

Lothian Lolly to boost the local economy

✘ Ken O'Neill, Lothians' newest independent candidate, has called for the creation of local currency to boost the Lothian's economy. Local currencies help raise awareness of the area's economy and how direct action can help it. Since local currencies are only accepted within the community, their use encourages the purchase of locally-produced and locally-available goods and services. This means that the community gains the benefit of the trade and less money goes to other parts of the country or the world.

Ken O'Neill said

Over recent years, everybody has noticed the closure of local shops as the chains and supermarkets force small businesses out of the market. By introducing a local currency, which I call the Lothian Lolly, we can help revitalise areas again, reinvigorating a sense of togetherness and feeling of pride in our community. At the same time we will help local business grow and compete in at times a cut-throat market. As they grow, so will the local economy.

The Lothian Lolly, one of the main points in my manifesto, would act as a local currency, for use at local shops. This will increase local trade and revive the area. The more traders join, the more effective the scheme will be. At the same time, we will reduce our carbon footprint by shopping locally and using local produce, with local shops sourcing goods and services locally.

In South London the Brixton Pound has boosted the local economy and built a mutual support system amongst independent businesses. They've achieved this in under two years, with the local council endorsing it and the New Economics

Foundation helping its development. Only recently the London Mutual Credit Union has become a Brixton Pound bank.

The Lothian Lolly would cover a much greater area, supporting the region's businesses and encourage local trade and production. This complementary currency, working alongside, but not replacing, pounds sterling, will help strengthen our community while creating a more diverse and resilient economy. Not only that, but we will reduce how far our food travels, how far we travel to shop and help our environment as well. A local currency is also a way to show commitment to each other within the community, a way to signal that this is about 'us', not just about 'me.' The stronger the community grows, the better it reacts in times of recession.

If elected, I will work with the four local authorities and local traders associations to make the Lothian Lolly a reality so we can lick our economy into shape.