

Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee

Due to Scottish Government Guidance relating to Covid-19, the meeting will be held remotely



Wednesday, 26th May, 2021 - 10.00 a.m.

AGENDA

Page Nos.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct, members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTE** – Minute of the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee meeting of 18th March 2021. 3 – 7
4. **JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK - ADDITIONAL FUNDING** – Report by the Executive Director, Education and Children’s Services. 8 – 32
5. **FOOD WELFARE AND SUPPORT** – Report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods. 33 – 44
6. **PROGRESS UPDATE ON FIFE GYPSY TRAVELLER SITES** – Report by the Head of Housing Services. 45 – 50
7. **GARDEN FENCING POLICY** – Report by the Head of Housing Services 51 – 58
8. **DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY - TRANSFER OF FORMER BLACKLAW PRIMARY SCHOOL SITE, BLACKLAW ROAD, DUNFERMLINE** – Joint Report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment. 59 – 65
9. **COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** 66 – 68
10. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME - 115 NEW UNITS, OVER 4 DEVELOPMENTS (PUBLIC REPORT)** – Joint Report by the Head of Housing Services, the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Procurement Service Manager.
 - (a) 8 New Houses - High Street, Methil 69 – 71
 - (b) 34 New Houses – West Wood Park, Glenrothes 72 – 74
 - (c) 34 New Houses – Boreland Road, Dysart 75 – 78
 - (d) 39 New Houses – High Street, Kirkcaldy 79 – 82

ITEM/

ITEM LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

The Committee is asked to resolve, under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

- 11. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME - 115 NEW UNITS, OVER 4 DEVELOPMENTS (PRIVATE REPORT)** – Joint Report by the Head of Housing Services, the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Procurement Service Manager
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|-----|--|-----------|
| (a) | 8 New Houses - High Street, Methil | 83 – 90 |
| (b) | 34 New Houses – West Wood Park, Glenrothes | 91 – 99 |
| (c) | 34 New Houses – Boreland Road, Dysart | 100 – 108 |
| (d) | 39 New Houses – High Street, Kirkcaldy | 109 – 117 |

Members are reminded that should they have queries on the detail of a report they should, where possible, contact the report authors in advance of the meeting to seek clarification.

Morag Ferguson
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Finance and Corporate Services

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19th May, 2021

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2021 CHSC 100

THE FIFE COUNCIL - COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING

18th March, 2021

10.00 a.m. – 11.50 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Judy Hamilton (Convener), Lesley Backhouse, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Neil Crooks, Linda Erskine, Fiona Grant, Helen Law, Donald Lothian, Alice McGarry, Graham Ritchie, David J Ross and Darren Watt.

ATTENDING: Michael Enston, Executive Director – Communities; Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Sharon Douglas, Community Investment Team Manager, Communities and Neighbourhoods; Mark Mccall, Service Manager (Safer Communities), Paul Short, Service Manager - Housing, Health and Social Care and Older Persons and Gavin Smith, Service Manager – Housing Access and Homelessness, Housing Services; Sheila Noble, Co-ordinator (Fife Violence Against Women Partnership), Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services and Wendy MacGregor, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Heather Bett, Clinical Services Manager, NHS Fife and Bill Campbell, Fife Federation of Tenants and Residents Association.

URGENT ITEM - CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

Prior to the start of the business of the Sub-Committee, the Convener advised that there had been a change to the membership of the Sub-Committee - Councillor John Beare had replaced Councillor Kate Stewart.

On behalf of the Sub-Committee, the Convener welcomed Councillor John Beare to the meeting and thanked Councillor Kate Stewart for her contribution during her time as a member on this Sub-Committee.

205. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Lesley Backhouse, John Beare, Judy Hamilton, Donald Lothian, David J Ross and Darren Watt declared an interest in Para. 207 – ‘Support for Voluntary Organisations’ - as they were appointed as representatives of Fife Council to the following organisations-

- Councillor Backhouse – member of Toll Centre, Burntisland and Greener Kirkcaldy;
- Councillor Beare –Markinch Town Hall Management Committee and Milton of Balgonie Hall Management Committee;
- Councillor Hamilton - Fife Society for the Blind (now known as Seescape), Hayfield Community Centre, YMCA, Kirkcaldy, Linktown Action Centre, Linton Lane Centre, Raeburn Community Centre and Greener Kirkcaldy;
- Councillor/

2021 CHSC 101

- Councillor Lothian - Auchtermuchty Community Centre Management Committee, Ladybank Youth Club Management Committee and Luthrie Village Hall Management Committee;
- Councillor Ross - Dunfermline and West Fife Sports Council; and
- Councillor Watt - Dunfermline and West Fife Sports Council.

Councillor Judy Hamilton also declared an interest in Para. 208 – ‘Fife Violence Against Women Partnership’ - as she was a representative of Fife Council on the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership.

206. MINUTE

The Sub-Committee considered the minute of the meeting of the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee of 21st January, 2021.

Decision

The Sub-Committee agreed to approve the minute.

207. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Head of Housing, presenting recommendations for the level of support to voluntary organisations within Communities Directorate for the period 2021-2024.

Decision

The Sub-Committee approved the level of funding to voluntary organisations as detailed in Appendices 1-3 of the report.

Councillor Fiona Grant left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

208. FIFE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report by the Interim Senior Manager (Children Services, Sexual Health BBV and Rheumatology) and the Chair of Fife Violence Against Women Partnership, updating members on the progress of the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP). FVAWP was responsible for the local delivery of ‘*Equally Safe - Scotland’s Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls*’. The FVAWP annual report 2019-20 directly linked to the national priorities and detailed local partnership activity across a wide range of? statutory and third sectors demonstrating how partners worked together.

The report highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on those with lived experience of gender-based violence. Covid-19 restrictions had significantly impacted on women and children living with domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women, creating an environment whereby risks were heightened. Risks associated with controlling, coercive and abusive behaviour had increased in lockdown both in terms of opportunity to abuse and access to support.

‘Coronavirus/

2021 CHSC 102

'Coronavirus Supplementary Violence Against Women Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners (September 2020)' was published to support local areas to redress the increased risks, including revision to the FVAWP action plan.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:

- (1) acknowledged the importance and value of the work undertaken by the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP);
- (2) agreed to support the continued efforts of Fife Violence Against Women Partnership in response to Covid-19 and the revised Action plan to 2022; and
- (3) agreed that consideration should be given to whether changes in Legislation would allow Fife Council to impose a limit on the number of licensed premises in Fife, providing services such as lap dancing, stripping etc.

Councillor Fiona Grant re-joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

209. HOUSING TRANSFER POLICY - REVIEW OF THE TRANSFER INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing, outlining the proposed changes to the Transfer Incentive Scheme (TIS) in support of the Housing Access Recovery Plan's approach to adopt a Transfer Led approach to Housing Allocations.

The TIS was originally introduced in 2007/08 to incentivise moves for households under-occupying tenancies, help tenants with particular needs to access the most suitable forms of housing, increase opportunities for all housing applicants and make best use of stock. Following a review of the scheme, it was proposed that measures were introduced which would enhance tenant mobility and options to progress the approach.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the outcome of the Officers' review outlined in the report;
- (2) noted that the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Sub-Committee Convener, would take action in 2020/21 to enhance the budget for the TIS to support the Housing Access Recovery Plan and that the revised budget would continue to be available in 2021/22;
- (3) agreed that, following final consultation with the Fife Tenants' Forum, the revised TIS would be implemented by April 2021; and
- (4)/

2021 CHSC 103

- (4) agreed that Housing Services and Communications actively promoted the TIS to ensure tenants under occupying larger council homes would be aware of the scheme and assistance from Fife Council Housing Service would be provided to offer a broader range of housing options and incentives to downsize.

210. RAPID REHOUSING TRANSFORMATION PLAN (2019-24) PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing providing members with the background and overview of a new model of service provision to enhance the contribution of the private sector to the prevention and response to homelessness. The report was part of a follow up to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Update considered by the Sub-Committee in November 2020, which sought approval to commission a small scale private rented sector resource to support the operation and delivery of temporary accommodation to enable the Council to meet statutory homelessness duties.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) agreed the proposal to commission and develop a revised model of private rented sector leasing to support the Council in meeting its statutory duties towards homeless households;
- (2) noted that the proposal would be fully governed through a procured approach with all relevant measures taken to promote high standards and accountability; and
- (3) agreed that a further report would be submitted to a future Sub-Committee meeting to seek agreement on further proposals to enhance the private rented sector contribution to the prevention and resolution of homelessness within the context of Fife's RRTP.

211. HOUSING SERVICES LOCK UP PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing updating members on progress of the programme to improve the lock up service offered to tenants and to modernise the lock up estate.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress made against the improvement actions and the focus on demolitions;
- (2) approved the continued approach to demolitions and refurbishments as outlined in the report;
- (3) agreed the revised timetable and approach to area plans; and
- (4)/

2021 CHSC 104

- (4) agreed to provide funding for future year improvements over the period 2021-28 from HRA Capital Budgets, which would be reported to Full Council in February each year as part of the HRA budget.

212. **COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee forward work programme which would be updated accordingly.

26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 4

Justice Social Work – Additional Funding

Report by: Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director, Education and Children’s Services

Wards Affected: All.

Purpose

To inform Committee of the additional monies from Scottish Government to address the projected backlog expected when the Courts fully reopen in late summer. The Justice Social Work Service Priority and Development Plan is also attached to provide background and context to the work being undertaken within the Service.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Committee are asked to note:-

- (1) the amount of additional finance and proposed plan for additional resources to address the expected backlog; and
- (2) the content of the Justice Social Work Priority and Development Plan.

Resource Implications

As noted in the report.

Legal & Risk Implications

None

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary for the following reasons: the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices

Consultation

This report has been produced by the justice services management team and references consultation undertaken with people who use the service and the wider staff group

1.0 Background

Covid Consequential Funding:

- 1.1 The Scottish Government has allocated additional funds for 2021/22 to Justice Social Work Services to prepare and deal with the anticipated 30%-40% increase in work from late summer as a consequence of the backlog at Courts across the country, and to manage the current backlog in Unpaid Work hours. Fife's Justice Social Work Service has received an additional £1,033m to assist with these issues. The finance is broken down into two constituent parts those being £180,680 which is ring-fenced specifically for commissioning third sector services, and £852,809 for Justice Social Work Services to directly address the impact of the pandemic. This in rough terms represents an approximate 15% rise in revenue to deal with the anticipated 30%-40% rise in work. Only time will tell the magnitude of the backlog, but with significant increases in Court capacity at all levels from late summer it is likely to be substantial. The additional monies will be invested to ensure Fife's Justice Social Work Service is prepared for events as they unfold around late summer, and as they manifest themselves up to that time.
- 1.2 The initial spend on staffing is:
- Eight qualified Social Workers £47,623 x 7 £380,984
 - Five Social Work Assistants £33,682 x 5 £168,410
 - Three Supervisors (Unpaid Work) £29,269 x 3 £ 87,807
 - Three Business Support Staff £22,935 x 3 £ 68,805
 - Total £706,006
- 1.3 This leaves a remaining £146,803 which will be considered for any additional resources that are required to ensure ongoing delivery of services in the face of the wave of additional workload. It is anticipated that face-to-face engagement is likely to be largely suspended during 2021, but the growing use of technology has proved effective in case management and support across a range of partners and interventions. This should be developed as a transformational resource in delivery of service provision, to expanded digital capacity and to continue flexible operation includes devices for service user monitoring, interviewing, online activities/interventions and engagement with local and national services.
- 1.4 Further additional resource may be required for expansion of the Unpaid Work Service (dependent upon the level of demand), additional capacity within health services to delivery effective interventions with regard to Drug Treatment and Testing Orders and possibly service as they relate to Groupwork which has been suspended for over a year to date.
- 1.5 The remaining money allows us the opportunity to remain flexible to changing and as yet unknown demand, and with the ability to respond quickly to those changes by utilising experienced agency staff to fill any immediate or short-term gaps.
- 1.6 National Justice Social Work and Court Services scenario planning anticipates a 31% rise in Community Payback Orders nationally this year, 39% next year and 32% in the year 23/24. It is very likely therefore that continued Scottish Government funding will be necessary to deal with the continued workload increase year on year.

Priority and Development Plan:

- 1.7 Fife Justice Social Work have completed their Priority and Development Plan for 2021/22 and have highlighted their strategic priorities and key challenges for the forthcoming year. The priorities focus upon:
- Investment in Staff
 - Training & Development
 - Service-User Participation
 - Changing Attitudes to Offending Behaviour
 - Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Increase focus on the use of alternatives to Custody
- 1.8 Whilst the key challenges identified are:
- Impact of Pandemic and Road to Recovery
 - Service Delivery in a new context
 - Maintaining a flexible approach to change

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 No issues noted.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 In respect of the additional finance a number of priority areas have been identified to make an immediate impact on our own backlog with Unpaid Work, which despite the recent 35% reduction in hours still has a significant number of outstanding hours to be worked. Additional staffing is likely to be peripatetic in nature to ensure the Service remains fluid and responsive to changes in demand.

The Priority and Development plan is attached for Members' attention.

List of Appendices

1. Justice Social Work Service Priority and Development Plan

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FIFE COUNCIL

JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

PRIORITY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2021 - 2022

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CONTENTS

1. Foreword by Chief Social Work Officer	Page 3
2. Introduction by Service Manager	Page 4
3. Understanding the Fife Context	Page 5
4. Operational Delivery Functions	Page 6
5. MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)	Page 7
6. Key Challenges	Page 8
7. Examples of Innovative Practice	Page 12
8. Strategic Priorities	Page 13
9. Conclusion	Page 19
10. Addendum	Page 20

FOREWORD

I am very pleased to introduce and endorse our Justice Social Work Service Priority and Development Plan. The purpose of the plan is to set out clearly the Service's priorities for the forthcoming reporting year, and to define the Service's development agenda over the same timeframe.

Offending and re-offending is a significant problem within society at large, and Fife is no different in that regard. Fife's geographical make up presents a microcosm of the Scottish landscape with a unique urban rural mix over a large area with pockets of significant deprivation. The subsequent demography presents challenges to the Service, this plan sets out new approaches to address some of those challenges.

The challenges however are not solely linked to those issues, the coronavirus pandemic has presented global problems and presents the world with new challenges. These are mirrored within the Justice System as Courts have battled to maintain services, prisons have had to take unprecedented actions and staff across the country have had to consider their own safety whilst undertaking day-to-day tasks.

The ongoing issues of substance misuse, domestic violence, the impact of mental health and childhood trauma have all increased since the initial lockdown and our Justice Service sets out clearly in this plan its priorities to tackle these issues by:

- ❖ Identifying key priority areas.
- ❖ Introducing plans to pro-actively change attitudes to offending behaviour.
- ❖ Re-focussing upon improving outcomes for service-users.
- ❖ Planning to respond to demand at a more local level.
- ❖ Tightening up on risk management arrangements.
- ❖ Ongoing and increasing investment in staff.

I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to those involved in the preparation of this plan, from across the Justice Social Work Service who have positively contributed to the plan and to the forward-thinking vision of the Service as we embark upon our recovery.



Kathy Henwood
Head of Education & Children's Services
(Children & Families & Justice Services)
Chief Social Work Officer

INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present our Justice Social Work Service Priority and Development Plan for 2021/22. The plan clearly sets out these priorities and challenges along with what actions will be deployed to meet them and sustain ongoing improvement in performance. The plan sets out a clear vision which will be reviewed annually and reported on within the same timeframe. It is expected that the plan may be subject to change in light of the pace of recovery, subsequent competing priorities and other external factors. It is also acknowledged that fiscal decisions at Government level may reset priority and improvement targets.

This plan is not only produced to set priorities and targets but to inform staff, service-users, elected members, partner agencies and the general public about what these are, and how they ultimately aim to assist in the reduction of re-offending in Fife.

The plan will set out our internal structures, strategic priorities, operational demand and key challenges with the aim of providing clarity on what specifically goes on within the Service and what we are doing to ensure we can continue to meet our targets whilst achieving positive outcomes.

Within all that we are committed to listening to our local communities, including those who experience crime and those who have been convicted of an offence, ensuring they play an active role in shaping the future. We will build upon our commitment to service-user participation and seek to engage with local communities to tailor services at a local level wherever possible.

The Management Team and I believe that this plan provides a clarity for those staff working within Justice Services, around the ethos of the Service, its priorities and its direction. Furthermore, it opens the Service up to external scrutiny by elected members and the wider public, including those who may be recipients of our Service either directly or indirectly. In that sense the plan's existence, purpose and design allows for ongoing development, scrutiny and review to afford the Service the opportunity to meet new challenges as they arise, to retain fluidity in ongoing resource allocation and to continue to tackle the issue of re-offending within our communities with a clear sense of purpose and direction.



Steve Hopton
Service Manager
Justice Social Work (Fife)

3. Understanding the Fife Context

Fife is the third largest local authority area in Scotland by population, that population is around 370,000, which equates to approximately 7% of the country's total population. The next formal census is planned this year (2021) which will update and confirm any changes in population and demographic make-up, and how those changes may bear influence upon crime and re-offending. In addition to the year-on-year changes, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic will play a significant part in planning, resource allocation and future development across all services in Fife and beyond.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) published their 2020 data which evidences an increase of those areas ranked in the most deprived 20%, 10% and 5% rankings. In Fife these can be exemplified by the information below relating to the most deprived 5% and their direct correlation to crime rate. Fifteen of Fife's defined data zones fall into the most deprived 5%, compared with six in 2012 and ten in 2016. Of those fifteen currently noted, ten are geographically located within the Levenmouth locality, and most are within the most negative crime ranking.

In the most recent reporting year (2019/20) Fife's figures for direct work are detailed below, it provides a basic overview of the amount of work and gives an oversight to the variety and complexity of that work undertaken by workers every day.

Criminal Justice Social Work Reports:	2,121
Throughcare Reports (HBR, HLR & HDC)	368
Community Payback Orders Supervised:	1,141
Drug Treatment and Testing Orders:	49
Diversion from Prosecution Cases:	106
Supervised Bail Orders:	14
CPO's with Unpaid Work Requirement:	809
Number of Community Based Throughcare Cases:	114
Number of Custody Based Throughcare Cases:	275
<u>In performance terms the Service saw:</u>	
CPO first direct contact made within one week:	73%
First Induction/CMP Meeting within one week:	73%
CJSW Reports submitted by the due date:	99%
CPO's successfully completed:	77%
Successfully complete Groupwork Programmes:	65%

4. Operational Delivery Functions

Fife Council Justice Services are responsible for providing a statutory social work service for those living within Fife involved in the justice system.

The operational delivery of this broadly fall into two categories:

Area based and Women's Justice Team –

- responsible for completion of Court reports, bail supervision, Diversion from prosecution programmes and the supervision of Community Payback Orders. In addition, the teams based in Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy provide a social work presence within the Sheriff Court in their area to assist Sheriffs and offer support to those appearing in Court and their families.

Specialist Teams–

- Throughcare – The work undertaken by these teams is primarily delivered under statute. The Throughcare teams work Fife-wide and provide reports for the High Court, Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and Parole Board whilst supervising those on statutory supervision following release from prison. The team also maintains contact with sentenced prisoners who will be on supervision on release, primarily through the Integrated Case Management (ICM) process and when reports are requested.
- Groupwork – delivering both the Caledonian System for men convicted of domestic abuse offences and Moving Forward Making Changes for those convicted of sexual offences.
- Drug Treatment and Testing Orders – delivers an intensive intervention that specifically targets the reduction in illicit drug use by the offender. The principles are that by reducing the offender's use of illicit drugs there will be a significant reduction in offending behaviour
- Unpaid Work – a requirement of a Community Payback Order which provides support to community groups or charities as well as individuals who can apply for help with their projects. Unpaid work in the community provides the labour and tools and the community groups provide the materials e.g. paint, plants or building materials.

The aim of our Service is to work effectively to reduce the likelihood of re-offending and promote community safety. Research has demonstrated the links between offending behaviour and issues such as poverty, poor mental health, substance misuse, unemployment, literacy and childhood trauma. Our interventions are therefore reflective of the issues that require to be addressed to reduce risks both to the individual and the wider community.

5. MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements)

The fundamental purpose of MAPPA is public protection and the reduction of serious harm. The protection of children, adults at risk of harm and other members of the public is paramount. MAPPA offer the potential for a co-ordinated approach to the management of people who commit sexual offences, restricted patients subject to mental health legislation and the 'critical few' other high-risk individuals who are assessed by the Responsible Authorities as posing a risk of serious harm by reason of their conviction/sentence.

The core intention behind MAPPA is the reduction of the risk of serious harm defined as; the likelihood of harmful behaviour of a violent or sexual nature, which is life threatening and/or traumatic, and from which recovery, whether physical or psychological, may reasonably be expected to be difficult or impossible.

The MAPPA Co-ordinator is employed on behalf of all the Responsible Authorities - and plays an essential role in the co-ordination, support, and administration of the strategic and operational functions on behalf of MAPPA in Fife. The co-ordinator's role is a dedicated function carried out on behalf of all the Responsible Authorities, accountable to those operating the joint arrangements, through the MAPPA Strategic Oversight Group.

In Fife as of 31 March 2020, 477 individuals were being MAPPA managed, of these individuals 333 were at liberty and being managed in the community setting.

Within Fife, there are positive working relationships with Police Scotland, Fife Council Housing Services, NHS Fife and other agencies which contribute to the ongoing robust risk management of individuals subject to MAPPA to ensure there is appropriate sharing of information in a timely manner. There is a focus on building and sustaining positive working relationships with the individual and all professionals involved in that individual's risk management plan. All agencies are working collaboratively to minimise the potential of future re-offending and further risk of serious harm. Whilst acknowledging that each partner agency has different strengths and roles, we are all committed to the same outcome.



6. KEY CHALLENGES

6.1. Impact of Pandemic and Road to Recovery

At time of writing the Justice system more widely continues to be affected by the consequences of the initial period of lockdown in March 2020. Court business has noticeably slowed due the difficulties in adhering to the safety guidance and many thousands of cases across the country have been deferred until later in the year when it is hoped that an easing of restrictions will allow for business to return to Court and begin to address the backlog. It is very difficult therefore to quantify the number of cases outstanding and what impact these will have on new cases coming through, but it's likely to take many months, if not years, to return to the pre-lockdown position.

Unpaid Work has suffered a similar fate in terms of backlog following on from the first lockdown and the subsequent second period of lockdown at the beginning of 2021. Upon return to work in mid-2020 supervision of service-users undertaking Unpaid Work reduced from a 1:5 ratio of supervisors to service-users to a 1:2 ratio. This clearly had a dramatic impact on the ability to supervise Orders in accordance with expectation. This was quickly recognised by the Scottish Government and legislation was enacted to ensure all outstanding and new Community Payback Orders with an Unpaid Work element had a twelve-month extension built in to address the expected delays in completion.

In addition to that change, the Government have also recently introduced a 35% reduction on all unpaid work hours with exceptions to those convicted of sexual, domestic abuse and stalking offences. This will have some impact locally as Fife Justice Social Work Services have around 66,000 hours of Unpaid Work outstanding, it is anticipated this will reduce by around 20,000 hours following the 35% reduction. Nevertheless, the Service's ability to administer the remaining hours will be severely hampered as it is very likely that the pace of recovery will be slow, and it is probably the case we will need to recommence at the 1:2 ratio and work towards increasing that in line with Public Health advice.

The management of the supervision element of Community Payback Orders has provided a fair degree of challenge also but has largely been manageable within the context of restrictions, building closures and ensuring staff safety. It is acknowledged that Orders have been managed in a different way as staff access to resources has been limited and home visits have been reduced according to health and safety considerations. Within the context of supervision, Groupwork has posed the most obvious problems in that it involves working with groups of men. Large groups were suspended in March 2020 and have not, to date, recommenced. One-to-one work was undertaken following the easing of the first lockdown, but this too was suspended following the decision to lockdown again at the turn of the year. This will also be reintroduced gradually in line with public health guidance but is priority for the Service given the high-risk nature of the offending behaviour and the need for this to be addressed timeously.

As with Unpaid Work it is unlikely that Groupwork involving Caledonian and MF:MC will be able to return to full capacity immediately upon the initial easing of restrictions.

These are likely to recommence on a one-to-one basis before increasing in size with progress very much dependent upon advice and guidance from the Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland. The most pressing impact upon these Orders are those which will be nearing the end of their timescales and will require priority to negate, or at least minimise, the possibility of returning Orders to Court to request time extensions.

Staff response to the pandemic has been exceptional, they have adapted new ways of working, overcome numerous hurdles, provided exceptional support to service-users, continued to ensure the National Outcomes and Standards are met and that risks are managed in accordance with assessment and priority. The Management Team too have ensured staff have been supported to work at home, that essential equipment was provided, PPE was readily available and that emotional and moral support was available at all times.

In addition, the lockdown measures in place have resulted in a number of key processes with both SPS and The Parole Board for Scotland moving online. The resultant savings in staff time, particularly in terms of Throughcare, has been positive for staff and they have commented on the benefits to be gained by continuing in this method where appropriate.

Moving forward out of lockdown will not be without its difficulties but staff and managers are keen to return to the office environment to again experience that camaraderie that comes from being part of a team, the support that comes from colleagues and again reconnect as a group of friends and acquaintances who, without knowing it, rely heavily upon each other for professional support and emotional well-being.



6.2. Service Delivery in a new context

Experience during the period of the pandemic, adapting to remote working, changes to how to deliver unpaid work and the various groupwork activities, the introduction of new technologies, ever-shifting developments in Social Work practice, etc., has set a scene for Justice Social Work and presented an opening into the future. A future that may have been many years away but by virtue of the circumstances of the pandemic has presented itself in the present. Mass home working, multi-agency meetings over MS Teams, remote Team meetings and supervision, working with service-users over WhatsApp, the list goes on.

In addition, the now established practitioner led groups and service-user participation groups, along with detailed service-user feedback will inform and develop more responsive services. As practice evolves across statutory and third sector partners, a

shared learning and development of community-based practice involving those partner agencies can promote greater understanding of the role of Justice Social Work not just within the wider justice context, but within the wider community context locally and nationally. Developing ways of 'joining up' with colleagues in other services to ensure that service-users receive that holistic, whole systems approach to care, risk management and rehabilitation.

An example of these developments in providing a more responsive, needs led service is the current pilot in the Glenrothes area where areas of support are identified at report writing stage and individuals receive intensive, short-term one-to-one support which provides encouragement and assistance for individuals to gain access to specialist services. This allows for swift, focussed intervention with the aim of meeting welfare needs, reducing re-offending, reducing potential harm to victims and, where applicable, allow for offence-focused work to commence more promptly.

Dealing with cause and effect, root and branch, presenting and underlying issues is the way forward to ensure engagement, confidence and success. The Service has recognised this but not simply in a way that impacts upon those under our supervision, but also with staff. Bottom-up management, building upon the experiences of those having direct contact with service-users whose knowledge and hands-on involvement is used to shape policy, practice and performance and whose value to the Service is recognised and ability to contribute to service development is encouraged.

In addition to the staffing context, many new challenges are likely to be encountered through numerous proposals for changes in technology. These are wide and varied but include complete replacement of the Social Work database, fundamental change to file storage and retention, the introduction of Oracle for all Management, Finance and Staffing oversight. All these require investment in planning, training and implementation. Further changes in computerised systems, telecommunications and hardware presents the Service with ongoing challenges in keeping staff up-to-date, aware, prepared and able to feel confident in their ability to continue to deliver the day-to-day job in the face of ever changing and developing programmes and systems.

Delivering services to the expected standards in the face of these challenges, and those being presented by an inevitable backlog of cases at Court will not be easy and may require further investment from central Government to alleviate the pressures brought to bear, this too presents problems as Local Authorities across Scotland, and beyond, will be required to actively compete for scarce resources.

This is not a negative outlook but a realistic one, the challenges are real not hypothetical, the context is new and in that regard holds a number of unknowns. Can we deliver, of course we can. But that doesn't mean it will be easy and at times very challenging, however we are a good team, we work together and together we will continue to deliver the best service we can whatever hurdles or barriers we need to overcome.

6.3. Maintaining a flexible approach to change

As a profession, social work is known as an agent of change. When faced with the most recent crisis brought about by the global pandemic the values of social work as

a profession were brought sharply into focus. Very quickly, the Service adapted to the changes and considered new methods of working, considering what could be done rather than focussing on barriers to change. Undoubtedly the changes brought about by the challenges of the global pandemic will need reviewed and refined as time passes but many of the changes brought about by necessity have kick started a process which is unlikely to be reversed.

The pandemic became a great leveller with a change of focus towards welfare needs and well-being. Power imbalances associated with the supervision of statutory Orders became less noticeable when workers were checking in with service-users by telephone or video call. Attention was paid to reviewing the effectiveness of contact when it was being conducted remotely. A Service decision was taken that staff and service-users needed to be involved in this to inform the development of this Service that was more responsive to need. The development of the Practice and Road to Recovery Groups, along with the Service User participation group has led to a shared feeling of contribution to the development of the Service going forward. It is intended that these groups will continue to become embedded but the challenge as time passes will be to hold on to that 'we are all in this together' feeling.

The staff group have needed to adapt to remote working and the Service has had to consider how to deliver unpaid work and groupwork whilst still keeping staff and service-users safe. The pace of change has been remarkable and the resilience of staff to adapt to these changes whilst still delivering a high standard of service is to be commended.

Wholesale changes in the recording and storage of client information; moving from paper based to electronic client records stored within Sharepoint, continues apace and will be supplemented by the introduction of the SWIFT replacement system in the next year. Again, it is to staff's credit that they have adapted to these changes whilst working from home, isolated from colleagues and business support as they tried to learn and implement new working practices.

The pandemic required a crisis-based approach from all services and local responses to need were facilitated by local multi-disciplinary teams including all key services and replicated in each local committee area. Whilst no longer crisis orientated, it has been recognised that these local groups offer an opportunity to develop place-based practices across each area that can be responsive to local need and develop services accordingly. Our Service will continue to be represented at these groups and increase the understanding of the role of criminal justice social work within the wider justice context.

It is recognised that over the next year the focus will shift towards recovery and reopening of services. This will be very much guided by both Government advice and local public health considerations to ensure on-going safe practices for staff and

service users. Undoubtedly, there will continue to be restrictions on staff returning to the large corporate offices as social distancing will remain in place. This will restrict numbers working within buildings at any given time. It is therefore likely that the Service will need to implement a flexible approach to working practices involving staff continuing to work from home for a proportion of the working week. A risk-based approach will be implemented to consider service-user contact with priority being given to re-establishing office based, face to face contact with those deemed at highest risk of harm to themselves or others or subject to a programme requirement to address domestic abuse or sexual offending. Work on reducing the significant backlog of unpaid work hours will also commence with consideration being given to the use of, rehabilitation related 'other activities' and work based personal placements within partner agencies in addition to the regular work squads.

The Recovery response to the pandemic represents an opportunity to build upon the changes implemented over the past year and to hold on to the development of links with partner agencies. There will be more challenges to come as the reality of the true costs of the pandemic in both a monetary and psychological sense begins to emerge over the next year. However, the lessons of the past year will stand our Service in good stead. We have an infrastructure from which to continue to develop a responsive, needs based service which supports resilience and strength across our workforce and service-users.

7. Examples of Innovative Practice

Justice Social Work is an area of social work practice which can be overlooked or misunderstood. Whilst Unpaid Work is tangible and most often used as an example of the implementation of Court Orders, there are many other aspects of work undertaken within the Service. We are fortunate to have a dedicated, dynamic, forward thinking workforce who are encouraged to contribute to service delivery in innovative ways. Staff are enabled to do so through a variety of practitioner led groups relating to practice, performance and planning. This in itself sets out the innovative practice of bottom-up management and practice development which has, within its first year, provided extremely positive outcomes across the Service, examples of this are:

- ❖ Improved Supervision Documentation
- ❖ Updated Exit Process
- ❖ Service-User Participation Group
- ❖ Inclusive Serious Incident Review Process
- ❖ Enhanced Bail Supervision Scheme
- ❖ Suicide Prevention Pack

In addition to the above the addendum on pages 20-22 has a cross-section of examples of innovative practice from within the Service, illustrations of good practice with service-users and further examples of service and practice developments which provide a context to how we can engage service-users to address issues that may in some way contribute to their offending behaviour.

8. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Fife Council's Justice Social Work Service has identified the key strategic priorities for the year 2021/22. These are set within the context of the ever changing and developing landscape caused by the global pandemic and will be subject to ongoing review. However, it is likely these will remain our key priorities for the full period and possibly beyond. These identified key priorities are not an exhaustive list of the Service priorities but highlight the key drivers which will underpin the plans for change, openness and positive scrutiny. These are:

8.1. Investment in staff

Investment in staff is the most important part of this entire strategy but does not solely relate to an increase in resources or staffing budgets. It means building a competent, well-trained staff group who are confident, feel valued, empowered and are provided with the tools and the opportunities to influence policy, practice and performance.

The Service has already committed to this by ensuring that Team Managers receive appropriately targeted training in staff and budget management along with a professional level of input on the importance of effective professional supervision for all our staff. This process will continue throughout the duration of the plan to ensure consistency across the Service as well as ongoing support for the management Team.

The Service started to explore the benefits of having front line staff more actively involved in process, policy, practice and performance development. This initially focused on areas such as customer engagement and effective supervision, and soon resulted in a number of improvements across the Service. This then led to the more formal development of a number of staff led groups which are designed to empower and grant ownership to staff across all levels. These groups are

- ❖ Practice & Performance Group
- ❖ Road to Recovery Group
- ❖ Senior Practitioners' Group
- ❖ Unpaid Work Focus Group

These groups are intended not only to produce positive results but to actively encourage staff to participate in influencing the future direction of the Service and establishing a culture of 'bottom up' policy direction. Building the confidence of staff to enable this form of management and co-operative leadership will remain the Service's top priority. Having this embedded within our Service will lead to a confident, engaged, motivated and participative workforce, which will result in staff sharing aspirations and positively impact upon the Service's plans and aspirations going forward.

8.2. Training & Development

Individual and organisational learning and development is a critical component in creating positive cultures, developing knowledge and skills and ultimately improving the service we offer to individuals. The Justice Service in Fife continue to strive for excellence through their commitment to learning and development. The Service is well supported in this area, internally through HR Workforce Development and Strategy, and externally, through Community Justice Scotland and other partners such as Health Promotion. Despite the pandemic in 2020-21, delivery on key training priorities through digital platforms has placed the Service in a very strong position as we move into the 2021-22 training plan which has been created in consultation with managers, stakeholders and external agencies.

BASW views training as a way to enable justice workers to acquire new knowledge and skills as well as maintain and improve their standards across all areas of their practice by ensuring learning and development is rooted in evidence, excellent practice, our code of ethics and commitment to promoting social justice. Additionally, it increases morale, reduces turnover and enables career progression.

In Fife we have always had a service committed to the above and this continues into 2021-22 where our Training Plan has provided opportunities for personal development, access to qualifications as well as local and national training. In relation to some of our core business, and in meeting our statutory obligations, our training needs will continue to be met through ongoing collaboration with Community Justice Scotland. Other priority areas will be supported through our internal colleagues in Workforce Development. Amongst others, key priorities for 2021-22 include:

- Transforming Psychological Trauma Training at levels 1,2 and 3 (in line the National Trauma Training Framework).
- Suicide Prevention.
- Working with Individuals with no Recourse to Public Funds.
- Drug and Alcohol training programme tailored to the needs of individual teams.
- Loss and Bereavement in a Criminal Justice and COVID-19 context.



8.3. Service-User Participation

One of a number of positives from the coronavirus pandemic over the past year or so has been the improvement in relationships between staff and service-users. This was particularly evident during the initial period of lockdown in March 2020 when little was known of the coronavirus and there was a general state of fear and alarm across the country. A large proportion of service-users relied heavily on their respective workers for access to food, medicine, advice and essential human contact. The restrictions in place at that time meant that the previous conventional methods of contact had to be changed and changed quickly. A number of different approaches were tried but the 'walk and talk', less formal approach was very much embraced by staff and service-users alike. This, in addition to the removal of the more formal physical structures and symbols of authority, led to a more relationship-based interaction between professionals and service-users.

To evidence this more robustly a service-user questionnaire was commissioned through the practitioner led Practice Group which elicited a large, positive and very informative response. From this, it was evident that service users valued the service response to the pandemic, as well as being asked to contribute their thoughts via the questionnaire. It was clear they were keen for their voices to be heard, and as a Service, it was important we listened to their collective voices to shape and influence practice going forward.

As a consequence, a Service-User Participation Group (SUPG) was formed and met for the first time in January 2021. To date these meetings have taken place remotely via MS Teams and have proved very successful with the facilitators remaining focussed upon ensuring the participants lead on the direction of travel. The group will continue to meet four-weekly and have already identified a number of early priorities focussing upon the initial periods of intervention, supervision and unpaid work. The group will attempt to ensure there is sufficient representation from across Fife, across the different services and across the demographic divergences the Service experiences.

8.4. Changing attitudes towards offending behaviour.

This priority covers a vast area and does not solely link to those who offend or with whom we work, although these do remain an instrumental focus for the Service. Attitudes to offending vary widely across society as does the level of insight into the Criminal Justice System itself. It is incumbent upon those who work within that system to address and dispel any misconceptions held by the public, and within that our Service can play a pivotal role in providing information and education to key groups in the communities at a local level and through targeting schools and educational establishments.

The Service has taken advantage of the opportunities presented through social media, in particular our Twitter page [@fcjusticesw](#), to spread the word on what work we do, why we do it and how it helps. This has already proved a highly effective strategy with a focus on continuing communication between partners, the wider group of stakeholders and communities. Improved communication which will continue to stimulate dialogue, enhance knowledge and further develop confidence in justice systems for the public and for key stakeholders.

We have now provided numerous schools in the area and throughout central Scotland with on-line seminars on work within the Justice system, where we fit into the wider processes and what benefits can be gleaned for service-users and the wider society at large by ensuring the work undertaken on Community Payback Orders is both challenging and meaningful. It is the Service's intention to continue to engage pro-actively with schools and further education establishments as we progress, but to also expand beyond the classroom boundaries to more public facing meetings. There are also processes in place to ensure reports are presented to Local Area Committees across Fife which will provide elected members with information relating to their respective areas, and how Justice Social Work is responding.

In addition to the above, we will continue to provide statistical detail, including crime and sentencing data, but it is important to contextualise this with real life examples of work, outcomes and the success of the input from the Service. It should be noted however, not every case is successful and there is no magic wand to prevent offending, but changing, or aiming to change, the public perceptions as to the individual and societal influences behind those actions, along with the efforts being made to tackle these should start to have a positive impact on changing attitudes to offending behaviour.

8.5. Promote Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as; *'not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the mental stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.'*

This definition may well be aspirational but at its lowest level underpins the edict that we should all feel valued and be seen as valuable. This at times may seem a very distant possibility for those going through the significant trauma of the Justice system with lengthy delays to its many processes, the stigma associated with many convictions, the personal impact offending may have upon families and within the wider community context.



As more is being understood of the impact of early childhood trauma on those within the Justice system, and the impact of the pandemic, it is clear that this will be a key area to be addressed in the coming months and years. The impact of trauma can lead to many emotional and behavioural issues, and whilst challenging, by working collaboratively with relevant partners and agencies it is likely that we can begin to address this. An example of this is the on-going partnership with NHS Fife to locate an Assistant Psychologist and Mental Health Nurse within the Women's Justice Teams. This has proved to be very successful and it is hoped that an evaluation will open the door to similar services in the future.

Within the context of mental health and well-being it is our responsibility to ensure the ongoing mental welfare of our staff. The experience of working through the coronavirus pandemic has provided a first-hand opportunity of learning what works best in terms of staff support at difficult times. We consulted staff to gain an understanding of their experiences during this time and can use this rich source of information to better inform Service priorities for staff support in the months to come.

Fife Council have recently introduced a number of positive initiatives to assist with staff mental wellbeing including training for managers to recognise and address any such issues. There can be little by way of argument that good mental health at work supported by an informed and understanding management group can reduce absence, increase productivity and provide for a happier more content workplace.

As a Service our priority will be to ensure we work in a trauma informed manner with staff and service-users and offer appropriate training and support and advice given their particular circumstances. It shall also be the Service's priority to ensure that staff and service-users feel valued, respected and offered support when required to ensure their continued mental health and well-being.

8.6. Increase focus on the use of alternatives to Custody

In line with Scottish Government policy, Fife Justice Social Work Services are committed to reducing the levels of custody and use of remand within the Justice system. Ensuring that there are sufficient, varied, reliable and credible alternatives available to the Courts provides an ongoing challenge but also provides the Service with the opportunity to trial potentially effective methods of intervention. Figures for 2019/20 show that around 15% of cases that were referred to Justice Social Work resulted in a custodial sentence, which means that close to 85% were dealt with by way of some type of community sentence. Whilst it is worth acknowledging that not all these will be subject to supervision, a significant proportion are. In the same year 2019/20, Fife Justice Social Work had 1141 new Community Payback Orders to supervise. In order to maintain or increase this level of community-based supervision the Service will require to continue to produce reliable and credible options, but also ensure that the Courts remain confident in the Service's ability to supervise these Orders robustly and in accordance with National Outcomes and Standards.

In addition to those tried and tested programmes relating to standard levels of supervision, the Service offers specific programmes of work for women within the Justice system, those convicted of sexual offences including Moving Forward: Making Changes (MF:MC), perpetrators of domestic abuse, including the Caledonian Programme, a Road Traffic Group, SMART Recovery and TURN a small project for men in the West-Fife area that will hopefully roll-out across Fife this year and beyond. New programmes are considered regularly by way of research, national modelling and internal planning.

Those noted above focus upon services available to individuals sentenced following an outcome at Court. We are also looking to ensure we have a range of services available to offer Court for those for whom remand in custody is being considered but bail is available.

Our new Enhanced Bail Supervision initiative will clearly differ from the current Bail Supervision process in that all individuals appearing at Court from custody will be offered the opportunity to have a bail supervision assessment. All bail supervision reports will be made available to the Procurators Fiscal, Solicitors and Sheriffs on the day of the Court appearance. Through engagement with the intensive nature of a Bail Supervision Order individuals will benefit by having their needs addressed, and it is hoped this will lead to a significant reduction in re-offending, risk of harm and the use of custody. Longer term, we are hopeful of seeing a reduction in the need for high tariff Orders if individuals comply with the bail process as the need for more intensive intervention, if found guilty, is reduced through this early intervention. The Service will also look to build on the use of Structured Deferred Sentences as a credible alternative for the Court where appropriate - these are imposed after an individual appears at Court, and where their offences are of a lower level, and it is evident the individual could benefit from a short period of support and intervention.

These initiatives and the available alternatives to custody do provide the Courts with options where risks can be mitigated against. These alternatives to a custodial sentence are available, are credible and are robustly managed.



9. Conclusion

The preceding detail outlines what the Service has identified as its key priorities over the coming year. Notwithstanding the uncertainty surrounding the ongoing pandemic and the pace of recovery the six identified areas will form the foundation of how we move forward over the forthcoming year. The empowerment of staff to participate, drive and take ownership of their Service will be supported by a detailed training plan and the continuation of well-established practitioner led focus groups. Service-users will also be encouraged to participate in, and influence, practice through their own participation group which will retain the priority of ensuring their ideas are taken seriously and taken forward.

Changing attitudes towards offending and focussing on alternatives to custody will ensure that the wider justice system and the integral partnerships work together to make positive use of the available resources to provide robust and credible programmes that ultimately help to reduce offending and make communities safer.

Promoting positive mental health and well-being is more relevant now than perhaps at any time in the recent past. The pandemic has had global impact and has had negative connotations for many thousands of families, including those here in Fife. This not only includes those we work with, but those whom find themselves victims of crime. The numerous lockdowns and associated isolation, the inability to see close family and friends, to socialise, and to live normally has had a severe impact on people, including staff, and it is incumbent upon us to ensure we promote positive mental health and support emotional wellbeing as we move out of this very difficult period. The acknowledgement of these issues is only the start.

The plan has also highlighted the key challenges ahead, the unknown route or routes to recovery and all the attendant difficulties, known and unknown. The new ways of working across Fife, including fast-paced technological change, will be testing. Despite the pandemic, nothing has halted the tide of change, it may have been slowed somewhat but the pace will quicken again as we emerge from lockdown. This too will require the Service to be flexible to what's coming, to ensure we continue to meet needs, to provide services, to continue to help the vulnerable in whatever capacity and to ensure our staff remain fit and able to continue to deliver vital help, support and care to those who need it most.

These are the key priorities and challenges we've identified at this point in time, they may change, there may be more, and they may be different. The Service is committed to tackle these individually and, where necessary, collectively with our partners. We have an experienced management group to lead us and an outstanding staff group who will continue to deliver regardless of whatever challenge presents itself, just as they have done over the past twelve months. As Service Manager for Justice Social Work in Fife I can confidently guarantee that.

ADDENDUM

Examples of Good Practice:

SMART Recovery Groups:

These sessions run across the Service on a weekly basis for around an hour at a time and are facilitated by Social Work Assistants. This is a valuable, low-cost, harm reduction intervention for service-users, and an appropriate service response given Scotland's drug deaths are rising at present. Due to the chaotic nature of these groups' attendance can fluctuate, but it can range from 2 to 8 attendees per session. As a response to the pandemic, over the last 12 months, these face to face sessions have taken place virtually, with service users accessing support via MS Teams.

Swifter Domestic Abuse Disclosure Process:

Previously the decisions to make domestic abuse disclosures via the Power to Tell scheme were taking up to 6 weeks as the agreement to disclose had to be made at a decision-making forum involving Police Scotland, Social Work, Fife Women's Aid and Housing. It was identified that this timescale was potentially placing individuals and their children at risk of harm, despite most referrals being clear cut i.e. the perpetrator does have convictions for violence, domestic abuse etc. It was agreed that instead of delaying disclosure for up to 6 weeks an Electronic Decision-Making Forum (EDMF) would be set up involving each service that is represented at Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland (DSDAS) meetings.

Each key agency would receive email referrals from Police Scotland as and when they were received. The email from Police Scotland would highlight the reason for the disclosure, along with the proposed wording to the victim. Each service would then respond with information they held on any of the cases, as well as their approval, or disapproval, for disclosure. A unanimous decision must be reached prior to Police Scotland undertaking the disclosure. It has been noted that this process has accelerated the disclosure of risk via domestic offending to individuals, thereby reducing the risk of harm to potential victims and their dependents.

Welfare Pilot:

In a new initiative in Glenrothes all individuals attending for a Justice Social Work report are being offered a welfare assessment should they wish it. The assessment identifies areas of support required including accommodation, physical and emotional health, addictions, and finances. If areas of support are identified, and the individual consents, they receive intensive, short-term one-to-one support which provides encouragement and assistance to gain access to specialist services. This allows for swift, focussed intervention with the aim of addressing their welfare needs, reducing re-offending, reducing potential harm to victims and, where applicable, allow for offence-focused work to commence more promptly should the individual be made subject to the conditions of a Community Payback Order.

Suicide/Self-Harm Prevention Arrangement

Following several suicides within Fife, a response plan which aimed to deliver a service to individuals who may present in crisis was developed. It was identified that practitioners were often not always confident when working with individuals who were experiencing self-harm and suicidal ideation. In conjunction with other agencies the Service developed a work pack to help support practitioners to become more confident and competent when dealing with people experiencing such matters.

In partnership with Fife Samaritans a proactive out of hours contact service was established. It was acknowledged that individuals were reluctant, for several reasons, to call services when having thoughts of suicide, including anxiety, embarrassment and feeling ashamed. Samaritans Fife Partnership were approached by Fife Justice Social Work to forge a partnership agreement to enable Fife Justice Social Work to make a direct referral for individuals who are deemed vulnerable and at risk of suicide.

Breakfast Club

This resource was run, pre-pandemic, every Thursday morning in Dunfermline, and was used as a stand-alone intervention or as a first step before being referred on to the TURN Men's Group. It provides a less structured, social experience where men can try out domestic and cooking skills, including preparation and tidy up afterwards. Speakers from partner agencies have been used and some guided discussion each week to help socially isolated men, who often have severe anxiety or other mental health issues, to practice interaction in a safe environment. Participants have reported an increase in confidence, a sense of inclusion and the importance of being made to feel welcome and accepted by others in the group. Unfortunately, these groups were suspended as a result of the pandemic, however there are plans in place to reinstate these meetings once assessed safe to do so.

TURN Men's Group

This project has been developed within the Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath Area teams since January 2019. It provides male service-users an innovative way to address their identified needs linked to their circumstances and factors which relate to their offending behaviour. Unlike other groupwork programmes offered within Justice Social Work Services this project does not focus on offending behaviour and it is not a requirement of their Order. Rather, men are encouraged to consider their strengths and the positive contributions they can make within their local community. Facilitators work in a creative, supportive manner to address the key aims of the project; to promote good physical health and mental well-being, increase self-confidence and encourage teamwork. The modular approach allows men to explore different themes with clearly defined aims for each module. The sessions have been 'virtual' since the onset of the pandemic, but participants have valued the efforts made to maintain contact via weekly online sessions, so that virtual groups can be formed with the benefits of social group interaction. As we look towards a welcomed return to face to face groups, service-users are already discussing the next project which involves the regeneration of a piece of wasteland in Dunfermline town centre and transforming this into a mindful space for the wider community to enjoy.

Dad's Group

This six-week programme was a new programme developed in partnership with an Early Year's Officer from the Beanstalk Family Nurture Centre in Dunfermline. It aims to provide fathers with improved confidence, knowledge and skills in their role as a parent. It was evaluated at the end of the pilot programme with a view to developing it to be run again and potentially rolled out to other teams across the service. The pandemic has meant a pause to this work, but it is anticipated that a further programme will be set up to run later in the year

Responding to the Needs of Drug Users:

Since the closure of the Drug Court in Fife and the return to Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTO), positive elements of work that had been developed have been retained in practice, these include the provision of auricular acupuncture SMART group meetings, close links with Addiction Services, Reiki and most recently via one member of staff's personal interest in the introduction of Kinetic Shift.

Additionally, since 2018 the team has obtained access to residential rehabilitation at the Turnaround facility in Paisley. A very successful outcome of this intervention was a service-user who had moved to long term rehabilitation in Glasgow with Phoenix Futures and has not come to the attention of police since discharge from the facility.

Measuring success in the case of a long-term habitual drug misuser is relative, many of the individuals have entrenched behaviours that have impacted on both them and their families for many years. Misuse of substances can often occur as a result of the individual's own traumatic experiences which they struggle to process or understand. Drug misuse is a means of temporarily escaping these traumas and the underlying factors require to be addressed before meaningful change can occur and be maintained.

Service-User Participation Group

The Service-User Participation Group (SUPG) involves a maximum of eight service-users who meet on a four-weekly basis to discuss topics relating to Fife Justice Services. From the initial sessions, service-users offered honest feedback about services provided currently and how these could be enhanced in the future. One of the issues highlighted unanimously by the group was the confusion and anxiety around Court appearances and subsequent expectations of the Sheriff and Justice Social Work. SUPG members identified the requirement for a leaflet/pamphlet to provide information in straightforward language, avoiding jargon and acronyms, alongside visual portrayals of the Justice System to aid their understanding. This project is now progressing, and service-users are excited to be executive authors and designers of those leaflets which will be distributed to all users of Justice Services in the future. Alongside specific projects, the SUPG will be involved in providing feedback and perspectives on different areas within the Service e.g. internal review format. There are also plans to launch a dedicated SUPG mailbox which will provide service-users the opportunity to submit areas for discussion and feedback will be provided by the SUPG participants to the wider service via communication in the proposed service-user newsletter.

26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 5

Food and Welfare Support

Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on food and welfare support and outline proposals for a long-term approach to food insecurity which aims to tackle poverty and encourage crisis prevention.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the committee are asked to:

1. Note the actions to date made by Fife Council and partners in response to food insecurity during the pandemic.
2. Note the immediate recovery actions.
3. Agree the proposed framework for a Fife food strategy, coordinated by a partnership working group.

Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications associated with this report.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no specific legal and risk implications associated with this report.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required at this stage.

Consultation

This report has been developed through the Tackling Poverty & Crisis Prevention reform work programme (including the Elected Member working group and officer project group), discussions with the Food Insecurity Steering Group and through consultation with individuals and groups involved in the community response to Covid-19.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The response to the Coronavirus pandemic involved a significant increase in crisis support services including welfare payments, advice and provision of food. Fife has experienced an increased demand for community food outlets and new provisions have been set up as a direct result of the pandemic. Reports to Policy & Coordination Committee in May and June 2020 outlined Fife Council's response to addressing food insecurity during the pandemic.
- 1.2 A report to Communities & Housing Services Sub-Committee in May 2018 provided information on household food insecurity in Fife and work being done to alleviate and prevent food crisis at that time. The Committee adopted the principles of the report *Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland* to guide the design and implementation of responses to food insecurity.
- 1.3 On Thursday 4 March 2021, Policy & Coordination Committee agreed the recommendations set out in the report on Tackling Poverty & Crisis Prevention reform. This included a recommendation to 'agree to bring forward proposals to committee on food and welfare support'. This paper presents some immediate recovery actions and sets out the direction of travel within a wider food strategy for Fife.

2.0 Evidence of Need

Narrative inquiry

- 2.1 Research led by Professor Karen McArdle in each of Fife's seven local areas has sought to explore the impact of COVID-19 on individuals and families that have engaged with local services during the pandemic. The research involved extensive discussions with 154 people who were in receipt of an emergency grocery box through the COVID Helpline, or an emergency Hardship Payment following discussion with a Welfare Support Assistant. Representatives from 35 voluntary groups were also interviewed as part of the research activity. This provided a rich data set around our understanding of low or insecure household incomes, relationships with food and the extent of worry and anxiety because of increasing debt, availability of food and reducing household budgets.
- 2.2 Researchers found it particularly concerning that there was "evidence of people going some days without food" and that it was clear from the sample that "food insecurity was a fundamental concern and widespread in all areas". Other key findings from the research were associated with mental health and wellbeing, social isolation and loneliness. The need for stronger community resilience was also highlighted with a recommendation to prioritise programmes that promote resilience and target vulnerable populations to enhance self-esteem, confidence, personal coping skills and target healthy living.
- 2.3 Dignity was also highlighted by the research with evidence of many individuals doing the best they could with difficult life experiences. Stigma associated with the use of food banks was apparent and cash was the preferred means of support as it holds no stigma, is flexible and can be used according to need.

Food Stakeholder Survey

- 2.4 In September 2020, a survey was undertaken by the Food Insecurity Steering Group to identify opportunities for better collaboration across organisations and communities, and to improve how we collectively respond to food insecurity in Fife in the short and longer term. Some of these findings focus on emergency food and how organisations can better prepare for any future emergencies.
- Use of local knowledge to identify and support vulnerable people who were likely to be in food crisis. Concerns that people were missed, particularly those who were newly financially vulnerable because of the pandemic.
 - Reports that people had to go through several agencies to get help, with some individuals being passed on to other services when they shouldn't have been. There is a need for training for staff and volunteers to ensure individuals are being treated consistently and that requests are dealt with efficiently.
 - Lack of communication and information sharing is a significant barrier to delivering an efficient food response. Lack of clarity over what each group/organisation was doing and who they were reaching led to confusion, duplication and inability to identify gaps.
 - Inconsistencies in data collection made it difficult to assess issues of supply and demand, which led to a potentially distorted picture of need. Some respondents said they would welcome guidance on what data to collect.
 - More use could have been made of existing food providers - their expertise, knowledge of the community and supplies.
 - Considering the quality and appropriateness of the food that is being provided.
 - The need for free or low-cost food will continue but there is a need to further develop equitable, dignified and sustainable models of provision, including the 'cash first' approach. The narrative inquiry in North East Fife recommended adopting a cash first principle for how we support vulnerable people to address the stigma associated with the use of food banks. This has also been highlighted through the [Menu for Change](#) project.

3.0 Current Response

- 3.1 The Food Resilience plan, which was developed for Fife in response to the pandemic, aimed to ensure that existing community food providers in communities across Fife had a stabilised and regular supply chain for them to continue to provide access to food and non-food items for individuals and families in crisis. The plan also aimed to support vulnerable communities and prioritised those who needed to shield, community food groups and the non-clinically vulnerable.
- 3.2 The response in the early days of the pandemic was to quickly ensure that food was available for vulnerable communities. This involved a range of responses, including:
- Providing emergency food parcels and food deliveries from a "hub and spoke" model of community anchor venues.
 - Purchasing bulk food provision to support stocks for community food projects.

- Setting up the COVID Community Helpline and Fife Voluntary Action's Helping Hands service to respond to a mix of urgent requests.
 - Providing a direct payment of £11.50 per child per week to those registered for Free School Meals, as well as making the payment to families of children who have been unable to attend school due to self-isolation as a result of positive Covid-19 cases.
- 3.3 The Food Resilience Plan has adapted since it was developed during the first lockdown. The following information in this section sets out the work that continues to be delivered to ensure communities receive adequate support in terms of welfare issues and access to food.

Fife Food Fund Crisis Payments

- 3.4 Fife Council has made use of the Scottish Government Food Fund to provide access to hardship funds for supporting people who are in crisis. Since December 2020, Fife Council has awarded over £71,000 in hardship payments to 161 recipients, with an average payment of £441.

Addressing Future Needs

- 3.5 Using the 'Addressing Future Needs' grant provided by the Scottish Government to support vulnerable and at-risk communities and households to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19, the Food Insecurity Steering Group have been able to offer small grants to community food providers in the areas of 'volunteering support', 'running costs', 'property & equipment' and 'support for service users'.
- 3.6 Overall, 37 community organisations involved in supporting communities and households through food provision applied through the grant scheme with £187,000 being made available to them.
- 3.7 As part of the Addressing Future Needs funding, £20,000 was made available to support larger scale developments. Two projects received funding:
- Funding was awarded to North East Fife to strengthen the Community Fridge Network by supplementing funds for FareShare trays and volunteer expenses and is being used to address gaps in provision by setting up another three community food projects in the area.
 - In the Cowdenbeath area, the funding will enable work to commence to improve public WiFi in Lochgelly Town Hall. This will support digital connectivity to allow staff and volunteers to help residents to access health, benefits and other support online.

Café Inc 2021

- 3.8 During the Christmas and Easter holidays, Café Inc was able to run in each of the seven areas. Due to ongoing Coronavirus restrictions, each area took a different approach that considered ongoing provision and what was possible in their communities to ensure children and families who were most vulnerable were able to access food. A blended approach to provision was taken by each area with a mix of support delivered by community pantries and fridges, as well as offerings of packed lunches, hot meals to take away, active family sessions and activity packs.
- 3.9 Planning for Café Inc in Summer 2021 is underway with the aim to continue to support children, young people and families with holiday food provision.

Family, Food & Fun Club

- 3.10 Based in the Glenrothes area, Family, Food & Fun seeks to empower families and build their resilience to help them move away from relying on emergency food aid. The Family Food & Fun Club was established through the Glenrothes Action Against Poverty Group and is being led by a small working group made up of members of Fife H&SPC, Fife Council and FVA, and was funded by Fife Council Education's Support & Connect programme. The aim of the club is to build confidence and resilience by linking people up with services and fellow families in the community. Reducing isolation is a key element of the club and despite pandemic restrictions, the club will offer opportunities for members to meet each other, first through a private Facebook group that will enable and encourage people to make connections, then once restrictions are eased, other activities will be explored.
- 3.11 Families are referred to the club by Southwood and Leslie Primary Schools, Collydean Community Centre and Fife Gingerbread, but then need to sign up themselves, which encourages them to take initiative. So far, 21 members have signed up to participate. On joining, families receive a welcome pack which includes vouchers for Farmfoods, recipes and ingredients. Members will be encouraged to share what they are making on the Facebook page. Information on sources of help like Best Start Grants and the Scottish Child Payment will also be posted to the page to raise awareness of these new benefits. In addition, as part of their welcome pack, members are invited to open a Credit Union account. If they stick with the club, they will receive a £10 Credit Union voucher to go towards their savings.
- 3.12 The project is also about engaging with members by asking them what they want to get out of the experience. As this club is newly launched, there are many opportunities to learn and explore new ways of supporting families.

Free School Meals

- 3.13 Scottish Government has recently confirmed there will be a Summer and Winter 'Family Pandemic Payment' - £100 for every child of school age who receives FSM based on the qualifying criteria. To qualify, children and young people need to have been registered for Free School Meals on the following dates:
- Payment 1 - on 30 May 2021 or subsequently register and are eligible for Free School Meals by the end of the school term prior to the Summer 2021 break.
 - Payment 2 - on 30 November 2021, or subsequently register and are eligible for Free School Meals by the end of the school term prior to the Winter 2021 break.
- 3.14 Fife Council is aiming to make the Summer 2021 payments mid-June, as the term ends 24 June 2021.

Low-Income Pandemic Payment

- 3.15 Scottish Government have also confirmed a £130 Low Income Pandemic Payment which will be paid to all those entitled to CTR, recipients of specific council tax

exemption types and people in temporary accommodation or receiving housing support who don't have a liability for council tax.

- 3.16 Numbers on how many individuals will benefit from this payment is not currently known, but expectations are that it may be a large number given Fife's CTR caseload is around 31,000.

Supporting emergency resilience

- 3.17 A further grants scheme of £40,000 was made available to support emergency resilience groups in local communities with essential items and training. Whilst these groups may not always be directly involved in the delivery of food and welfare support, they have been a lifeline for many with the ability to connect vulnerable individuals and families with local groups and services.

4.0 Immediate Recovery Actions

- 4.1 The immediate recovery actions aim to help individuals and families who are accessing support, not only with food, but with a wider network of wraparound support. A key factor in work going forward will be the shape and extent of support and how to expand and sustain community initiatives, particularly those which work directly with users in terms of participation and the provision of wider support. Whilst pockets of funding have enabled new services to be set up, many of the immediate recovery actions will be undertaken within existing resources.

Action Area	Project Description	Timescale (start)
Income Maximisation	Support has been made available to CARF to increase their staffing capacity to respond more quickly to referrals from food providers for income maximisation services.	1 May 2021
Debt Management	Fife Council's Welfare Support Assistants have been working with colleagues in CARF to increase capacity and take up of debt advice.	Early 2021
Re-establishing Community Job Clubs	Community Job Clubs have started to re-open by appointment only. Over the coming months there will be a phased re-opening with the expectation that the telephone service will remain to provide extra support to individuals in crisis.	April 2021
Befriending Support Programme	Fife Voluntary Action has been supported to expand their programme to enable them to work with more individuals, as well as to bring befrienders together in a support network so they can share challenges, develop solutions and amplify learning.	April 2021

Promotion of food and welfare support	A welfare support communications campaign titled "Help with..." to raise awareness about the help Fife Council and partners can provide. The first phase of this "Help with... Money & Benefits" went live in April with another phase covering Food due to be launched later in 2021.	April 2021
Community Food Network	The work of the Community Food Development Team has been refreshed to better align the resource with supporting existing community food providers to come together to plan and coordinate provision across Fife, as well as share practice, ideas and identify potential areas for joint activity. Initial invites to community food providers to explore the development of a Good Food Network for Fife will be sent after the Easter break.	April/May 2021
Food Learning	The review of the service offering from the Community Food Development Team has also identified the need to strengthen work around food learning as a means of supporting households and families to cook meals from scratch, budget their household income to maximise their food purchases and learn how to minimise food waste. This requires further development before launching from October this year.	October 2021

5.0 Long Term Approach to Food Insecurity

5.1 The Food Stakeholder Survey identified views on how best to address food insecurity long-term:

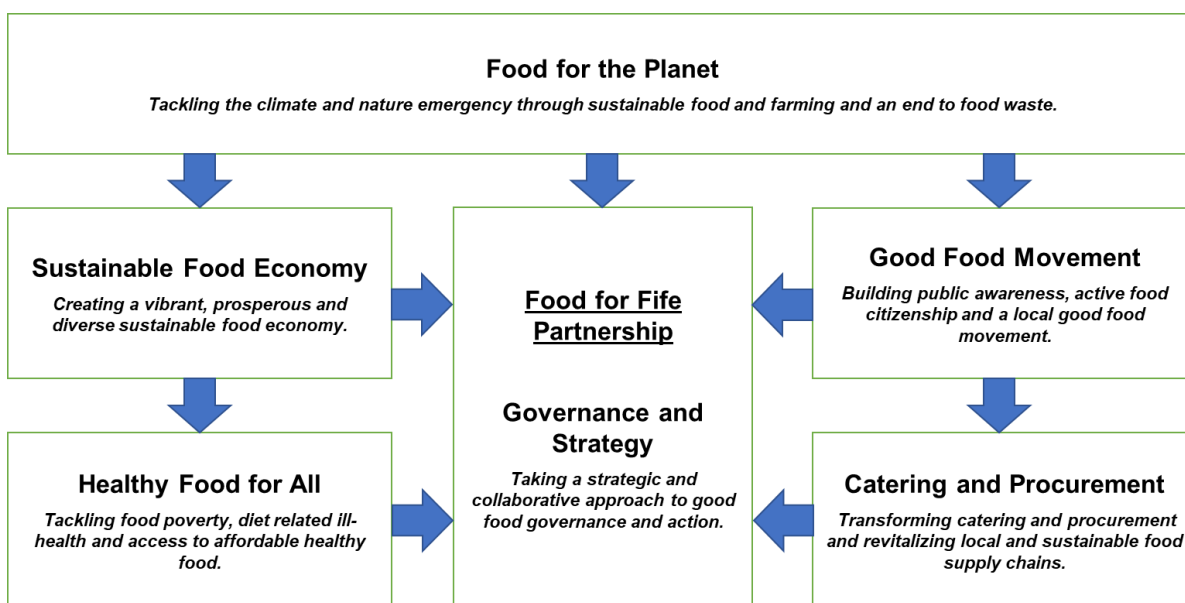
- There was a strong sense that food provision needed to be community led, maximising what people know about their local neighbourhood with support as appropriate in the form of funding and/or staff time.
- There's a need to build a resilient, sustainable food infrastructure with medium- to long-term investment in projects such as local growing initiatives.
- To tackle the underlying causes of poverty, respondents suggested a range of responses: environmental education, jobs creation, employment and training, and payment of the Real Living Wage.
- Locally based models could support healthier diets and lifestyle and make food supplies more sustainable. We could look at more joined-up approaches to health and diet in terms of food insecurity across public agencies with a suggestion to look at social prescribing.

- 5.2 Following on from that final point, skills and knowledge around what constitutes a healthy diet and being a healthy weight are also important as well as basic food skills. Here it is important to note other work happening across Fife, including the Public Health Whole Systems Approach in Cowdenbeath and Dunfermline linking early intervention and the prevention of obesity in children and young people, which can influence food poverty and food insecurity. The Fife Food Champions are a network who have been trained to deliver key food and health messages along with cooking skills, and are an example of work that links up the threads of community-led approaches and building knowledge and skills
- 5.3 In addition, wider questions around food supply and waste have been raised during the pandemic. The recovery and reform agenda highlighted food poverty and food insecurity as cross-cutting issues that align with wider economic and environmental challenges within Fife. Food poverty and insecurity can be influenced by various elements of the wider food system, including economic and environmental challenges like the procurement of local food.
- 5.4 To take this forward, Fife Council was awarded funding from Sustainable Food Places to develop a Food Strategy for Fife and establish more collaborative partnership working across the food system. The proposed framework for this strategy is as follows.

5.5 **Framework for a Food Strategy**

- 5.6 It is proposed that a food strategy be developed for Fife, which is supported by strong and collaborative partnership working between individuals and organisations at every level, from community groups and businesses to third sector organisations and public services.
- 5.7 The strategy will cover key food issues, including food insecurity. The proposed framework for this is a six-pillar model (a more detailed diagram is available in Appendix 1):

Figure 1: Six Pillars of Fife’s Food Partnership



- 5.8 The six pillars will form the basis for a food strategy and action plan, which will be developed and regularly reviewed in partnership with an open conversation between

a wide range of stakeholders. The food strategy and action plan will be delivered by a partnership working group that will help to coalesce and coordinate action as well as measuring progress in terms of both activity and outcomes.

5.9 The below table gives a summary of the key milestones for the next few months to take forward this work.

Food Summit (including visioning workshop)	22 June 2021
Partnership working group	June 2021
Food Strategy and Action Plan	Phase 2 – July 2021

5.10 How does food insecurity fit into this framework?

5.11 The availability and access to affordable food is essential. The Marmot report (2020) found that if those on benefits subscribe to the NHS Eatwell Guide, they will need to spend 75% of their disposable income on food, which will leave nothing for rent, gas, electricity and other costs. The most deprived, Marmot asserts, spend more than a third of their income on housing and during the pandemic, food insecurity has only got worse. Therefore, prevention of food insecurity has to be the key element in any food strategy for Fife in the long-term. Specifically, it needs to address the following:

- Low income and job insecurity
- Debt
- Access to local, low cost, high quality food products
- Low levels of positive mental wellbeing
- Low levels of literacy and numeracy skills to balance household budgets
- Community leadership/ownership of actions to tackle root causes of poverty
- Food skills – healthy diets, storage, cooking, food labels and food safety

5.12 The ‘Healthy Food for All’ pillar will set out how good food is a right, not a privilege and that everyone should be able to eat healthily every day, no matter who they are, what they do or where they live. Key to achieving this is:

- ensuring all those in danger of going hungry or suffering malnutrition can access nutritious food while working to address the underlying causes of food poverty. Continuing to provide Council services like Café Inc and supporting community food resilience will be key to ensuring access to food for individuals and families. In addition, providing wider access to support through these services such as money and debt advice, income maximisation and welfare support will help people to address the reasons they are food insecure.
- raising awareness of what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet and giving people the skills, resources and support needed to feed themselves well. This is also essential to prevent ill health and to manage existing health conditions. Also raising awareness of how the food we eat can significantly impact our energy, cognition, emotions and development, especially in children and young people. Programmes that promote resilience by building skills and confidence around healthy living and eating will be integral to reducing food insecurity.
- changing people’s food environment - from institutional settings to high streets - to ensure affordable healthy food is available and accessible to all.

- 5.13 Instilling a sense of community leadership and ownership needs to be key to a long-term approach to food and as such will be covered by the 'Good Food Movement' pillar of the food strategy. This is about making the shift towards healthier and more sustainable food and requires high public awareness of food issues and widespread participation in food-related activity, by both individuals and institutions, as part of a growing movement of active food citizenship.
- 5.14 To address aspects of food insecurity, the main cross-cutting reform priorities presented to Policy & Coordination Committee in March 2021 can help. The Tackling Poverty & Crisis Prevention reform work programme has played a key role in setting out how Fife Partnership will address poverty by taking a more preventative stance by taking forward a new No Wrong Door approach and by looking at cost reduction and concessions. The No Wrong Door ethos will encourage collaboration between services and is more focused on early intervention and solving customer's problems before they get to the crisis stage. This will involve more wraparound support like income maximisation and debt advice to ensure customers receive a package of support that meets their needs.
- 5.15 In addition, Community Wealth Building provides an opportunity to renew procurement processes and allow for greater use of local supply chains. The power of using the public purse through procurement and catering to buy more local food can build a strong local food economy. The menus chosen by public sector organisations can affect the health of children and adults accessing them.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 In January 2021, the Social Renewal Advisory Board, which was set up by Scottish Ministers to make proposals that can renew Scotland once we start to emerge from the pandemic, identified a call to action to "ensure everyone can access nutritious, culturally appropriate and affordable food". To get there, the Board recommends:
1. Investing in local food partnership working.
 2. Investing in public sector food to increase access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food for all and build greater local food resilience.
 3. Tackle non-financial barriers to food.
- 6.2 This paper has outlined how Fife Council and partners will seek to address this call to action by considering immediate actions for recovery and by taking a wider look at food insecurity longer term by developing a food strategy and exploring aspects of Community Wealth Building that can utilise local food production in a wider response to the food network in Fife.
- 6.3 At the heart of Fife's response to food insecurity is an approach that links food with the economy and environment and promotes healthy living, both mentally and physically. Maintaining a dignified approach to supporting vulnerable groups and supporting people to address the underlying issues of food insecurity are integral to making Fife a fairer place to live, even more so during this time of hardship.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

- Dignity: Ending Hunger Together in Scotland, June 2016. Available [here](#).
- Food Insecurity in Fife, May 2018
- Food Insecurity and Coronavirus (COVID-19), May 2020
- Addressing Food Insecurity in Summer 2020, June 2020
- Social Renewal Advisory Board, January 2021. Available [here](#).
- Tackling Poverty & Crisis Prevention, March 2021. Available [here](#).
- Climate Emergency Workstream, March 2021. Available [here](#).

Appendices

1. 6 Pillars for the Fife food system

Report Contact

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Food for the Planet - Tackling the climate and nature emergency through sustainable food and farming and an end to food waste. CCZW and Fife Environment Partnership

Tackling the climate and nature emergency is the single greatest challenge of our time and will require a radical shift in our food and farming system towards agroecological production, sustainable diets and an end to food waste. By changing what we, as individuals and institutions, choose to eat, we can transform what, how and where food is produced and thus help to minimise any negative impacts on climate and biodiversity. At the same time, by tackling the tragedy of food waste, we can balance the need to feed a growing global population while remaining within planetary boundaries.



Sustainable Food Economy - Creating a vibrant, prosperous and diverse sustainable food economy. Economic Development and Food for Fife

Make good food a defining characteristic of where you live depends, ultimately, on ensuring healthy and sustainable food businesses - from producers and processors to retailers and caterers - are mainstreamed as part of a revitalised local food economy. Putting good food entrepreneurs and enterprises at the heart of local economic development and promoting them to consumers not only ensures that buying healthy and sustainable food becomes the easy choice but also creates jobs, businesses and prosperity while regenerating high streets and city centres.



Fife's Food Partnership

Food Governance and Strategy - Taking a strategic and collaborative approach to good food governance and action.

To transform a place's food culture and food system a joined-up strategic approach and committed long-term collaboration is required between individuals and organisations across every sector and at every level, from community grassroots and third sector organisations to businesses and council leaders.

Key to achieving this are: a strong cross-sector food partnership and an inspiring and ambitious food vision backed by a clear strategy and action plan.



Good Food Movement - Building public awareness, active food citizenship and a local good food movement. Climate Action Fife partnership project, Fife Council with Greener Kirkcaldy, FCCAN and Fife College.

A shift towards healthier and more sustainable food requires high public awareness of food issues and widespread participation in food-related activity, by both individuals and institutions, as part of a growing movement of active food citizenship. Key to achieving this are: communications and events that can inspire people about the role, importance and joy of good food; practical engagement opportunities such as growing, cooking and sharing food in every community; and a facilitated network through which food actors of every kind can connect and collaborate on-line and in person as part of a local good Healthy Food for All food movement.



Catering and Procurement - Transforming catering and procurement and revitalizing local and sustainable food supply chains. FC Facilities, NHS

Catering and procurement provide a uniquely powerful lever for promoting good food. By transforming catering across a wide range of settings - from nurseries, schools and colleges through hospitals and care homes to workplace canteens and smaller scale catering outlets - it is possible not only to improve the eating habits of many thousands of people but also to create the large scale demand for healthy, sustainable and local food needed to underpin a fundamental shift in the food production and supply system.



Healthy Food for All - Tackling food poverty, diet related ill-health and access to affordable healthy food. Food Insecurity group and Community Development team

Good food is a right not a privilege and that everyone should be able to eat healthily every day, no matter who they are, what they do or where they live. Key to achieving this are: ensuring all those in danger of going hungry or suffering malnutrition are able to access nutritious food while working to address the underlying causes of food poverty; raising awareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and giving people the skills, resources and support needed to feed themselves well; and changing people's food environment - from institutional settings to high streets - to ensure affordable healthy food is available and accessible to all.



26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 6

Progress Update on Fife Gypsy Traveller Services

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose

The report is to update members on site improvement at the three permanent Gypsy Travellers sites at Kelty, Thornton and Cupar, and in relation to services for nomadic Gypsy Travellers as outlined in the Fife Co-operation Policy.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to –

1. Support the progress made in relation to improving the Gypsy Traveller Site at Tarvit Mill, Cupar.
2. Agree to the proposed next phase of improvements at Heathery Wood, Thornton.
3. Support the development of the Fife Gypsy Traveller Cooperation Policy following the evaluation of the Negotiated Stopping Places pilot across Scotland.

Resource Implications

Housing Revenue Account Capital Funding has been identified to support the improvement at Tarvit Mill and Heatherywood.

£2.17m of HRA capital has been identified in 2021-23 to support this important housing improvement work.

Legal & Risk Implications

There is a risk that not improving the living conditions of Gypsy Traveller families and their children will not enhance the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA and summary form have been completed – the summary form is attached to the report. (Appendix 1)

Consultation

Consultation is ongoing with council tenants at the 3 permanent Gypsy Traveller sites by the Tenant Participation Team. One to one consultation has taken place at Tarvit Mill, Cupar. Group meetings were organised during April and May 2021 to ensure that there is meaningful engagement with tenants.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Council owns and manages three sites in Fife: Heatherywood, Thornton which has 18 pitches; Tarvit Mill, Cupar which has 20 pitches; and Thorntonwood, Kelty which has 12 pitches. Each pitch contains the following:

- Hard standing for parking a caravan and a car or other vehicle.
- An amenity block with toilet/shower/bath, kitchen area, hot and cold water and storage
- A mixture of self-contained caravans, and chalet style accommodation

1.2 The Council has undertaken work at Heatherywood to improve the site beyond the Scottish Government's minimum standards for Gypsy Traveller Sites. This work has included-

- Extending the amenity block
- Installing new kitchens and bathrooms in amenity blocks
- Improving insulation within the amenity blocks

The work has been undertaken across all 18 pitches on the site. The feedback from the tenants on the site has been positive.

1.3 The permanent sites are on the Housing Revenue Account and tenants on the sites have a tenancy agreement, modelled on the Scottish Secure Tenancy which confers rights to stay on the site. Rents are paid on the pitches and tenants on the site pay Council Tax.

1.4 Gypsy Traveller services include providing assistance to nomadic Gypsy Travellers who stop in Fife for a limited period during the Travelling Season (March-October). These temporary encampments are managed in accordance with the Councils Gypsy Traveller Co-operation policy. The Council has also been following Covid guidance in relation to managing temporary encampments which has been provided by the Scottish Government and COSLA.

1.5 There is current work and consultation on-going within the Scottish Government and COSLA in relation to Negotiated Stopping Places (more details are provided further in the report) and a "design guide" is being developed for improvements on Permanent Sites.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 **Improvements to Permanent Sites** – Tarvit Mill has been identified as the first site in Fife to have chalets installed. Work has been delayed due to on-going Covid 19 restrictions; however, a lot of preparatory work has been completed:
- Full drainage surveys of the site have been concluded;
 - Decant area has been identified to relocate people who wish to remain on the site during the works;
 - Electrical surveys have been completed to ensure that Chalets can be connected to the power grid;
 - A draft site layout plan has been developed to take account of revised fire standards;
 - Full refurbishment of septic tank is underway;
- 2.2 Consultations have taken place at Tarvit Mill on a one-to-one basis to ensure that plans fully reflect the needs and aspirations of tenants across the site. Group work also started in April and has continued in May 2021 to ensure full engagement with tenants. The next stage beyond this will be the establishment of the decant pitches to allow work to commence on creating the new pitches and install Chalets. Whilst this is on-going a procurement exercise is underway to purchase the Chalets to be installed on the site. The aim is to complete most work over the Summer / Autumn in 2021/22 and be fully complete by March 2022.
- 2.3 Heatherywood has had new amenity blocks installed in 2019. There is a recognition that the tenants at the site wish Chalets also to be installed. Within financial year 22-23 work will start to improve Heatherywood with Chalets being established on the site.
- 2.4 There are no current plans to alter provision at the third site at Thornton Wood, Kelty. There will need to be a full consultation with tenants on this site in 2022 to establish what their aspirations are and how these can be accommodated.
- 2.5 **Design Guide** – the Scottish Government and COSLA have been developing a design guide for the improvement of permanent sites. Consultation feedback has been provided in relation to the draft design guide. As part of this it has been indicated that Fife Council plans are running in advance of the guide and that work is on-going. The Scottish Government has proposed a total of £20m grant funding in 2021-23 to support the redevelopment of permanent sites in Scotland – an expression of interest has been submitted by Fife Council in relation to this funding. Results will not be announced until late May 2021. If successful, the grant would give access to additional funding for permanent site improvements.
- 2.6 **Nomadic Gypsy Travellers** – Covid 19 guidance has led to a different approach across Scotland in relation to the management of temporary encampments. The presumption has been to negotiate Gypsy Travellers remaining in place if safe with the provision of sanitation, waste disposal and health advice. It has been the case in Fife that we have practiced the core principles of negotiated stopping, and positively influenced the Scottish practice for some years, including appropriate support for Gypsy Travellers, without defining formal stopping places that Gypsy Travellers could remain on.

- 2.7 **Negotiated Stopping Places** – COSLA and the Scottish Government have developed this proposal building on the learning from the Leeds Gate Transit site in England and from the management of the Covid 19 pandemic. The aim of the pilot is to develop safe stopping places for Nomadic Gypsy Travellers, ensure better access to services, and develop better knowledge of the needs of this community. There are three pilot authorities taking part – Moray, East Ayrshire, and Perth & Kinross. A Negotiated Stopping place means allowing Gypsy Travellers to remain at a location for an agreed period whilst adhering to a code of conduct. As part of this arrangement there will be the provision of sanitation, water, and waste disposal facilities. The pilot in three authorities is scheduled to run between February to August 2021 with a full evaluation in September.
- 2.8 **Fife Council Gypsy Traveller Co-operation Policy** – The Gypsy Traveller Co-operation Policy is very similar to what is being tested through the Negotiated Stopping Places pilot, without nominating actual stopping places, but was ahead of its time having first been approved in the late 1990s and revised significantly in 2004. Fife will continue to influence the national agenda going forward.

Currently, Gypsy Travellers site managers have a discussion with Gypsy Travellers to establish how long they will remain at the location, advise on the conduct expected and identify any needs for assistance. During Covid 19 where required we have offered assistance with sanitation and waste disposal. Legal action is only undertaken where the site is at an unsafe location and there is a risk to the Gypsy Travellers at the location. It is recommended that this approach be extended over the summer of 2021 and the revision of the Co-operation Policy takes place in the Autumn to allow learning from the Negotiated Stopping Places pilot to be included. The revised Co-operation Policy would be completed by December 2021.

- 2.9 **Covid 19 pandemic** – Gypsy Travellers have been identified as a group at particular risk of Covid 19 due to pre-existing health inequalities. During the pandemic advice has been given out to all Gypsy Travellers in relation to F.A.C.T.S and Testing. Additional support has been given to access food, heating assistance and health advice. It is proposed to continue to do this until the pandemic comes to an end. There has been a review of the learning in relation to this as part of Recovery Planning.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The further improvements on Gypsy Traveller sites allow Fife Council as a landlord to improve the conditions on sites and ensure that the facilities provided are well beyond the required site standards. The work is underway at Tarvit Mill and Heatherywood is programmed for start in 2022. Further discussion needs to be undertaken with Thorntonwood tenants in Kelty to establish the future for this site.
- 3.2 The review of the Co-operation Policy and incorporation of the learning from the Negotiated Stopping Places pilot will ensure that the complex issues around Unauthorised Encampments are explored again and will potentially lead to further developments in relation to this issue

John Mills

Head of Housing Services

List of Appendices

1. EQIA Assessment Summary Form

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

None.

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Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report

Which Committee report does this IA relate to (specify meeting date)?

Gypsy Traveller Update Report to Community & Housing Services Sub-Committee – 26th May 2021

What are the main impacts on equality?

Positive impacts to the Gypsy Traveller community in Fife due to the improvement of Gypsy Traveller Sites across Fife.

Greater opportunity for more positive working with Gypsy Traveller who are on unauthorised encampments.

What are the main recommendations to enhance or mitigate the impacts identified?

Consultation on the proposals for change have been taken to Gypsy Traveller tenants on existing sites.

If there are no equality impacts on any of the protected characteristics, please explain.

Positive impacts for Gypsy traveller community in terms of eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity.

Further information is available from: Name / position / contact details:

Paul Short, Service Manager, Housing, Health & Social Care

26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 7

Garden Fencing Policy – Progress Update

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report has been prepared to update members of the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee on the work being carried out to develop a Housing Services Garden Fencing Policy as part of our wider Estates Management Approach.

The report provides proposals to develop a consistent approach to requests for maintenance and replacement of garden fencing in Council properties.

Recommendation(s)

The Sub- Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the proposals detailed in this report and authorise officers to progress with the proposed Test of Change outlined in section 3.2 of this report.
2. Agree to continue to fund fencing repairs, maintenance and replacement from existing HRA Revenue and Capital budgets for the financial year 2021/2022
3. Agree to consult with the Fife Tenants Forum on the development of the policy.
4. Agree that a final report proposing a Garden Fencing Policy is submitted to this Sub-Committee in February 2022.

Resource Implications

Options will be provided to the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee in February 2022 with any resource implications arising from the implementation of a policy based on the evaluation of the proposed Test of Change to be considered as part of the HRA budget from 2022/23 onwards.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal or risk implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

An EQIA will be undertaken to identify and policy impact and will be submitted along with a final report on a proposed policy.

Consultation

Consultation will be carried out with Building Services colleagues to identify the most cost-effective delivery methods, and the Area Housing Teams across the 7 Committee Areas to understand demand from tenants.

It is proposed to consult further with Fife Tenants Forum as part of the policy development and with the Fife Environmental Partnership to ensure options are aligned to Climate Fife priorities.

1.0 Current Position

1.1 Current Position

- 1.2 Housing Services does not have a policy position on provision and maintenance of garden fencing which has led to an inconsistent approach along with a degree of dissatisfaction amongst tenants. Additionally, the current management guidance (Appendix 1) lacks detail creating a lack of clarity for tenants and leaves decision making open to a high degree of interpretation by local officers.
- 1.3 Decisions on whether or not a tenant's request for new fencing is approved lies jointly between Area Housing staff and Building Services staff. There remains a lack of transparency in decision making and feedback to tenants on the outcome of the decision. Fencing repairs can be requested by Housing Management Officers, Customer Service Advisers in the Contact Centre or by Local Offices. These repairs are charged to the Responsive Repairs budget in the HRA.
- 1.4 The majority of new/replacement fencing work is funded by devolved local area housing budgets. Occasionally replacement fencing is charged to the Responsive Repairs budget and there remains some ambiguity around process for distinguishing between these.
- 1.5 The maintenance and replacement of fencing contributes to our overall Estate Management Strategy through improving the look of our estates and provides tenants with a clearly defined private space within their tenancy. Furthermore, this has a direct impact on the Housing Service contribution to Place Leadership work at an Area level.
- 1.6 Failure to maintain fencing has a negative impact on how tenants perceive the look of their neighbourhood and consequentially performance within our ARC indicators

2.0 ISSUES AND OPTIONS

2.1 Current Spend of Fencing Repairs

Committee Area	No. of jobs raised	Total Spend 19/20	No. of jobs raised	Total Spend 18/19
South West Fife	60	£39,885.40	90	£20,893.30
Dunfermline	191	£40,598.47	130	£31,955.05
Cowdenbeath	369	£74,371.56	223	£63,168.93
Glenrothes	462	£99,655.67	486	£122,828.41
Kirkcaldy	252	£101,351.02	409	£134,964.27
Levenmouth	174	£163,649.15	307	£88,374.53
North East Fife	169	£50,187.06	231	£61,906.64
Total Spend via Responsive Repairs	1677 jobs raised in total	£569,698.33	1876 jobs raised in total	£524,091.13
Average Cost of Fencing Repair work	£339.71		£279.37	

For the financial year 2019/20 a total of **£569,698** was spent carrying out fencing repair work equating to 1,677 jobs completed. This was an increase of more than £45,000 from 2018/2019 for 199 less jobs.

2.2 Current Spend on New/Replacement Fencing

Any new or replacement fencing is funded by local area budgets. Areas have full control of their budget spend. However as of 2019/20 some replacement fencing work can be directly charged and completed under the Responsive Repairs budget if the criteria are met.

Committee Area	No of jobs complete	Total Spend 19/20	No of jobs complete	Total Spend 18/19
SWF	22	£26,877.93	24	£37,039.33
Dunfermline	10	£17,660.92	30	£59,645.16
COW	40	£102,315.00	51	£137,207.30
Glenrothes	26	£51,835.62	24	£21,067.79
Kirkcaldy	9	£20,493.16	12	£32,788.61
Levenmouth	43	£103,652.36	64	£59,930.00
NEF	11	£20,920.37	20	£19,706.40

<u>Total Area Spend</u>	161 new/replacement fences	<u>£343,755.36</u>	225 new/replacement fences	<u>£367,384.59</u>
<u>Average Cost of New/Replacement Fence</u>	£2135.13		£1632.82	

For 2019/20 in total **£343,755.36** was spent on new/replacement fencing work. This equated to 161 new/replacement fences across the 7 Areas. An average cost for a new/replacement fence for 19/20 was **£2,135.13** (This cost is inclusive of additional requirements i.e. removal of existing fence and any groundwork).

- 2.3 The volume of fences maintained and/or replaced needs to be considered in the context of the number of requests received. Table 1 highlights the number of requests made direct through the Customer Contact Centre; however, this does not report the number of ad-hoc requests made direct to the Housing Management Officers in their “patch”.

Committee Area	No. of new/replacement requests	No. of repair requests	Total no. of lagan requests related to fencing work
SWF	24	28	52
Dunfermline	42	45	87
Cowdenbeath	114	57	171
Glenrothes	86	78	164
Kirkcaldy	69	51	120
Levenmouth	72	78	150
NEF	51	48	99
Total	458	385	843

- 2.4 Historically a maintenance programme was undertaken to prolong the lifespan given that indicative lifespans would be extended from 10 years for an untreated fence to 20 years for a treated fence. This programme was discontinued as it became cost prohibitive and the impact on current fence conditions is likely to have been significant. Subsequently, local decisions have been made not to replace fencing when they have reached the end of their natural life unless the tenant meets the criteria of the current management guidance.
- 2.5 Additional complexity lies with unpicking the ownership of fences which creates a boundary between a Council property and an owner-occupied property. Historical house sales processes resulted in a variety of legal arrangements and consequently a consistent position has not been feasible.

- 2.6 In the absence of a detailed policy on this matter, the affordable housing programme has evolved whereby garden fencing has been provided in new build properties where the current criteria are not met for existing tenants. Consideration in policy development should be given to the feasibility of retrospective provision of garden fencing to ensure consistency across all tenanted properties.
- 2.7 Consideration should also be given to those tenants who currently do not have a clearly identified boundary within their garden area e.g. tenants within a 4 in a block. Feedback from tenants and elected members suggest that this would create a feeling of safety, security and ownership, further contributing to tenant's satisfaction.
- 2.8 It is proposed that officers develop a policy for consideration by this Sub-Committee that would be fair, equitable and transparent for tenants and based on clearly identified principles. Key considerations in developing the policy will include:
- Where a garden fence existed at tenancy sign up, this should be maintained and replaced as part of the tenancy agreement.
 - Where a garden shed existed at tenancy sign up this should be maintained and replaced as part of the tenancy agreement
 - Where a property has no clearly defined garden space, we provide fencing to create this for our tenants
 - Where fencing is provided, this should be in line with the Climate Fife agenda and maintained in a sustainable way with consideration given to hedging as an alternative. Appendix 2 provides additional information on options
 - Where a fence is within the curtilage of a Council owned property, it will be maintained by Housing Services.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 In order to fully understand tenants' views on the value of a garden fencing policy, it is recommended that officers consult with the Fife Tenants Forum and local Tenants & Residents Associations to explore policy options and associated impact on tenants' rents
- 3.2 To fully support a policy options appraisal, officers will undertake a **Test of Change project within a selected Area Committee Area**. The purpose of the Test would be to identify the quantity of garden fences, the condition of these fences, the challenges faced within mixed tenure estates, the potential demand from tenants who do not currently have clearly defensible space, the costs associated with any programme of replacement, and or maintenance along with a retrospective fitting approach.
- 3.3 In line with the Climate Fife Plan, officers will undertake work with colleagues within The Fife Environmental Partnership and partner services to ensure that any future policy position can be met from service resources and provides value for money for Council tenants.

- 3.4 Officers will bring a final report to the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee with a policy options appraisal based on the outcomes from the Test of Change project, and a proposed policy which will be fair equitable and transparent..

John Mills

Head of Housing Services

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Current Fencing Management Guidance

Appendix 2 – Fife Environmental Partnership – Garden Fencing Assessment

Report Contact

Mark McCall

Service Manager (Housing Estates and Safer Communities)

http://repairfinder/cgi-bin/fife_ft_index.pl?type=info&mode=desc&let=F&head=Fencing

Peter Nicol - Outlook Web App FISH - Knowledge Base Fife Council Repairfinder

Fife
COUNCIL

Contents > A-Z > F > Fencing [Exit](#)

Home Report a Change A-Z Info Pages Cancel a Job BS No Access Contractor List Gas Escapes Housing Technical Officer Patches Housing Management Officer Patches Standby Rota (Out of Hours) Task Book Tenant Responsibilities Local Office Emergency Access Process Maps Suggest Process Improvements

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Please select a letter from the list above

Fencing

Customer Service Process

New Or Replacement Fencing

New or replacement fencing should only be erected where there are clear health and safety issues. All requests for new fences or replacement of existing fences should be referred to a Housing Management Officer to deal with. **(This referral can be done via a Lagan enquiry. Housing -> Housing Information and Advice -> Estate Management -> Housing Land.)**

All orders for new or replacement fencing must be issued to Building Services or in accordance with the Tender Procedures and charged to financial budget HO14020102.

The current Council policy for the erection of new fencing or replacement of existing is:

If there are children or other vulnerable individuals resident in the property, then new or replacement fencing may be appropriate in the following situations:

- Front boundary fence onto busy road
- Property adjacent to a railway line, water course or other hazard
- Property bounds a steep drop
- Leave the property without fencing may cause an estate management problem.

HAVE YOU FOUND SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS PAGE? THEN [CLICK HERE](#) TO SEND A REPORT AND MAKE US AWARE. THANKS.

Appendix 2

<u>Fence type</u>	<u>Install notes</u>	<u>Maintenance requirements</u>	<u>Climate Fife positives</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Wooden fence with alternating vertical slates to allow wind through. Larch locally sourced no treatment required, fade to silver. Cedar or Douglas Fir similar.	Heavier spec materials last longer, more robust. Depending height use min 4" or 6" square cut, heart wood larch posts at 2m centres- solid and last 15-20 years with no treatment.		No chemicals used for fence treatment.	Clad with heartwood larch spanning rails c3"x1.5" and larch slats c3/4" alternating either side of the rails. This will cost c 30% more in materials than a treated softwood fence but will last longer with no use of chemicals
Hedge – whips eg hawthorn circa 18 months.	Cheapest & quickest to install, but need time to grow	Cut every 3-5 years. Litter removal.	Biodiversity, refuge, source of food, and corridor for wildlife	
Hedges - faster growing species eg hornbeam	Still relatively simple to install, grows faster	Cut slightly more frequently. Litter removal.		
"Instant" hedges				Trough Grown Instant Hedging Hedges Hedges Direct or https://www.instanthedges.co.uk/
Hedge screening/ facades				https://www.hedgesdirect.co.uk/acatalog/Green-Screens.html https://www.impactplants.co.uk/living-screens
Hedgelaying	Higher – skilled	Less frequent but more skilled maintenance		Home Page (hedgelaying.org.uk)
Bamboo screens/ panels	More robust are more expensive	As wooden fences for more robust	Sustainable growth	https://www.ukbamboo.com/product-category/bamboo-screens/
Recycled plastic	Similar method to traditional wood fence instal	As wooden fences	Material reuse	Recycled Plastic Fencing, Recycled Plastic Fences, Eco Fencing (kedel.co.uk)

26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 8

Decision Taken Under Delegated Authority – Transfer of former Blacklaw Primary School Site, Blacklaw Road, Dunfermline

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services, and
Ken Gourlay, Head of Asset and Facilities Management Services

Wards Affected: Ward 4

Purpose

To advise the Committee of a decision taken by the Executive Director, Enterprise & Environment, and the Executive Director, Communities acting under delegated authority to transfer the site of the former Blacklaw Primary School, Blacklaw Road Dunfermline to the Housing Revenue Account for the development of 80 affordable homes.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to note the decision taken under delegated authority, to transfer the site of Blacklaw Primary School, Blacklaw Road Dunfermline to the Housing Revenue Account to allow further affordable housing development to take place. Due to the transfer value of the site and the availability of additional grant funding being made available prior to the end of the financial year on 31 March 2021, the transfer required Executive Directors consent under delegated authority.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report. Where the decision taken under delegated authority gives rise to resource implications, details of these are set out in the relevant report and considered by the Executive Directors when considering the terms of the proposal.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Council's Standing Orders require that, when Executive Directors exercise their delegated authority in urgent or emergency situations, a note of the decisions taken in these circumstances is reported to the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee at its first possible meeting. This report fulfils that requirement for the Community & Housing Services Sub-Committee

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment Checklist is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices as set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Consultation

The Conveners for both the Asset and Corporate Services Sub-Committee, Councillor David Barratt and the Community & Housing Services Sub-Committee, Councillor Judy Hamilton and the Members for Ward 4 have been consulted.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Blacklaw Primary School was closed in 2011, the site cleared, and the first phase of affordable social housing developed and completed in 2012. The site is designated for residential development in the Fife Local Development Plan as site DUN024.
- 1.2 Recent discussions among Education & Children's Services, Planning Services and Housing Services confirmed that there was now sufficient capacity in the Primary School catchment area of the site to allow further affordable housing development to take place.
- 1.3 At the Assets and Corporate Services Sub-Committee on 22 August 2019, approval was granted to the method of valuation proposed for internal transfer of surplus Council assets to support the delivery of the Council's Affordable Housing Programme. It was agreed that such assets would be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account at 50% of market value.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 Additional funding for pipeline projects in the Affordable Housing Programme was offered by the Scottish Government if applications were received prior to 31st March 2021. A review of the Programme indicated that it would be possible for an application to be submitted to cover the cost to acquire the site of the former Blacklaw Primary School by the Housing Revenue Account and cover initial design and site investigation works.
- 2.2 The overall site area of the former Primary School is 2.62 hectares. By applying the market value for the site, its total market value is £1,830,000. By applying the conditions of the approval from the Assets and Corporate Services Sub-Committee on 22 August 2019, the internal transfer value is therefore £915,000.
- 2.3 The List of Officer Powers permits property transactions without prior committee consideration and consent up to a limit of £750,000. The internal transfer value of the site at £915,000 exceeds that limit. In order to meet the deadline for the grant application, formal consent to the proposed site transfer was required. The date of application being submitted for the funding was Thursday 18 March 2021, the same date as the last meeting of this Sub-Committee.

- 2.4 Accordingly, in accordance with the terms of sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.5 of the List of Officer Powers, a report was submitted to the Executive Director, Communities, the Executive Director Enterprise, the relevant Sub-Committee Conveners and Local Members, on 18 Mach 2021 seeking approval to proceed with the transfer of the site of the former Blacklaw Primary School at Blacklaw Road Dunfermline at a price of £915,000. Approval was received and accordingly the transfer effected, the grant application submitted and approved.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 In accordance with the provisions included in the List of Officer Powers, when the urgent powers provisions are invoked, the details of the approved transaction are now being submitted to the Committee for information and noting.

List of Appendices

1. The report dated 18th March 2021 submitted to the Executive Directors for approval
2. A location plan of the site.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

- N/A

Report Contact

Author Name Sharon Ward
Author's Job Title Lead Officer, Assets, Property Services
Workplace Bankhead Central, Bankhead Place, Glenrothes
Telephone: 03451 55 55 55, Ext No 440273
Email – sharon.ward@fife.gov.uk

PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS CONSULTATION

To:	Michael Enston, Executive Director - Communities
	Keith Winter, Executive Director - Enterprise and Environment
	Councillor Judy Hamilton, Convener, Community & Housing Services Sub-Committee
	Councillor David Barratt, Convener, assets and Corporate Services Sub-Committee
	Councillor James Calder
	Councillor Ross Paterson
	Councillor David J Ross
	Councillor Fay Sinclair
CC:	John Mills, Head of Housing Services
	Alan Paul, Senior Manager, Property Services
From:	Sharon Ward, Lead Officer, Asset Management – Strategic Planning & Capital Programmes, Property Services, Bankhead Central, Glenrothes
Date:	18th March 2021
Our Ref:	AHP Site Ref 060 – Blacklaw Road/Whitelaw Road Dunfermline (site of former Blacklaw Primary School)

In accordance with the current Fife Council: List of Officer Powers, the Executive Director(s), the relevant Committee Convener(s) and Local Members require to be consulted where the Council is looking to dispose of property by sale, including internal transfer between General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, when the proposed transaction is invoking the conditions outlined in para 4.3.2 and 4.3.5 of the List. The List of Officer Powers can be viewed at: [List of Officer Powers](#).

Details of the property transaction are outlined below:-

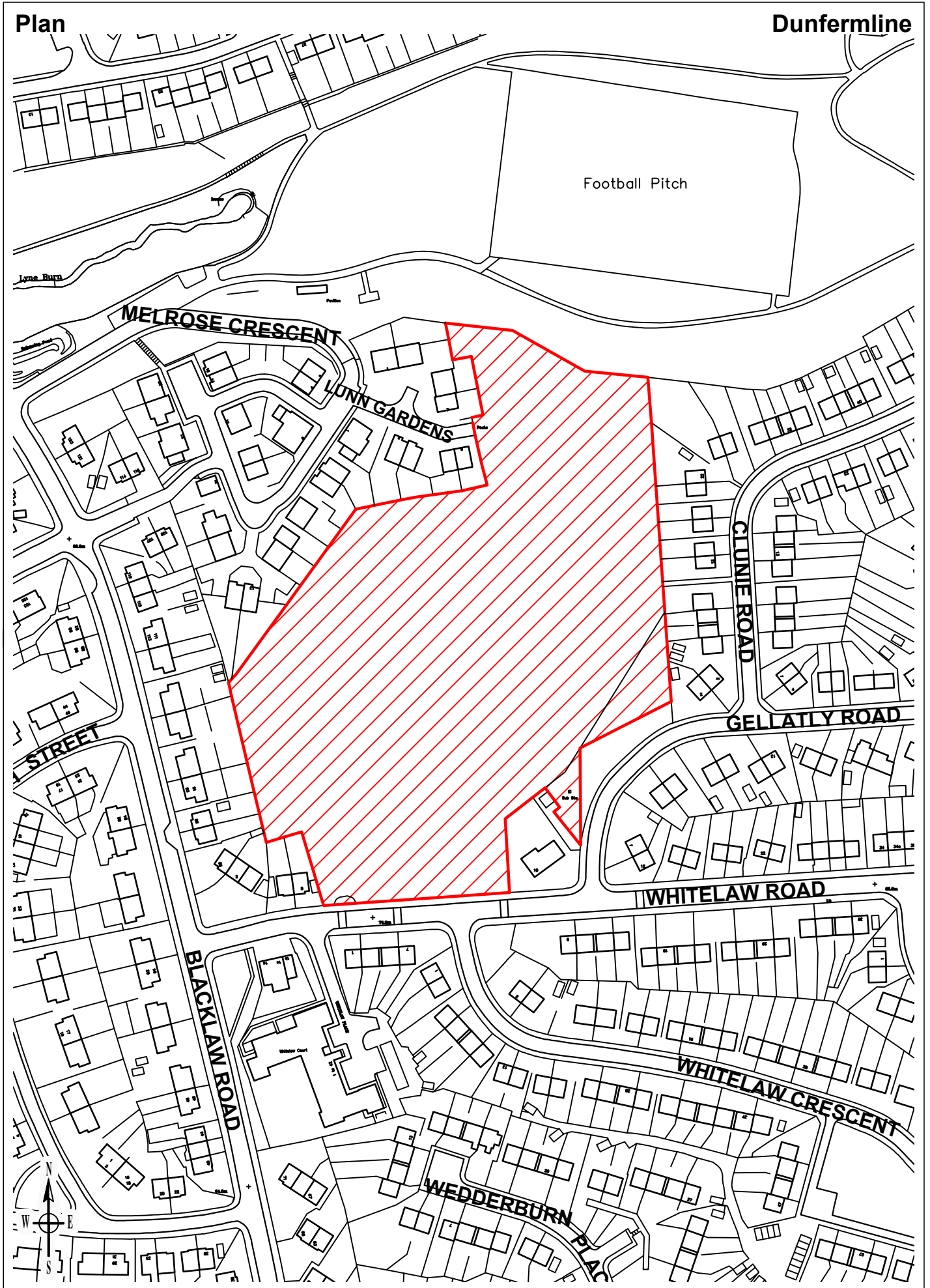
1. ADDRESS OF PROPERTY	Site at Blacklaw Road/Whitelaw Road Dunfermline (plan attached)
2. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (including area if appropriate)	This site extending to 2.62 Hectares forms the residual area of the former Blacklaw Primary School.
3. BACKGROUND	Blacklaw Primary School was closed in 2011, the site cleared, and the first phase of affordable social housing developed and completed in 2012. Due to the wider expansion of Dunfermline, additional housing development created capacity issues within particularly the Primary School network. As a result, further

	<p>development of this site was held in abeyance. This matter has been resolved so far as the Primary School catchment area for this site is concerned and agreement between Education and Housing Services has been reached for the residual part of the site to be released for development. The site is designated for residential development in the Fife Local Development Plan as site DUN024.</p> <p>At the Assets and Corporate Services Sub-Committee on 22 August 2019, approval was granted to the method of valuation proposed for internal transfer of surplus Council assets to support the delivery of the Council's Affordable Housing Programme. It was agreed that such assets would be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account at 50% of market value. This arrangement acknowledged the requirements of the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010, for disposals at less than best value, and is compliant with those conditions.</p>
<p>4. CURRENT POSITION</p>	<p>Plans are under way for the development of 80 houses on the site and details on design are under discussion with Planning and Transportation Services. Funding to acquire the site and cover initial design and site investigation works has been made available from the Scottish Government for this site within this current financial year, 2020/21, and can be accrued to this year's accounts if the appropriate applications are submitted before 31 March 2012.</p> <p>Given the overall site area, at 2.62 Hectares, the market value for the site has been determined as £1,830,000. By applying the conditions of the approval from the Assets and Corporate Services Sub-Committee on 22 August 2019, the internal transfer value is therefore £915,000.</p> <p>The List of Officer Powers permits property transactions without prior committee consideration and consent at £750,000. In order to proceed to make the grant application, formal consent to the proposed application and site transfer would first be required. The Community & Housing Services Sub-Committee whose remit includes all matters pertaining to the</p>

	<p>delivery of the Affordable Housing Programme holds its next meeting on Thursday 18th March 2021. The Assets and Corporate Services sub-Committee who consider all matters related to the Council's wider property transactions next meet on Wednesday 21 April 2021, which would not meet the deadline for the submission of the grant application to secure immediate funding.</p> <p>Accordingly, in accordance with the terms of sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.5 of the List of Officer Powers, requiring approval from the relevant executive Directors, Committee Conveners and Local Members, I am seeking approval to proceed.</p> <p>If approved, a report to both the Community & Housing Services Sub-Committee and the Assets and Corporate Services Sub-Committee for ratification of the decision will be submitted at the earliest opportunity.</p>
5. SERVICE COMMENTS	Housing Services support the proposed course of action as laid out within this briefing note.
6. RECOMMENDATION	Approval is sought to the immediate transfer of the surplus residual site of the former Blacklaw Primary School site at Blacklaw Road/Whitelaw Road Dunfermline to the Housing Revenue Account at a price of £915,000, as per the terms of the approved arrangements from the Asset and Corporate Services Sub-Committee on 22 August 2019.
7. ENCLOSURES	Location plan.
8. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	

A response is required no later than Thursday 25th March 2021. If you require any additional information, then please let me know as soon as possible.

NB. Please note that the information contained in this document is for consultation and approval under sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.5 of the List of Officer Powers and is commercially confidential at this time. It should not be shared with parties outwith the Council.



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Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee of 26th August 2021			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Physical Activity and Sport Strategy		Andrew Stokes, Paul Vaughan	Deferred to meeting 26.08.21.
Final Play Space Strategy	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan, Kevin O'kane	Expected at committee 26.08.21
Strathkinnes Cycle Path	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan, Alan Bisset	Expected June 2021. – schedule for meeting on 26.08.21
Community Learning and Development Plan - 2021-24	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Ross Martin	Ross Martin and Andrew Gallacher CLD Partnership Chair. - contact Ross Martin.

Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee of 11th November 2021			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Annual Assurance Statement and Pathway to Improvement			Expected Oct 2021
Community Safety Partnership Update			Expected Oct 2021
Strategic Housing Investment Plan			Expected Nov 2021

Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee of 3rd February 2022			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Minute of meeting			
Garden Fencing Policy		Mark Mccall	Finalised Garden Fencing Policy submitted for agreement by the Sub-committee.

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Management of Community Halls and Centres		Andrew Stokes	2nd report, following approval at Nov 2020 meeting. Deferred due to covid, on hold, tbc.
Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre (LC) - Integration and Improvement of Provision	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	Remitted from Policy & Co-ordination Committee (previously Executive Committee business) requires funding, Andy MacLellan to advise if report required at later date.
Community Assets and Services: Prices and Concessions	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Samantha Pairman, Daryl Keddie-cu, Andrew Stokes	Deferred due to Covid, expected 2021
Abbeyview Community Hub	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	To be confirmed. - requires funding, Andy Maclellan to advise if report required at later date.
New Build Affordable Housing; Phase 3 Update & Proposed Phase 4 (2022-32) Principles		Helen Wilkie	Phase 3 - information via briefing note Phase 4 - covered through workshop, tbc
Housing Acquisitions Policy - 2019/20 Update	Housing Services	Helen Wilkie	Deferred due to Covid To be discussed at P & C Oct/Nov 2020 before coming to C&Hsg Committee
Trust Management & Governance	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Tim Kendrick	TBC - progress report(s), as appropriate, on detailed proposals as they were developed
Lochore Meadows Phase 2 Proposals - Golf	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	TBC
St Andrews Skateboard Park (Pipelands)	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	Deferred due to Covid

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) Progress Report - Year 2	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Sharon Douglas	Annual progress report (year 3) - contract will need reviewed/extended. Report previously considered 08.11.18.- required October 21 meeting? TBC
Rockgelly	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan	Date to be advised.
Greenspace Strategy	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Tim Kendrick, Kevin Okane	Date to be advised.
Public Consultation - Fife Local Policing Plan 2020 - 2023			Email from Alexander Brodie, Superintendent (Operations), Police Scotland, Fife Division dated 26.11.19 refers. TBC
HRA Capital Investment			Meeting tbc.
Public Social Partnership Review			meeting tbc.
RRTP Update Year 2			meeting tbc.
Area Lettings Plan			meeting tbc
Energy Efficiency Standard for Scotland's Social Housing (EESH 2)			
Local Housing Strategy Jan-March 2022			meeting tbc

26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 10(a)

Affordable Housing Programme (Public Report) – 8 New Houses - High Street, Methil

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services
Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation & Environment
Morag Ferguson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Caroline MacDonald, Procurement Service Manager

Wards Affected: 22

Purpose

As part of the ongoing implementation of Phase 3 (2017-22) of the Fife Affordable Housing Programme, this report seeks authority to continue negotiations and conclude legally binding agreements with the Developer as outlined in the relevant appendix:

In the case of 251 High Street, Methil (Appendix A)

(a) To purchase newly constructed units to Housing for Varying Needs Standards.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and note that a private paper detailing the (commercial) terms are to be considered later in the agenda.

Resource Implications

The Council has identified capital borrowing capacity within the 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for the delivery of new Council housing. In addition, the Scottish Government has allocated housing subsidy funding to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing. Hence there is adequate funding available to deliver the project.

Legal & Risk Implications

Competence & Vetting

Developers undergo technical competence and financial vetting assessments as part of the pre-award process.

Land Acquisition

The contract for the acquisition of the land will be subject to:

- (a) the Developer exhibiting a valid title to their site to the Councils satisfaction; and
- (b) the Developer obtaining full planning permission and any other necessary consents for the construction of the units

Procurement

The Procurement Scotland Regulations 2016 are not deemed to apply to the Development at 251 High Street Methil. The Development falls within the grounds for exclusion from the Procurement legal framework as it is considered an acquisition of land.

The risk of a legal challenge to the award of the contract on the ground they will not be publicly advertised, competitive procurement is low.

The Procurement threshold for works contracts is £5.45M. The High Street, Methil development is below the threshold, it only requires a Contract Award Notice to be published within 30 days of the contract being signed.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices as set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Consultation

The Committee Convener and Members for the ward have been consulted.

Consultation has also taken place with the members of the Affordable Housing Programme Board.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council and its partners are committed to delivering 3,500 new affordable homes by May 2022.
- 1.2 To achieve this goal the Council is developing or redeveloping land/buildings in Council ownership; working with key partners including the Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) and the Scottish Government; and, as in this case, engaging with private sector landowners, their agents and Developers.
- 1.3 This report focuses upon proposals to deliver new council homes for social rent that has emerged from the process of private sector engagement which will continue throughout the life of the Affordable Housing Programme.
- 1.4 There is considered to be further scope to deliver additional units by similar means although the precise mechanisms and the associated risks will vary and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 Detailed information regarding the proposed development is contained within the relevant Appendix (Private Report Only).
- 2.2 To ensure that all potential Developers are aware of, and how to access, the affordable housing programme Fife Council periodically advertises on Public Contracts Scotland to invite contact from appropriately skilled and experienced Developers who can construct housing which meets the Council's requirements on their own land within Fife. The notice was last published on 11 Jul 18 with no respondents. Previous similar notices were published in 2017, 2014, 2013 & 2010.
- 2.3 Inflation costs within housing construction have increased 16% since the latter developments of Phase II of the programme were approved (*source BCIS Q3 2015 to Q3 2019*). Compounding factors include:
 - The ongoing recovery in the housebuilding sector in Fife (increase house completions in Fife in all sectors 805 [2013-14] to 1,923 [2017-18]. *Source Scottish Government new build completions*).
 - An expansion of affordable housing construction throughout Scotland (increase in completions from 7,012 [2013-14] to 8,534 [2017-18] *Source Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme: new affordable housing approvals: 2000-01 to 2017-18*).

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 This proposal offers an opportunity to deliver much needed new affordable housing within the parameters of the programme as well as supporting ongoing development.
- 3.2 Further work is required to conclude the proposed deal. Initial investigations and negotiations have assumed an ability to deliver the project but remaining risks and issues will be managed as the projects move forward.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

- Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2014 (HNDA)
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017/18-21/22 (SHIP)

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26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 10(b)

Affordable Housing Programme (Public Report) – 34 New Houses – Westwood Park, Glenrothes

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation & Environment

Morag Ferguson, Head of Legal & Democratic Services

Caroline MacDonald, Procurement Service Manager

Wards Affected: 13

Purpose

As part of the ongoing implementation of Phase 3 (2017-22) of the Fife Affordable Housing Programme, this report seeks authority to continue negotiations and conclude a legally binding agreement with the Developer as outlined in the relevant appendix:

- (a) To purchase newly constructed units to Housing for Varying Needs Standards.

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and note that a private paper detailing the (commercial) terms are to be considered later in the agenda.

Resource Implications

The Council has identified capital borrowing capacity within the 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for the delivery of new Council housing. In addition, the Scottish Government has allocated housing subsidy funding to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing. Hence there is adequate funding available to deliver the project.

Legal & Risk Implications

Competence & Vetting

Developers undergo technical competence and financial vetting assessments as part of the pre-award process.

Land Acquisition

The contract for the acquisition of the land will be subject to:

- (a) the Developer exhibiting a valid title to their site to the Councils satisfaction; and
- (b) the Developer obtaining full planning permission and any other necessary consents for the construction of the units.

Procurement

The Procurement Scotland Regulations 2016 are not deemed to apply to the Development at Westwood Park, Glenrothes (Appendix A). The Development falls within the grounds for exclusion from the Procurement legal framework as it is considered an acquisition of land.

The risk of a legal challenge to the award of these contracts on the ground they will be not publicly advertised, competitive procurement is low.

The Procurement threshold for works contracts is £5.45M. One of the remedies available following a successful procurement challenge for a contract above the threshold is an Ineffectiveness Order. The risk of this remedy being granted can be mitigated by publishing a Voluntary Ex Ante Transparency Notice ("VEAT Notice"). This remedy is applicable to the Westwood Park, Glenrothes Development.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices as set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Consultation

The Committee Convener and Members for the ward have been consulted.

Consultation has also taken place with the members of the Affordable Housing Programme Board.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council and its partners are committed to delivering 3,500 new affordable homes by May 2022.
- 1.2 To achieve this goal the Council is developing or redeveloping land/buildings in Council ownership; working with key partners including the Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) and the Scottish Government; and, as in this case, engaging with private sector landowners, their agents and Developers.
- 1.3 This report focuses upon proposals to deliver new council homes for social rent that has emerged from the process of private sector engagement which will continue throughout the life of the Affordable Housing Programme.
- 1.4 There is considered to be further scope to deliver additional units by similar means although the precise mechanisms and the associated risks will vary and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 Detailed information regarding the proposed development is contained within the relevant Appendix (Private Report Only).
- 2.2 To ensure that all potential Developers are aware of, and how to access, the affordable housing programme Fife Council periodically advertises on Public Contracts Scotland to invite contact from appropriately skilled and experienced Developers who can construct housing which meets the Council's requirements on their own land within Fife. The notice was last published on 11 Jul 18 with no respondents. Previous similar notices were published in 2017, 2014, 2013 & 2010.
- 2.3 Inflation costs within housing construction have increased 16% since the latter developments of Phase II of the programme were approved (*source BCIS Q3 2015 to Q3 2019*). Compounding factors include:
 - The ongoing recovery in the housebuilding sector in Fife (increase house completions in Fife in all sectors 805 [2013-14] to 1,923 [2017-18]. *Source Scottish Government new build completions*).
 - An expansion of affordable housing construction throughout Scotland (increase in completions from 7,012 [2013-14] to 8,534 [2017-18] *Source Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme: new affordable housing approvals: 2000-01 to 2017-18*).

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 This proposal offers an opportunity to deliver much needed new affordable housing within the parameters of the programme as well as supporting ongoing development.
- 3.2 Further work is required to conclude the proposed deal. Initial investigations and negotiations have assumed an ability to deliver the project but remaining risks and issues will be managed as the projects move forward.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

- Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2014 (HNDA)
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017/18-21/22 (SHIP)

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26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 10(c)

Affordable Housing Programme (Public Report) – 34 New Houses – Boreland Road, Dysart

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services
Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation & Environment
Morag Ferguson, Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Caroline MacDonald, Procurement Service Manager

Wards Affected: 12

Purpose

As part of the ongoing implementation of Phase 3 (2017-22) of the Fife Affordable Housing Programme, this report seeks authority to continue negotiations and conclude legally binding agreements with the Developers as outlined in the relevant appendix:

In the case of Boreland Road, Dysart (Appendix A)

- (a) To acquire the site for the development of new affordable council houses for rent; and
- (b) For the construction of new affordable council houses for rent (recognising the stated figures may be adjusted as the detail in the proposals is worked through).

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and that a private paper detailing the (commercial) terms are to be considered later in the agenda.

Resource Implications

The Council has identified capital borrowing capacity within the 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for the delivery of new Council housing. In addition, the Scottish Government has allocated housing subsidy funding to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing. Hence there is adequate funding available to deliver the project.

Legal & Risk Implications

Competence & Vetting

Developers undergo technical competence and financial vetting assessments as part of the pre-award process.

Land Acquisition

The contract for the acquisition of the land will be subject to:

- (a) the Developer exhibiting a valid title to their site to the Councils satisfaction; and
- (b) the Developer obtaining full planning permission and any other necessary consents for the construction of the units; and
- (c) Terms being agreed for the award of the proposed construction contract to the Developer, Allanwater Homes Limited.

Procurement

The Development at Boreland Road, Dysart normally require a publicly advertised, competitive procurement exercise. However, a direct award without such an exercise can be justified where the works can only be supplied by a particular economic operator for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights and the Developers have secured exclusive control of this site. These contracts can only be awarded to these particular economic operators, so Fife Council are using the negotiated procedure without prior publishing of contract notices.

The risk of a legal challenge to the award of the contract on the ground they will be not publicly advertised, competitive procurement is low.

The Procurement threshold for works contracts is £5.45M. One of the remedies available following a successful procurement challenge for a contract above the threshold is an Ineffectiveness Order. The risk of this remedy being granted can be mitigated by publishing a Voluntary Ex Ante Transparency Notice ("VEAT Notice"). This remedy is applicable to the Boreland Road, Dysart Development.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices as set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Consultation

The Committee Convener and Members for the ward have been consulted.

Consultation has also taken place with the members of the Affordable Housing Programme Board.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council and its partners are committed to delivering 3,500 new affordable homes by May 2022.
- 1.2 To achieve this goal the Council is developing or redeveloping land/buildings in Council ownership; working with key partners including the Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) and the Scottish Government; and, as in this case, engaging with private sector landowners, their agents and Developers.
- 1.3 This report focuses upon proposals to deliver new council homes for social rent that has emerged from the process of private sector engagement which will continue throughout the life of the Affordable Housing Programme.
- 1.4 There is considered to be further scope to deliver additional units by similar means although the precise mechanisms and the associated risks will vary and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 Detailed information regarding the proposed development is contained within the relevant Appendix (Private Report Only).
- 2.2 To ensure that all potential Developers are aware of, and how to access, the affordable housing programme Fife Council periodically advertises on Public Contracts Scotland to invite contact from appropriately skilled and experienced Developers who can construct housing which meets the Council's requirements on their own land within Fife. The notice was last published on 11 Jul 18 with no respondents. Previous similar notices were published in 2017, 2014, 2013 & 2010.
- 2.3 Inflation costs within housing construction have increased 16% since the latter developments of Phase II of the programme were approved (*source BCIS Q3 2015 to Q3 2019*). Compounding factors include:
 - The ongoing recovery in the housebuilding sector in Fife (increase house completions in Fife in all sectors 805 [2013-14] to 1,923 [2017-18]. *Source Scottish Government new build completions*).
 - An expansion of affordable housing construction throughout Scotland (increase in completions from 7,012 [2013-14] to 8,534 [2017-18] *Source Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme: new affordable housing approvals: 2000-01 to 2017-18*).

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 This proposal offers an opportunity to deliver much needed new affordable housing within the parameters of the programme as well as supporting ongoing development.
- 3.2 Further work is required to conclude the proposed deal. Initial investigations and negotiations have assumed an ability to deliver the project but remaining risks and issues will be managed as the projects move forward.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:-

- Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2014 (HNDA)
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017/18-21/22 (SHIP)

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26th May, 2021

Agenda Item No. 10(d)

Affordable Housing Programme (Public Report) – 39 New Houses, Kirkcaldy High Street

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services
Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation & Environment
Morag Ferguson, Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Caroline MacDonald, Procurement Service Manager

Wards Affected: Ward No. 11

Purpose

As part of the ongoing implementation of Phase 3 (2017-22) of the Fife Affordable Housing Programme, this report seeks authority to continue negotiations and conclude a legally binding agreement to purchase newly constructed units with GMC Ventures Limited as outlined at 2.1 below, namely:

1. To acquire the sites for the development of new affordable council houses for rent; and
2. For the construction of new affordable council houses for rent (recognising the stated figures may be adjusted as the detail in the proposals is worked through)

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and note that a private paper detailing the (commercial) terms are to be considered later in the agenda.

Resource Implications

The Council has identified capital borrowing capacity within the 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan for the delivery of new Council housing. In addition, the Scottish Government has allocated housing subsidy funding to assist in the delivery of new affordable housing. Hence there is adequate funding available to deliver this project.

Legal & Risk Implications

Competence & Vetting

Developers undergo technical competence and financial vetting assessment as part of the pre-award process.

Land Acquisition

The contracts for the acquisition of the land will be subject to:

1. the Developer exhibiting a valid title to their site to the Councils satisfaction; and
2. the Developer obtaining full planning permission and any other necessary consents for the construction of the units; and
3. Terms being agreed for the award of the proposed construction contract to the Developer.

Procurement

The rules on public procurement normally require a publicly advertised, competitive procurement exercise for contracts of this value. However, a direct award without such an exercise can be justified where the works can only be supplied by a particular economic operator for reasons connected with the protection of exclusive rights and the Developers have secured exclusive control of their sites.

Therefore, the risk of a legal challenge to the award of these contracts on the ground they will be not publicly advertised, competitive procurement is low.

The Procurement threshold for works contracts is £5.45M. One of the remedies available following a successful procurement challenge for a contract above the threshold is an Ineffectiveness Order. The risk of this remedy being granted can be mitigated by publishing a Voluntary Ex Ante Transparency Notice ("VEAT Notice"). This remedy is applicable to this Development.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices as set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

Consultation

The Committee Convener and Members for the ward have been consulted.

Consultation has also taken place with the members of the Affordable Housing Programme Board.

Information regarding the progress through the planning process for the development is set out in the relevant appendix.

1.0 Background

1. The Council and its partners are committed to delivering 3,500 new affordable homes by May 2022.
2. To achieve this goal the Council is developing or redeveloping land/buildings in Council ownership; working with key partners including the Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) and the Scottish Government; and, as in this case, engaging with private sector landowners, their agents and Developers.
3. This report focuses upon proposals to deliver new council homes for social rent that has emerged from the process of private sector engagement which will continue throughout the life of the Affordable Housing Programme.
4. There is considered to be further scope to deliver additional units by similar means although the precise mechanisms and the associated risks will vary and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 Detailed information regarding the proposed development is contained within the relevant Appendix A (Private Report Only).
- 2.2 To ensure that all potential Developers are aware of, and how to access, the affordable housing programme Fife Council periodically advertises on Public Contracts Scotland to invite contact from appropriately skilled and experienced Developers who can construct housing which meets the Council's requirements on their own land within Fife. The notice was last published on 11 Jul 18 with no respondents. Previous similar notices were published in 2017, 2014, 2013 & 2010.
- 2.3 Inflation costs within housing construction have increased 16% since the latter developments of Phase II of the programme were approved (*source BCIS Q1 2015 to Q3 2019*). Compounding factors include:
 - The ongoing recovery in the housebuilding sector in Fife (increase house completions in Fife in all sectors 805 [2013-14] to 1,923 [2017-18]. *Source Scottish Government new build completions*).
 - An expansion of affordable housing construction throughout Scotland (increase in completions from 7,012 [2013-14] to 8,534 [2017-18] *Source Scottish Government, Affordable Housing Supply Programme: new affordable housing approvals: 2000-01 to 2017-18*).

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 This proposal offers an opportunity to deliver much needed new affordable housing within the parameters of the programme as well as supporting ongoing development.
- 3.2 Further work is required to conclude the proposed deal. Initial investigations and negotiations have assumed an ability to deliver this project, but remaining risks and issues will be managed as the project moves forward.

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

- Housing Needs and Demand Assessment 2014 (HNDA)
- Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017/18-21/22 (SHIP)

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