

# Average salary in West Lothian has risen by £5,000 over last decade

The average salary in West Lothian has risen by more than £5000 over the last decade, taking them above the national average.

Councillors heard this week that the average salary in the county had risen to £31,000.

Details came as the business development team revealed that £500,000 of Westminster funding will be pumped into skills development and job start up programmes.

In a report to the Economy, Community Empowerment and Wealth Building Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, Jim Henderson, the council's Business Development Manager said: "In the past decade, average wage levels have risen in West Lothian.

"Where previously they lagged the Scotland average, they have now increased by more than £5,000 pa to over £31,000 pa – now exceeding that average. This reflects a number of factors including increased competition for skills.

Mr Henderson told councillors: "Building on that, we are supporting firms to create new roles which are career-focused. Grants of £10,000 per new job are available for roles offering at least £35,000 starting salary."

Key employment sectors include life sciences, technology, engineering and advanced manufacturing.

Mr Henderson said: “We have also used medium-term funding from the UK Government called “Shared Prosperity Fund” (SPF). We have deployed this to encourage local firms to invest in both capital and revenue projects. In 2025-26, we will provide over £540,000 of grant support to enable a range of activities including higher-value start-ups, access to Expert Help and support low-carbon projects.

The PDSP heard that the council’s specific Invest in West Lothian website launched last year had grown a significant customer base. The site has evolved to also offer residents business information as well – one of the most visited parts of the site is the “Job Vacancies” section.

Local firms can post their current recruitment opportunities and residents can see all the current opportunities across all business sectors.

The Council’s Business Gateway start-up team help more than 300 new businesses to start each year. These new starts add more than £15 Million to the West Lothian economy every year.

Mr Henderson told the meeting: “Local firms engage with our Growth Advisers on a range of themes including, but not limited to, larger premises, marketing, innovation, staff development, strategy, cyber resilience, procurement, low carbon and international trade. This work involves detailed and commercially-sensitive information – business engagement reflects the high degree of trust built by the team.

“Colleagues also support Third Sector organisations and groups to address issues and/or opportunities. More than 450 local businesses are supported every year. They account for more than 40% or £2.1 Billion of the gross value add (GVA) of the local economy.”

Councillor Sally Pattle asked whether the team could help provide apprenticeship training for nursery education staff.

Mr Henderson said he would be happy to speak to nursery providers about sourcing training.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter