

Blackburn Local Place Plan 2024 - 2034



“We went to lots of workshops and meetings and gave our opinion as younger people, about what we thought could be done and how things could improve. As we will be the next generation growing up and living with them.

If everyone gets heard and their thoughts taken into consideration, it will result in a more effective and understood community.”

Ellie Reid, (left) Change in Blackburn Youth Committee

Blackburn, West Lothian Local Place Plan



What is a Place Plan?

A local Place Plan is a community-led plan setting out proposals for the development and use of land. Local Place Plans offer communities the opportunity to develop proposals for their local area, expressing their aspirations and ambitions for future change.

The Blackburn Local Place Plan represents the community aspirations for land-use in Blackburn. This should be considered in conjunction with the Blackburn Future Plan, Blackburns' community-led Action Plan which outlines areas for action- some of which is based on the aspirations outlined in this Place Plan. The Blackburn Future Plan Action Plan is a live document that reflects projects being delivered on the ground that directly influence priorities in the Whitburn and Blackburn Locality Plan.

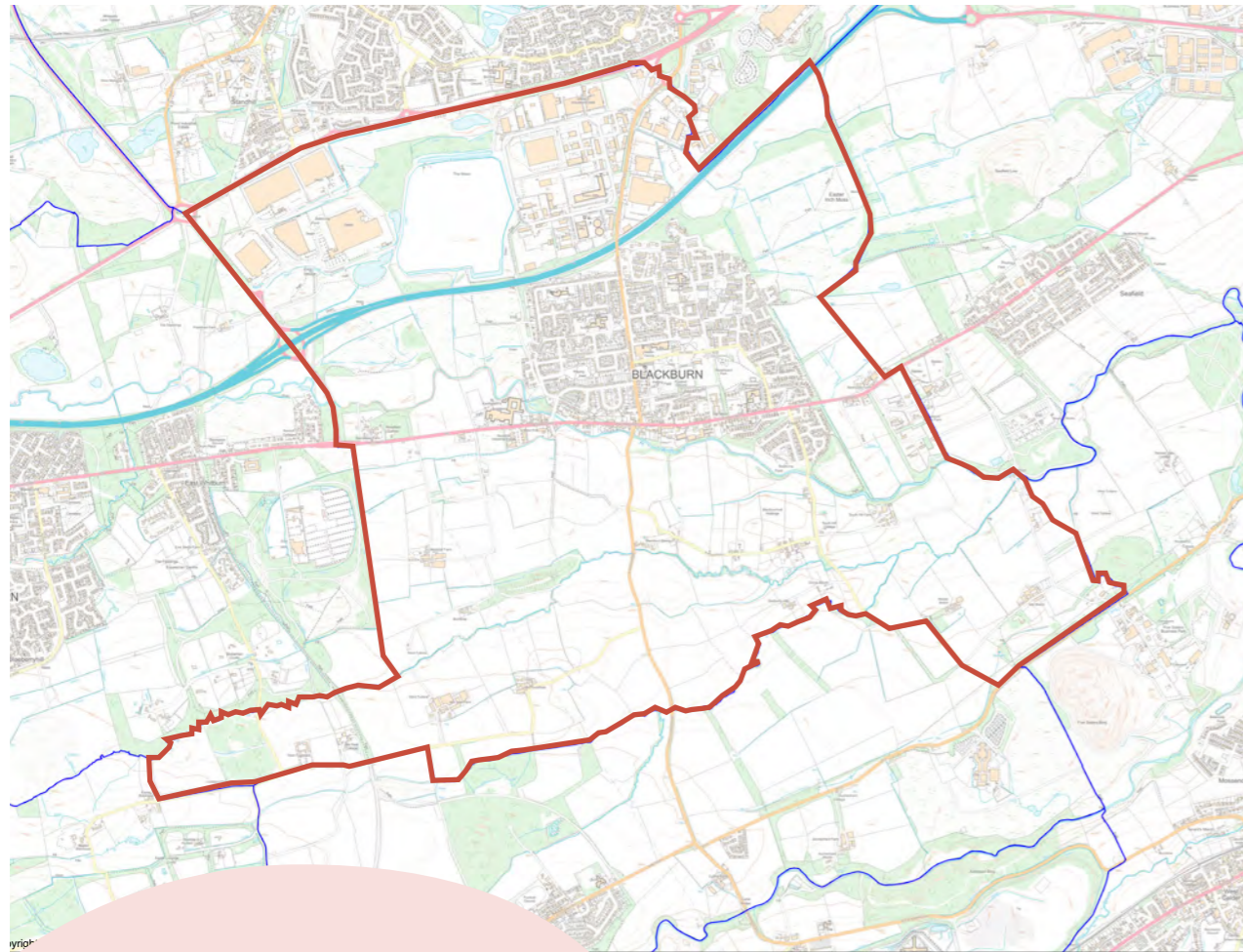


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The Boundaries and duration of Blackburn Place Plan

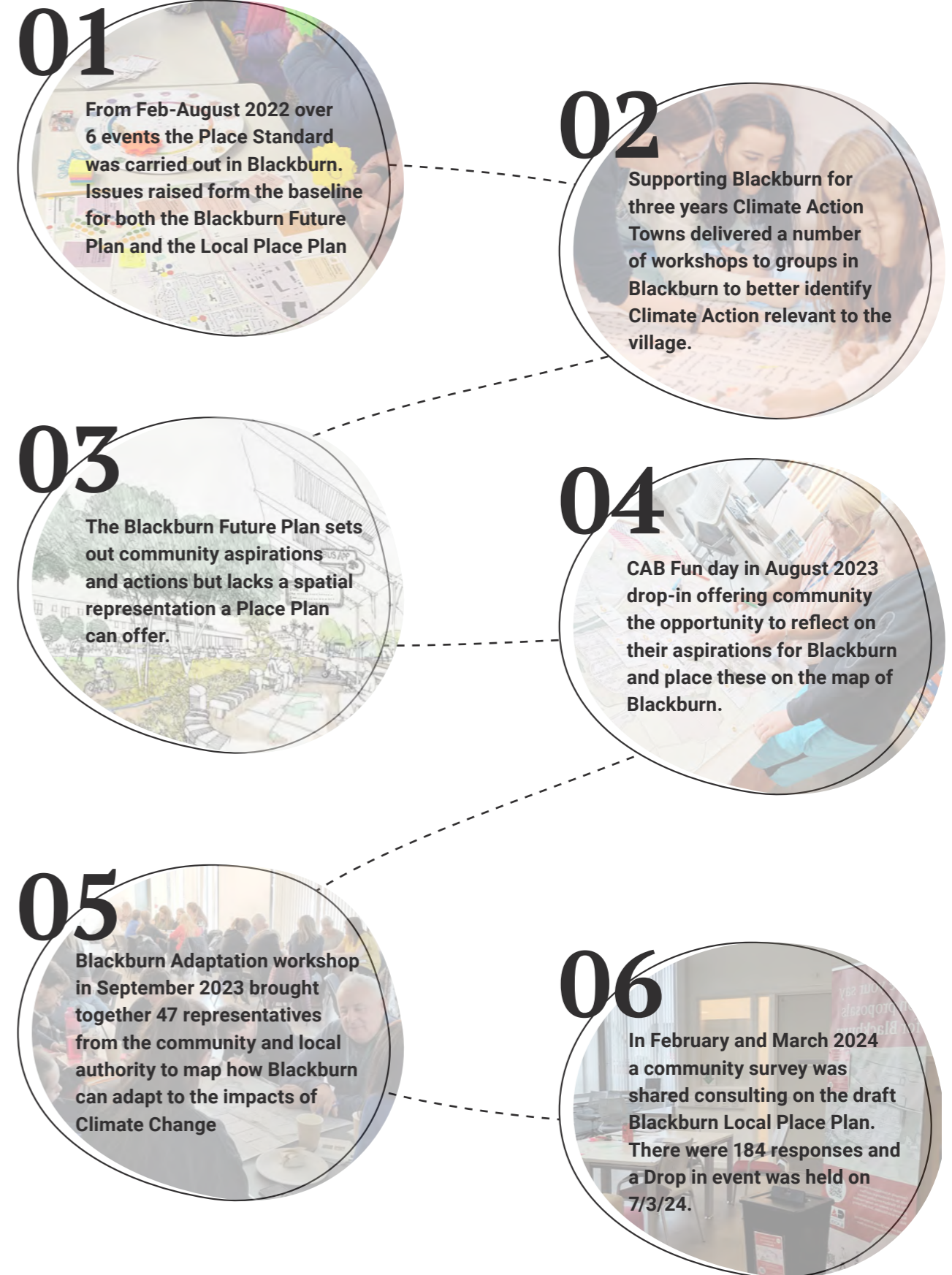
The boundaries of the place plan for Blackburn, West Lothian are the boundaries of the jurisdiction of Blackburn Community Council as shown in the plan below. The Duration of the Blackburn Local Place Plan is 10 years from publication.



The Red line denotes Blackburn Community Council area Boundary

The core group involved in developing Blackburn Local Place Plan were: Community Action Blackburn, Blackburn Community Council, Blackburn United Community Sports Club, West Lothian Council (Community Regeneration) and Architecture and Design Scotland (Climate Action Towns).

Community Involvement- the route to delivering the Local Place Plan



Why Blackburn has developed a Place Plan

Community Action Blackburn (CAB) have developed the Blackburn Local Place Plan with the objective of “giving local people the opportunity to engage meaningfully and have a positive influence in the future planning of development in their area”.

It was developed in accordance with requirements of the Town & Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations - January 2022.

Our aim is to ensure growth and prosperity for our town by encouraging economic development which is both sustainable and inclusive. The plan is part of a suite of plans seeking to create a future for the town maximising the natural environment, history and building on its greatest asset; the local community.

CAB have consulted widely on the development of the Blackburn Place Plan and in the spirit of the aforementioned Regulations, CAB considers this document can be regarded as a representative view of a wide section of the Blackburn community.

We now seek to work in partnership with elected members and officers of West Lothian Council and to bring the proposals identified to implementation through the councils planning processes.

The Blackburn Place Plan sits alongside the Blackburn Future Plan and the Blackburn Action Plan feeding into the Councils Regeneration Plan for the area. These Plans seek to address some of the major challenges faced by the local community following a lack of public and private sector investment.

West Lothian Council has identified Blackburn as a priority area due to the level of deprivation. Over 50% of the residents reside in 5 of the 8 SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) areas which are within 20% of the most deprived in Scotland.

There are 5,876 people living in the area and we are experiencing higher population growth than the rest of West Lothian and Scotland generally. Proportionally, we have a higher number of children and young people and a lower number of older people aged 65+. There are a significantly high number of lone parent households (37.4% of families compared to the national average of 27.6%).

There are significantly higher numbers of benefit claimants in Blackburn including Universal Credit (all categories), disability living allowance and pension credits. Numbers of incapacity claimants is almost double the national average.

Unemployment rates across all groups is higher than the national average: youth unemployment claimants (18-24yrs) for example is 6.6% compared to the Scotland average of 4.4%. Male unemployment claimants (all age groups) is 5.6% v 3.9% nationally.

Data shows that there are higher rates of people living with long term, life limiting health conditions (24.5% v 19.6% nationally) and there are much higher rates of benefit claimants for mental health conditions. There are also much higher levels of unpaid care (especially in the 50+ hours pw bracket) being provided within family and friend groups.

Statistically, people in Blackburn (and Seafield) have far fewer qualifications compared to the national average: 37.5% of the working age population have no qualifications compared to 26.8% across Scotland. Only 11% have a qualification to degree level, compared to 26.1% nationally.

The Blackburn Place Plan alongside other “plans” provides the opportunity to address the inequality gap so evident in Blackburn by encouraging the council to positively utilise the provisions of the land use process alongside the wider socio economic plans to assist the regeneration of the town.

Blackburn Adaptation Workshop was delivered to inform the development of the Local Place Plan and hosted by Community Action Blackburn



About Community Action Blackburn - The Community Body preparing the Local Place Plan

Community Action Blackburn (CAB) are a community owned and led charitable organisation working in partnership to engage, assist and support the community ultimately leading to improved health, family life, knowledge confidence, skills, opportunities, environment, safety and a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

We adopt a bottom-up approach with one of the main foundations being sustainability, achieved through:

- Community interaction, involvement and ownership
- True partnership working
- Effective use of funding and available resources to reduce costs
- No duplication of work
- Outcomes linking into those of partners

Community Action Blackburn (CAB) are regarded as the anchor organisation in the community and work with the community and partners to deliver a range of targeted interventions. CAB aim to be the voice and advocate for the community.

The main partner/ collaborator of Community Action Blackburn is the Community of Blackburn.

Other Key Partners of CAB are :

West Lothian Youth Action project; West Lothian Council (WLC) Regeneration Team; Change in Blackburn Youth Committee; Blackburn Partnership Centre; Blackburn Community Education Association; Blackburn Community Council; West Lothian Council Anti-Poverty Service; Blackburn, Murrayfield and Our Lady of Lourdes Primary Schools; Pinewood School; St Kentigern's Academy; Bathgate Academy; Architecture and Design Scotland Climate Action Towns; West Lothian Food Bank; Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian; Blackburn United Community Football Club; Community Police; Fire and Rescue Service and West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership.

Community Action Blackburn Contact Details:

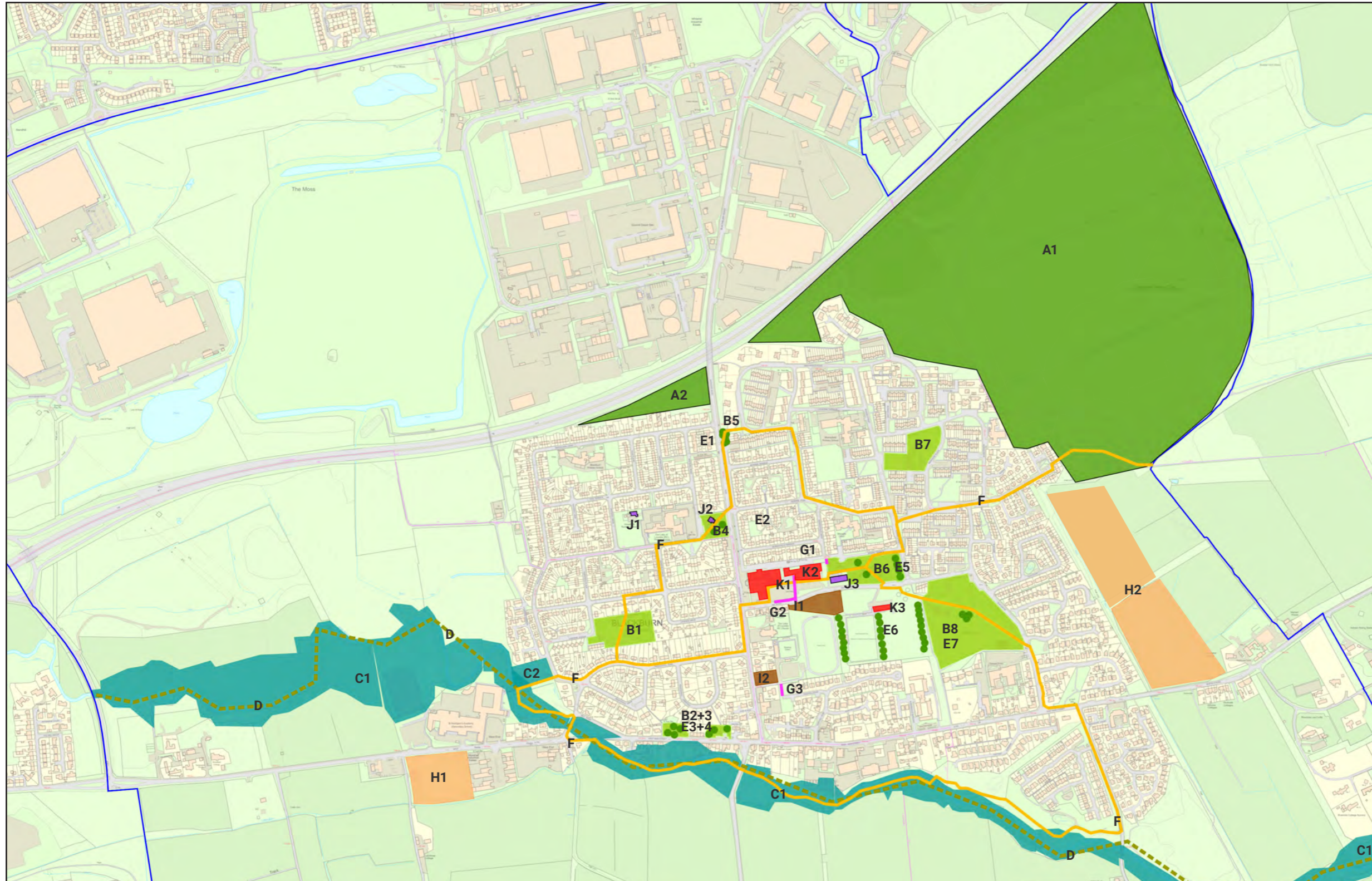
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Blackburn Local Place Plan

Map produced using Parish Online

Key

- A - Local Biodiversity Asset - maintain and protect
- B - Greenspace asset - retain for community use and improve planting and biodiversity
- C - Future Flood Risk area - do not build or develop
- D - Encourage nature networks in Blackburn - indicative locations
- E - Increase planting and improve biodiversity to greenspace, indicative locations.
- F - Develop walking routes for a Healthy and Connected Blackburn- indicative route
- G - Improve connectivity for walking, wheeling and cycling between paths and bus stops
- H - Sites identified for future affordable housebuilding subject to further consultation
- I - Areas confirmed for Housebuilding
- J - Retain and improve these vacant buildings for local services or community use
- K - Valued community asset - retain and support



Key themes and considerations

Biodiversity and Greenspace

Blackburn Place Plan supports the retention of current green spaces in Blackburn, while improving planting and biodiversity. Key areas related to this topic are noted below.

- A1** Easter Inch Moss should be protected as an asset for the community.
- A2** The Green areas adjacent to the motorway should be protected.
- B1, 4, 6, 7, and 8** Are all valued community greenspaces and should be retained for the use of the community.
- B 3 and 4** should be retained as greenspace with improved planting to support biodiversity.
- B5** the Boulder Path Garden should be planted as an edible walkway and well maintained
- E1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7** are existing community greenspaces where tree and other planting should be increased to encourage biodiversity.
- E6** There should be more biodiverse planting between the pitches at the football club.

The River Almond

Projections note that the River Almond could be prone to flooding in the future and community discussions note the following:

- C1** There should be no building, housing or development on the flood plain of the river, as noted on the plan
- C2** This site should not be built on or developed for housing due to identified flood risk
- D** The river valley should be supported as a nature network and welcoming to various species

Valued Community Assets

In conversations the community of Blackburn noted that the following are valued community assets which should be protected

- K1** The Mill Centre
- K2** The Partnership Centre
- K3** Blackburn United Football Club

Access and Getting around Blackburn

Blackburn should be easy to get around by walking, wheeling and cycling to support the health and wellbeing of people living here.

- F** There should be a series of health walk routes around Blackburn to encourage people to walk for health. Feasibility and proposals should be further explored along with locations for stopping points and themes such as nature or heritage.
- G1** The paths around the partnership centre should be safer and better connected
- G2** There should be better safe access between the Partnership centre and the bus stops on Ash Grove
- G3** Feasibility and further consultation should be carried out regarding a shortcut path between Daisyhill Road and the partnership Centre

Vacant and Derelict Buildings

The community is concerned about a number of vacant and derelict buildings in Blackburn and have the following aspirations.

- J1** The former Hopefield Nursery should be developed for community use.
- J2** Trindley Knowe the Family Centre Building should be retained for community use if possible
- J3** The former health centre building should be repaired and in-use.

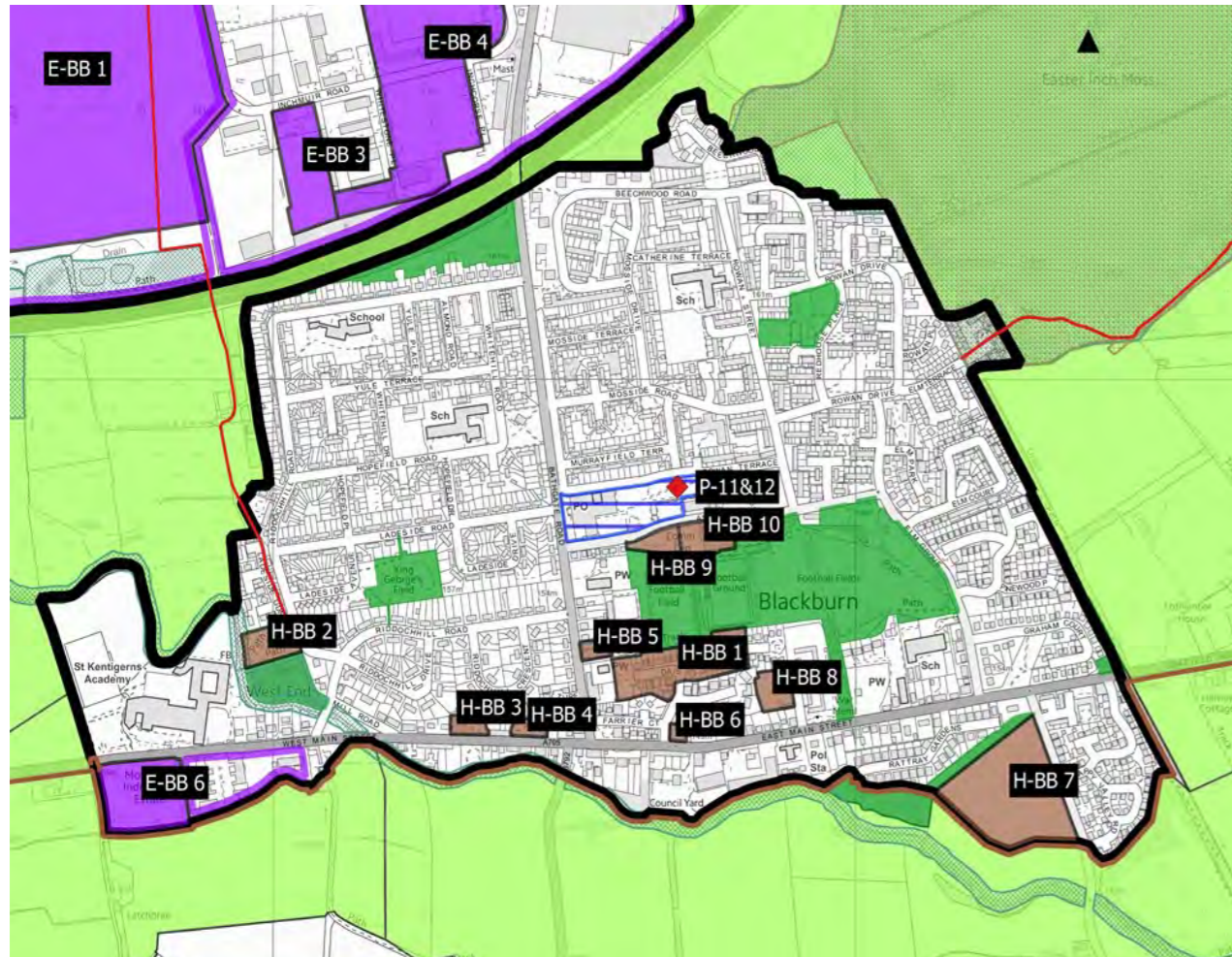
Affordable Housing Sites

Projections note that the River Almond could be prone to flooding in the future and community discussions note the following:

- H1** was the second priority for affordable housing development in the Blackburn community survey
 - H2** was the top priority site for housing development in the Blackburn community survey
 - I1 and I2** are earmarked for housing development in the LDP
- Community aspirations for housing** are that community infrastructure such as healthcare and education are considered. Any proposals for specific development should be subject to further community consultation. Mixed tenure preferred with local aspiration for affordable housing to meet local need and move towards Blackburn matching the West Lothian average tenure profile.

Considerations with regards to local and national plans

The Blackburn Local Place Plan has been developed with consideration to West Lothian Council Local Development Plan (2018) and the Scottish National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). This Place Plan should be read in conjunction with the Blackburn Future Plan.



Blackburn in West Lothian Local Development Plan (2018)

West Lothian Local Development Plan

Key proposed changes in Blackburn Local Place Plan from the current West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 are:

- E-BB6 is proposed for the development of affordable housing
- H-BB2 has been identified as prone to future flooding and should not be developed on
- HBB3 and HBB4 on the Main Street valued by

the community and should not be developed, rather maintained as greenspaces with improved planting and biodiversity.

- H-BB9, H-BB10, H-BB7, H-BB1 and H-BB8 have all been developed or in progress as housing sites since the West Lothian Local Development Plan 2018.
- The area to the East of Blackburn has been highlighted by the community as a potential area for increased affordable housing.

Considering West Lothian Local Development Plan at the Blackburn Adaptation workshop



National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

National Spatial Strategy - Strategic Connections

Blackburn is adjacent to the strategic connection between Edinburgh and Glasgow outlined in National Planning Framework 4.



National Spatial Strategy- Central National Planning Framework 4

Key NPF4 Policy areas incorporated or considered within Blackburn Local Place Plan are:

Sustainable Places:

- Tackling the climate and nature crises,
- Climate mitigations and adaptation,
- Biodiversity,
- Natural Places,
- Brownfield vacant and derelict land and empty buildings

Liveable Places:

- Design, quality and place,
- Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhoods,
- Quality homes,
- Blue and Green Infrastructure,
- Play recreation and sport,
- Flood risk and water management.

Productive Places:

- City town local and commercial centre,
- Community Wealthbuilding.

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