

West Lothian Community Safety Strategic Assessment

REPORT

by

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Key Points Summary

- This Community Safety Strategic Assessment (CSSA) is designed to inform decisions about future priorities for action by the West Lothian Community Safety Partnership. It builds on the Community Safety Strategy published in 2008, and the detailed Community Safety Data Audit (CSDA) which reported at the start of 2009.
- Work to date has focussed on three discrete areas of activity: anti-social behaviour; preventable injuries and deaths; and violence and crime. This Strategic Assessment highlights the main issues to emerge locally in respect of each of the three areas, as well as to explore cross-cutting issues relating to young people in West Lothian. It also explores links between drug and alcohol misuse and each of the three main areas of focus.
- The Data Audit has revealed that, while some robust sources of data do exist to inform future action planning to improve community safety, these are often held within individual partners' organisations and are not readily available for secondary analysis. Since much of the data collected by different partners is confidential, it is unlikely that sharing of the data can be easily achieved. Ways of providing anonymised data for primary analysis need to be explored.
- One of the biggest barriers to understanding the victim and offender profiles of those living in West Lothian is access to police data. This is the main source of information in this regard but has restricted access. Complementary data from other sources is available but also has restricted access.
- Some national and local attitudinal data is available, but it is often based on small sample sizes and is difficult to generalise to the wider community. Perception data also does not provide an indication of the true prevalence of community safety issues in the local area since it is not necessarily linked to direct experience of crime or anti-social behaviour.
- Much of the data that is available cannot be easily broken down by ward, gender, age, disability, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Where data is broken down, there are inconsistencies in the time frames used for reporting, the geographical level of analysis and the age band clusters used for disaggregate analysis. This makes comparison of datasets difficult and is one of the biggest challenges in ensuring that future action plans are targeted appropriately and are inclusive.
- While there does not appear to be a problem with data collection techniques and, indeed, there is a multitude of data that could be used by partners in shaping future community safety activity, what does need to be improved is the storage of data in accessible formats, and greater awareness-raising between partners of what information is held.
- There is restricted analytical capacity to maximise usefulness of data that is currently held and so there needs to be management of expectations around how quickly data analysis can be carried out.
- From data that is available, the main findings are as follows:

Priorities: Anti-social behaviour, Preventable Injuries and Deaths and Violence and Crime

- **Anti-social behaviour** does not appear to be unusually high in West Lothian, especially when looking at police recorded crime data alone. It also appears to have remained stable over recent years. There are, however, some key difficulties in providing accurate estimates of the prevalence of anti-social behaviour since much of it will not appear in crime recording databases. The use of measures to control anti-social behaviour are also not consistently applied between local authorities, making it

difficult to compare West Lothian with other jurisdictions. Police data on reports of anti-social behaviour from the public is available, but is perceptual and so does not provide an objective measure of anti-social behaviour. Attitudinal data is also available but does not relate directly to experience.

- **Accidents and Injuries** data, as well as suicide data in West Lothian shows that patterns do not differ significantly from those presented nationally. Much of the information presented is based on small numbers of people and there may be questions around the accuracy of generalising findings from such small case numbers. That said, there does appear to have been general reductions in most areas of preventable injuries and deaths in recent years, with the exception of suicide, which has shown a recent increase in West Lothian.
- **Violence** and violent crimes in West Lothian appears to have decreased in recent years. That said, violent crime occurs differentially across the authority, and there appears to be a higher incidence of domestic abuse within the authority than other local authorities. Calculating accurate prevalence figures for domestic abuse is difficult due to under-reporting to the police, and an inability to cross-reference alternative data sets (such as those held by support organisations) with the core police data. This means that the problem is likely to be underestimated.

Cross Cutting Issues: Young People

- The main finding in respect of young people is that there is a lack of readily available evidence which can be used to understand their experiences as either victims or offenders.
- West Lothian does have a number of ongoing initiatives which are designed to reduce young people's involvement in criminal activity, to divert them away from the justice system and to encourage positive healthy lifestyles. The authority has witnessed increased entry into drug treatment services for young people in recent years, as well as a reduction in persistent offending, both of which may be a reflection of the good work already being undertaken.

Cross-Cutting Issues: Substance Misuse

- Substance Misuse data (for drugs and alcohol) does suggest that there may be a specific need for continued focus on reducing substance misuse among young people in the area.
- Other than showing that substance misuse may be particularly prevalent among young adults in West Lothian, the data show that it is not something that differs locally in terms of referral numbers, user profiles or personal health consequences when compared to national data.
- Males are considerably more likely to require hospital treatment due to alcohol related injuries than females across nearly all of the age groups. Notably, the exception is the 0-15 age group where females are more likely to require treatment. This is one area where age, gender and substance misuse all combine to create a high risk group with regards to personal safety.
- The data also show that hospital admissions for drug and alcohol misuse are more likely to originate from a small number of localities within the authority, and these may provide a focus for the future.

Further Research

- Immediate areas for primary research include: a need for better linking and integration of the datasets that are currently being held and managed by partners; geographical analysis for the core police recorded crime data; manipulation of existing data to allow it to be married with the

Life Stages agenda; more qualitative exploratory work to identify the predictors of fear for different demographics; and a need for learning from elsewhere about how best to collect information about minority groups, since they appear to be largely hidden in existing data sources.

Strategic Assessment in Context

In Autumn 2008, the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership published its Community Safety Strategy for 2008 to 2011. The key aim of this strategy is to achieve reductions in: anti-social behaviour; preventable injuries and deaths; and violence and crime.

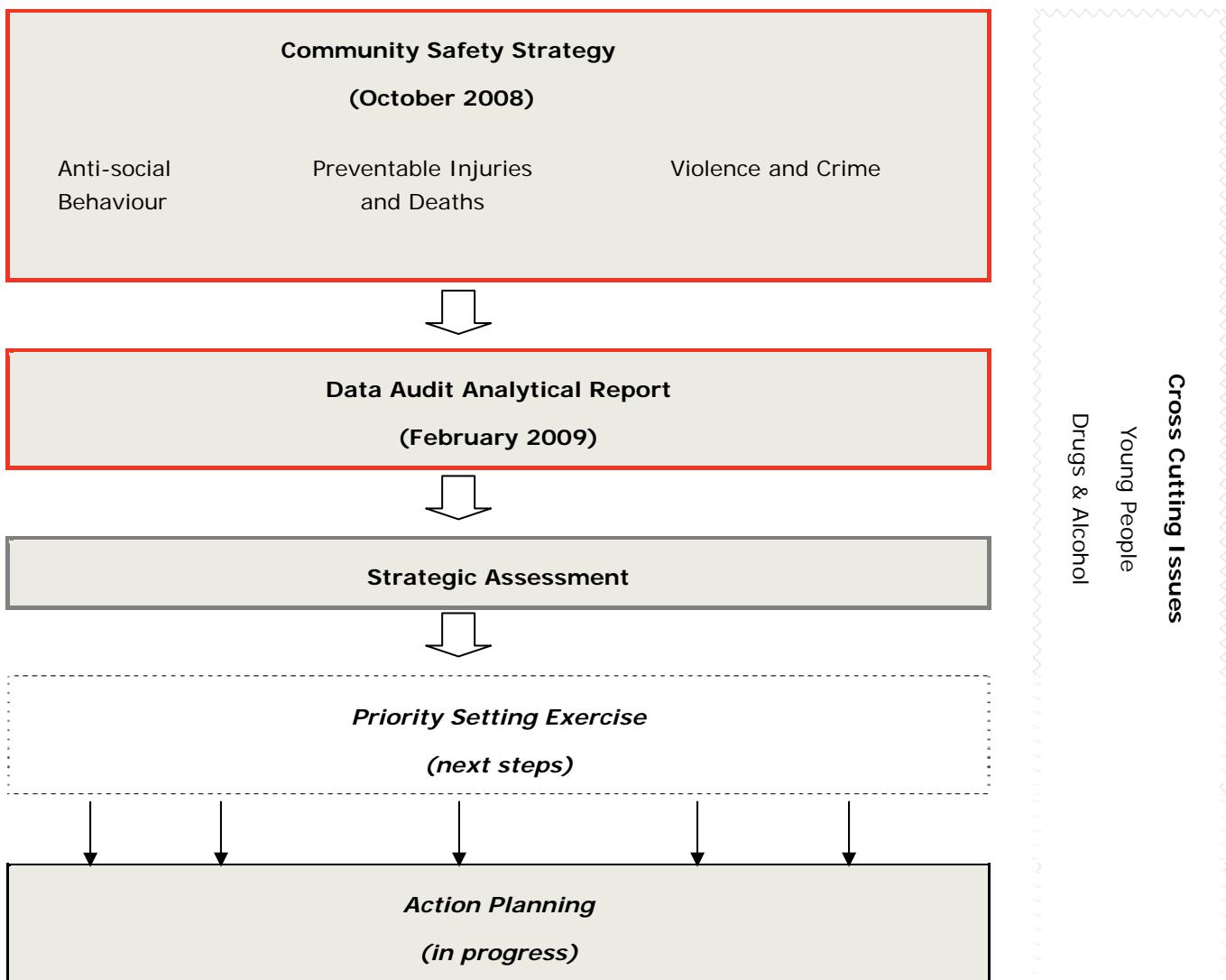
The Strategy also includes a commitment to the development of a community safety strategic assessment, informed by an audit of existing data that relates to anti-social behaviour, preventable injuries and deaths, and violence and crime in the area. The overall purpose of the exercise is to inform action planning in year two of the Strategy and to assist in the development of the second version of the Strategy in 2010.

The purpose of the strategic assessment is to present and interpret the analyses of the data collected in the audit and to identify, from that evidence, current and possible future issues and priorities for the Community Safety Forum. Jointly, the data audit and the strategic assessment seek to inform and enable the CSP partners to:

- understand the patterns, trends and shifts relating to violent crime, anti-social behaviour and preventable injuries and death, including a clear focus on young people and youth issues;
- set clear and mutual priorities for the partnership;
- develop activity to meet the needs of the local community which is driven by reliable intelligence;
- deploy resources effectively; and
- undertake annual reviews and plan activity based on a clear understanding of issues

This first strategic assessment will also identify gaps in intelligence, analytical capacity and capabilities, and in community engagement mechanisms. Addressing these gaps should help the partnership to develop the strategic assessment in future years.

The model below shows where the strategic assessment sits within the wider planning and policy development framework, highlighting the work that has preceded its development, and that which is ongoing or still to follow.



It is important to note at the outset that the data audit has flagged a number of local issues which may provide a focus for future activity, but that the list of issues is too long to enable them each to be targeted in the short or medium term. There is a need, therefore, following this strategic assessment, for a priority setting exercise to inform future action planning.

The remainder of this document summarises the evidence to emerge from the data audit exercise and outlines the strategic implications of that work for the community safety partners.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This strategic assessment builds on the West Lothian Community Safety Data Audit (CSDA), which was carried out at the end of 2008, and reported at the start of 2009. The data audit report sets out a detailed analysis of secondary data relating to the main areas targeted by the Community Planning Partnership's Community Safety Strategy for 2008 to 2011, presented under four headings, as follows:

- anti-social behaviour;
- drugs and alcohol;
- home safety, road safety and suicide; and
- violence and crime.

1.1.2 Although drugs and alcohol data were collected as a distinct focus of the audit, the underlying assumption was that achieving an understanding of substance misuse in West Lothian would also help to inform each of the other three areas of work. There is a body of evidence linking drug and alcohol misuse to both risk of offending and victimisation. The personal health risks of drink and drug misuse also makes them a relevant area of focus for those with an interest in reducing preventable injuries and deaths.

1.1.3 The data audit report should be used as a supplementary reference document to accompany this assessment, and to provide broader understanding of the context and origins of the information provided here, as well as providing more detailed explanation of the trends in data over time. As such, we have cross-referenced the relevant paragraph numbers from the data audit report that can be consulted for further information on any of the issues discussed.

1.1.4 The purpose of the strategic assessment is to present and interpret the evidence from the data audit report analyses and to inform decisions about future priorities for action by the Community Safety Forum.

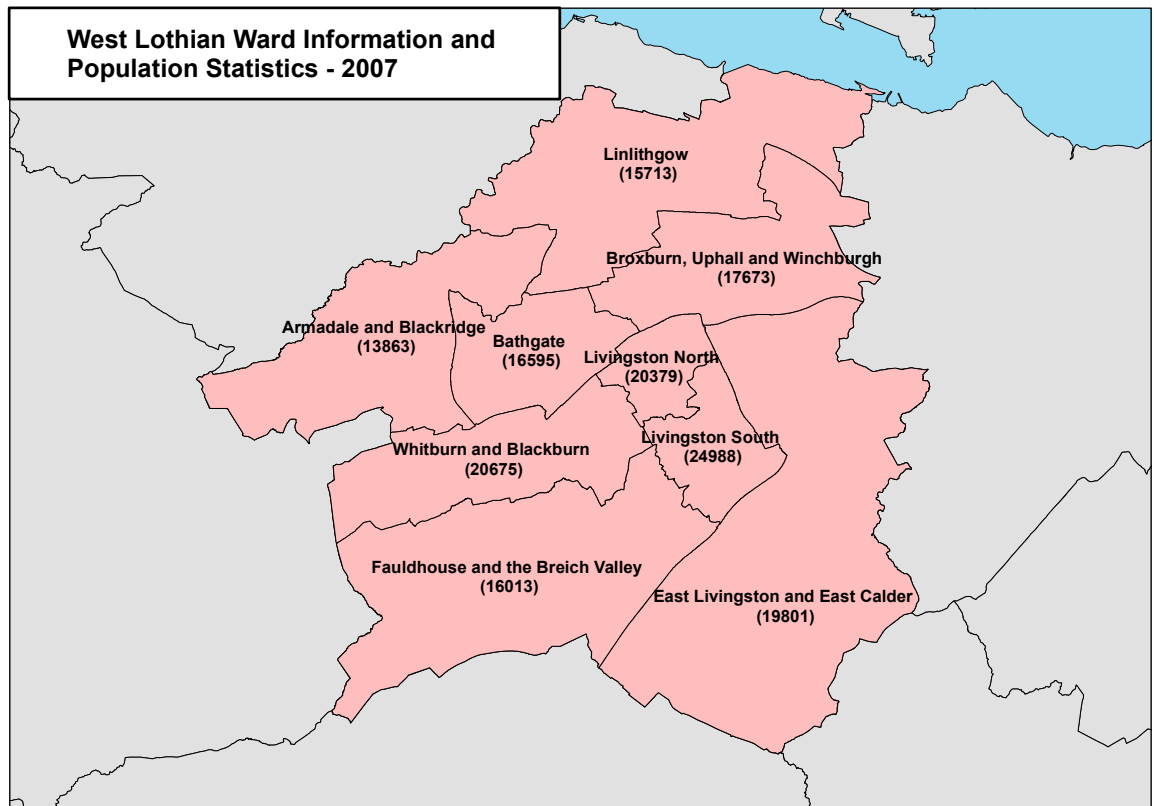
1.1.5 This report aims to present the key findings both thematically and geographically, to provide a focus for future activity to tackle the key issues of concern. Initially, it was intended that data might also be presented demographically, but this is not possible due to the lack of substantive evidence that can be broken down to that level.

1.2 The Local Context

1.2.1 West Lothian is situated to the west of Edinburgh and is one of the 32 unitary council areas in Scotland. At 427 km², it ranks 20th out of the 32 in terms of geographic size, while its population of 167,770 in 2007 ranks it 10th out of the 32. It borders the City of Edinburgh, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire and Falkirk Local Authority areas.

1.2.2 The authority is made up of nine separate multi-member wards or locality planning partnerships, shown in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 West Lothian Multi-Member Wards and Population Profile



1.2.3 Data from the 2001 Scottish Census and the GRO show that, in West Lothian:

- the ratio of males to females is 48: 52, the same as the national divide;
- the mean age is 36, compared to a national average of 38;
- 21.0% of the population is aged under 16, compared to a national average of 17.8%;
- those of pensionable age represent around 16% of West Lothian's population, compared to a national average of just over 19%;
- 18.5% of the population are thought to have a limiting long-term illness, compared to 20.3% of the population in Scotland as a whole; and
- 10% of West Lothian's population were born outside of Scotland, with 1% in the EU and 2% elsewhere outside of the UK - this compares to 13% outside of Scotland at the national level, with 1% in the EU and 2.5% born elsewhere.

1.2.4 The most notable feature of West Lothian's population is, therefore, that it has a relatively young population. As such, individual attention is given in both the data audit report and this strategic assessment with regards to specific community safety issues affecting young people, and associated implications for action.

1.2.5 Overall the number of West Lothian residents is expanding rapidly; between 1995 and 2005, West Lothian had the largest increase in population of all Scottish Local Authorities and its population is currently expected to grow by a further 20% between now and 2024.

1.3 Key Issues from the Data Audit

Thematic Analysis

- 1.3.1 This section highlights the main community safety issues to be addressed for West Lothian as a whole, highlighting the areas where the data has shown either that there is a difference in the local profile compared to the national average or that there has been a shift in the trends of different types of incidents over recent years.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 1.3.2 The available recorded data indicated that in West Lothian levels of anti-social behaviour were not unusually high in relation to other areas of Scotland. Public perception also seemed to be more positive than in other authorities. However, this is an area where further consideration of other data sources and additional evidence gathering may be needed to refine the understanding of the impact of anti-social behaviour on community safety.
- 1.3.3 One of the most commonly used definitions of Anti-Social Behaviour is in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It defines ASB as behaviour that is “likely to cause alarm, distress or harassment to another individual or individuals”. Whilst this may seem clear, the subjectivity of each of these outcomes makes measuring incidents of anti-social behaviour difficult to achieve. Alarm, distress and harassment are difficult to operationalise and, as such, perceptions and experience of anti-social behaviour may vary considerably from one person to another.
- 1.3.4 The two main data sources identified for this measure were the police recorded crime statistics and the local authority databases regarding anti-social behaviour measures enforced and breached. This data presents a generally positive picture of the levels of anti-social behaviour in West Lothian. However, perhaps the most significant finding from the data audit is that the available data which support our understanding of ASB are limited; and that additional hidden data sources may provide a more accurate picture of the extent of the problem in West Lothian.
- 1.3.5 Importantly, the audit was limited to **recorded** and **detected crimes** only. It did not include **reported** incidents, since such figures can provide over-amplified indicators of crime, and are, essentially, unsubstantiated. This is particularly important to note in the context of anti-social behaviour, since some reports of anti-social behaviour may never appear on police recorded crime datasets, as no crime is involved. The police hold data that may be more directly indicative of anti-social behaviour than simply using crime data including, for example, the System for Tasking and Operational Resource Management (STORM) which records police responses to any police-generated activity. This may provide a wealth of additional information about different incidents that are notified to the police, including the time, date, location of incident, incident type, details of informants and of the main parties involved but, as this is not in the public domain, it has not been used here.
- 1.3.6 Although data on reported incidents has not been included, it is important to note the existence of this data since it may provide a valuable insight into the types of behaviours that prompt public contact with the police with regards to anti-social behaviour. Importantly, these calls will be linked to actual experience, unlike more generic attitudinal survey data, which does not necessarily reflect participant’s experience.

- 1.3.7 Attitudinal data were taken from the Scottish Household Survey, but are limited both in terms of the extent to which they can be broken down to the local level, and their inherently subjective nature. The data that are available suggest that perceived levels of antisocial behaviour and of young people as the perpetrators of ASB also compare favourably to national averages.
- 1.3.8 Bearing in mind the possible limitations of the data sources as noted above, the data about both anti-social behaviours and related criminal activity that *was* analysed indicates that the prevalence of such behaviour is not unusually high in West Lothian compared to other areas [CSDA paras 2.2.1 – 2.2.11]. Public perceptions of anti-social behaviour are also more positive than in other authorities [CSDA paras 2.4.1 to 2.4.16]. Young people’s involvement in such behaviour also seems to be at a relatively low level compared to other areas and the national average [CSDA para 2.6.20 and 2.6.21 to 2.6.23]. It is important to acknowledge, however, that much of this may, in fact, be due to the existence of such teams as the Safer Neighbourhoods Team and Neighbourhood Youth Officer/Young People’s Team, which are actively seeking to minimise the potential of ASB in the community [CSDA paras 2.5.2. to 2.5.6 and paras 2.6.3 to 2.6.20].
- 1.3.9 One area of note, however, is that the number of seizure of vehicle warnings enforced in the area proportionally far exceed those enforced in others parts of the country [CSDA paras 2.3.1 to 2.3.3]. Such measures are typically linked to reckless driving by young drivers, without due care and attention or consideration for others. This may indicate a need for targeted interventions with this population to try and reduce this behaviour in the area and, indeed, some such initiatives are already underway. These include Operational Opel, which aims to combat inappropriate driving among young drivers, and to reduce road crashes through enforcement and education and Westdrive, which promotes positive driving and educates young drivers about risks on the roads.
- 1.3.10 Recent research has suggested that there are links between behaviour regarded as anti-social and people’s behavioural expectations for particular locations, and that these expectations can be very context-specific¹ ie what is acceptable in one location (groups of young people in a park) is not in another (young people “hanging round a street corner”). This means that the gathering of data that explores expectations needs to be targeted at the local level, rather than being based on national reports.
- 1.3.11 Perhaps the key message, therefore, is to ensure that local partners keep abreast of community expectations in relation to anti-social behaviour and target action on the issues/types of behaviour that are the subject of those expectations. By doing this, the actual level of anti-social behaviour could be minimised while at the same time having the maximum impact on the community’s wellbeing.

Road Safety, Home Safety and Suicide

- 1.3.12 In West Lothian, as with Scotland as a whole, those most likely to be affected by road and home safety issues are the young and the elderly.
- 1.3.13 The data audit showed that children under five account for a larger proportion of all those admitted to hospital on an emergency basis in West Lothian compared to Scotland as a

¹ Millie, A. (2008) Anti-social behaviour, behavioural expectations and an urban aesthetic, *British Journal of Criminology*, 2008, 48, pp.379-394

whole, and that male children up to the age of five are more likely to require A&E admission than females [CSDA paras 4.2.1 to 4.2.4]. The overall number of emergency hospital admissions for under 15s in West Lothian in 2007/08 was 396. Of these, 40% were aged 1-4 (n=158) compared to 32% nationally (n=2,912). This presents two questions for the partnership to explore:

- proportional over-representation of under 5's in the data; and
- why males are more likely to be admitted than females.

- 1.3.14 The data audit also showed that around 15% of all deaths and serious injuries resulting from road traffic accidents in 2006 were children [CSDA para 4.3.2]. This figure may seem high, but must be considered in the wider context of West Lothian's notably young population.
- 1.3.15 In West Lothian (as with Scotland as a whole), males in the 16-22 age group are the most likely to be involved in serious or fatal RTAs as either a driver or passenger [CSDA para 4.3.5]. This may be linked to the above data on the prevalence of reckless driving in West Lothian and may be further evidence of a need for targeted work with young male drivers to prevent injuries and deaths.
- 1.3.16 At the other end of the spectrum, people aged over 65 are proportionally more likely to require an emergency admission to hospital for falls in the home. Data for West Lothian also shows that the number of emergency hospital admissions for falls in the home by those aged over 65 have increased in recent years, and so this may be a priority area for action [CSDA paras 4.5.2 to 4.5.4]. Females are most likely to require emergency hospital admission due to a fall in the home and males are most likely to require emergency hospital admission due to falls outside the home [CSDA para 4.5.7]. Females aged 65 or over are the most likely to be killed by a fall [CSDA para 4.5.8 to 4.5.9].
- 1.3.17 The audit has shown that, in general, data for accidents, injuries and deaths in West Lothian does not differ significantly from that presented nationally. This does not mean that this area does not deserve attention. Rather, it indicates that work may already be underway which is successfully managing these issues at the local level and that this working practice may need to be drawn out and better understood, so that the situation can be improved even further.
- 1.3.18 Importantly, the only area where the audit has revealed a slight anomaly in relation to personal safety is the area of suicide. The number of suicides in West Lothian fell steadily between 2002 and 2006. However, the number of suicides in West Lothian went up to 25 in 2007, from 15 in 2006 [CSDA paras 4.8.1 to 4.8.7]. This data should be treated as an early warning, highlighting a possible need to revisit and rejuvenate activities in this area.

Violence and Crime

- 1.3.19 Violent crime, in general, appears to have been declining in recent years in West Lothian, and this is another area where the authority can claim to be making progress. The total number of recorded violent crimes in West Lothian has decreased by around 15% between 2004 and 2007. The category of crime experiencing by far the biggest reduction between 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 was robbery and assault with intent to rob [CSDA paras 5.2.1 to 5.2.5]. Some of this reduction may be accounted for by high visibility patrols used by the police as a preventative measure. It would be a useful exercise for the partnership to explore in more detail recent police initiatives, to achieve a better understanding of whether they have

directly impacted in this reduction. This would facilitate the achievement of further reductions in the future.

- 1.3.20 The absence of police data regarding offender and victim profiles means that only a limited awareness of the problems of violent crime in West Lothian can be achieved.
- 1.3.21 Although alternative data sources for victimisation are available from various support agencies, these are often based on small numbers of self-referrals from victims, and are likely to underestimate the problem. This issue is especially important in relation to domestic abuse which, when examined in isolation from other types of violent crime, is an area where there has been an increase in recent years in the number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the police in West Lothian.
- 1.3.22 Between 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, West Lothian experienced a 20% increase in the total number of reported domestic abuse incidents. This is notably larger than the 11.5% increase experienced by the Lothian and Borders police force area as a whole, which is itself much larger than the 6.6% increase in reported domestic abuse incidents nationally [CSDA paras 5.7.1 to 5.7.13]. This is concerning, not least because the figures are likely to represent an under-estimate of the true incidence of domestic abuse. Historically, criminal justice theory and research has shown that domestic abuse is a crime type that is often under-reported.
- 1.3.23 Further, the **recorded** violent crime figures that are presented may hide cases of domestic abuse that not classified as violent crime, for example, those that result in verbal abuse and may be recorded as breach of the peace, and so it is not possible to generate a recorded crime statistic for 'domestic abuse' per se.
- 1.3.24 Although data from sources other than the police were collected as part of the data audit (ie from local support agencies), it is difficult to compare these figures with other jurisdictions due to different recording practices and the different service models employed.
- 1.3.25 In interpreting the data, it is possible that this increase in reported cases is a result either of increased incidents of domestic abuse and/or has resulted from successful policies designed to encourage reporting of domestic abuse locally. Without further research, it is difficult to conclude which, if either, has resulted in this increase. In the absence of police data regarding victim profiles, therefore, all that we have been able to identify to date is that domestic abuse is something that is either more prevalent in West Lothian than elsewhere in the country, that it is a problem that is rising, or that reporting rates are higher.
- 1.3.26 Planning for West Lothian's Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) for the management of sexual and violent offenders are still at an early stage, and at present, it is difficult to put a figure on the number of violent offenders that will subject to MAPPA locally. The Scottish Government has not concluded what the process for these offenders will be within MAPPA, including an overarching definition as to what a violent offender is and appropriate risk assessment tools. As a result, specific data for this category cannot be provided here.
- 1.3.27 Similarly, there is a lack of available data regarding the sexual offender profiles other than that held by the police or the courts, and which is hard to access due to the need to protect offender anonymity. The Lothian and Borders Force Information Unit could provide figures on request, but this was not achieved for the data audit.

- 1.3.28 For fear of crime, figures for West Lothian (taken from national attitude surveys) compare favourably to those of Scotland as a whole. In West Lothian, men are, overall, less likely to say that their quality of life is affected by fear of crime, across all age bands. [CSDA paras 5.11.1 to 5.11.18]. Although research has shown that the fear of crime is disproportionate to the actual amount of crime committed in any given area, it can still be sufficient to prevent community participation at even the most basic level and therefore should be addressed. This highlights that further research is required in this area of work.

Cross Cutting Themes – Drugs and Alcohol

- 1.3.29 Drugs and alcohol were included in the community safety data audit because of the body of evidence linking substance misuse and both risk of offending and victimisation. These include, for example, links between acquisitive crime and drug misuse, alcohol and violence, and the use of drink and drugs as contributors to personal injuries and death, especially through road traffic accidents and fires in the home. It is considered that tackling drug and alcohol misuse can benefit personal health as well as community well-being through minimising exposure to drug and alcohol related crime and social disorder.
- 1.3.30 The data audit report revealed that the number of drug-related deaths in West Lothian has remained relatively stable over the past 11 years [CSDA paras 3.2.1 to 3.2.3]. However, there has been a steady increase in the number of new male and female clients presenting to drug treatment services in West Lothian over the years [CSDA paras 3.2.5 to 3.2.11]. Overall, there has been a much higher rise in the number of males presenting to drug treatment services than females. Perhaps the most notable feature of West Lothian's population in respect of drugs misuse, however, is that the average age of new referrals to drug treatment services in West Lothian for 2007/08 was 27, slightly younger than the national average of 30 [CSDA para 3.2.7].
- 1.3.31 Since 2001, there has been a steady increase in the number of new referrals into drug treatment services in West Lothian. This is not a result of West Lothian having a higher population of drug users compared to other areas, but that local specialist drug services may have created a high awareness of their presence and worked hard towards meeting the historical Scottish Executive drug treatment target of *"increasing the numbers of drug users engaged in treatment by 10% every year"*. Drug Misuse Statistics Scotland 2007/08 show that young people aged under 19 accounted for 16% of all new referrals into drug treatment services in 2007/2008 in West Lothian (n=86). Around one third (n=27) of these were aged under 15. This compared to a national average of around 8% for under 19s, only a fifth of whom were under 15. This may be interpreted positively in that younger drug users living in West Lothian are accessing appropriate treatment and support at an earlier age because West Lothian is one of the few areas in Scotland to have a dedicated young people's substance misuse treatment and support service (Back on Track). In the preventative context, however, it may also suggest that targeted interventions are required that address drug consumption among young people, especially young men.
- 1.3.32 The findings in relation to alcohol do not suggest that West Lothian has any notably different characteristics in terms of the scale of alcohol misuse or the demographic most likely to be involved, nor has it experienced any notable shifts in trends in recent years when compared to the national picture.

- 1.3.33 The only detailed local finding was that males are considerably more likely to require hospital treatment due to alcohol-related injuries than females across nearly all of the age groups. Notably, the exception is the 0-15 age group where females are more likely to require treatment [CSDA paras 3.4.5 to 3.4.6]. A better understanding of the residential origins of these young females attending A&E would allow this activity to be delivered even more precisely. It is understood that postcode data are collected for those admitted and analysis of this data could be a future action for the Partnership.
- 1.3.34 At a general level, the data audit did not extend to explore links between alcohol and drugs misuse and offending, since the data were not available to support this analysis at the local level. The extrapolation of incident data from police systems which have evidenced links to alcohol and/or drug consumption would contribute significantly to the work of the Partnership in the future and is something that could be taken forward as a medium to long term priority, recognising that it would be a resource intensive task.

Cross Cutting Themes – Young People

- 1.3.35 The data audit has failed to uncover any substantive data that relates explicitly to young people in West Lothian as either victims or offenders. This may be partly due to information not being made available to the audit team, or may be indicative of a general lack of data being collected. It is assumed that the police and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration will hold information that could be used if suitably anonymised, in order to gauge the numbers of young people who are involved in offending or who have been victimised. Given the sensitivities of accessing data about young people (because of their status as high risk citizens, due to their age), any investigative work in this area would need to be well specified and rationalised.
- 1.3.36 What we do know is that drug abuse in West Lothian may be affecting a younger demographic compared to other authorities and this may be a priority area. Importantly, the data which evidences this is based around numbers of people presenting to drug treatment services, which do not necessarily reflect difficulties in prevalence.
- 1.3.37 For young people, the strategic assessment can only conclude that more needs to be known before suitable action plans can be developed.

Strategic Implications of Findings from the Thematic Analysis

- 1.3.38 The strategic implications of the findings from the thematic analysis include a need to:

- undertake close monitoring of public perception of ASB/crime to identify any changes in that perception, investigate the reasons and put in place appropriate action;
- target interventions to reduce reckless driving by young drivers;
- target interventions to address drug consumption among young people, especially young men;
- investigate the characteristics and residential origins of young adults, especially young females attending A&E as a result of excessive alcohol consumption, to help target interventions among this group;
- establish the potential for more systematic collection of data that links alcohol and/or drug consumption with offending and victimisation;
- examine and identify the factors that have contributed to the successful management of accidents, injuries and deaths in West Lothian to draw out good practice;
- investigate the reasons for the recent increase in suicide; and
- establish the characteristics of victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse and seek to compare to national features to allow more focussed targeting of interventions in the local area.

Geographical Analysis

1.3.39 The following tables provide a summary of the population characteristics for each of West Lothian's nine multi-member wards alongside the main community safety issues which may require to be addressed in each.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Armadale and Blackridge</i></p> <p>Population = 13,863 (8.37% of WL total)</p> <p>Under 16s = 19.4% of ward population</p> <p>Over 60s = 17.9% of ward population</p> <p>Unemployment = 2.5% of ward population</p> <p>Deprivation = The Mayfield datazone in Armadale is the most deprived area of West Lothian and the only area of West Lothian in the top 5% most deprived in Scotland.²</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Proportion of incidents of vandalism and hate crime recorded by the police in 2007/08 was greater than might be expected given the proportion of West Lothian's population living in the area. ■ Generates high numbers of ASB measures per head of population. ■ The EH48 postcode (Bathgate and Armadale) accounts for a large proportion of episodes of care for people receiving treatment for problem drug use. ■ Datazone S01006393 (Armadale Mayfield) shows consistently high figures for hospital admissions related to both drugs misuse and alcohol abuse. ■ Has the highest number of referrals to the StaySafe West Lothian project despite having slightly fewer children than the average for wards in West Lothian. ■ Has one of the highest rates of violent crime per head of population, second only to Livingston.

² <http://www.wlinfo.org.uk/Geog1.asp>

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Bathgate</i></p> <p>Population = 16,595 (10.02% of total)</p> <p>Under 16s = 20.0% of ward population</p> <p>Over 60s = 17.4% of ward population</p> <p>Unemployment = 2.5% of ward population</p> <p>Deprivation = Bathgate has more of the most deprived datazones in West Lothian (four in the most deprived 15% in Scotland) than any other West Lothian ward. The Boghall area in particular suffers from high levels of deprivation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experienced a small rise in the number of recorded incidents of Breach of the Peace between 2006 and 2007. ■ Generates high numbers of ASB measures per head of population. ■ The EH48 postcode (Bathgate and Armadale) accounts for a large proportion of episodes of care for people receiving treatment for problem drug use. ■ Datazone S01006418 (Bathgate Boghall Centre – Elizabeth Drive) shows consistently high figures for hospital admissions related to drugs misuse. ■ Datazones S01006477 (Bathgate Balbardie) and S01006416 (Bathgate Centre) show consistently high figures for hospital admissions related to alcohol misuse. ■ Bathgate has the second highest number of children attending A&E at St John's Hospital, and the third highest number of referrals to the StaySafe project despite having slightly fewer children in the population compared to West Lothian as a whole. This may be because referrals are only made for families in receipt of benefit. ■ Bathgate has one of the highest rates of violent crime per head of population in West Lothian, second only to Livingston.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh</i> Population = 17,673 (10.67% of total) Under 16s = 18.8% of ward population Over 60s = 18.07% of ward population Unemployment = 2% of ward population Deprivation = only one datazone (Broxburn Bridge Place) in the in the most deprived 25% in Scotland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The only ward in West Lothian that has experienced a notable increase in recorded incidents of minor assault. ■ A small increase in the number of incidents of vandalism recorded between 2006 and 2007. ■ Broxburn witnessed a small rise in recorded Breach of the Peace incidents between 2006 and 2007.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>East Livingston and East Calder</i> Population = 19801 (11.95% of total) Under 16s = 20.9% of ward population Over 60s = 17.14% of ward population Unemployment = 2.2% of ward population Deprivation = contains three of the fourteen most deprived datazones in West Lothian, all in Craigshill, all amongst the 15% most deprived in Scotland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ward does not appear to be uniquely affected by any community safety issue covered by the data audit. More detailed understanding of this location may reveal examples of good practice in community and personal safety harm reduction.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Fauldhouse and Breich Valley</i> Population = 16013 (9.66% of total) Under 16s = 19.7% of ward population Over 60s = 13.21% ward population Unemployment = 2.2% ward population Deprivation = The ward includes one datazone in Stoneyburn that is one of the 15% most deprived in Scotland, as well as more affluent areas such as West Calder.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ One datazone (S01006300 – Fauldhouse Cricket Ground) previously showed consistently high figures for hospital admissions related to drugs misuse. This cricket ground is now burnt down and there is no access to this area. This may have resulted in displacement of drug/alcohol users who previously frequented this area, and local intelligence may be desirable to identify if a new site is being used for these purposes.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Linlithgow</i></p> <p>Population = 15713 (9.4% of total)</p> <p>Under 16s = 20.4% of ward population</p> <p>Over 60s = 11.4 % of ward population</p> <p>Unemployment = 1.1% ward population</p> <p>Deprivation = least deprived of all the wards in West Lothian.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Appears to be relatively unaffected by all of the community safety areas that were a focus of the data audit.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Livingston North</i></p> <p>Population = 20379 (12.3% of total)</p> <p>Under 16s = 22.6% of ward population</p> <p>Over 60s = 10.70% of ward population</p> <p>Unemployment = 1.7% of ward population</p> <p>Deprivation = the least deprived of the three Livingston wards and out performs the West Lothian average in all of the Key Economic Indicators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Experienced a sharp rise in the number of recorded Breach of the Peace incidents between 2006 and 2007.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Livingston South</i></p> <p>Population = 24988 (15.08% of total)</p> <p>Under 16s = 23.7% of ward population</p> <p>Over 60s = 17.61% of ward population</p> <p>Unemployment = 2.5% of ward population</p> <p>Deprivation = Livingston South matches the West Lothian average in nearly all of the Key Economic Indicators.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Generates the greatest number of ASB measures enforced per annum, but this is not disproportionate per head of population.

Ward Characteristics	Key Issues to be Addressed
<p><i>Whitburn and Blackburn</i></p> <p>Population = 20675 (12.48% of total)</p> <p>Under 16s = 19.8% of ward population</p> <p>Over 60s = 15.33% of ward population</p> <p>Unemployment = 3.0% of ward population</p> <p>Deprivation = contains three of the fourteen most deprived datazones in West Lothian, two in Blackburn and one in Whitburn that are in the 15% most deprived in Scotland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A small increase in the number of incidents of vandalism recorded in Whitburn and Blackburn between 2006 and 2007. ■ Postcode EH47 (Whitburn, Blackburn and Fauldhouse) accounts for a large proportion of episodes of care for people receiving treatment for problem drug use.

Strategic Implications of Geographical Analysis

1.3.40 Whilst these tables show that different focus and activity is required in each of the separate nine multi-member wards, the audit has highlighted that two areas may be priority areas for action by the Partnership. These are:

- Armadale and Blackridge; and
- Bathgate

1.3.41 To a lesser extent, there may be a need to focus on the areas of Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh and Whitburn and Blackburn.

1.3.42 In addition to highlighting areas where more work may need to be done, the audit did show some reductions in crime in recent years, and these may provide an indication of where lessons can be learnt to inform future activity. These are listed in the Data Audit Report (CSDA paras 2.2.10 to 2.2.11].

Demographic Analysis

The data audit revealed very little in terms of data that could be disaggregated on the basis of demographics. The limited findings that could be extrapolated are presented here.

Age

1.3.43 In the absence of any readily accessible and anonymised victim or offender profile information from the police or from other organisations, it is hard to draw any conclusions about who should be targeted on the basis of age. We do not know, to date, the ages of those most likely to commit various offences in West Lothian, or those who are most likely to be victimised. Whilst it may be possible to speculate on the basis of national statistics, this is insufficiently robust to inform local strategic direction. Gaining access to this data must be a priority for the Partnership.

1.3.44 Police data aside, the data audit has shown some examples of effective practice at the local level in reducing young people's involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour through

engaging them in consultative work, and through the establishment of dedicated youth teams. We know, for example, that early intervention work has helped to reduce the numbers of persistent young offenders operating in the area. What is required, however, is more objective evaluative work to explore the impacts of integrated and intensive support approaches to tackling youth crime and disorder, as well as understanding the role of drug and alcohol consumption in early involvement in youth crime. This might be achieved through primary research with young people who are already in contact with support services.

Gender

- 1.3.45 A focus on gender is important in the community safety context since research has historically shown links between gender and particular types of victimisation, as well as offending behaviour. We know, for example, that women are more likely to be involved as offenders in acquisitive crimes than crimes of violence, and that males are more likely to be both the perpetrators and victims of police recorded assault. Males are also more likely than females to be involved in road traffic accidents due to reckless driving and are also more often represented in suicide figures than women. By exploring links between each of the three main areas of activity and gender, it was hoped that any differences in community safety experiences between men and women could be uncovered which would allow more accurate action planning in the future.
- 1.3.46 With regards to anti-social behaviour, the data audit revealed no gender issues of note. This was mainly due to a lack of reliable data sources which provided a gender breakdown and lack of access to raw datasets which contained the gender profile of perpetrators of anti-social behaviours. This again flags problems both in terms of data gaps and access.
- 1.3.47 The data audit did show that, overall, there has been a much higher rise in the number of males presenting to drug treatment services than females, especially young men.
- 1.3.48 In terms of violence, the lack of police data regarding victims and offenders means that the only gender issue to emerge comes from the Scottish Crime and Victimisation Survey. Self-report victimisation from this survey suggests that males are more likely to report a physical attack than females. Males in the age groups 16 to 34 and 35 to 44 are most likely to report having been physically attacked [CSDA paras 5.4.7 to 5.4.11].
- 1.3.49 The absence of accessible victimisation and offender data also does not allow us to provide an accurate presentation of the age or sex of perpetrators and victims of domestic abuse (and similarly, repeat victimisation and offending). In order to fully understand the gender correlates of violence, access would be required to police data as well as to complementary data sources (such as those held by support services) to balance under-reporting to the police.

Disability

- 1.3.50 Disability was also a focus of the data audit report since people with physical and/or mental disabilities can sometimes be at increased risk of victimisation due to a lesser capacity to defend themselves. The audit did not, however, reveal any specific data in relation to people from disabilities groups. Without having either the data that shows that people with disabilities are victimised members of society more than other sectors, or knowing if there is under-reporting of crimes among this group, it is difficult to conclude whether a strategic

focus on this group is required. The lack of evidence may suggest, however, a need for more research to establish what is available.

Ethnicity, Religion and Faith

- 1.3.51 The audit has revealed no data that relate specifically to victimisation, offending or perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour among specific ethnic, religious or faith sub-groups within West Lothian. It is also not clear to what extent there is an understanding of the ethnic make-up of the community in West Lothian and this should, perhaps, be a precursor to any targeted Community Safety exploratory work.
- 1.3.52 Census data regarding ethnicity and religion are available at the local authority level but is not routinely published because doing so might be perceived as exposing people to risk. That is, by advertising areas that have a high concentration of residents from minority groups, there is potential that these areas may be targeted by perpetrators of hate crimes. A request by the Partnership to have this profile data may prove illuminating, especially if it could be mapped geographically to achieve an understanding of where these residents live. This would then allow an understanding of any associations between density of minority groups living in different areas and their likely exposure to different crime types. This should be complemented by an analysis of police data regarding the religious and ethnic profiles of victims and offenders in the area.

Sexual Orientation

- 1.3.53 As with disability, ethnicity, religion and faith data, the audit identified nothing that relates specifically to victimisation, offending or perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour among specific sexual orientation sub-groups within West Lothian. This is perhaps not surprising since much national data also fails to achieve this level of disaggregation, typically because the relevant surveys often fail to ask questions regarding sexual orientation. In the community safety context, understanding the experiences and perceptions of this group is important since they may experience or perceive crime differentially due to the potentially negative attitudes of other towards them.
- 1.3.54 Examples of good practice do exist in the wider research community around engagement with people from the LGBT communities and an audit of previously successful mechanisms for generating population profiles in this regard could be undertaken if it is considered a priority for the partnership. The absence of any data to date does, however, make it difficult to ascertain whether this should be prioritised and, as such, this decision would be a qualitative one.

Strategic Implications from the Demographic Analysis

- 1.3.55 Based on the key findings from the demographic analysis, the Partnership may need to:

- establish early on a mechanism for accessing and analysing police data on victim and offender profiles by age, gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation, since this is the single biggest local dataset that is likely to inform targeted activities with sub-sets of the population;

- undertake more objective evaluative work to explore the impacts of integrated and intensive support approaches to tackling youth crime and disorder, as well as the antecedents and correlates of youth crime at the local level (including early alcohol and drug use);
- carry out further work to understand why more young males are accessing drug treatment services in West Lothian than females and more than in other areas;
- achieve a greater understanding of the circumstances surrounding violence experienced by young males, and explore any links between self-reported violence victimisation among this group, and police recorded crime statistics;
- better understand the characteristics of West Lothian's disabled population in terms of mental and physical disability to explore links between disability and increased risk of victimisation;
- undertake a mapping exercise to identify where people from minority ethnic communities are living and marry this up with crime and victimisation data to achieve a greater awareness of their likely experience and exposure to different community safety issues based on areas of residence. This will allow the partnership to establish if communities with a high concentration of minority residents are experiencing crime at a disproportionate level; and
- an audit of previously successful mechanisms for generating minority sexual orientation population data.

1.4 Gaps in the Evidence

- 1.4.1 Whilst the general paucity of data that can be disaggregated at the demographic level is a point of general note to arise from this audit, other more specific data gaps can also be identified.

Missing data

- 1.4.2 The audit identified important gaps in terms of:

- community level perceptions of antisocial behaviour and fear of crime;
- data on drug and alcohol-related accidents;
- data for suicides which can be disaggregated geographically;
- reported and unreported incidents of domestic abuse and what proportion of domestic abuse calls have been reported as anti-social behaviour; and
- local evaluation evidence for interventions and initiatives aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol-related deaths and injuries, home and road safety, suicide or violent crime.

Unavailable Data

- 1.4.3 The audit also revealed the following data which is currently collected and stored, but which is not available in the public domain:

- data regarding offender and victim profiles for each of the recorded crime offences, including sensitive crimes such as sexual assault of adults and children (conviction rates, retraction rates and sentencing patterns);
- characteristics of young offenders in the area;
- data regarding repeat offending and repeat victimisation; and
- prosecutions as percentage of reports, conviction rates and retraction rates and sentencing patterns.

1.4.4 It is important to note these omissions before presenting the initial list of priorities identified from the data audit, since it will be necessary in the early action planning stages that follows this assessment to identify ways in which gaps can be filled. Once data is available, priorities may shift and change.

Strategic Implications of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Data

Information sharing

1.4.5 Reconciliation of datasets across the authority may be difficult. Not only are the sources multifarious, but they are also designed to meet the different strategic priorities and to inform the 'core services' of those who hold the data. Existing staffing and resources to undertake the manipulation, cleaning and merging of datasets are currently inadequate to enable this.

1.4.6 What the data audit has achieved, however, is the identification of what are believed to be the most relevant datasets that relate to each of the main community safety strands, and these are listed in the data audit report. These could be more formally indexed, alongside data showing the frequency with which the data sources are updated and when the data is published or released into the public domain. This will also help the Partnership to keep abreast of new data as and when it emerges, to monitor performance and to update action plans accordingly.

Community Engagement

1.4.7 Given the importance of community views in developing and delivering effective and acceptable interventions, it is surprising that the audit revealed so few cases of previous or ongoing community liaison approaches to work in this area. There are some good examples of community engagement and consultation (for example, the Fauldhouse Anti-Social Behaviour Survey) and these could provide a starting point for the development of other such initiatives. Consultation activity must be targeted and customised to meet the needs of local communities and to address issues of specific concern, and must seek to fill some of the gaps identified. This may include work with people of different genders, age groups, disabilities groups, people from minority ethnic or religious groups or of differing sexual orientations and older people about whom relatively few existing data exist.

Evaluating Best Practice

- 1.4.8 Whilst examples of successful initiatives within the authority might be provided, the audit did not uncover any substantive evaluation evidence, especially with regards to such initiatives as the use of CCTV in preventing anti-social behaviour, or the role of 'early years' intervention in preventing future offending behaviour.
- 1.4.9 Two activities appear to be required. The first is to uncover any local initiatives which have sought to tackle each of the areas identified in the Community Safety Strategy and which were rigorously evaluated (although it is assumed that these will be few, since they were not uncovered in the audit) and, secondly, to carry out more detailed analysis of any evaluation work that has been performed on initiatives introduced in other jurisdictions. The importance of robust evaluation work lies in its use as evidence for continued resourcing of successful initiatives, and refocusing of less successful initiatives to maximise performance. Given the associated costs and time required to perform objective evaluation work, conclusions are often drawn about the success, or otherwise, of different schemes based on anecdotal evidence or on unrepresentative samples. Despite being resource intensive in the short term, effective evaluation work can ensure that restricted resources are appropriately targeted for maximum gains. One way of reducing costs may be to engage service providers and service users in action research, working alongside trained evaluation staff to uncover reliable outcomes based evidence.
- 1.4.10 Intervention evaluation reports are essential if lessons are to be learnt for the future. The relative impact of interventions and local initiatives on their target audiences need to be understood and so this too overlaps with the need for more community consultation work.

1.5 Current Activity

While this document sets out areas where more work may be needed, it is also important to note some of the areas where work is already underway which can be used as a foundation on which to make further community safety improvements. These are attached as Appendix A to this report along with information on schemes and initiatives presently being confirmed or developed.

1.6 Priority Selection Exercise and Ongoing Monitoring of Priorities

- 1.6.1 Having presented the main community safety issues which appear to be affecting West Lothian, it now remains for the community safety partners to decide on a definitive list of priorities and to select from within them those which should be targeted in the short, medium and long term.
- 1.6.2 Following the prioritisation process, a general recommendation would be to ensure that a clear set of objectives is in place, with associated measurable milestones, to monitor performance over time.
- 1.6.3 A strategy also needs to be determined for the review and update of this strategic assessment to ensure that it remains current and draws on contemporary data as it is published. This is a working document and is one that requires to be updated and revised as the partnership progresses in improving community safety in West Lothian.