

Storm Eowyn clear up work continues

Work is still being done to clear up the damage caused by Storm Eowyn in the worst hit area of West Lothian, almost four months after the devastating weather event.

West Lothian Council received more than 1,300 calls about storm damaged trees from January to the end of March this year.

And more than 300 calls – the highest in the county – came from southern Livingston after Storm Eowyn swept through.

David Lees, Cleaner communities' manager, gave an update four months after the storm and said: "All areas are now open but there's still work to be carried out to complete the tidy up."

Contractors brought in to help with Ash Dieback cutting had spent most of February and March diverted to help the arbor teams clear fallen and dangerous trees.

Councillors on the Livingston South Local Area Committee heard in a report from Mr Lees: "The two areas which were the most affected where the highest reports were submitted were Livingston North 272 and Livingston South 303, with East Livingston and East Calder 172. This was based on enquiries between 24 January and 31 March.

"Following Storm Eowyn which affected West Lothian on 24 January 2025 there were 1,354 enquiries raised regarding tree damage, either uprooted trees or windblown trees with the

potential to fall up to 31 March.”

Of those calls 370 (27%) of these enquiries were raised within the first 24 hours.

Mr Lees added: “To effectively manage the volume of reports the service triaged each enquiry and allocated a red, amber or green status so the Arbor Team could deal with emergencies first which included blocked roads, damage to property, blocked footpaths and danger to life and limb.”

Safety patrols were carried out at Linhouse and Murieston by the Ranger Service in the days following with both fallen and dangerous trees identified and recorded and access managed through signage and barriers.

Councillor Maria MacAulay asked: “ I know the trees have been made safe, but does that mean that all the potentially damaged trees have been dealt with?”

Mr Lees replied: “At the moment we have been dealing with the trees that have come down, blocked paths and cause problems but we will be going out to all areas to see if there are trees that cause concern that they need to deal with.”

The report to the committee added: “Our country parks were also badly affected and the decision was taken to close the parks while assessment of the damage was undertaken by the Rangers. Areas were sealed off to the public due to health and safety risks and work is still being completed on our woodlands to remove any damaged trees.”

Ash Dieback removal at Howden West Road, near St John’s Hospital, was postponed to divert resources on to storm works. This work started at the end of April.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter