

**Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership meeting**  
**26<sup>th</sup> January 2026, 19:00 – 21:00 at Bleachingfield Centre, Dunbar**

**Meeting Chaired by:**

- 1) Allison Cosgrove, Chair of the Dunbar and East Linton Area Partnership (AC)

**Members (and substitute members) present:**

- 2) Alasdair Swan, Vice Chair (AS)
- 3) Cllr Lyn Jardine, ELC (LJ)
- 4) Jacqueline Bell, ELC (JB)
- 5) Bea Taylor, Dunbar Community Council (BT)
- 6) Anne Lyall, East Lammermuir Community Council (AL)
- 7) Daniel Wight, Dunpender Community Council (DW)
- 8) Andrew Ashton, West Barns Community Council (AA)
- 9) Kath O'Brien, West Barns Community Council (KO)
- 10) Pippa Swan, Dunbar Shore and Harbour Neighbourhood Group (PS)
- 11) Jo Demer, Dunbar Grammar School Parent Council (JD)
- 12) Alex Carley, Small Shools Parent Council (AC)
- 13) Jo McNamara, Sustaining Dunbar (JMcN)
- 14) Phillip Mellor, Dunbar Trades Association (PM)
- 15) Jo Waddell, Dunbar Trades Association (JW)
- 16) Heather Blackwood, The Ridge (HB)
- 17) Suzie Fletcher, Innerwick Parish Welfare Association (SF)
- 18) Linda Shaw-Stewart, Dunpender Community Council (LSS)

**Others in attendance**

- Laurence Rockey, ELC, Chief Executive (LR)
- Eamon John, ELC, Head of Communities and Partnerships (EJ)
- Adrian Girling, The Space (AG)
- Stevie McKinlay, ELC, Connected Communities Manager (SMcK)
- Rocio Pombo, ELC Business Support Administration (RP)

**Apologies**

- Mike Shaw, Dunbar Shore and Harbour Neighbourhood Group (MS)

1.	<p><b>Welcome</b> Meeting confirmed to be quorate.</p> <p>AC welcomed everybody to the meeting, including Laurence Rockey, ELC Chief Executive and Eamon John, Head of Communities and Partnerships.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Apologies</b> – None as noted above.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Approval of Minutes</b> No objections. Minutes approved.</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b> None outstanding.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Updates on workshops (AS)</b></p> <p><b>a. Housing (paper 1)</b> AS explained that the current main issue is that housing needs and infrastructure are not fully known. According to housing officers during the workshop, public housing turnaround is slow but steadily improving. Long-term empty private housing is an issue that needs exploring, including possible squatting. There are projects to improve building fronts and new housing opportunities are opening up.</p> <p>There was a discussion around working with the Council and Housing Associations to carry out inspections on social housing. An inspection has been carried out in the Dunbar Shore &amp; Harbour Residents' Area.</p> <p>PS raised concerns about the inspection in question, noting it lacked preparation and that tenants were not informed beforehand. Moreover, the inspections in question involve no tenant consultation, no property mapping, and don't cover building fabric or common areas, with no follow-up. A review may be needed.</p> <p>LJ clarified that building and property inspections are carried out independently and differently, hence the lack of inspection to building fabric and common areas.</p> <p>SMcK shared he had been informed by Rebecca that there's a focus on turning around long-term voids when possible.</p> <p><b>b. Health and Wellbeing (paper 2)</b> AS provided a positive update on recent activities, beginning by thanking HB and The Ridge for their anxiety self-referral service, which is seeing increasing demand.</p> <p>There is good progress on new village halls in East Lammermuir and upcoming healthy eating initiatives. The Medical Centre can now refer patients to the Leisure Centre, and Andy's Man Club continues to show strong results supporting men's wellbeing. Support services for addiction, debt, and mental health remain active.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to improve accessibility at the Leisure Centre. The Grammar School's intergenerational activities and the new Good Neighbour scheme are building community connections. New dental facilities will open in the old Bank of Scotland building. The Area Partnership is supporting dementia care initiatives, and the Debt Advisory Service remains in high demand.</p>	

	<p>There was consensus that while great work is already being carried out in the community, integrated efforts and better communication between local organisations must be improved upon.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Progress Report on Area Plan (AS)</b>  AC noted that the area plan is being reviewed by sections during each business meeting as to keep it relevant.</p> <p><b>a. Environment Review</b>  AS opened a review of the group's community and environmental goals and asked members if they wished to propose any changes to the objectives. No amendments were raised.</p> <p>The following ongoing initiatives were noted:  East Lammermuir is using Community Benefit funding for an ambitious biodiversity plan. The Dunbar Community Council has commissioned a Woodland Management Plan for Lochend Woods, a project DELAP can take an active role in once the plan is complete.</p> <p>The Area Partnership has already provided financial support to the Tynninghame Community Farm, which promotes sustainable living, local food growing, and outdoor community activities. The Belhaven Community Garden also operates in these areas, providing education and mental health support.</p> <p>JB noted the importance of raising awareness of the value of our natural landscape, nature and soil, and water bodies.</p> <p>JMcN informed that Sustaining Dunbar have submitted an application for Community Asset Transfer and are awaiting resolution. Sustaining Dunbar aim to connect with other local groups in the meantime, particularly community councils and Area Partnership.</p> <p>thanked JMcN and Sustaining Dunbar for the splendid work they carry out, recognising the significant challenge this presents. It was also noted that The Ridge’s garden has been successfully revamped.</p> <p>EJ added that a vote had taken place the week prior on the “Open Space Strategy”. Admin to share information on the strategy with members.</p> <p><b>b. Action Plans on Healthy Eating—DW, Tynninghame Community Farm</b>  DW presented an update on healthy eating, focusing on Tynninghame Community Farm (TCF). He emphasised that the farm is about more than healthy eating; it also involves community activities and outdoor connection. The project cooperates with Sustaining Dunbar.</p> <p>He noted that while East Lothian has some of the best agriculture in Scotland, only about 5% of its produce is for direct human consumption, with the rest mostly cereals for animal feed. TCF is a small group formed in 2022. To be financially viable, they need 6-8 acres but currently operate on 2 acres. Last year, the farm supplied The Crunchy Carrot in Dunbar and 70 households. The plan is to supply 120 households this year.</p> <p>The model is community-supported agriculture, which provides a secure livelihood for three employed growers and security for the farm. A key aim is to connect consumers with how and where their food is grown and to supply local people.</p> <p>A key challenge is that the scheme is inaccessible to many low-income households. In response, they have started a solidarity scheme where willing customers can pay extra</p>	<p>RP</p>

to support others. Surplus produce is also given to Sunny Soups Kitchen and the Haddington Community Kitchen.

DW added that the compost toilet funded by the Area Partnership has been very useful due to the number of volunteers and is currently up and running.

EJ asked if TCF is registered with VCEL and the East Lothian Food Collective, to which DW confirmed they are registered with both.

JB commended the work and raised the broader issue of how to support local growers, noting that supermarket contracts can restrict who growers are allowed to sell to.

SF highlighted the value of children's trips to the farm and noted there is space for allotments at the local school.

AC added that there is a clear demand and people would value more allotment spaces being made available.

**c. Action Plan on Young People—AG, theSpace, Dunbar**

AG from theSpace in Dunbar gave an update. The organisation aims to create opportunities for young people, based on what the community has asked for, including accessible leisure spaces, skills development, and better facilities. A key focus is listening to young people.

They hold a weekly session on Wednesday evenings. Their work covers operational costs and involves a lot of music activity. A young people's technical team runs lighting and sound for local events like ELAFest and the Dunbar Music Festival. The approach is youth-led and multigenerational.

The goal is to provide locally what people would otherwise have to travel out of Dunbar for, and to make buildings accessible to all. This includes creating high-quality local apprenticeships.

AG stated that theSpace asks for a genuine partnership from East Lothian Council to achieve these goals, and emphasised that personal connections are essential. They noted that their funding mainly comes from core sources and that a strategy plan has been developed alongside SMcK. A current focus is on better demonstrating their value and impact to secure greater recognition.

**d. Area Plan Risk Assessment**

AS delivered an update on the Area Plan risk assessment. He explained that the assessment is required by ELC and aims to identify progress versus process, ensuring real changes are taking place.

**e. Key Current Issues**

LR began by noting that population is moving east and that economic change drives such shifts. The Council has £30m in savings to find and expects a 5% population increase over the next few years.

Prevention and better investment will lead to better outcomes, but some hard choices lie ahead. He stressed the importance of engagement – how to empower and collaborate with communities, recognising the hours people invest locally. He is keen to deepen relationships not only with communities but also with organisations like NHS.

CO commented that LR is the first senior ELC official to attend a DELAP meeting.

### **1. Parking charges**

LR acknowledged that there are two sides to the argument. Evidence shows that increased turnover from paid parking can benefit High Streets. However, if no parking is available, consumers may choose supermarket convenience over town centres. He disagreed with the view that unpopular policies are necessarily undemocratic.

### **2. Lack of music provision in small schools**

LR stated that it is inevitable that larger, more heavily staffed schools can offer greater variety. EJ noted there has been debate in Dunbar about whether to have one or two schools, with most people favouring a single school.

LR confirmed that brass instruction is available at West Barns Primary School, with 30% of eligible pupils taking part and no waiting list.

AC raised concern that cuts disproportionately affect smaller schools. LR responded that small schools do not produce poorer outcomes – teacher-pupil ratios are set by Scottish Government – but acknowledged hard choices are required. EJ asked about the role of the third sector, citing PE provision as an example.

### **3. Waiting lists for autism and ADHD assessments**

LR confirmed the waiting list is where they want it to be and is the responsibility of the NHS. Current approach is to support children before, during and after assessment, though resources remain a challenge.

CO described the process as stressful for children and guardians, with people stepping into the assessments unprepared and no friendly environment. LR thanked CO for the feedback, describing it as very helpful.

### **4. Road safety at West Barns Primary School**

LR confirmed that yellow lines are enforceable by Police Scotland. A proposal to restrict traffic movement on school roads had been made but was not taken forward. Speed checks have been carried out on Edinburgh Road.

### **5. Housing Capital Budget, and what type of social housing should we expect to see in our Area?**

Taylor Wimpey is building 28 social rented units at Hallhill, Dunbar. Sixteen will be handed over this financial year, with the remaining twelve completing early in 2026/27. An additional 12 units are due for completion in May 2027. Negotiations are also underway for 24 two-bed flats for low-cost home ownership and are expected around November 2026.

JMcN asked why social housing is so expensive for the Council and cited costs above £240k per unit. LR explained this reflects requirements for heat pumps, safety standards, and the use of smaller contractors. EJ added context on developer contributions and the principle of compact growth, noting the need to consider overall housing percentages.

### **6. Community assets**

EJ confirmed the asset review is ongoing. Some community buildings are being assessed using a traffic light system, with decisions to be made on a location-by-location basis.

### **7. Housing: estate inspections and allocations**

Estate inspections are led by local housing teams and are set to increase in frequency, with improved monitoring and follow-up. A lead officer will oversee tenancy sign-ups and ongoing tenant support.

	<p><b>11. Recognition of volunteers</b>  <b>JW</b> highlighted the vast amount of unpaid work volunteers contribute and stated that people make Dunbar and that too often things are done <i>to</i> communities rather than <i>with</i> them. DW called for the local development plan to better reflect local outcomes. LR acknowledged the contribution of volunteers and reiterated his commitment to improving collaboration.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Annual Meeting Arrangements</b>  DELAP scheduled meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23<sup>rd</sup> Macrh 2026 — AGM</li> <li>• 25<sup>th</sup> May 2026</li> <li>• 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026</li> <li>• 7<sup>th</sup> September 2026</li> <li>• 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2026</li> </ul>	
7.	<p><b>AOCB—To be notified to the Chair in advance</b>  N/A</p>	