



MURIESTON LOCAL PLACE PLAN 2025-35



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2. Executive Summary

We are pleased to present this Local Place Plan which sets out the local community's vision for Murieston over the next ten years.

The plan has been led by the local community and produced collaboratively by Murieston Community Council and Murieston Community Development Trust in consultation with the community. It draws partly on a consultation undertaken in 2019-20 by Community Enterprise on behalf of Murieston Community Council, and partly on further surveys and consultation undertaken in 2023-24 specifically for this plan.

This reflects a new approach which jointly considers land use planning, community planning and community action, supporting local people to become more involved in shaping their places.

The local community are at the heart of this plan. Their support and enthusiasm has been instrumental in its preparation and a range of local groups will lead on delivery. The Community Council and Community Development Trust will work jointly with West Lothian Council, other local groups and the community to support delivery of actions within the plan and realise the vision for the area.

We are pleased to have been given the opportunity to shape our neighbourhood and to inform future iterations of the West Lothian Local Development Plan.

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May 2024

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Acknowledgements

The team would like to thank the local residents and organisations who enthusiastically contributed to the making of this plan. We could not have done it without you.

3. Introduction

This Local Place Plan contains the spatial proposals to realise our local community’s vision and action areas for the Murieston Community Council area over the 10-year period of 2025-35. It provides input to the West Lothian Local Development Plan currently under development and intended to be adopted in 2026.

The plan is rooted in our local community aspirations, needs, and ideas, gathered through community engagement. In 2019-20 Murieston Community Council engaged Community Enterprise to undertake an independent survey representing the views of 915 residents, resulting in a Community Action Plan published in 2020. This resulted in the establishment of Murieston Community Development Trust in July 2023. Further community engagement in 2023-24 (see Section 5) has solidified proposals for a way forward.

This Local Place Plan also reflects planning policy aims of creating sustainable, liveable and productive places as expressed in National Planning Framework 4, including Policy 15 on Local Living and 20-Minute Neighbourhoods, as well as taking account of the West Lothian Local Development Plan adopted in 2018.

Delivery of the plan must be collaborative with public bodies, funders, businesses, landowners and local community working together for common purpose. Everybody needs to be involved if the plan is to become a reality.



The purposes of this Local Place Plan are:

- To show how our area could look in the future once our vision and action plan have been implemented.
- To input to the plans of Murieston Community Development Trust for improved community facilities.
- To help Murieston Community Council and West Lothian Council consider the impact of planning applications on our local communities.
- To inform West Lothian Council's review of the Local Development Plan (see Section 8).
- To influence investment by West Lothian Council, other public bodies, funders, landowners and businesses in ways that support our local community.

Murieston faces challenges as a result of over-development, lack of investment in existing facilities, and cuts in funding from West Lothian Council. A 2019-20 survey conducted by Community Enterprise identified that 'meeting and socialising' was rated the lowest aspect of life in Murieston. Overwhelmingly, people want better space for all ages to meet and socialise locally, to foster a sense of community and togetherness. Yet, shortly after Murieston Community Development Trust was launched, it became apparent that West Lothian Council cuts to all funding for community centres and village halls from April 2026 may result in closure of Murieston Village Hall.

We therefore need an ambitious plan for the future of Murieston. Nobody understands a place and its requirements better than the people who live there. This refined plan for the next decade is the community's shared vision for the future of our place and how we would like to get there. It is supported by an action plan that expresses the community priorities for change identified through a series of spatially-oriented projects which will form the backbone of the overall projects that Murieston Community Development Trust will undertake with the support of Murieston Community Council. We intend that Murieston Community Development Trust will be a catalyst to make things happen, get people engaged, take hold of our own destiny, and work towards improving our own situation.

4. Murieston Now

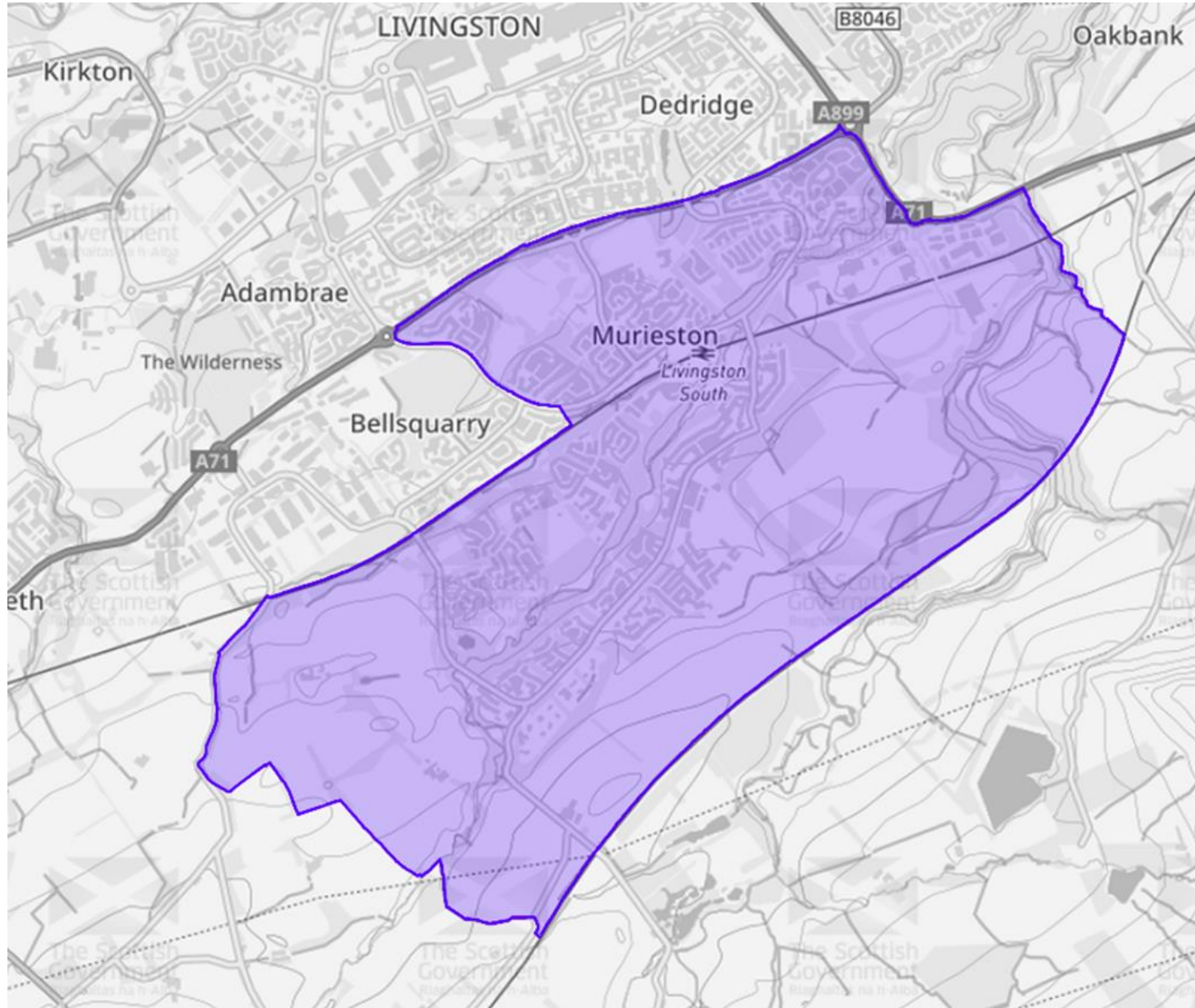


Figure 1: Murieston in context

Murieston is at the southern edge of Livingston. It is bounded by the A71 main road to the north and by open countryside to the south and west.

The area is divided into 3 main areas by Murieston Water which cuts through the area to the south and by the Shotts railway line between Edinburgh and Glasgow, which stops at Livingston South Railway Station: North of the railway line; Murieston Valley; and South of Murieston Water.



Figure 2: Murieston facilities

1. Livingston South Railway Station
2. Bankton Retail Centre
 - Co-op
 - Day-Today
 - Superbowl
 - Florist
 - Sapphire Chinese
3. Murieston Community Garden
4. Murieston Village Hall
5. Bankton Square
 - Nursery
 - Lamond Veterinary Clinic
 - Bankton Dental Practice
 - Livingston Chiropody & Podiatry
6. Hamilton Square
 - Murieston Medical Practice
 - Murieston Pharmacy
 - West Lothian Chiropractic
 - Almond Hearing
 - Restaurant/Retail
7. Murieston Scout Hall
8. Bankton Mains Bowling Club
9. Murieston United Football Club
10. Williamston Primary School
11. Livingston Cricket Club - pitch
12. Bankton House Hotel
13. Oakbank Industrial Park
14. Livingston Cricket Club
15. Murieston Trail
16. Linhouse Circular Trail
17. Oakbank Trails

Murieston is a rural residential suburb to the South of Livingston, West Lothian, the eighth-largest settlement and the third-largest town in Scotland. Designated as a new town in 1962, Livingston is currently one of the fastest growing towns nationally and Murieston is one of 10 precincts around it.

The Murieston Community Council area covered by the research is highlighted in the boundary map in Figure 1 above. Located approximately 15 miles West of Edinburgh and 30 miles East of Glasgow, Murieston sits close to the M8 corridor and has become a popular commuter area. Murieston's population has risen recently to over 6000, growth largely influenced by the growth of Livingston.

History and heritage

Murieston is primarily a new-build residential area. Historically, the area was once made up of small settlements within open farmland: the area just beyond the southern border of Murieston is still largely agricultural. As a result, there are only a few listed buildings, all privately owned, and two listed bridges.

Community facilities

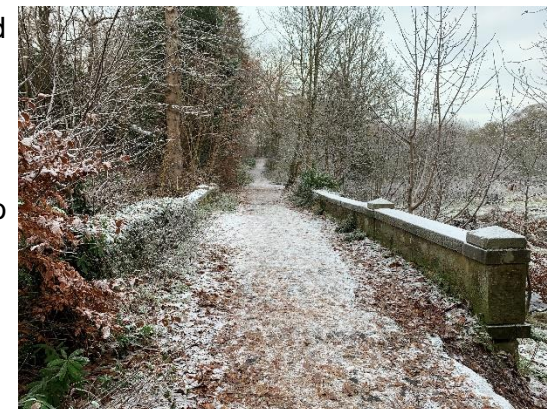
Murieston's publicly-owned community facilities are Williamston Primary School, Murieston Village Hall, which is run by local charity Murieston Initiative SCIO, and the clubhouse and changing pavilion run by Murieston United Football Club. Murieston Scout Hall and a number of private sports clubs (Bankton Mains Bowling Club, Livingston Cricket Club) are also used for community activities. There is also a GP surgery with pharmacy, a dental surgery, a chiropodist, a chiropractor, a hearing specialist, and a veterinary surgery.

Leisure and recreation

Murieston Trail and Linhouse Circular are much loved and well-used woodland areas used by walkers. A path network also extends towards Livingston town centre. The area has 3 play areas, natural and synthetic football pitches, 2 cricket pitches, and plans for tennis courts. Murieston Community Garden is a community-built public garden on a site near Livingston South Railway Station. There are a number of other community groups and organisations covering Livingston South Community Church, Murieston Community Café, Murieston Environmental Group, singing, dance, sports, parents and toddlers, art group, and other activities.

Transport

The main points of arrival are by road via the M8 or A71 or by train to Livingston South Railway Station, situated in the centre of Murieston. The station has a car park with 125 spaces and rack for 8 bikes. The car park is regularly full to capacity, with some residents having to find parking in nearby streets.



Murieston Bridge – listed



Murieston Village Hall



Murieston Trail

Walking is a viable option for areas close to the train station, but limited lighting and poor accessibility on muddy woodland paths further afield discourage many residents from walking, particularly at night. Poor public transport and station parking options result in many residents choosing to drive.

Economy

Murieston is often said to have a large proportion of residents who commute outside the area to work. However, 70% of our respondents remain in Livingston, working within the town or from home, or not working for various reasons such as school or retirement. There are limited local economic opportunities with packaging, distribution, and pharmaceuticals companies at Oakbank Park, and a limited range of local shops and services near Livingston South Railway Station. There are no permanent cafés for socialising. Murieston has few visitors from outside the area and only one hotel. There are currently insufficient events or facilities to attract more visitors.

Opportunities and challenges for the future

Murieston has some strengths which provide opportunities: a beautiful rural landscape which is the reason many residents choose to live in the area, and a number of sports facilities for outdoor activities.

Like any area, Murieston also faces challenges:

- A recent approx. 20% increase in housing without any increase in community facilities or transport infrastructure which has caused discontent amongst both old and new residents.
- Sustaining local community facilities and activities in the context of reductions in public expenditure.
- A Community Centre needing significant remediation, unfit for community needs, with insufficient rooms for community activities, and unsuitable for racket sports, film, or dance due to its low ceilings.
- A consequent lack of community activities and community spirit.
- Limited local business opportunities and limited capability to attract money into the area.

The Community Enterprise survey in 2019-20 identified that although Murieston is not deprived in terms of most domains of The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, “the exception is the ‘geographical access to services’ measure: 59% of Murieston residents live within the 10-30% most deprived in terms of access to services. Of these, almost half (1692 people) fall within the 10% most deprived category”.

Murieston Community Development Trust was set up in July 2023 to encourage greater community spirit by focussing on the community’s needs for better facilities, more activities, and opportunities for socialising.



Livingston South Station (eyesore)



Preparing for Children's Party in Village Hall



Launch of Development Trust in Village Hall

5. Engagement Process

Background

Local Needs

In 2019, Murieston Community Council commissioned Community Enterprise to assess and report on local needs and objectives. Community engagement proceeded with launch publicity via Murieston Community Council and established local Facebook pages; a survey promoted online and via existing organisations, and leaflet drops; consultations at events and drop-in exhibition; specific stakeholder consultations; and focus groups covering diverse interests and age ranges, including school groups.

A Community Action Plan Research Report [Reference 1] and a summary Community Action Plan [Reference 2] for the area was published in 2020, incorporating five themes (The Great Outdoors, Amenities and Services, Community Cohesion, Community Resources, and Health, Wellbeing and Opportunities), with three main priorities in each theme.

It was identified that residents want Murieston to be protected from over-development, our green spaces to be looked after, and better facilities provided for socialising. The Community Action Plan developed a vision: “We live in an attractive, safe and friendly place with good local social and sports amenities and a vibrant sense of community engagement, able to enjoy the best of both town and rural living and an enhanced quality of life for all residents”.

Community Action

This resulted in a decision to set up a development trust for the area. Murieston Community Development Trust was established as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation in July 2023, with a constitution designed to enable the community to participate in asset transfer and community ownership.

To address issues identified in the Community Action Plan, the trustees of Murieston Community Development Trust have developed a strategic plan, consisting of short-, medium-, and long-term priorities. Short-term priorities are very high priority or can be done with limited resources; medium-term priorities need more resources and long-term priorities will need extensive long-term fundraising and planning. The aim is to achieve the short-term and smaller medium-term priorities whilst investigating the feasibility and cost of the larger and longer-term priorities. The plan is intended to be reviewed regularly and priorities may be influenced by external factors. For example, the future of our community space has recently risen in priority after it came to light that all Council funding for Murieston Village Hall will be cut from April 2026, which thus creates the very real threat of closure of the hall and loss of our only general community space.

Our LPP Process

Community Engagement

The 2019-20 community survey was available online from mid November 2019 to early February 2020. It was also available in paper copy format at various key locations in Murieston, including the Co-op Shop, Di's Diner, Du Beau and Murieston Medical Practice. A total of 290 individual responses were recorded. A significant number of these represented family groups rather than individuals and altogether, the survey represented the views of 915 people including children. The survey resulted in a Community Action Plan and Research Report, published in 2020. Page 22 of the Research Report [Reference 1] gives more detail on the breakdown of numbers.

To complement and update the community engagement that took place to build the Community Action Plan, a number of reviews and events were undertaken in 2023-24. An additional survey was run from January 12th 2024 to February 17th 2024, available online and by hand-delivered paper copies. 269 survey responses were received, representing approx. 248 households – 11.3% of approx. 2200 total. The results reinforced the results of the previous survey and added support for saving Murieston Village Hall (84.4% of responses in favour of refurbishing or redeveloping the hall) and support for protecting Linhouse Circular from over-development of houses (83% of responses against housing development, 70.6% of responses in favour of community action to protect the area).

Stall at Livingston Cricket Club Gala Day, 2 nd Sept. 2023	Publicising Murieston Community Development Trust and promoting engagement
West Lothian Council LDP2 engagement 2 nd Oct. 2023	Attendance at "We Need to Talk About LDP 2 – The Next West Lothian Local Development Plan"
LPP Engagement	Leaflets circulated to all 2,200 houses in Murieston, notices on noticeboards, online publicity on the Murieston Community Council and Murieston Community Development Trust websites and local social media
Open drop-in events	20 th January 2023, 10am-12 noon 27 th January 2023, 11am-1pm 4 th February 2023, 12 noon-2pm
Community survey 2024 [Reference 5]	Online and paper survey, notified to all houses in the area and aimed at capturing comments across action areas, and in particular to give attention to areas of local change or new issues arising since the Community Action Plan
Information requests	The main community bodies in the area were requested to provide input to the plan [see page 39].

We intend to participate in future engagement with West Lothian Council. Any further meetings which take place may result in updates to this plan.

6. Our 2035 Vision and Plan for Delivery

Vision

“We live in an attractive, safe and friendly place with good local social and sports amenities and a vibrant sense of community engagement, able to enjoy the best of both town and rural living and an enhanced quality of life for all residents”.

Twenty-Minute Neighbourhood

The layout of the Murieston build environment fits well with the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood and its relationship with active / sustainable travel. We endorse the principles of active travel which will be outlined later in this Local Place Plan.

Murieston has some challenges because both the railway line and Murieston Water split the area into three distinct communities. However, Livingston South Railway Station is at the convergence of the railway and Murieston Water, therefore providing an obvious focus for all areas of the community.

Murieston has a good spatial profile of a 20-minute neighbourhood with the focal point of the community comprising Livingston South Railway Station, Bankton Retail Centre and Murieston Village Hall. The majority of houses in the south Murieston area (to the south of the station) and all parts of Bankton (to the north of the station) are within 20 minutes distance for a person walking at an average pace.

The Local Development Plan should support this approach of a connected and compact neighbourhood where people can meet most of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home under Policy 15 of National Policy Framework 4.

However, a survey conducted by Community Enterprise in 2019-20 identified that for the “geographical access to services’ measure: 59% of Murieston residents live within the 10-30% most deprived in terms of access to services. Of these, almost half (1692 people) fall within the 10% most deprived category. ... The lack of some services local to the Murieston area, as opposed to the wider Livingston community, could be contributing to this service deprivation profile”.



Vision: Meeting spaces for multiple groups



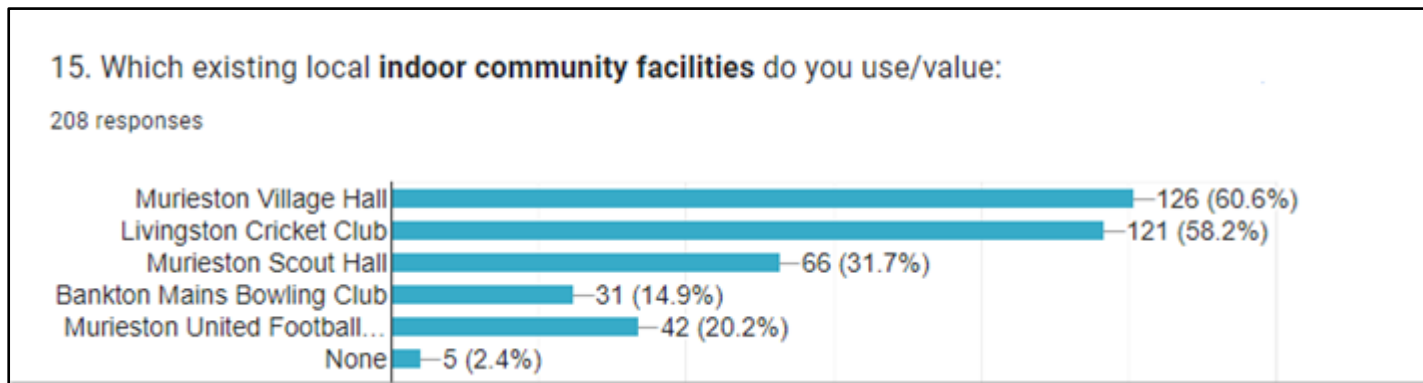
Vision: A friendly welcoming community cafe



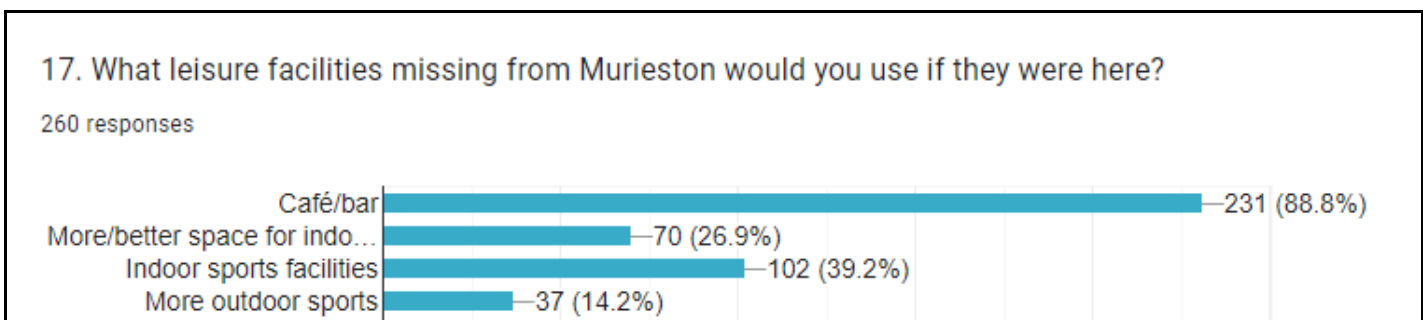
Vision: Outdoor and indoor sports facilities

Community Resources

The main priority for the area is to safeguard the future of our community meeting space.



The Community Enterprise survey identified that depression and anxiety affect both young and old as a result of social isolation. Meeting and socialising was the lowest scoring aspect of life in Murieston and is a contributing factor to the low sense of community. Strongly evidenced in the research was the lack of social space or 'hub' to meet informally and a lack of activities to get involved in at community level. There are a number of community-run buildings but none of these are fully accessible for people to drop in, meet other locals and have a cup of coffee.



In April 2024, Murieston Community Café was established as a volunteer-run Saturday pop-up café at Murieston Village Hall in an attempt to address this issue, at least partially.



Vision: Community deli, bakery and gift shop



Vision: Cafe next door

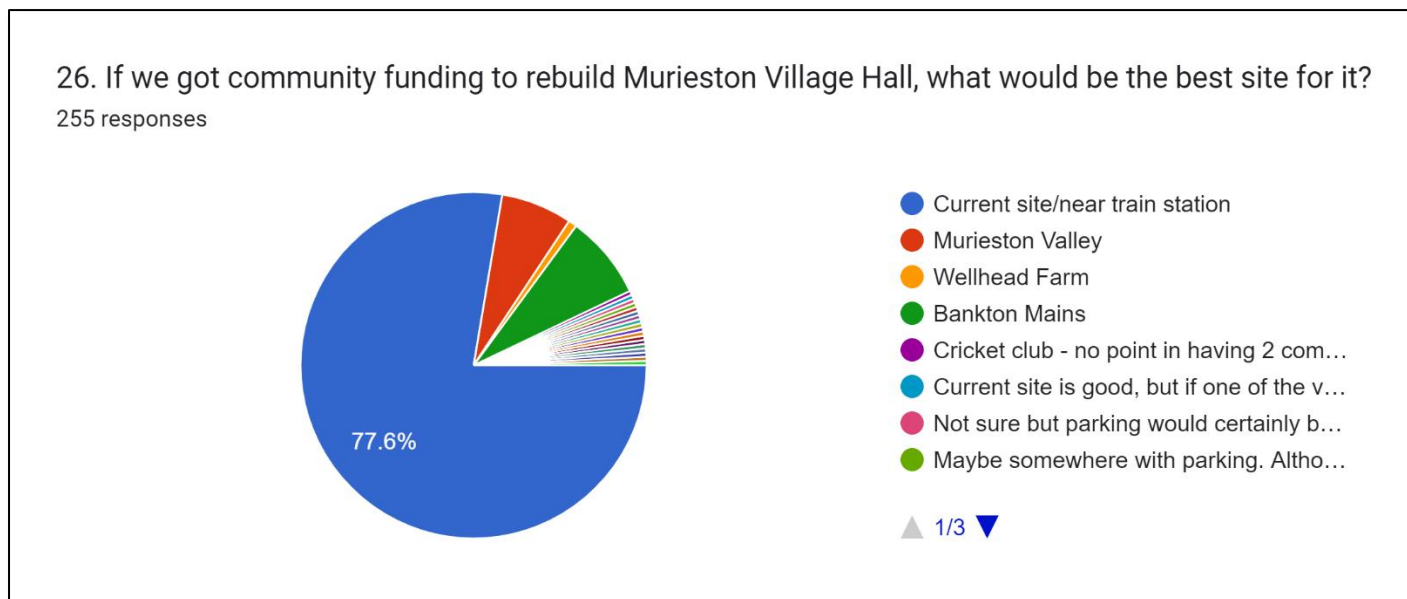


Vision: More benches at Bankton Centre and on walking trails

In addition, the future of Murieston Village Hall is under threat from Council revenue budget cuts which will cause all Council funding to be cut by April 2026.

Recent community consultation has highlighted the importance of retaining community space in the area. However, the current hall does not meet the current needs of the community. We wish to raise funds to allow us to build a new community-owned facility with café/bar, indoor sports/dance hall, large and small meeting rooms, a theatre for drama, films, presentations, and church use, and facilities to allow community enterprises to be run to allow us to fund the social aspects.

Our ideal location for such a facility would be on the site of the current Village Hall. However, disabled access and broadband availability would have to be addressed. At present, because there is no parking at the Hall itself, disabled users arriving by car or bus have to walk from Livingston South Railway Station to the Hall. The currently attained broadband speed of 1.5 Mbps is also an issue for the future. While streets within sight of the Hall are running Gigabit broadband, the Hall itself seems to have been forgotten in the Openreach and Virgin Media plans. Mobile broadband has been tested but does not fare significantly better and is unreliable.



An improved car parking surface at Bankton Mains is also needed to support the community groups there.

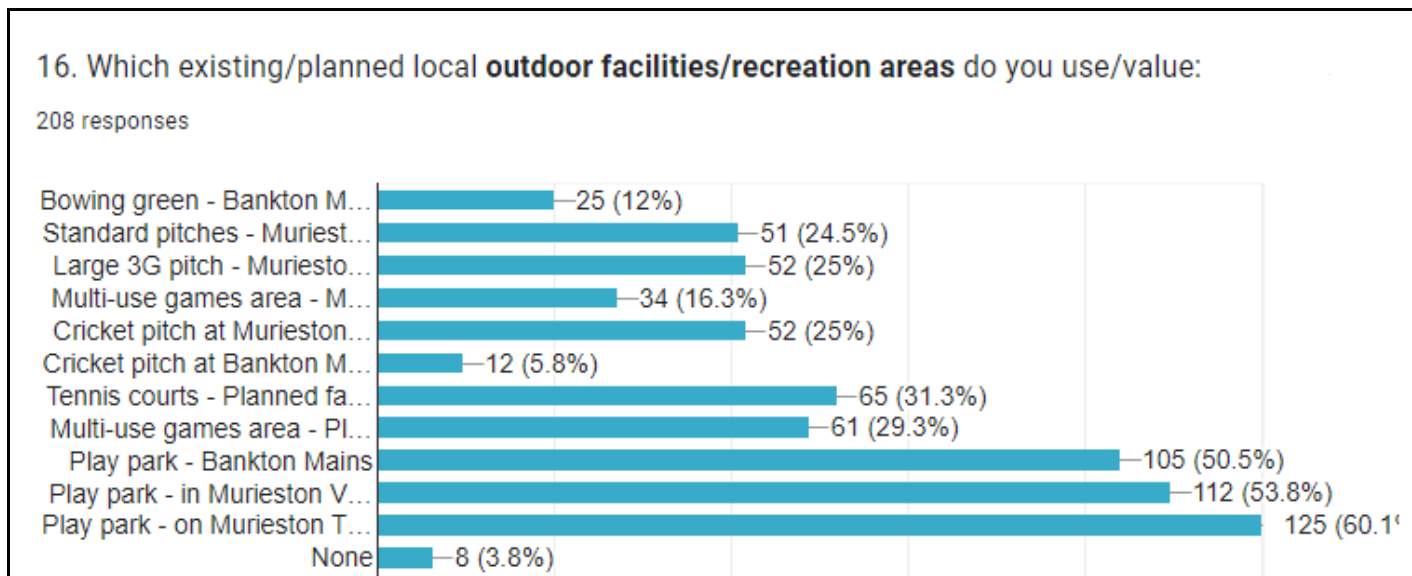
Amenities and Services

There is a need for rebalanced development in the vicinity of Livingston South Railway Station. We would like further community and commercial development at this locus which meets the needs of the residents of Murieston and the travelling public. We would support small-scale commercial and retail presence in line with Policies 26 and 28 of National Policy Framework 4 which would enhance amenity and serve more of the local needs and living.

We would encourage development opportunities such as:

- Café/bar
- Digital working hub
- Crafts/artisans centre including delicatessen, bakery, etc.
- Community facilities

Amenities for children are also important. Our most valued outdoor recreational spaces are the three play parks in the area.

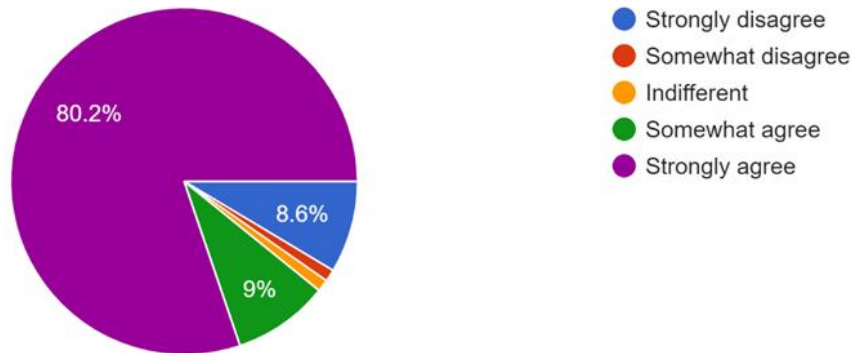


Environment

Murieston has an existing framework of paths and trails that is highly valued by residents. Their amenity should be preserved through protection from incursions and urbanisation, and their sustainability ensured.

9. Rate the statement "The outlooks and walks in Murieston are very important to me"

268 responses



Murieston Trail



Autumn Glory at Cambridge Pond



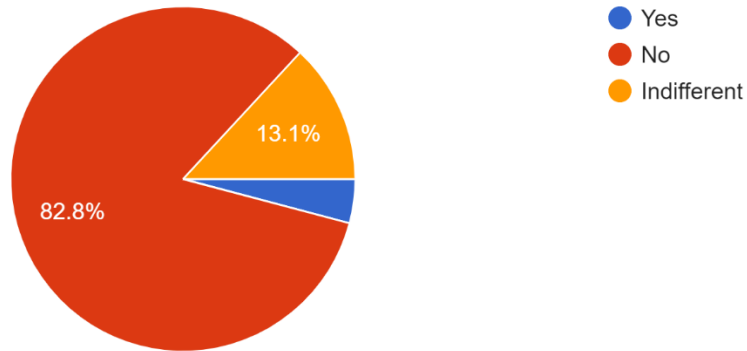
Beautiful Linhouse Circular

Protect our Green Spaces

Murieston residents have had enough of development encroaching on our green spaces. We strongly wish to protect our green spaces for the future, and we will vociferously oppose any further developer-led housing or industrial development. Over 70% of survey respondents would oppose further housing at Linhouse, Wellheads, Balgreen or Murieston Castle. Linhouse is the area which residents most wish to protect, with over 80% opposing that.

29. Should Linhouse (south of Murieston Gardens/Road) be developed for housing?

267 responses



In particular, Linhouse Circular Trail is an extremely valued recreation area, the second most popular recreation area in Murieston after Murieston Trail, and used by over 70% of survey respondents. We wish to:

- Protect land adjacent to the paths in Linhouse Loop and provide sufficient screening from recent development to recover some of the rural atmosphere which has been lost by recent development.
- Protect and enhance the Southern part of the whole area next to the Linhouse Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- Explore with West Lothian Council the possibility of developing a solar farm in middle of the Northern part, which would allow both West Lothian Council and the Murieston community to benefit financially whilst we protect the area from potentially greater levels of development and avert development of a potential distributor road.
- Preserve access from Linhouse area to Linhouse Water valley and the Pentland Hills National Park - identified as strategic opportunities for enhancement in West Lothian Place-based Green Networks [Reference 6].

We have support from the community for looking at ways to try to protect Linhouse Circular recreational area from more obtrusive development by investigating a solar farm.

34. The area inside Linhouse circular is zoned for industrial development. How should we try to protect it? We are wondering about exploring wheth...ide funding for social purposes in our community.

248 responses



In addition, we wish to protect land which would be required to extend Murieston Trail to the South-West along the path of the Murieston Water into West Calder and Harburn Community Council area.

Improve the Quality of our Green Spaces

Maintenance and investment will be needed to improve the quality of existing green spaces – in surfaces, drainage, signage, paths, bridges and causeways, wayside benches and facilities. Sustaining the existing network and accommodating some changes and new developments will require collaboration with external partners in terms of planning and funding. This is something that the local community understand will involve time and effort.

Our aspirations are:

- To assure the continuing quality of existing trails in Murieston by maintenance plans agreed with external partners and community groups. Particular attention will be required for the lower-level trail alongside Murieston Water from Cambridge downstream.
- To improve access to Linhouse Circular by developing a car park adjacent to Murieston Road to accommodate visitors who travel from outside the area to Linhouse Circular and currently cause a safety hazard at the dog-leg corner of Murieston Road by parking onto the road.
- Improve screening of important paths from recent developments



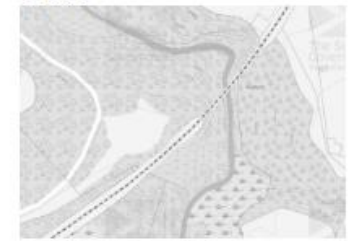
Existing railway underpass in Wellheads area



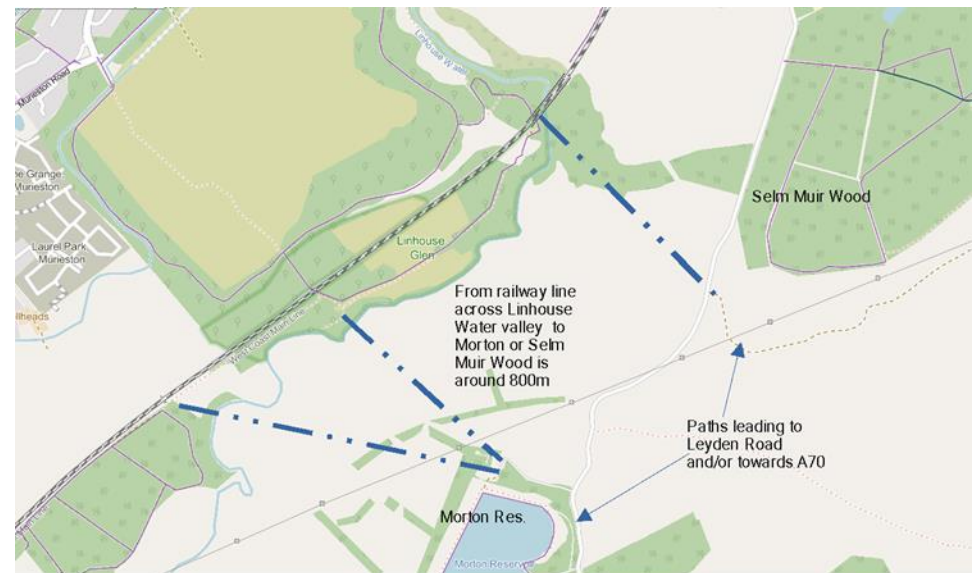
Pedestrian crossing directly on line (with warning notices, stiles over fences)



Potential for path through existing viaduct, linking to Linhouse Water valley and PHNP

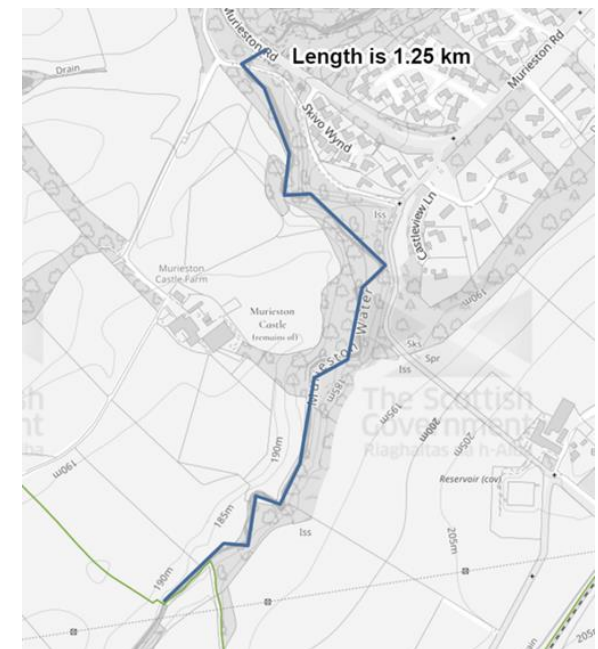


- Identify opportunities for access from Murieston to longer trails as a waterside path further upstream along Murieston Water in Harburn direction, and from Linhouse Circular across Linhouse Water valley in the direction of Pentland Hills National Park. If access arrangements can be agreed with external partners we will aim to progress these to established trails within the planning period.



Section within the Murieston Community Council area: from Murieston Road (at SW extreme) to boundary with West Calder and Harburn CC area - Length approx. 1.25 km roughly following the path of the river.

For about half the length upstream from Murieston Road, you can walk through woodland with no obvious path, until hemmed in by fences and undergrowth approx. level with Murieston Castle Farm.



Develop an Environmental Strategy

A primary reason that residents live in Murieston is access to rural amenities. We wish to develop an environmental strategy for the area which will enhance and highlight existing and planned national and local biodiversity plans. Murieston will be part of a West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan expected to be published in 2024, covering a 10-year period (Local Biodiversity Action Plan [Reference 7]). One target, tagged “30 by 30”, is to increase the proportion of protected areas (currently 16% in West Lothian) to 30% by 2030.

Murieston is an ideal area to lead this improvement as it has larger areas of strategic significance for natural capital than other parts of West Lothian (West Lothian Natural Capital Assessment Report [Reference 8]). Map 3 on page 16 (with an explanation on page 14 of the key) shows areas of high strategic significance in red (along Murieston Water and Linhouse Water valleys) and adjacent areas of medium strategic significance, in yellow. At an overview level, “protected areas” in or near Murieston can be seen as ribbons that follow the river valleys with 500m wide buffer zones either side. Most of Murieston is included in protected area or buffer zone by virtue of Murieston Water running centrally through Murieston and Linhouse Water valley along the south-east boundary and then through the eastern part of Murieston Community Council area. Areas of medium strategic significance cover all of the Linhouse Circular area and more. This study provides evidence to West Lothian Council that the area is of strategic importance for biodiversity and supports our desire to enhance the biodiversity of the Linhouse Circular Trail.

We also wish to consider ways we can benefit from our Natural Capital as Carbon Storage Capacity (bog) or Carbon Sequestration Capacity (such as natural woodland).

Energy Efficiency

We wish to support progress towards net-zero by supporting renewable energy solutions, considering heat networks, encouraging improvement of energy efficiency and low-carbon transport, and supporting the concept of low carbon resilient living through 20-min neighbourhoods, accelerating urban greening, and encouraging investing in net-zero homes. We aspire that our community buildings should exemplify what can be done to move towards “net zero” (Let’s Do Net Zero [Reference 9]). This would apply particularly to Murieston Village Hall or its potential replacement.

Active Travel

Sustainable travel is an essential component of the Local Development Plan. The spatial strategy for Murieston should reflect the sustainable travel and sustainable investment hierarchies by making best use of and improving existing infrastructure and services. Measures to reduce the dominance of the car should be promoted to fulfil Policy 13 of the National Planning Framework 4 with the effect of encouraging, promoting and facilitating developments that prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport for everyday travel and reduce the need to travel unsustainably.

Improved Resources and Services

In promoting the use of bicycles for local journeys, we would like improved and new facilities to be developed:

- Secure storage units for bikes at Livingston South Railway Station, which would also cater for electric bikes and include charging points
- An electric bike hire scheme operating county wide (similar to metropolitan bike hire schemes)

Cycling

The roads in Murieston do not particularly cater for cyclists and present a level of risk. The safety of cyclists will be best served by good traffic management, including:

- Speed limits which are appropriate to the road and traffic conditions
- Speed calming measures where appropriate
- Well maintained and improved highway signage, road markings, and waymarking to local facilities
- Well-designed road junctions including good visibility splays
- Use of no parking zones / bays where traffic flow is impeded

Cyclists also have responsibilities. In particular, they need to observe good etiquette when cycling on paths and be mindful of risks of harming other users.



Vision: Extended walking and cycling trails

Safety and Security on Paths

It is essential that everyone can use the pathways throughout Murieston safely. Core paths are the pedestrian arteries linking the different areas of Murieston and need to be:

- Well lit at night
- Regular grounds maintenance to prevent overgrowth and paving degradation
- A cleared strip on both sides of the path to aid personal safety
- Responsive winter maintenance
- Guidance to all users on responsible and safe behaviour when traversing the path network

We wish the Council to review some paths which are not currently adopted but should be brought up to similar standard in terms of surface, lighting and safety, so that they can be used as part of the functional transport network. This applies particularly to the section of Murieston Trail across Murieston Water from Murieston Road/East Cairn View, over Murieston House Bridge to join the riverside paths towards the railway station and heading towards Livingston Cricket Club. Mud on these paths and lack of lighting discourage people from walking to the railway station from housing adjacent to Murieston Road. If they were adopted and upgraded, it would provide a route with reasonable inclines from Murieston Road all the way to the centre of Livingston, suitable for walking or cycling. Improvements are also needed to street lighting on the pathways around the grass pitches at Murieston United Community Football Club.

Journeys to and from Schools

The 'school run' has become synonymous with queues of cars parked near to schools several times throughout the school day. The benefits of active travel, for parents and children by walking and cycling, need to be promoted on a regular basis. Measures to improve active travel include:

- Walking school buses to primary schools
- Schools liaising with West Lothian Bike Library to provide and repair children's bikes
- Regular training on safe cycling for primary children
- Rigorous maintenance of paths infrastructure forming the safe routes to schools

Accessibility

Active travel is relevant to everyone, irrespective of age, mobility, physical ability or impairment. We would like services to be targeted for individuals who need assistance. Services which will provide accessibility for all, include:

- On-demand response services such as Dial-a-Ride and Dial-a-Bus services
- Customised bike and wheeled solutions for the disabled
- Organised walking groups
- Car sharing/pooling

Develop an Integrated Mobility Hub

The interchange at Livingston South Railway Station enables passengers to travel to and from the station on foot, by car, bicycle, wheeling and by bus. As new technologies and facilities emerge, the basic interchange model needs to adapt to be more flexible and smarter to meet the changing needs of the community. Our vision is that the area around Livingston South Railway Station becomes a smart Mobility Hub which integrates different modes of transport supplemented with enhanced transport-related and digital services and facilities to benefit the traveller.

The development of a multi-modal mobility hub is consonant with the Scottish Government's policy promoting 20-minute neighbourhoods to develop more liveable neighbourhoods, by improving access to an array of sustainable travel choices for everyday journeys, reducing private car dependency and increasing walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport use. It will also improve accessibility for those with limited transport choice or no access to a car. Improved placemaking including public realm improvements delivered through a mobility hub will also help deliver economic, health, social, environmental and safety benefits to Murieston and beyond.

We note that this new approach to transport interchanges is encouraged in the National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) and has been adopted recently in a smaller form at the first designated Mobility Hub in Scotland - the Calderwood Mobility Hub in East Calder.

Smart Mobility Hubs have several key characteristics, including:

- Co-location of public and shared mobility modes
- Reduction of private car use and space and improve the surrounding public realm
- Encouraging sustainable modes of travel
- Providing physical and digital travel-based information
- Providing a traveller-friendly interface

Accordingly, we encourage the development of the station interchange to become an accredited smart Mobility Hub which will provide and facilitate a range of features to aid travel-friendly, sustainable and seamless travel for all, including:

- Improved bus services, including demand-responsive mini-buses (such as Dial-a-Ride and Dial-a-Bus services)
- More comprehensive bus routes, including a route direct to Livingston North railway station via Livingston bus station and St. Johns Hospital to allow visitors to get to the hospital or centre from either station without bus changes
- Taxi hailing
- Bike parking, secure lockers for pedal and electric bikes and EV docking points for electric bikes
- Bike repair facilities and tyre pumps
- Infrastructure for future micro-mobility options, as and when deemed legal
- Cargo bike rental
- Car clubs / pools and sharing
- EV car charging bays
- Infrastructure for future autonomous vehicle options, as and when introduced
- Digital services point with transport information, ticketing, way finding with walk distances and information on local services
- Integrated ticketing
- Public Wi-Fi
- CCTV for public safety
- USB charging for mobile devices
- Covered waiting area
- Package delivery lockers

Some features which should be part of a future mobility hub are already in place at the interchange at Livingston South Railway Station; for example, accessible access to platforms, accessible toilet, physical community noticeboard, area information map, path signage, public Wi-Fi, bus and platform shelters, self-service delivery lockers and defibrillator. However, since redevelopment of the station a few years ago, the station has become an eyesore. Part of the development would be to bring the station back to the standard it was at before the redevelopment.

Since the front area of the station is already an eyesore, we feel that development of a two-level car park to address the local parking problems would not detract from the visual impact of the station and would encourage greater use of trains and buses for journeys.

We are also actively fostering other significant developments for the community and travellers such as a pop-up café, remote working and meeting facilities.



Then: Station in 2013



Now: Station in 2023

Bridle Paths

One of the most attractive features of Murieston is the extensive trail network and the variety of users that enjoy them. One such group are horse riders and there are approximately 50 horses in the area. All the paths and trails are included in West Lothian Council's Core Paths Plan which means they can be used for any non-motorised activity if exercised responsibly as outlined in The Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

Currently there are no pathways or trails for horses only, which means that pedestrians, dog-walkers and cyclists have to use the same paths. This could potentially lead to conflict and unfortunately there have been incidences of off-lead dogs attacking horses. Thankfully, most of the users respect each other's space.

There are a number of things that could be done to improve the safety and enjoyment for all users:

- Signage at key points along the trail outlining The Scottish Outdoor Access Code and what to do if you meet a horse and rider. There are no signs to warn users that the paths are used by horses.
- Widen paths to give everyone plenty room. This might be by keeping overhanging branches pruned back, improving drainage in certain areas so horses would not have to walk along the same narrow paths as other users.
- Where possible have pathways just for horses (or where they have priority over others). At one time there were sign posts along the side of the playing field that directed horse riders away from footpaths. Unfortunately, the drainage is very poor there, so riders use the footpaths to avoid damaging the playing fields.
- The increase in cars on roads increases the risk for horses and riders. There is only one sign warning of horses on the road at the front of the entrance to Murieston Castle. All riders would prefer to stay off the roads, but it is not possible, so we should provide more warnings to motorists.



Horse-riding on Murieston Trail

Everyone has the right to enjoy the trails responsibly, but the risk of conflict, safety and enjoyment could be improved by these changes.

7. Projects

Duration	Project	Page
Short term	Protect Murieston Village Hall	Page 27-28
	Maintaining and improving existing paths	
	Greening Livingston South Railway Station	
	Support public involvement in the planning and development process	
Short-medium term	Community Social/Arts Hub	Page 28-29
	Community Enterprise	
	Develop an Environmental Strategy	
Medium term	Improvements to Murieston Trail/Linhouse Circular	Page 29
	Parking/Electric Car Charging Points at Railway Station	
	Encourage Active Travel	
Medium-long term	Community Sports Hub	Page 29
Long term	Extend Paths Network	Page 30

Short Term Projects

Protect Murieston Village Hall

As our only general community space in an area with no cafes for general socialising, we strongly wish to protect Murieston Village Hall from potential closure. According to survey respondents, it is our most used local building and provides an important focus for social activities, reducing social isolation and loneliness, and supports families with young children. Recent discussions with West Lothian Council on the future of the Village Hall have highlighted that all funding will be cut from April 2026 and so there is a very real possibility that it might close. We wish to protect our community resource in the short term while we work out a longer-term solution for community space in Murieston. Work has already started to ensure it is used as much as possible and provides activities for all age groups. Options for lease or asset transfer are being explored.

Maintaining and Improving Existing Paths

We will document our local paths network to facilitate future opportunities and engage with the Woodland Trust, West Lothian Council, and other appropriate bodies and support local charity Murieston Environmental Group to ensure the footpaths in Murieston Woods and Linhouse Circular are well maintained.

Greening Livingston South Railway Station

We will work with West Lothian Council to get planters installed at the station. We are participating jointly with Murieston Community Garden, Murieston Environmental Group and the Rotary Club of Livingston in the ScotRail 'Adopt-a-Station' programme and have also initiated discussions with ScotRail on future options for further greening of the station.

Support Public Involvement in the Planning and Development Process

We will attempt to influence current planned developments and discourage further large-scale housing developments outwith West Lothian Council Local Development Plan. Recent building work has proceeded despite vigorous efforts by local residents to protect green spaces. Murieston Community Development Trust and Murieston Community Council will work with West Lothian Council to ensure future threats to our green spaces are managed effectively. An action plan will be developed to ensure our green spaces are protected and improved.

Short-Medium Term Projects

Community Social/Arts Hub

To ensure the future of sustainable, low-energy community facilities in Murieston, we aim to develop a Community Social and Arts Hub for use by both adults and young people to increase public involvement in the arts and allow the display and performance of art. Although we currently have a Village Hall, it is always booked, mainly by local children's groups, and so there is very limited opportunity to book it for adult events. Unlike in many traditional communities, there are insufficient older buildings that the community can make use of. Residents therefore wish to develop a larger fully-accessible zero-energy community-owned building. We will consult with local residents on the exact format this will take but envisage it might include some of the following, which are common in trust plans in other areas of Scotland:

- Cafe/bar/restaurant with cooking facilities (to act as warm hub with music/board games/books/magazines)
- Both indoor seating and outdoor seating suitable for dog-walkers
- Retail space (adjacent to the café) with bakery, deli and gift shop
- Gallery/multi-purpose display area with seating
- 150-seat cinema / performance / multipurpose space with retractable seating, screen, projector area, set up with facilities for Zoom hybrid meetings (big enough for church use)
- Bookable large hall for dances/music events (with large adjacent storage space for tables/chairs, etc.)
- Bookable medium and small room spaces for numerous purposes bookable by local groups (with multiple adjacent storage spaces for different groups)
- A community run co-working/office space (for use by Community Council/Trust and rental to others)
- Workshops
- Community library/bookshop
- Studios for makers and creatives
- CCTV for community safety
- Disabled parking

Significant fundraising will be required to achieve this. We have initiated discussions with the Scottish Land Fund. A site needs to be agreed. The preferred site is the site of the existing Village Hall, but two issues need to be resolved first: access for disabled people needs to be significantly improved and disabled parking made available; and high-speed broadband needs to be available (maximum current obtainable speed is 1.5 Mbps). If these cannot be resolved then we may wish to consider an alternative site.

Community Enterprise

Community facilities are unlikely to bring in enough income themselves to pay for the upkeep required. Whilst ensuring that our community facilities are as low energy as possible, we also need to ensure that their sustainability is supported financially through development of community enterprises to bring in income we can depend on.

We have already benefitted to a small degree from windfarm benefits from commercial operations. The first community enterprise we wish to explore is the possibility of development of a solar farm in the northern section of the inner part of the Linhouse Circular recreational area. We will talk to West Lothian Council in the first instance to explore possibilities. It would have the benefit of protecting a much-loved recreational area which is currently zoned for industrial development while bringing in an income to the community and West Lothian Council which has not been achieved previously.

Develop an Environmental Strategy

We will research options to address climate change and develop a strategy with West Lothian Council for enhancing the valued natural capital of the area and replacing trees which have fallen or been felled. We will engage with Murieston Environmental Group when volunteers are needed.

Medium Term Projects

Improvements to Murieston Trail/Linhouse Circular

Trail information and signage will be installed, including historical and environmental information and dog-fouling signage. More benches will be installed. Opportunities for further planting will be investigated. We will also work with West Lothian Council on improvements to the surface and lighting of important existing sections of paths leading to public transport.

Improved Parking and Electric Car Charging Points at Railway Station

We will lobby West Lothian Council for increased parking at the station and energy-efficient electric charging points.

Encourage Active Travel

We will review the opportunities for active travel and ways to encourage this. In particular, we will engage in discussions about development of Livingston South Railway Station as an Integrated Mobility Hub, and we will work with ScotRail to ensure a secure, modern, dry cycle terminus is installed at the station.

Medium-Long Term Projects

Community Sports Hub

Whilst ensuring the future of Murieston Village Hall is our first priority, we support the development of community sports facilities in Murieston, and in particular the Livingston South Sports and Wellbeing Hub. To ensure long-term benefit to the community, such facilities must be run as a community-owned charity controlled by residents, equally available to all current and future groups, and with all groups of residents using it having equal representation. As soon as we have funding available that is not needed for a community social hub we will contribute to such plans if they have not already been achieved by others.

Long Term Projects

Extend Path Network

Although no discussions have yet taken place, we aim, in conjunction with other adjacent Development Trusts such as West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust, to extend the paths network between Murieston and Harburn/elsewhere to provide even greater opportunities for all communities to use the outdoors.

8. Specific Requests for West Lothian Local Development Plan

Designation references are based on the West Lothian Council Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP1).

1. West Lothian Development Plan Map3 Livingston Area

Local Neighbourhood Centre for Bankton / Murieston overlaps Land Safeguarded for Open Space. This has caused issues with planning applications being raised to build developments extending into the Open Space. Map requires amendment to remove the overlap between Open Space and Neighbourhood Centre. Eastern boundary of Neighbourhood Centre should be defined as a line between grid points (306246-665396, 306254-665379, 306241-665346).



2. Murieston Local Community Hub

The long-term sustainability of Murieston Village Hall is of concern to the community. The existing hall requires significant investment and may require total replacement in the long term. Consequently, it is proposed that the area to the south of Livingston South Railway Station be designated as a Local Community Hub to secure this land for the community and allow expansion of the facilities as required. The hub to be defined as the triangle of land encompassing the existing Murieston Village Hall and Murieston Community Garden, grid ref. (306226-665296, 306064-665239, 306164-665192), approximately 0.68 hectares.



3. Local Community Space – Murieston Valley

The area defined below to be identified as an area reserved for community use. The community to identify projects which will enhance the area for the greater use by residents within Murieston Community Council Area. Area defined by the polygon grid ref. (306118-665168, 306124-665189, 306044-665240, 305985-665217, 306005-665177), an area of 0.609 hectare. Murieston Community Council cannot positively confirm the western edge of the polygon, points (M to N). The western edge should, therefore, be adjusted to abut the private land to the west.



4. Local Community Space - Murieston East

The area defined below to be identified as an area reserved for community use. The community to identify projects which will enhance the area for the greater use by residents within Murieston Community Council Area. Area defined by the polygon grid ref. (306335-665457, 306359-665369, 306574-665437, 306573-665684, 306539-665695), an area of 4.00 hectare.



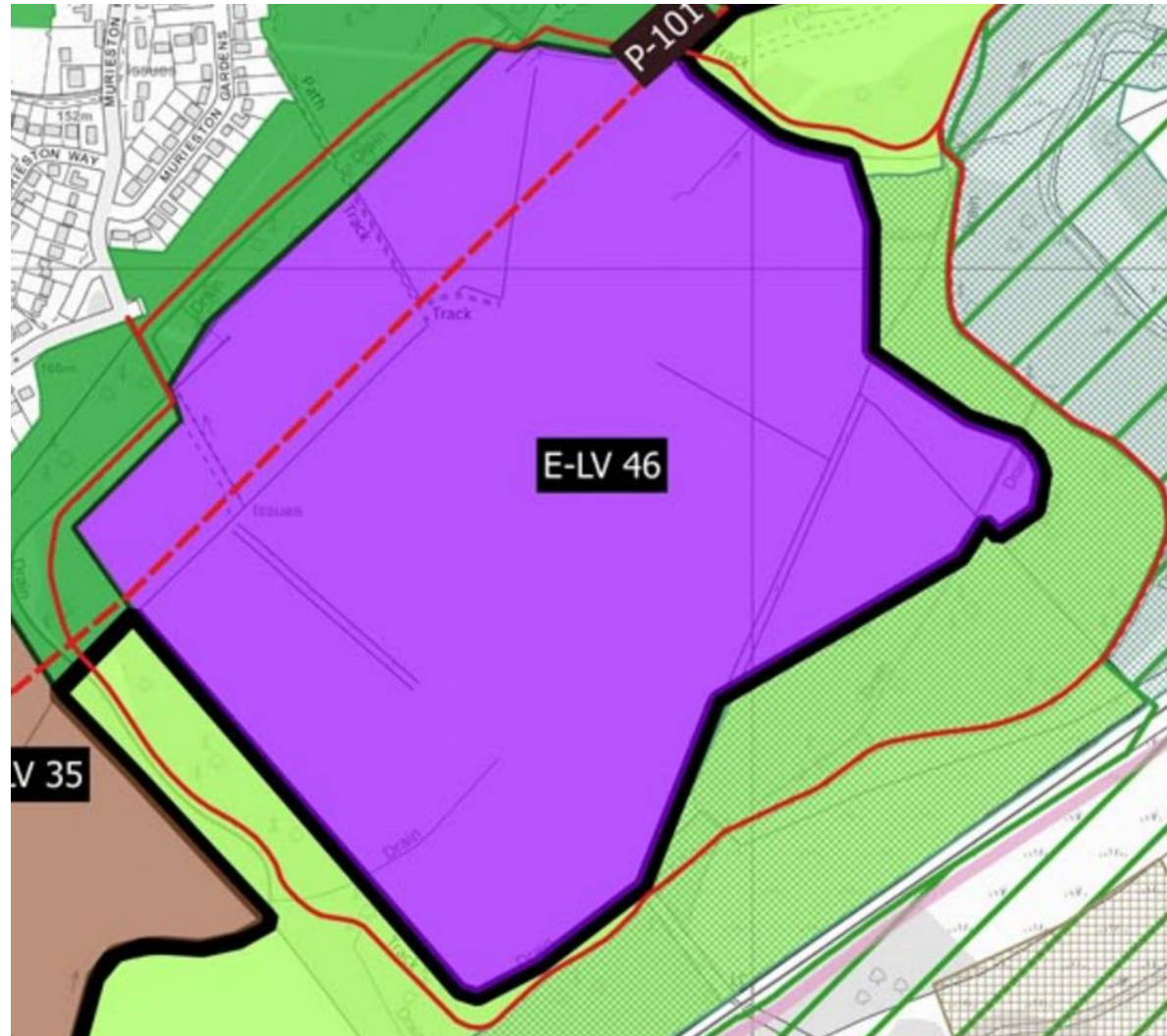
5. E-LV 46 Designated for Employment (Part 1)

This area has remained untouched since the inception of Livingston Development Corporation, the current main use of this area is recreation. Murieston Community Council considers the need to expand the area of land to the south of E-LV 46, currently allocated as Countryside Belt / Local Biodiversity by reducing the safeguarded employment area by 14.5 hectares as defined by polygon below. Grid ref: (307206-664866, 306899-664396, 306730-664284, 306557-664478, 307323-664797, 307049-664598). With the addition of this area, the new area should be defined as Land Safeguarded For Open Space / Local Biodiversity site, where the community will work towards enhanced biodiversity within the area.



6. E-LV 46 Designated for Employment (Part 2)

Description of previous land use is stated in (5) above. Having redesignated 14.5 hectares of the site to Land Safeguarded for Open Space / Local Biodiversity, the areas of Countryside Belt to the Northeast and the woodland strip to the Southwest (adjacent to Wellhead Farm development) be designated as Land Safeguarded for Open Space. The path network surrounding E-LV 46 should be protected within the description of 'Core Pathways'. The residual central land should be allocated to Solar Farm development, circa 35.5 hectare.



7. Housing H-LV 31

24 Units adjacent to Lyon Drive. Remain as defined in 2018 plan, identified for housing.

8. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) Nature Based Solutions

Murieston Community Council area is a mixture of urban and rural which has seen a dramatic increase in Feral Pigeon and invasive Grey Squirrel. In the spirit of nature-based solutions, the Community Council feels that a natural control method of these species is now required. To this end, predatory species such as Goshawk and Pine Marten should be introduced in the southern woodland area of Murieston South as part of a species rewilding programme.

9. Policies

- **Affordable Housing Policy HOU 4.** West Lothian demand for housing over the next West Lothian Local Development Plan period will be in the region of 9500 units. In order to dissuade further development within West Lothian, we suggest the following policy changes:
 - **Within Priority areas 1:** % Affordable Housing requirement should be raised to 35% from 25% and the Threshold for commuted sums reduced to <20 from <25.
 - **Within Priority areas 2:** % Affordable Housing requirement should be raised to 20% from 15% and the Threshold for commuted sums reduced to <30 from <40.
 - **Within Priority areas 3:** % Affordable Housing requirement should be raised to 15% from 10% and the Threshold for commuted sums reduced to <50 from <60.
- **DES 1:** Embed Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhood planning guidance within Economic Development and Growth policy.
- **Developer Contribution:** Supplemental Guidance policy to be developed for Transport and Infrastructure. This policy to be applied to all developments within 3 Kilometres of Livingston South Railway Station and will require developers to contribute to upgrading parking facilities at the station. This guidance does not contradict the National Walking Strategy but provides the necessary safeguards for individuals using personal transport during inclement weather to reach the transport hub at Livingston South Railway Station and onward rail travel.

9. Next Steps

Murieston Community Council, Murieston Community Development Trust, and Murieston Initiative SCIO will collaborate to initiate discussions with West Lothian Council on lease arrangements and potential asset transfer to allow future replacement of Murieston Village Hall with a community-owned, zero-energy, sustainable building. We will also initiate discussion on opportunities for community enterprise to allow our ambitions to obtain a regular source of funding. This would include discussion on ways in which we can protect Linhouse Circular from future housing or intrusive industrial development by investigating the potential for a solar farm which could contribute to net-zero and help fund community efforts while allowing the community to lead efforts to increase biodiversity.

10. Appendix

Acronyms Used

SCIO Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (regulated by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator)

MCC Murieston Community Council

MCDT Murieston Community Development Trust

LDP Local Development Plan

Groups Involved

Community groups or agencies involved in any way or invited to contribute.

- Murieston Community Council has a long history of representing Murieston
- Murieston Community Development Trust was set up as a SCIO in July 2023 by local residents with the support of Murieston Community Council in response to local needs
- Murieston Initiative SCIO operates and manages Murieston Village Hall, managing community space for childcare, social welfare, education, and entertainment
- Murieston Community Garden is a community organisation building a public community garden next to Livingston South Railway Station
- Murieston Environmental Group is a charity helping to maintain the highly-valued Murieston Trail and other environmental resources
- The Rotary Club of Livingston is a charity based in Livingston, involved in maintaining planters at Livingston South Railway Station
- Livingston Cricket Club
- Livingston South Sports and Wellbeing Hub
- Murieston Tennis and Sports Club
- Murieston United Community Football Club
- Bankton Mains Bowling Club
- Murieston Scout Hall

References

1. Community Action Plan Research Report: https://murieston-cdt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Murieston_CAP_background_research_report.pdf
2. Community Action Plan Summary: <https://murieston-cdt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Community-Action-Plan-for-Murieston.pdf>
3. National Standards for Community Engagement: [VOiCE \(voicescotland.org.uk\)](https://voicescotland.org.uk)
4. Scottish Government draft guide on How to for Local Place Plans: [Local Place Plans | Our Place](#)
5. Murieston Community Survey 2024: <https://murieston-cdt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Murieston-Community-Survey-2024-Response-Summary.pdf>
6. West Lothian Place-based Green Networks: West Lothian Local Development Plan: background paper (August 2014): <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/4790/West-Lothian-Placed-Green-Networks-background-paper/pdf/WestLothianPlaced-basedGreenNetworksAugust2014.pdf>
7. Local Biodiversity Action Plan: <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/75251/Local-Biodiversity-Action-Plan>
8. West Lothian Natural Capital Assessment Report: https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/60084/West-Lothian-Natural-Capital-Assessment-Report-2023/pdf/West_Lothian_Natural_Capital_Assessment_Report_2023_FINAL_compressed.pdf
9. Let's Do Net Zero: <https://localenergy.scot/funding/lets-do-net-zero-community-buildings-fund/>
The Community Buildings Fund helps community organisations reduce their building energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions by installing renewable technologies such as heat pumps, batteries, and solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, along with energy efficiency measures. Grants of up to 80% of eligible costs up to a maximum of £80,000 are available.
10. Complex sites and metering: <https://localenergy.scot/opening-the-door-to-local-energy-schemes-complex-site-classes/>
11. Selms Muir Solar Farm: <https://renewableconnections.co.uk/west-lothian-solar-farm-approval-secures-energy-for-7000-homes/>
Projected to generate up to 18 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy for 7,000 homes, from a 45 hectare area site to the SE of Livingston near Kirknewton.