

## Appendix B Community Engagement Events Undertaken

Public Consultation Events June 2023				
Date	Where	Time	Who	Purpose
Tuesday 13th June	Musselburgh - Regent Room and/or concourse Brunton Hall, Ladywell Way, Musselburgh EH21 6AF	2-7pm	Open to the Public	Public consultation event
Friday 16th June	North Berwick - Hope rooms, 34 Forth Street, North Berwick EH39 4JD	1-3.45pm	Open to the Public	Public consultation event
Monday 19th June	Haddington - Star room, John Gray centre, 15 Lodge St, Haddington EH41 3DX	2.30-6.30pm	Open to the Public	Public consultation event
Thursday 22nd June	Dunbar - Bleachingfield, Countess Crescent, Dunbar EH42 1DX	5-8pm	Open to the Public	Public consultation event
Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> June	Prestonpans - Pennypit Community centre, Double Dykes, Rope Walk, Prestonpans EH32 9BN	4.30-7.45pm	Open to the Public	Public consultation event
Tuesday 27th June	Musselburgh East - Community learning centre, Haddington Rd, Musselburgh EH21 8JJ	12.30-5.45pm	Open to the Public	Public consultation event
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Tranent - Fraser Centre, 3 Winton Place, Tranent EH33 1AF	4.30-7.45pm	Open to the Public	Public consultation event

