

# **Depute leader of council vows to continue work for communities**

**It was a memorable moment in a week full of such moments for West Lothian's councillor turned MP.**

After taking the oath of allegiance in the House of Commons Kirsteen Sullivan has vowed to take her work in the community to her new job in Westminster's chamber.

Pushing Labour's message for change, she said: "People have been struggling for far too long."

Ms Sullivan took the Bathgate and Linlithgow Constituency for Labour with 19,744 votes in a 28% swing from the SNP's Martyn Day.

Ms Sullivan, first elected to West Lothian Council in 2017, won the Bathgate and Linlithgow constituency in this month's General Election as a Labour and Cooperative party candidate.

Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service at the end of a hectic first week as an MP, Ms Sullivan said: "Thank you to everyone who supported me throughout the campaign and who gave me their vote on 4 July.

"To those who voted another way or who stayed at home, please know that I am here to serve everyone, regardless of where they placed their X on the ballot paper. I will work tirelessly every day to repay the trust placed in me.

"I remain a councillor representing Whitburn & Blackburn and

those duties will continue for the time being, however I will step down in due course.”

Ms Sullivan stood as a candidate in the 2021 Scottish election in Linlithgow before retaining her council seat in Whitburn in the 2022 council elections.

She serves as deputy Labour group leader and depute Council leader, and chairs the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth-Building Policy Development and scrutiny panel as well as the Community Planning Partnership Board.

She described her priorities having been elected to parliament: “I am greatly honoured to have been elected as the MP for my home constituency of Bathgate and Linlithgow.

“I fully appreciate that not many people have the privilege to serve their local communities in this way and I will do my utmost to ensure local people have the representation they deserve in Westminster.

“I have spoken to thousands of people since the turn of the year and the same concerns were raised time and again – the NHS, with too many struggling to access the treatment they need; the cost-of-living crisis; cuts to local services; job security, and so on. People have been struggling on a number of fronts for far too long.”

Ms Sullivan added: “As well as supporting constituents with their individual needs and enquiries, I will work to identify opportunities for greater investment in local infrastructure to deliver a train station for Winchburgh and improve our road networks, including the long-awaited upgrade to the Avon Gorge and an all-ways junction at Burghmuir.

“As a Labour & Co-operative MP, I will work with local organisations to deliver community energy projects, reducing bills and moving to more sustainable energy sources.”

Describing her experience as a councillor in West Lothian Ms Sullivan said: "What I'm most proud of is the relationships I've built up with people in community groups and local third sector organisations.

"I think I've shown that partnership working at all levels is invaluable, especially in times of hardship and in respect of policies being delivered that reflect the needs of local residents and organisations.

"In terms of delivery, as a Labour & Co-operative Councillor I'm proud to have initiated the establishment of the West Lothian Food Network, particularly as it became an invaluable way to ensure those in need could access food during lockdown."

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter