

### KEY UPDATES

#### Scottish unemployment falls as UK jobless number reaches new high

UK unemployment increased by 80,000 to 2.51million in the last three months to July; the largest increase in nearly two years, according to ONS. In Scotland, by contrast, unemployment fell over the same period. Youth unemployment has risen across the UK to levels not experienced for more than a decade. Commenting on the UK's weak economic recovery, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) expects growth in the UK to increase by just 0.1% in each of the coming quarters.

- The number of JSA jobless in West Lothian for August is 4,713. This is an increase of 23 on the previous month.
- West Lothian's unemployment rate of 4.1% is below the Scottish (4.3%) rate, but above the Great Britain (3.9%) rate. West Lothian's unemployment rate ranks 13th highest out of all Scottish local authority areas.
- Youth unemployment (18-24 year olds) in West Lothian for August is 1,550. This is a rise of 25 on last month.
- There were 967 notified jobcentre vacancies in August - a net decrease of 362 from July 2011.
- The ratio of jobseekers to jobcentre vacancies stands at 5 jobseekers for every vacancy advertised in West Lothian Jobcentres. In comparison, Scotland's ratio is 6.3:1, Great Britain is 4.7:1 with Inverclyde having the highest ratio of 21.1:1 (21 jobseekers for every vacancy) of claimants to vacancies of Scottish local authorities.

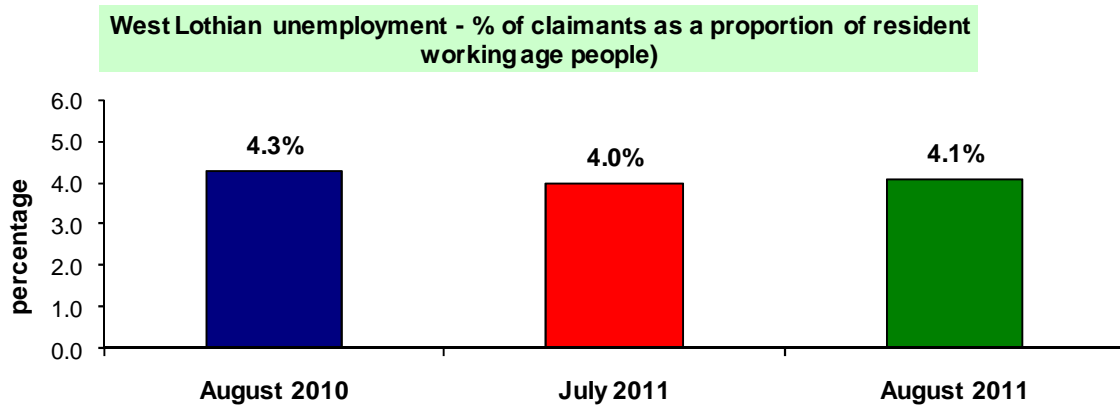
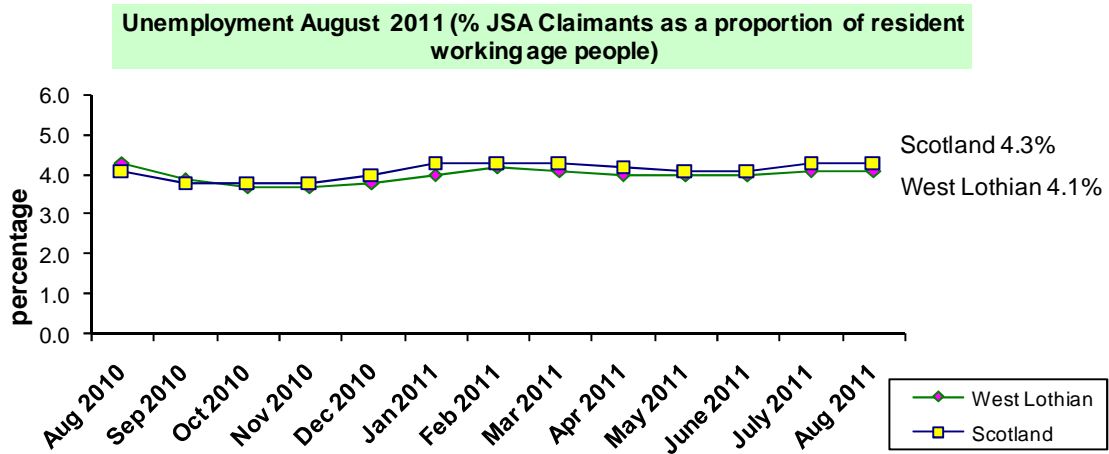
## Jobs and Investment

Here are some positive jobs, investment and business news items for the West Lothian area:

- Eight hundred **new council houses** are being built in West Lothian. West Lothian Council is backing the development with almost £63 million and the Scottish Government has also invested £9.5 million. The development will support 55 construction related jobs, including ten apprenticeships and work experience placements for local unemployed people.
- An £860,000 project to revamp **Bathgate's town centre** has been completed. The investment set out to enhance the public realm and event space in the town centre, whilst also improving accessibility for shoppers and visitors.
- **Superdry**, the vintage Americana fashion retailer, are opening a new store in The Centre, Livingston. The opening will mean that 31 of the 35 new retail units created in The Elements extension are now occupied.
- Craig Galloway and Scott Walker, founders of Caddy Hire, were named West Lothian's top young entrepreneurs at the regional finals of the 2011 Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust (PSYBT) '**Young Entrepreneur of the Year**' Awards.
- Bathgate-based construction company **Dunne Group** defied tough sector conditions with a return to the black in its last financial year, benefiting from a major building contract for the new Southern General Hospital in Glasgow.
- **Oatridge College** in West Lothian is set to slash its energy demands from the National Grid by 60% and save 20 tonnes of carbon being pumped into the atmosphere every year, by commissioning one of Scotland's largest solar power projects.
- The **Cooperative** is set to open four new Scottish food stores before the end of the year including one in Livingston.

# Unemployment

Unemployment in West Lothian stands at 4.1% (% is a proportion of resident working age people) in August 2011. The latest JSA claimant count figure shows an increase of 23 on the previous month and now stands at 4,713. West Lothian's unemployment rate of 4.1% is lower than the Scottish rate of 4.3% although higher than the Great Britain rate of 3.9%.



Source: ONS claimant count rates

Unemployment - total JSA claimants (August 2011)			
	Males	Females	Total
<b>West Lothian (numbers)</b>	3,138	1,575	4,713
<b>West Lothian (%)</b>	5.6%	2.7%	4.1%
<b>Scotland (%)</b>	2.8%	6.0%	4.3%
<b>Great Britain (%)</b>	2.6%	5.1%	3.9%

Source: ONS claimant count with rates and proportions  
 Note: % is a proportion of resident working age people

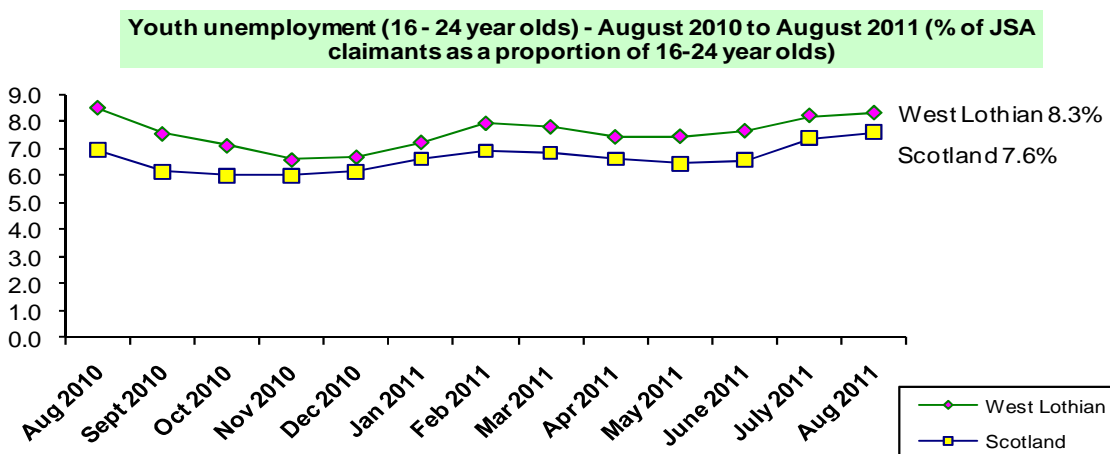
Included on page 8 is a breakdown of unemployment by local area within West Lothian based on the former 32 Scottish local authority wards. This shows that those wards with the highest rate of unemployment are Craigshill (9.1%), Polkemmet (7.8%) and Armadale Central (7.5%). Those with the lowest are Kingsfield (1.3%), Murieston (1.7%) and Kirkton (1.9%). In general, unemployment is higher in the southwest of West Lothian and lower in Linlithgow and the southeast of the area.

The latest unemployment data for the UK based on the preferred government measure, is for the three months to end of July. The number of people unemployed increased by 80,000 to 2.51 million (a rate of 7.9%). This is the largest increase in nearly two years, according to ONS. The total number of people claiming JSA rose by 20,300 in August to 1.58 million.

**N.B.** JSA based unemployment figures do not provide the full picture. The headline JSA figure, however, does help to indicate the latest trend or change at a national or local level and the effects of economic down turn on unemployment. The Government's favoured method of measuring unemployment - the ILO method - does not readily translate into up to date local area estimates.

## YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Youth unemployment - 16 to 24 year olds includes the MC,MC group and it is therefore important that it is tracked. The following graph shows youth unemployment as a percentage of all 16 to 24 year olds, comparing West Lothian with Scotland. West Lothian has a higher proportion (8.3%) for August than Scotland (7.6%) of youth unemployment. Although both have followed a parallel trend in the last two years.



Source: ONS claimant count

**N.B.** Between 400 and 500, 16 to 17 year olds were registered unemployed with Skills Development Scotland most of whom will not be claiming JSA. Therefore, it is estimated that the total level of unemployment for 16 to 24 year olds is about 2,000.

## Business Support

The volume of local business start-ups gives an instant insight into the state of West Lothian's economy.

Business Gateway services in West Lothian are delivered by West Lothian Council's Economic Development service as part of the Lothian consortium, a public private partnership that works with businesses across Edinburgh and the Lothians. The team promotes entrepreneurship, supports the start up of new businesses and help businesses to grow whilst responding to the additional pressures placed on businesses by the economic downturn. The team has continued to pro-actively target companies in sectors judged to be most at risk to understand their needs.

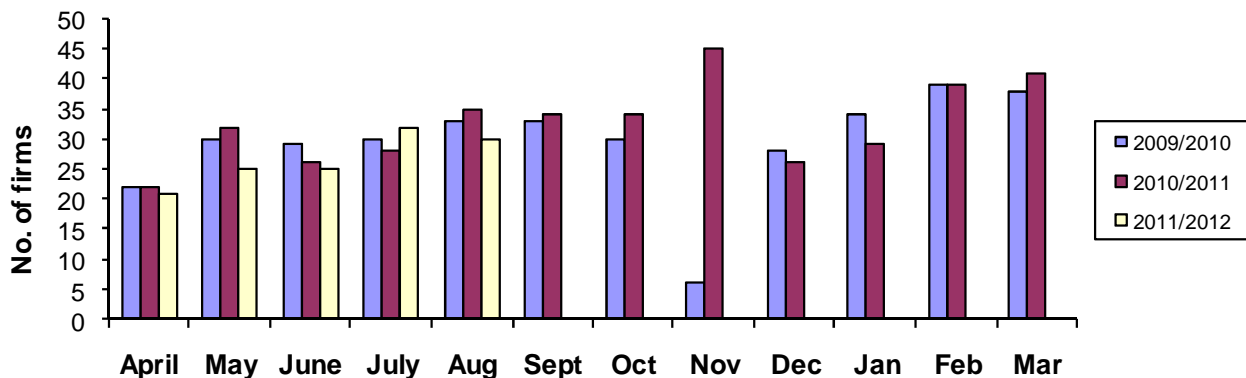
Business Gateway Activity	Annual Target	Cumulative Target	Cumulative Actual	Monthly Target	August 2011 Actual
Number of Starts	280	115	133	23	29
Starts by Women	123	50	64	10	17
Starts by Young People	71	30	21	6	2
Number of SMEs supported	500	210	250	42	33

Source: West Lothian Council, August 2011

### Business Gateway Support

Business start-ups over the summer have been strong and are now well above target for the year. In total 250 growth businesses have been supported so far this financial year, of which 84 have received in-depth consultancy support in the areas including expansion, funding, market diversification, and e-commerce.

#### Business Gateway service new firm starts 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12



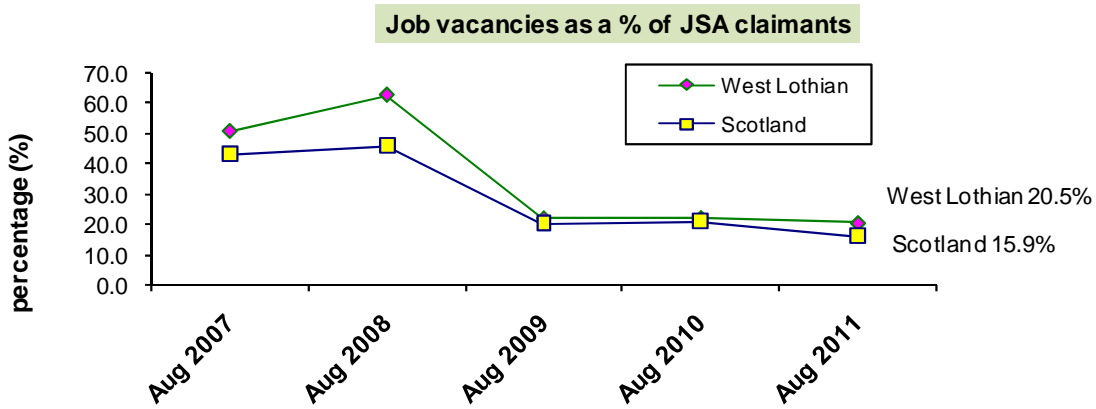
Source: West Lothian Council, August 2011

Local firms have responded enthusiastically to the Supplier Development Programme which the council joined earlier this year. Over 100 businesses have now signed up for the Programme, which aims to open up new opportunities and increase local companies' chances of winning new business. More details can be found at [www.sdpscotland.co.uk](http://www.sdpscotland.co.uk).

Public Contracts Scotland allows companies access to over 250 contracting authorities across Scotland ranging from local authorities and housing agencies to the NHS, universities and government departments. The recently announced £1.5BN Forth Replacement Crossing will also be using Public Contracts Scotland to tender all sub contracting opportunities. Last year over 8000 opportunities were advertised across the Scottish Public Sector. For more information visit [www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk](http://www.publiccontractsscotland.gov.uk).

# Job Vacancies

The number and type of Jobcentre Plus vacancies also provide a snapshot of the local labour market. It is estimated that Jobcentre Plus vacancies account for about a third of all available employment opportunities. In West Lothian the most common type of vacancies tend to reflect the main employment sectors e.g. business services, retail and manufacturing.



Source: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis

The graph above compares the rate of job vacancies expressed as a percentage of the number of JSA claimants for both West Lothian and Scotland. West Lothian's rate for August 2011 stands at 20.5% and Scotland's at 15.9%. This means there are currently 5 jobseekers for every vacancy advertised in West Lothian jobcentres.

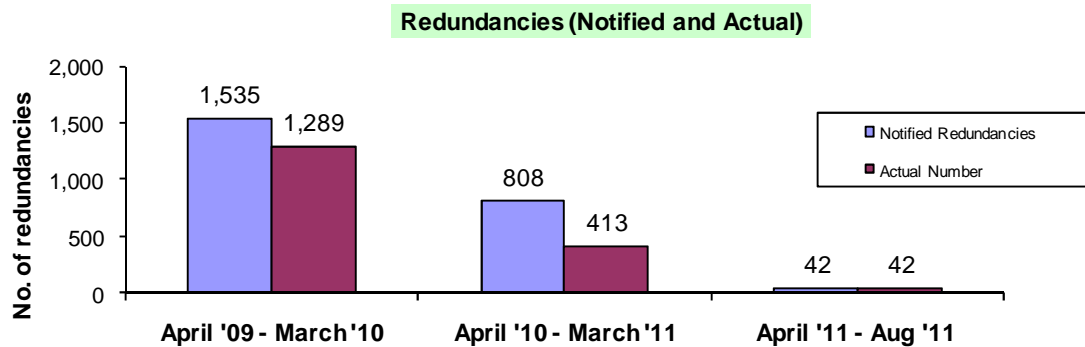
The actual number of West Lothian job vacancies for this August is 967. This is a net decrease of 362 vacancies on the month of July — there were 1,329 vacancies in July 2011.



Source: Jobcentre Plus vacancies

## Redundancies

Redundancies have fallen in the past financial year (2010/2011). Nevertheless, this provides only a partial picture of what is happening in the economy. In the first five months of the financial year 2011/12, there have been 42 redundancies reported.



Source: Skills Development Scotland

**N.B.** Notified redundancy figures are gathered from firms legally obliged to notify BERR (Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform) when proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees as redundant and from those firms who voluntarily notify redundancies of less than 20 employees.

## Shop Occupancies

To provide a better perspective of change in the town centres, we intend to include in this part of the monitoring report a mix of indicators on high street activity, which will cover business sectors, activities and employment as well as shop occupancy levels. The information will be presented on a quarterly basis.

The quarterly table on shop occupancies below shows the number of shop units occupied (excluding charity shops) as a percentage of total stock for each of West Lothian's six town centres. The percentage of charity shop units in each town is shown separately. A comparison is made between the latest quarter and the same quarter from the previous year.

<b>Shop unit occupancy comparing Quarter 3 — 2011 and Quarter 3 — 2010 - expressed as percentage of total town centre shop units</b>				
Town Centre	Quarter 3 — 2011 (%)		Quarter 3 — 2010 (%)	
	Overall occupancy	Charity shops	Overall occupancy	Charity shops
Armadale	94.1	0.0	94.6	0.0
Bathgate	93.2	3.2	91.6	3.3
Broxburn	88.2	0.6	92.0	0.6
Linlithgow	95.3	1.4	97.8	2.0
Whitburn	82.0	1.7	84.9	1.7
Almondvale	90.3	0.7	90.3	0.6

Source: West Lothian Council, July 2011

There was a slight fall in shop occupancies this quarter in four of the towncentres — with Broxburn experiencing the largest decrease (3.8%) — in overall shop occupancy in relation to this time last year. Overall occupancy remained the same in Almondvale over the same period with Bathgate increasing its occupancy by 1.6%.

## Comparator Indicators

### MONTHLY COMPARATOR INDICATORS

A number of monthly key indicators have been chosen to compare with a number of benchmark local authorities. Both national areas of Scotland and Great Britain have also been included to set comparisons in context. The following table includes indicators on unemployment, youth unemployment and job vacancies.

	JSA Claimants as a % of working age residents (1)	% of 16 to 24s claiming JSA (2)	Ratio* of jobseekers to job vacancies (3)
Clackmannanshire	5.8%	11.4%	10.3:1
Edinburgh, City of	3.3%	4.6%	3.3:1
Falkirk	4.7%	8.7%	7.7:1
Fife	5.0%	8.7%	7.0:1
Midlothian	4.0%	8.1%	5.5:1
North Lanarkshire	5.8%	11.0%	8.9:1
South Lanarkshire	4.6%	9.1%	9.9:1
West Lothian	4.1%	8.3%	4.9:1
Scotland	4.3%	7.6%	6.2:1
Great Britain	3.9%	6.5%	4.6:1

Sources:

(1) ONS claimant count

(2) ONS claimant count/ONS mid-year (2010) population estimates

(3) ONS claimant count/Jobcentre Plus vacancies

\* for example, there are about five (4.9:1) jobseekers for every vacancy advertised in West Lothian jobcentres.

### ANNUAL COMPARATOR INDICATORS

Similarly, a number of annual indicators have been chosen to compare with the same local authorities and Scotland and Great Britain. The following tables include indicators on population, earnings and VAT registered firms.

	Population (2010)		Earnings (2010)	
	Number	% change on previous year	Gross weekly pay (£)	% change on previous year
Clackmannanshire	50,630	0.2	461.0	7.9
Edinburgh, City of	486,120	1.8	524.8	1.3
Falkirk	153,280	0.5	478.0	3.3
Fife	365,020	0.4	479.1	3.0
Midlothian	81,140	0.4	481.9	13.1
North Lanarkshire	326,360	0.0	448.4	4.3
South Lanarkshire	311,880	0.3	492.4	-1.2
West Lothian	172,080	0.6	459.0	8.1
Scotland	5,222,100	0.5	486.9	3.1

Sources:

ONS Claimant Count/ONS mid year (2010) population estimates

ONS annual survey of hours and earnings—resident analysis (2010)

	VAT registered firms		
	Stock at end of year (2007)	% change on previous year	Per 10,000 of population
Clackmannanshire	945	5.6	185
Edinburgh, City of	13,760	4.1	288
Falkirk	2,950	6.7	194
Fife	7,500	3.1	207
Midlothian	1,820	2.8	225
North Lanarkshire	5,710	6.0	175
South Lanarkshire	7,265	4.8	234
West Lothian	3,630	7.1	212
Scotland	141,895	3.6	273
Great Britain	1,964,920	3.0	318

Sources: BERR - VAT registrations/deregistrations by industry/ONS mid year (2010) population estimates

## WARD UNEMPLOYMENT (August 2011)

The following table is a breakdown of unemployment by ward, and the area of West Lothian covered by each ward, and based on the old 32 ward scheme (up to date data for the current Multi-member Wards is not yet published by DWP).

WARD AREA	Area covered by ward	Male JSA claimants	Female JSA claimants	Total JSA claimants	
		number	number	number	rate
Craigshill	Livingston	198	91	289	9.1
Polkemmet	Whitburn	156	77	233	7.8
Armadale Central	Armadale	142	70	212	7.5
Durhamtoun	Bathgate	120	69	189	7.5
Boghall	Bathgate	116	62	178	6.6
Blackburn	Blackburn	148	76	224	6.5
Croftmalloch	Whitburn	135	60	195	6.1
Ladywell	Livingston	134	64	198	5.9
Newland	Bathgate	106	58	164	5.8
Fauldhouse	Fauldhouse, Breich	123	60	183	5.4
Dedridge	Livingston	132	58	190	5.3
Almond	Whitburn, East Whitburn	93	59	152	5.0
Armadale West	Armadale and Blackridge	110	51	161	4.8
Deans	Livingston	105	69	174	4.8
Breich Valley	Stoneyburn, Addiewell and Longridge	125	38	163	4.6
Howden	Livingston	116	53	169	4.5
Limefield	West Calder	79	50	129	4.2
Houstoun	Uphall, Pumpherston	88	41	129	4.1
Strathbrock	Broxburn	88	37	125	4.1
Knightsridge	Livingston	89	68	157	4.0
Middleton	Broxburn	79	46	125	4.0
Easton	Bathgate/Armadale	76	40	116	3.8
Oatridge	Winchburgh and surrounding area	86	31	117	3.7
Carmondean	Livingston	81	40	121	3.2
Linhouse	Kirknewton, Wilkieston	65	39	104	3.1
East Calder	East Calder	54	30	84	2.5
St Michael's	Linlithgow	57	18	75	2.5
Calderwood	Mid Calder	57	26	83	2.4
Preston	Linlithgow	64	30	94	2.4
Kirkton	Livingston	42	26	68	1.9
Murieston	Livingston	41	21	62	1.7
Kingsfield	Linlithgow, Philipstoun	33	17	50	1.3
<b>West Lothian</b>		<b>3,138</b>	<b>1,575</b>	<b>4,713</b>	<b>4.5</b>

Source: ONS claimant count - September 2011

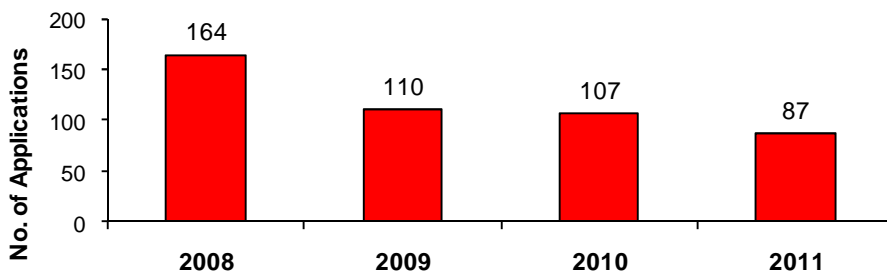
# Planning Applications

Planning applications provide another measure of the health of the local economy. The numbers of planning applications received indicate levels of business and consumer confidence, economic growth, development investment and development change.

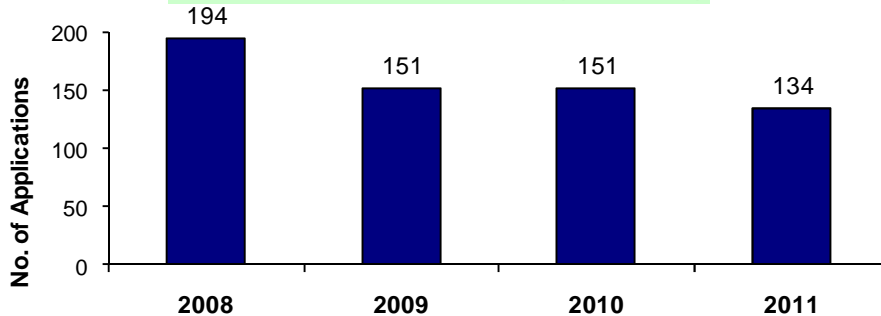
The following charts split planning applications into two categories: householder and all other planning applications. Householder applications include house extensions, conservatories and garages. All other application types include listed building applications, advertisement consent, small-scale individual developments and applications by business and industry.

Because there is seasonal variance in development applications, the charts below focus on change over the period April to June for the last three years. Household applications have fallen since 2008, although these appear to be leveling off in the last year.

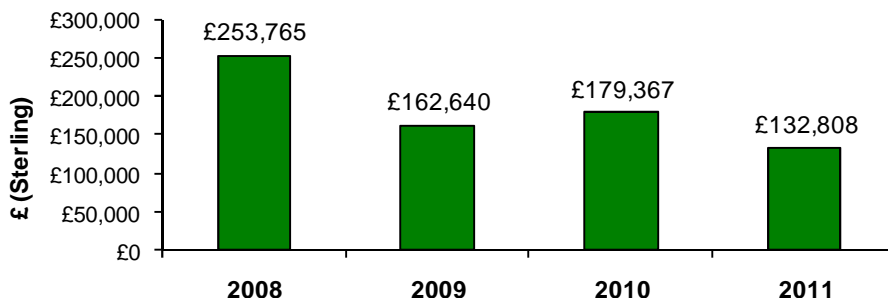
**Householder Planning Applications - Apr - Jun (2008 - 2011)**



**All other Applications - Apr - Jun (2008 - 2011)**



**Planning Applications fees (total) - Apr to Jun (2008 - 2011)**



Source: West Lothian Council, June 2011

## House Completions

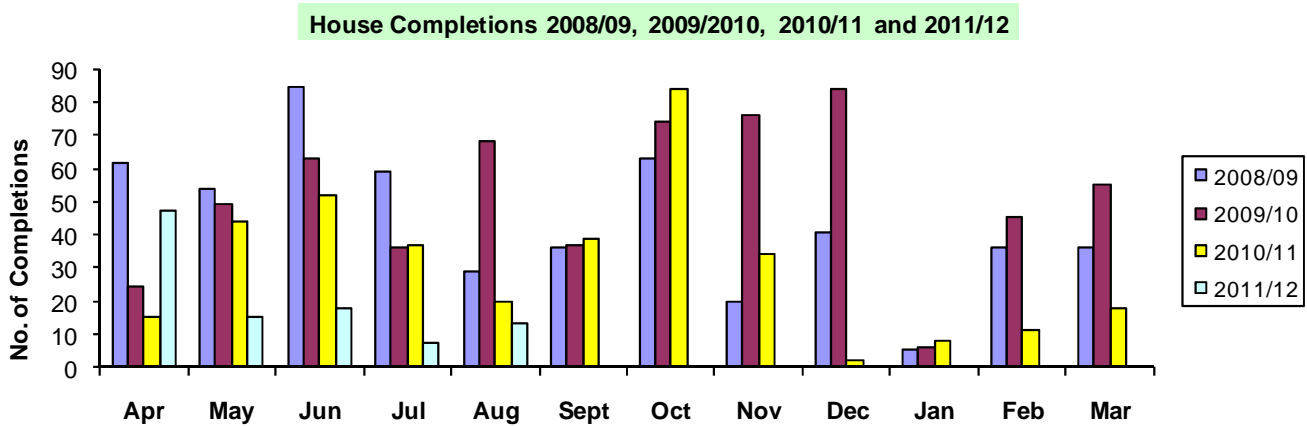
The number of house completions in the local economy is a useful barometer for measuring the house building industry's sensitivity to changing economic conditions.

The average monthly completions during the last three financial years has been as follows:

- 2008/09 - 43
- 2009/10 - 51
- 2010/11 - 25

The number of house completions in August was 13.

In the first 8 months of the year, 132 houses have been built compared with 274 for the same period last year.



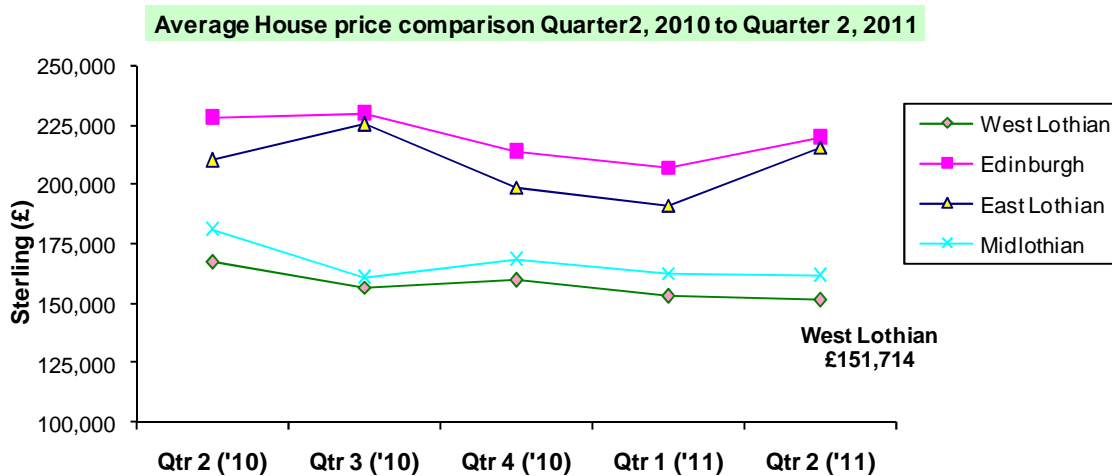
Source: West Lothian Council, September 2011

# House Prices

House prices and the housing market are also seen as a barometer to the state of the economy. Housing is the biggest component of most household's wealth. Therefore it has a big impact on the economy. For example, a fall in house prices will reduce consumer confidence. This leads to lower levels of spending; people will be more reluctant to undertake risky investments and borrowing.

The latest figures reveal a year-on-year decline in the average house price in the three months to June for West Lothian and Midlothian. In Midlothian a 10.8% fall took the average house price to £161,350, whilst in West Lothian a drop of 9.5% brought the average selling price down to £151,714. East Lothian has somewhat bucked the trend having recorded an annual rise in each of the last two years. Its current average house price is £215,847. In Edinburgh the average house price in the three months to June was £219,530.

Analysts say the number of people looking to sell continues to outstrip the number of active buyers and even though there has been a slight increase in mortgage availability recently, market conditions continue to favour the buyer.



Edinburgh Solicitors Property Centre (ESPC), July 2011

You can find economic information about West Lothian at any time on West Lothian Council's business website at [www.westlothian.com/Home/wl\\_economy/facts\\_figures/](http://www.westlothian.com/Home/wl_economy/facts_figures/). If you need help with interpreting this data, or require additional statistics or economic information, please contact Kenny Wheeler, Economic Development Officer with West Lothian Council, on 01506-777945 or at [kenny.wheeler@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:kenny.wheeler@westlothian.gov.uk)

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