

Cabinet Committee

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes /
Blended Meeting



Thursday, 5 October 2023 - 10.00 am

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. **MINUTES**
 - (i) Cabinet Committee of 7 September 2023. 3 – 9
 - (ii) Minutes of the Education Appointment Committee of 19 April, 19 June, 20 June, 23 June, 25 August, 4, 6 and 12 September 2023. 10 – 17
4. **COST OF LIVING - WINTER PROGRAMME 2023/24** – Report by the Executive Director (Communities). 18 – 29
5. **EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DIRECTORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023-26** – Report by the Head of Education and Children's Services. 30 - 82
6. **COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING – PROGRESS REPORT** – Report by the Head of Business and Employability Services. 83 – 97
7. **FIFE'S HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION PLAN 2023/25** – Report by the Head of Housing Services. 98 – 109
8. **SWAN AND MEMORIAL COURTS, METHIL – HOUSING IMPROVEMENTS** – Report by the Head of Housing Services. 110 – 116
9. **RIVER LEVEN REGENERATION - CAPITAL FUNDING** – Report by the Head of Roads and Transportation Services. 117 – 128
10. **FIFE COUNCIL RESPONSE TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON MANDATORY TRAINING FOR ELECTED MEMBERS DEALING WITH DECISIONS RELATING TO PLANNING MATTERS** – Joint report by the Head of Planning and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. 129 – 139
11. **TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP – SHUNA AND BARGANY SWORDS** – Report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service. 140 - 143

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.

Lindsay Thomson
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Finance and Corporate Services
Fife House
North Street
Glenrothes
Fife, KY7 5LT

28 September 2023.

If telephoning, please ask for:

Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes
Telephone: 03451 555555, ext. 442238; email: michelle.mcdermott@fife.gov.uk

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BLENDING MEETING NOTICE

This is a formal meeting of the Committee and the required standards of behaviour and discussion are the same as in a face to face meeting. Unless otherwise agreed, Standing Orders will apply to the proceedings and the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct will apply in the normal way

For those members who have joined the meeting remotely, if they need to leave the meeting for any reason, they should use the Meeting Chat to advise of this. If a member loses their connection during the meeting, they should make every effort to rejoin the meeting but, if this is not possible, the Committee Officer will note their absence for the remainder of the meeting. If a member must leave the meeting due to a declaration of interest, they should remain out of the meeting until invited back in by the Committee Officer.

If a member wishes to ask a question, speak on any item or move a motion or amendment, they should indicate this by raising their hand at the appropriate time and will then be invited to speak. Those joining remotely should use the "Raise hand" function in Teams.

All decisions taken during this meeting, will be done so by means of a Roll Call vote.

Where items are for noting or where there has been no dissent or contrary view expressed during any debate, either verbally or by the member indicating they wish to speak, the Convener will assume the matter has been agreed.

There will be a short break in proceedings after approximately 90 minutes.

Members joining remotely are reminded to have cameras switched on during meetings and mute microphones when not speaking. During any breaks or adjournments please switch cameras off.

THE FIFE COUNCIL - CABINET COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

7 September, 2023

10.00 am - 12.45 pm

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), Lesley Backhouse, David Barratt, John Beare, James Calder, Ken Caldwell (substituting for Derek Glen), Ian Cameron (substituting for Jan Wincott), Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Dave Dempsey, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Lynn Mowatt (substituting for David Alexander), Sam Steele (substituting for Craig Walker), Jonny Tepp and Ross Vettraino.

ATTENDING Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive; Eileen Rowand, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services), Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Les Robertson, Head of Revenue and Commercial Services, Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Stephen Smith, Project Manager (Trauma Informed Practice), Human Resources, Helena Couperwhite, Democratic Services Manager and Lesley Robb, Lead Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; Michael Enston, Executive Director, (Communities), Diarmuid Cotter, Head of Customer and Online Services, Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service and Debbie Chapman, Capital Projects Manager, Communities; Shelagh McLean, Head of Education and Children's Services, Avril Graham, Team Manager and Vivienne Sutherland, Principal Psychologist, Education and Children's Services; Alan Paul, Head of Property Services, Property Services; Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services and Hilary Roberts, Lead Officer (Tourism), Business and Employability Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors David Alexander, Derek Glen, Craig Walker and Jan Wincott.

140. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

141. MINUTE

The committee considered the minute of the Cabinet Committee meeting of 10 August 2023.

Decision

The committee agreed to approve the minute.

142. BUDGET 2024-27 UPDATE

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided members with an update on the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024 onwards following the publication of the Scottish Government's updated Medium Term Financial Strategy and the impact on the council's financial planning assumptions and their planned approach to achieve a sustainable and balanced budget.

Decision

The committee noted:-

- (1) the updated financial planning assumptions;
- (2) the continuing uncertainty around those planning assumptions; and
- (3) the planned approach to achieve a sustainable and balanced budget for 2024-25 onwards.

143. REVENUE MONITORING 2023-24

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided members with a strategic overview of Fife Council's finances and reported on the current forecast position for 2023-24.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the high-level financial position as detailed in the report;
- (2) noted that there were ongoing financial impacts arising from the current economic climate which continued to be managed by services with an element of protection from inflationary risk being accounted for centrally;
- (3) instructed services to mitigate overspends as far as possible and ensure strong financial management;
- (4) noted that detailed monitoring reports would be submitted to the relevant scrutiny committees; and
- (5) requested that scrutiny committees ensured an appropriate level of support and challenge in relation to financial reports.

144. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN - PROJECTED OUTTURN 2023-24

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided a strategic financial overview of the Capital Investment Plan and advised on the provisional outturn for the 2023-24 financial year.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the Capital Investment Plan re-profiling to deal with carry forward budgets from 2022-23 into later years of the plan as detailed in Appendix 1;
- (2) noted the projected outturn position and that the level of financial risk continued to be heightened due to high levels of inflation and supply chain challenges;
- (3) noted that more detailed capital outturn reports for 2023-24 would be submitted to the relevant scrutiny committees of the council;
- (4) noted that budget variances would be managed by the appropriate Directorate in conjunction with the Investment Strategy Group; and

- (5) noted the updated prudential indicators provided and that these would be reported on a quarterly basis.

145. DEVELOPING A TRAUMA INFORMED WORKFORCE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Customer and Online Services which updated members on current and planned organisational development activity in Fife aimed at reducing the impact of psychological trauma, including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on individuals, workforces and communities in response to a request from council on 16 March 2023.

Decision

The committee agreed:-

- (1) to endorse the trauma informed approach being undertaken and the training plans outlined in the report; and
- (2) that elected members be encouraged and supported to undertake the appropriate learning including the Scottish Trauma Informed Leaders Training (STILT).

146. STATUTORY CONSULTATION REPORT ON THE PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE INVERKEITHING HIGH SCHOOL FROM THE EXISTING SCHOOL SITE OF HILLEN ROAD, INVERKEITHING TO A NEW SITE SOUTH OF THE A985 (ADMIRALTY ROAD, ROSYTH) THE FLEET GROUNDS, ROSYTH

The committee considered a report by the Head of Education and Children's Services which presented the statutory consultation report in terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 in respect of the proposal to relocate Inverkeithing High School from the existing school site of Hillend Road, Inverkeithing to a new site, south of the A985 (Admiralty Road, Rosyth), The Fleet Grounds, Rosyth. The report also sought approval to proceed with the recommendation contained within the consultation report.

Motion

Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Hilton, moved as follows:-

To agree officers' recommendations with the addition of the following at recommendation number 2 "and officers are requested to bring back an options appraisal report, with costings, for the future development of community use and swimming facilities for South and West Fife to the January meeting of the Cabinet Committee".

Amendment

Councillor Barratt, seconded by Councillor Beare, moved as an amendment to the motion, to accept officers' recommendations with the addition of the following:-

"Cabinet notes that a commitment was made in November 2020 to bring back a report on the retention, refurbishment and investment into the existing Community Use facilities in Inverkeithing and notes no such report has since been presented.

2023 CC 78

Cabinet agrees the loss of the school to Inverkeithing will have an impact to the town and notes the strong community desire that the council should make a commitment to retain community facilities on the site of the existing school.

Cabinet therefore requests that as part of the Fife-wide review of leisure facilities and the delivery model of Community Use in South and West Fife, that specific consideration of maintaining or replacing the existing community use and sports facilities in Inverkeithing should be included.”

Prior to any vote being taken, Councillors Ross, Hilton, Barratt and Beare agreed to conjoin the motion and amendment.

Decision

The committee, having unanimously agreed to approve the conjoined motion and amendment:-

- (1) approved the proposal to relocate Inverkeithing High School from the existing school site of Hillend Road, Inverkeithing to a new site, south of the A985 (Admiralty Road, Rosyth), The Fleet Grounds, Rosyth with the proposed date for implementation of this proposal being for academic session August 2026;
- (2) noted that a commitment was made in November 2020 to bring back a report on the retention, refurbishment and investment into the existing Community Use facilities in Inverkeithing and that no such report had since been presented;
- (3) agreed the loss of the school to Inverkeithing would have an impact to the town and noted the strong community desire that the council should make a commitment to retain community facilities on the site of the existing school;
- (4) noted that a review of leisure, cultural services and facilities would be undertaken across Fife to inform future strategy and service delivery which would include the delivery model of Community Use in South and West Fife and requested officers bring an options appraisal, with costings, for the future development of community use and swimming facilities for South and West Fife to the January 2024 meeting of the Cabinet Committee; and
- (5) requested that as part of the Fife-wide review of leisure facilities and the delivery model of Community Use in South and West Fife, that specific consideration of maintaining or replacing the existing community use and sports facilities in Inverkeithing should be included.

147. FIFE TOURISM STRATEGY 2023-30

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services seeking approval of the Fife Tourism Strategy 2023-30.

Decision

The committee:-

2023 CC 79

- (1) commented on and approved the new Fife Tourism Strategy 2023-30 and delegated to the Head of Business and Employability Services to make any minor amendments to the document ahead of publication;
- (2) noted that an annual action plan would be prepared by the Lead Officer for Tourism in liaison with the Fife Tourism Partnership Board and other key stakeholders;
- (3) noted that progress would be monitored and reported via an annual briefing note to all elected members and to the appropriate committee of the council; and
- (4) agreed to support and facilitate the success of Fife Tourism Strategy, Fife Council would, as per strategic priority 1, assist communities in creating a strong sense of place and develop an approach to improve access in local communities to items of local, cultural or historical significance.

148. **SIGNING THE GLASGOW DECLARATION ON CLIMATE ACTION IN TOURISM**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Business and Employability Services informing members of the importance of embracing sustainable tourism policies and to seek approval for the Fife Tourism Partnership to become a signatory of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

Decision

The committee agreed to the Fife Tourism Partnership becoming a signatory of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

The meeting temporarily adjourned at 11.50am and reconvened at 12.05pm with all members present.

149. **COWDENBEATH LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT PROJECT**

The committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service providing members with an update on progress on refurbishment and enhancement of Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the council's agreed capital plan allocation of £7.793m to the project;
- (2) approved the integration of the library service (operated by Fife Cultural Trust) into the leisure centre and noted that a capital receipt opportunity would be generated by vacating the standalone library on the High Street; and
- (3) approved the project Business Case as detailed in the report.

150. COUNCIL TAX - CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services which presented a proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on increasing council tax multipliers for higher banded properties.

Motion

Councillor Ross, seconded by Councillor Craik moved to accept officers' recommendations in the report.

Amendment 1

Councillor Calder, seconded by Councillor Tepp moved as follows:-

To change the submissions in the consultation response to the following:

- Q1 – change response to “No”
- Q1 – change reasons for your answer section to “During a cost of living crisis we should not be considering significant Council Tax increases on properties.”
- Q3 – change response to “There should be no additional increase in Council Tax for these bands”
- Q8- change response to “Fife Council believes that this will have a detrimental impact on our communities.”
- Q10 – amend reasons for your answer section to include the following “Fife Council believes that the Scottish Government should instead look into improving the funding formula to help better support communities in terms of equality and wellbeing. The Scottish Government should look at the long-promised abolition of the unfair Council Tax and replace with a fairer system. These changes as proposed further entrench the unfair system that currently exists”.

Amendment 2

Councillor Beare, seconded by Councillor Backhouse moved a further amendment to the response to Q10 to amend the wording in this section and replace the term “Scottish Government” with “Scottish Parliament”.

Councillors Ross and Craik subsequently agreed to withdraw the motion and with the consent of the Convener, Councillors Calder, Tepp, Beare and Backhouse agreed to conjoin the first and second amendment.

Decision

The committee, having unanimously agreed the conjoined first and second amendment:-

- (1) reviewed the proposed consultation responses contained within the report;
- (2) agreed the following changes to officers' recommended consultation response

2023 CC 81

- Q1 – change response to “No”
 - Q1 – change reasons for your answer section to “During a cost of living crisis we should not be considering significant Council Tax increases on properties.”
 - Q3 – change response to “There should be no additional increase in Council Tax for these bands.”
 - Q8- change response to “Fife Council believes that this will have a detrimental impact on our communities.”
 - Q10 – amend reasons for your answer section, paragraph 2 to change the term used from “Scottish Government” to Scottish Parliament”
 - Q10 – amend reasons for your answer section to include a third paragraph with the following “Fife Council believes that the Scottish Parliament should instead look into improving the funding formula to help better support communities in terms of equality and wellbeing. The Scottish Parliament should look at the long-promised abolition of the unfair Council Tax and replace with a fairer system. These changes as proposed further entrench the unfair system that currently exists.”; and
- (3) authorised officers to submit the amended consultation response to the Scottish Government.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

19 April 2023

13.00-17.00

PRESENT: Councillor Brian Goodall, Councillor Linda Erskine, Angela Logue, Head of Service, Lesley Henserson, Education Manager, Margaret Gray, Parent Council, Judith Allison, Parent Council.

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

10. HEADTEACHER – CROSSGATES PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 3 applicants on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Alison Green, currently Depute Headteacher at Crossgates Primary School.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

19th June 2023

10:30am-12:50pm

PRESENT: Councillor Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Councillor Eugene Clarke, Maria Lloyd, Head of Service, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Maggie Bell, Parent Council, Sarah Erskine, Parent Council

11. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

12. HEADTEACHER – LOCHGELLY HIGH SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 2 applicants on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Ross Stewart, currently Deputy Headteacher at Lochend Community High School.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN’S SERVICES COMMITTEE –
EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

20th June 2023

09:00 – 12:00

PRESENT: Alycia Hayes Councillor
Dave Dempsey Councillor
Nicola Hetherington Parent Council representative, Elie
Gordon Torrie Parent Council representative, St Monans
Karyn O’Reilly Parent Council representative, Colinsburgh
Angela Logue Head of Service
Rona Weir Education Manager

13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

**14. JOINT HEADTEACHER –
COLINSBURGH, ELIE AND ST MONANS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Committee interviewed 1 applicant on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Ashely Mcbain, currently Acting Head Teacher at Colinsburgh and Elie Primary Schools.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

23 June 2023

09:00-10:30

PRESENT: Councillor Margaret Kennedy, Councillor Alistair Suttie, Maria Lloyd, Head of Service, Deborah Davidson, Education Manager, Sheena Bailey, Parent Council

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

16. HEADTEACHER – KILMARON SPECIAL SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 1 applicant on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Ruth Munro, currently Headteacher at Kilmaron Special School.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

25th August 2023

9:30am-11:50am

PRESENT: Councillor Kathleen Leslie, Councillor Brian Goodall, Maria Lloyd, Head of Service, Karen Lees, Education Manager, Judith Kisby, Parent Council, Anne Fraser, Parent Council

17. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

18. HEADTEACHER – BALWEARIE HIGH SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 2 applicants on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Alison Mitchell, currently Acting Headteacher at Lasswade School.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – CABINET COMMITTEE – EDUCATION
APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

4th September 2023

09.00 am - 10.30 am

PRESENT: Councillor Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, Angela Logue - Head of Service, Sarah Else - Education Manager, Mary Caldwell Catholic Church Representative, Stuart Sutherland – Parent Council Chair and Lisa Mccran – Parent Council Member.

19. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

20. HEADTEACHER – ST MARGARET’S R C PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 1 applicant on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Catherine Mullen as Headteacher for St Margaret’s R C Primary School.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – CABINET COMMITTEE – EDUCATION
APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

6th September 2023

10.00 am - 12.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw and Alycia Hayes, Angela Logue - Head of Service, Sarah Else - Education Manager, Dawn Ewing – Parent Council Chair and Laura McNab – Parent Council Member.

21. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

22. HEADTEACHER – CULROSS AND TORRYBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 2 applicants on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Claire Wyatt, currently Acting Headteacher at Culross and Torryburn Primary School, as Joint Headteacher.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES
COMMITTEE – EDUCATION APPOINTMENT COMMITTEE – GLENROTHES**

12 September 2023

13.45-17.00

PRESENT: Councillor Judy Hamilton, Councillor Lynn Ballatyne Wardlaw, Angela Logue, Head of Service, Jackie Funnell, Education Manager, Jennifer McEwan, Parent Council, Karen Thorburn, Parent Council.

23. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Decision

The Committee resolved that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A to the Act.

24. HEADTEACHER – KIRKCALDY NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Committee interviewed 1 applicant on the short list for this post.

Decision

Agreed to recommend the appointment of Emma Clunie, currently Acting Headteacher at Kirkcaldy North Primary School.

5 October 2023
Agenda Item No. 4

Cost of Living Support – Winter Programme 2023/24

Report by: Michael Enston, Executive Director (Communities)

Wards Affected: All Wards

Purpose

To propose a further programme of support for Winter 2023/24 to provide help during the continuing cost-of-living challenges.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Cabinet: -

- (1) review progress and lessons from the experience of providing a co-ordinated programme of support in 2022/23;
- (2) note the continuing provision over the period from April to September 2023;
- (3) agree the proposals for additional support for winter 23/24, as detailed in Appendix 1; and
- (4) agree to continue to implement a temporary Personal Vehicle Allowance payment from 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024 to support staff with high business use of their personal vehicles.

Resource Implications

The 2023/24 council revenue budget included additional permanent funding of £0.150m for Café Inc. The total budget for Café Inc is £0.550m. The 2023/24 council revenue budget approved temporary funding for Additional Hardship Support (Scottish Welfare Fund), £2m and temporary funding for cost of living pressures, £0.948m. There is unallocated temporary funding from the remaining Covid grant and LACER funding of £0.393m. The HRA budget for 2023/24 continues provision for energy support, £0.5m.

The proposed additional winter spend in Appendix 1 will be funded from the cost of living pressures budget, unallocated funding from the remaining Covid grant and LACER funding and the HRA budget. This funding is detailed in Appendix 1 and totals £1.841m.

The continuing needs projects that have previously been approved and funded from temporary Covid Grant and LACER funding, £1.461m are shown in Appendix 2.

Additional support for benefits maximisation, active communities and energy advice totalling £0.700m and funded from Community Recovery Funding, was previously approved by the Cabinet Committee. This is detailed in Appendix 2.

The proposal to continue the Personal Vehicle Allowance Payment to 31 March 2024 will continue to be funded from existing Directorate budgets.

Legal & Risk Implications

There is a continuing risk that provision of crisis support at these levels is unsustainable given the reliance on temporary funding. Longer term, the policy intention is to shift the balance from crisis intervention to prevention and self-reliance.

Impact Assessment

An impact assessment was previously provided.

Consultation

The recommendations in this report were created following a review of provision in winter 2022/23 and continuing dialogue with partners, area teams, voluntary organisations and Area Committee Conveners.

1.0 Background

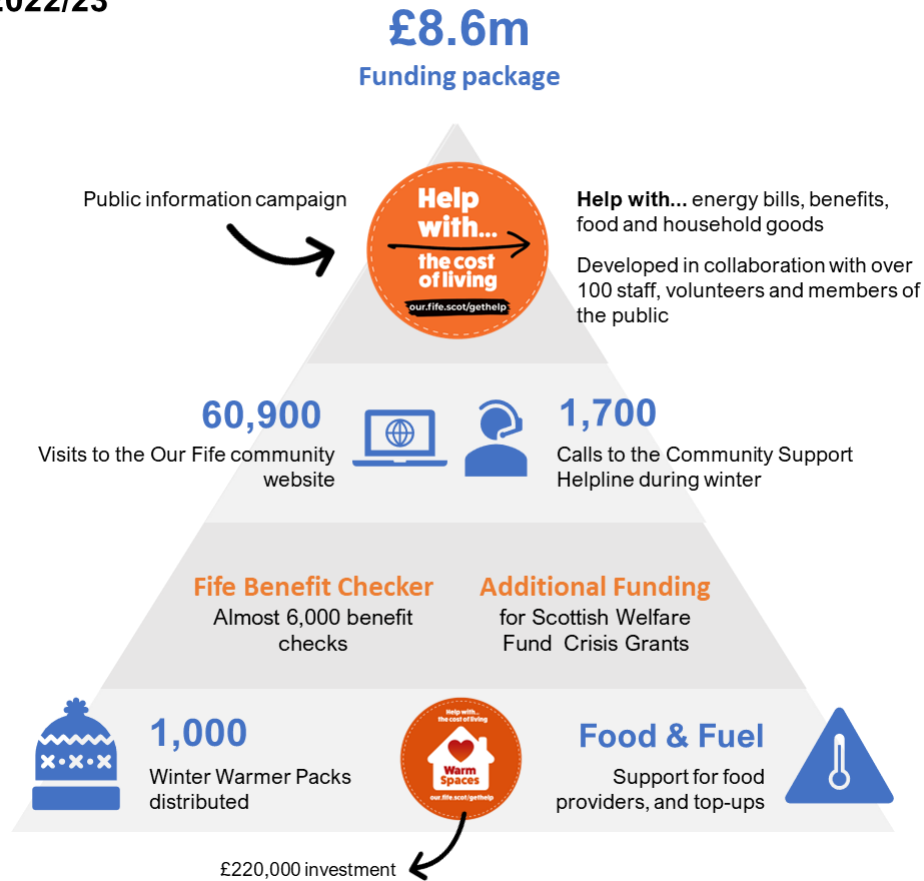
- 1.1 In September 2022, the Cabinet agreed an extensive programme of measures designed to enhance support to people struggling to cope with cost-of-living pressures. The winter programme 2022/23 was supported with £8.6m drawn from covid grant carry forward, council revenue budget allocation and balances.
- 1.2 A further report in April 2023 highlighted initial lessons from the programme and proposed priorities for funding during 2023/24. In June of this year, Cabinet agreed funding for Fife wide projects as part of Community Recovery Funding. This allocated support for key tackling poverty measures supplementing provision agreed by Area Committees.
- 1.3 Cabinet in June also considered initial proposals for the development of a more strongly preventative approach to supporting people through a person centred “no wrong door” design of future service provision. This work on service redesign is fundamentally important in helping the shift from crisis support to prevention. A further report on this work will come to Cabinet in November.

2.0 Impact of Winter Programme 2022/23

- 2.1 The steep rise in fuel bills in the later part of 2022 led to an increased need for quick response fuel top-ups and payments to help those struggling to heat their homes. During the Winter Programme 2022/23, fuel support payments were made to 5,000 struggling households and £600,000 of the Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis payment budget was spent addressing fuel crisis. Additionally, 72 community warm places were developed across Fife. There were 42,049 Café Inc meals taken up during the October and Christmas school holidays 2022/23. Demand for emergency food grew with over 18,000 people receiving a Trussell Trust food parcel in 2022/23 compared with approximately 15,000 in 2021/22.
- 2.2 There are some signs of a slightly better picture with a decrease in the number of food parcels delivered to households with children in the latter half of 2022/23 by the Trussell Trust. Although further analysis is needed, it seems likely that the introduction of the Scottish Child Payment is the reason for this slowing in demand in this group. There is also preliminary evidence from our own systems that measures, particularly benefits maximisation, are lifting people out of relative poverty. Nonetheless, a significant level of need remains and Trussell Trust are reporting new groups where the demand for food bank support is high. The second highest reported user of a Fife Foodbank is now someone with a disability. Café Inc has seen a 14% increase in demand from April 2023.

2.3 Below is a snapshot of the key activity and outputs of the Winter Programme 2022/23.

**Fife's Winter Programme
2022/23**



2.4 A key focus has been maximising people’s income from benefits and, for last year’s programme, two new data tools were used. The Fife Benefit Checker, ‘Entitled To’, helps people increase their monthly income. Over a nine-month period from the end of October 2022 – June 2023 there were 7359 benefit checks completed resulting in an identified financial gain of £104 per month on average.

2.5 From September 2022 when the Fife Benefit Checker was introduced until the beginning of September 2023, 477 people, from 32 different agencies/teams, have been trained in over 58 sessions. Five training for trainer's sessions have been delivered and there are 34 facilitators from a mix of voluntary and statutory agencies, delivering this Fife Benefit training.

"I found the information very helpful and a useful tool for us to have in providing our tenants with the most up to date information. This will be used daily when discussing what benefits tenants are entitled to." Quote from a Fife Council Housing professional

2.6 Data is being used to inform decision making on where to target resource and support. The Low-Income Family Tracker (LIFT) helps target low-income households who could increase their income from benefits. Examples of the recent impact of this are shown in the following table.

2022/23 Benefit Maximisation Campaigns		Fife	Outcome
Benefit Cap	From 1 January 2023, Scottish Government agreed to fully mitigate the benefit cap to those people affected, without a financial assessment. LIFT was used to identify those households affected by the benefit cap to invite them to make an application for their housing costs to be met.	96	This was instrumental in quickly identifying the households affected and getting money to them to meet their housing costs. The average gain was £40 per week.
Pension Credit – Phase 1	A general awareness campaign in November and December 2022 encouraged people to see if they were eligible for pension credit and associated cost of living payments by getting a benefit check.	604	110 households went on to claim pension credit. Total income gain to Fife households of £0.5 million.
Pension Credit – Phase 2	Letters were sent in July 2023 to people identified through LIFT as eligible for but not claiming pension credit.	565	Waiting on September refresh of LIFT data to track outcomes.

2.7 Additionally, a Tax-Free Childcare campaign was run during 2022/23. This raised awareness of the advantages of paying for childcare via a Tax-Free Childcare account. For one family, they reduced their monthly childcare bill for one child by £65.60 per month, just by paying via this method.

2.8 The key lessons identified from experience of providing the winter programme in 22/23 are:

- Challenges in managing demand for fuel top-ups and sustaining these as a crisis measure rather than an ongoing entitlement
- Co-ordination was good but helpful if more could be done to set out the totality of support and maintain this knowledge with a wide group of front-line staff
- Helpful to join up energy support and advice with benefits/income advice
- Direct support for food projects was valued but helpful if attention could be given to supporting supply and address shortages
- “Warm places” worked best at a local level when linked to wider activity or opportunities to socialise
- Need for better join up of the service offer in relation to household goods
- Good ethos of people pulling together but requires significant communication, information and training resource

2.9 These lessons were used to build in changes and improvements to the proposed programme for the coming winter.

3.0 2023/24 Priorities and Winter Programme

- 3.1 Proposals for additional support to be provided this winter to address the sustained cost of living crisis are set out in Appendix 1. The proposals are funded from temporary funding totalling £1.841m. The continuing support priorities agreed by the Cabinet Committee in April 2023 and Community Recovery Funding agreed in June 2023 are detailed in Appendix 2. The key changes and improvements for this year's winter programme are set out below.
- 3.2 **Income Maximisation and Energy Advice** - Income maximisation remains key to a prevention approach and is central to addressing poverty. Working with Citizen's Advice and Rights Fife (CARF) and Cosy Kingdom, the aim is to establish an advice framework which will mean there are more staff and volunteers skilled up in benefit, money and energy advice at the same time as continuing to train more people on using the Fife Benefit Checker.
- 3.3 **Crisis Fuel Support** - There will be two core offers of help for those in fuel crisis this Winter. Both are funded by the Scottish Government and will be accessed through the Helpline with a trained team of staff dealing with those reaching fuel crisis. One scheme is for those on pre-payment meters, the Fuel Bank and the other is the Home Heating Support Fund and is for those paying for their fuel in other ways including direct debit. Both have a good record for turning around payments of support quickly. Additionally, continued support is proposed for those going into temporary accommodation by means of providing a fuel top-up and for those private tenants who need crisis fuel support in addition to the payments from the Fuel Bank and Home Heating Support Fund.
- 3.5 **Mould and Damp Issues** - Housing Services are prioritising action to address mould and damp issues given the risks to health and wellbeing. Tenants affected by mould and damp where fuel poverty is assessed as a causal factor will receive additional support. There is also £100,000 to be allocated from the HRA to help Fife Council tenants who need additional help above the Fuel Bank and Home Heating Support fund schemes.
- 3.6 **Household Support** - There are continuing challenges for people in securing what they need to furnish and keep their homes warm. Cosy Kingdom has been funded to continue its handy service and help people with small works and with insulation. In 2022/23, additional provision was made to improve the quality of carpets through the Scottish Welfare Fund, Community Care Grants. It is proposed to extend this support this year. Fife Council Housing are reviewing their re-let standards to ensure that new tenants have a good start in their homes and more furnishings are retained where possible. The Big Hoose has been providing much needed household items for families in Fife that are struggling with the cost of living. The project has processed 86,000 packages of support for families in need. Some items are one-off donations (such as a toaster, slow cooker or mattress) while other goods can be accessed on multiple occasions (such as nappies, toiletries and food items). A social value evaluation and new business plan is near to completion and initial findings are that, for every £1 invested in the project, the social return is £5.96. There is provision to support the project and a separate report on this will come to the Cabinet once the council receives the evaluation and funding proposal.
- 3.7 **Warm and Welcoming Community places and emergency food support** - Last Winter £220,000 was invested in a programme of Warm Spaces run jointly with community groups, Fife Sports and Leisure Trust and Fife Cultural Trust. Seventy-two Warm Spaces in Fife were supported through this funding and the evaluation of this approach showed the most successful spaces were where food or activities were provided. Many of those using the warm places have also reported that they felt it was

a good safe place to come and it was welcoming. It is recommended that £260,000 is allocated from the area teams to support both community food providers and warm places this winter.

- 3.8 **Child Maintenance** - Fife Gingerbread has been working to ensure that more families have an increased income through access to Child Maintenance. One barrier is the cost to the resident parent of getting child maintenance pursued. The agency charges £20 and this proposed £5000 fund is expected to help remove this barrier and encourage more parents to get the child maintenance for their child / children. It will be administered by Fife Gingerbread.
- 3.9 **Contingency** - There is some uncertainty around need and demand particularly around energy and food support. It is proposed to retain a balancing sum as contingency provision.
- 3.10 **Improving the messaging** - In October 2023, our.fife.scot/gethelp was launched and there have been 60,900 views to date. The Community Support Line on 0800 952 0330 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) is available for those not online and will continue. The line took 1,700 calls during the winter months. Recommendations for Winter 2023/24 are to build on the cross-sector campaign approach – focusing on the sharing of content from a wider range of expert organisations and identifying new opportunities to share information and calls to action through existing service contact points across the Fife Partnership.
- 3.11 **Employee Personal Vehicle Allowance** - Cabinet previously agreed to introduce a temporary Personal Vehicle Allowance payment for those employees who need to use their car to deliver council services. A payment of £400 per annum has been paid to those employees who claimed more than 2000 business miles in 2021/22. This was backdated to April 2022. In addition, employees who were expected to claim more than 2000 business miles in 2022/23 also received the payment. The payment was then extended for a further period of six months to 30 September 2023 following a Cabinet report in April 2023 (employees have received £200 over this period).
- 3.12 Around 1200 employees have been paid the allowance to date at a total cost of approximately £740k (this covers the 18 month payment period). Following discussion with the Trade Unions and to manage the risk if employees withdraw use of their vehicles, it is proposed to continue to pay the allowance at the current rate with a further review at the end of March 2024. The cost of this extended period of payment is estimated to be £200k with employees receiving a further £200 over six months.
- 3.13 **Employee Cost of Living Support** - In addition to the allowance, a number of other measures have been implemented to further support employees including daily payment of expenses; reminders to managers to authorise payments more quickly and communication on the range of savings that can be made through the Employee Benefits scheme. Employees are also signposted to the cost-of-living support available for all Fife residents as well as tailored financial wellbeing support for employees through our employee benefits provider.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 As with last winter, the programme of support utilises a mixture of temporary COVID and LACER funding, HRA provision and additional temporary revenue budget funding. It will be difficult to sustain this across successive winters should cost of living pressures remain.

- 4.2 Increasing effort will go in to benefit maximisation work and to providing advice and support earlier in ways which avoid more pressing and costly crisis support.
- 4.3 Continuing emphasis will be place on co-ordination, both among agencies and front-line workers, and between the Fife wide winter programme support and area initiatives. In this regard, the additional spend outlined in this report needs to be viewed alongside Community Recovery Funding and area anti-poverty budget provision.

List of Appendices

1. Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24 - Proposed Additional Winter Spend
2. Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24 – Previously Approved and Community Recovery Funding
3. Welfare and Government payments

Report Author

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Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24 - Proposed Additional Winter Spend

Temporary Funding	£	Comment
COVID and LACER Funding Balance to be allocated	393,000	Total grants carry forward into 2023/24 is £1.854m. The previously approved projects detailed in Appendix 2 total £1.461m leaving a balance of £0.393m
Winter Cost of Living temporary budget	948,000	
HRA	500,000	
Total Temporary Funding to be Allocated	1,841,000	

Project Proposal	£	Comment
Fuel Top ups - Temp Accommodation	70,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to continue to provide fuel top ups for those going into temporary accommodation who have a 5-week waiting time for benefit payment due to change in circumstances.
Fuel top-ups (Private Tenants)	100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crisis fuel support in addition to the Fuel Bank and Home Heating Support Fund.
Mould and Damp Issues/Fuel Top Up contingency - HRA	500,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FC tenants affected by mould and damp where fuel poverty is assessed as a causal factor will receive additional support from the HRA. 100k for emergency fuel payments.
Carpets SWF upgrade	430,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgraded quality and increase in the number of rooms carpeted for Community Care Awards.

Project Proposal	£	Comment
Food providers and welcome /warm places	260,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area funding to support community food and warm places providers.
Winter warmer packs	30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1000 emergency winter warmer packs including blankets, insulated flask, hat, and gloves for people with temporary lack of heating.
Household Support via Big Hoose	150,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision for potential further support for Big House. Evaluation and business case are being finalised currently.
Child maintenance	5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund operated by Gingerbread to help mitigate the agency cost that individuals need to pay in order to have child maintenance pursued.
Provision for unknown level of need for food, fuel and cash support	296,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to cover unknown need and demand levels, which will need a provision /response.
Total Proposed Additional Winter spend	1,841,000	

Cost of Living Support Programme 2023/24 - Previously Approved Additional Winter Spend 2023/24

Project	£	Comment
Community support for warm places, food and other local responses to emerging need and gaps in services.	572,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £82,500 Boiler repair scheme for homeowners on a low income -average spend per household – £1,898. £44,850 Fuel Top ups made for those going into temporary accommodation. £7,000 6-month staff costs to support benefit check work. Follow up calls. £70,000 for the continuation March to October for community warm places where needed. £44,229 Greener Kirkcaldy Handy services 1.5 staff members for 6 months £20,000 testing a new delivery system for Big Hoose items which will have a local charity picking up the items and delivering them direct to those in need and save staff journey time and costs – SWF and Dunfermline.
Additional Staffing for Scottish Welfare Fund and Helpline	223,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 additional staff have been recruited – 4 for the SWF and 2 for the helpline
Fife Hardship Grants	200,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This COVID Hardship Fund has been superseded by additional funding to the SWF and by the Fuel Bank and Heating Support Fund.
Leisure Concessions	70,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Winter Splash for Nowt</i> – Additional free swim programme provided for school age children.
Targeted relief on school meal debt	46,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases of school meal debt are assessed on an individual basis and written off if deemed appropriate.

Project	£	Comment
Rates relief funds	250,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023-24 To date relief awarded to 15 businesses, Total relief awarded to date is £152,913, cost to LACER fund is £38,228. • This helped support and protect 428 employees employed by these companies.
Pre employment training	100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is ringfenced for cabins at Matrix Fife to create a training space and classroom.
Total	1,461,000	

Community Recovery Fund 2023/24

Project	£	Comment
Local Benefits Maximisation	200,000	CARF have recruited staff to co locate in community job clubs with welfare support assistants to increase the level and access to free benefits and money advice.
Energy Support and Advice	250,000	Cosy Kingdom has launched an extensive training programme, skilling staff and volunteers on first level energy advice. One of the first teams to be trained are the FC helpline staff who will be administering the Fuel Bank crisis fuel payments.
Active Communities	250,000	This initiative is removing the barriers for families and people with long term health conditions keeping active. Examples are the delivery of free swimming lessons for children, Leisure Active memberships for parents to attend fitness classes as well as free equipment to participate in sports. Travel costs to access the provision at Fife Sport and Leisure Trust venue where needed.
Total Community Recovery Funding	700,000	

Welfare and Government Payments

Future payments

UK Government payments -

£300 Cost of Living Payment

- Eligibility: Those on a qualifying low income/means tested benefit or Tax Credits.
- Paid in separate instalments throughout the year.
- £300 to be paid during autumn 2023 for most people.
- £299 to be paid in spring 2024 for most people.
- This is paid per claim, so a couple claiming would qualify for one payment.
- Administered by DWP

£150 or £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment

- Eligibility: Those entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2023 to 2024 for individuals born before 25 September 1957.
- An extra £150 or £300 added to the normal Winter Fuel Payment amount.
- Paid in November 2023.
- Administered by DWP.

Scottish Government payments -

Scottish Child Payment

- Eligibility: Those on qualifying benefits such as Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, or Income-based Job Seekers Allowance. Parents/carers receiving Pension Credit, Income Support, or Income-related Employment Support Allowance may also be eligible.
- Weekly payment of £25 for every eligible child aged under 16.
- Administered by Social Security Scotland.
- Scottish Child Payment is one of five family payment available from Social Security Scotland, along with [Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods](#).

Previous payments

- **Cost of Living Payments (UK Government)** Awarded to those on a qualifying low income/means tested benefit or Tax Credits. Paid £301 in April and £301 in May 2023.
- **£150 Disability Cost of Living Payment (UK Government)** Awarded to those on a qualifying disability benefit. Paid between June and July 2023.
- **Child Bridging Payment (Scottish Government)** Available for each child who gets a Free School Meal. Paid four times a year during 2021 and 2022. Final payments were made in December 2022.
- **£400 Energy Bills Support Scheme** Awarded to all households with a domestic electricity connection in Great Britain. Paid monthly from October 2022 to March 2023.
- **£300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment (UK Government)** Awarded to those entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment for Winter 2022/23. Paid in November 2022.

5 October 2023
Agenda Item No. 5

Education and Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26

Report by: Angela Logue, Head of Service, Education and Children's Services

Wards Affected: All wards

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present – and seek approval for – the Education and Children's Services (ECS) Directorate Plan 2023-26 and to set this plan in the context of other key strategic plans for children and families in Fife.

Recommendation(s)

The committee is asked to consider and approve the Education and Children's Services (ECS) Directorate Plan 2023-26.

Resource Implications

The paper outlines the Directorate's focus for improvement, both as a Directorate and through wider partnership working, to ensure that outcomes for children and young people in Fife improve as the Directorate works within its current budget.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Directorate Improvement Plan, and the related plans described in this paper, meet a range of requirements to publish strategic plans for services to children, young people, families and communities, arising from legislation and national policy.

Impact Assessment

The Directorate Plan highlights the Directorate's key priorities for improvement over the coming three years. These have been chosen to help achieve improved outcomes for all children and young people but will have a particular focus on: closing the attainment gap for children living in socially disadvantaged areas; improving life chances and opportunities for Fife's most vulnerable children and young people (including looked after children and the care experienced).

Consultation

The development of the Education and Children's Services (ECS) Directorate improvement priorities for 2023-26, and the related strategic plans described in this paper, have been informed by feedback from a range of consultation and engagement activities with: children, young people and families, staff and the Education Scrutiny Committee.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Education and Children's Services (ECS) Directorate is subject to a range of requirements to develop and publish strategic plans for its services, arising from both legislation and national policy. The Directorate meets these demands through the development and publication of:
 - The **ECS Directorate Improvement Plan** which meets a range of statutory and policy requirements for the provision of council services
 - The **Fife Children's Services Plan** for which the ECS Directorate acts as a lead agency for strategic planning of wider children's services – as required by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
 - The **South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) Regional Improvement Plan** which delivers on the commitment to collaborative improvement agreed between COSLA and the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 Each of these key strategic plans have been updated in recent months.
- 1.3 The **ECS Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26** sets out the strategic actions for the Education Service and Children and Families Social Work Service. This plan forms Appendix 1 to the paper.
- 1.4 The **Fife Children's Services Plan 2023-26** was published in July. This plan forms Appendix 2 to the paper; a copy can be found at www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023.
- 1.5 The **South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) Regional Improvement Plan 2023-24** was published in August. This plan forms Appendix 3 to the paper; a copy can be found at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/seicollabportal/seic-plan/>
- 1.6 This paper:
 - presents an overview of the improvement priorities in each of these key strategic plans and shows how these align; and
 - describes how these three key strategic plans will contribute to the plans for recovery and reform outlined in the updated Plan 4 Fife.

2.0 The Structure of the Directorate Plan for 2023-26

- 2.1 The last three-year strategic planning period for children's services in Fife – from 2020 through to 2023 – covered a period in which we saw the impact of a major, global pandemic (the Covid-19 pandemic) and the beginnings of a period of recovery.
- 2.2 In developing the current Directorate Improvement Plan, we have sought to identify the most significant challenges and barriers to life opportunities faced by children, young people and families in Fife. Many of these challenges reflect a need to focus on core aspects of service delivery – to help sustain and further strengthen recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. They also reflect the importance of ensuring that – as outcomes and experiences improve for children, young people and families across Fife – these also reflect a significant improvement in equity and equality.
- 2.3 In order to help ensure a clear focus for this work, the Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26 is structured in the form of separate improvement plans for:

- The Education Service (including early years settings, schools and specialist provision)
- Children and Families Social Work

3.0 Improvement Priorities for 2023-26

- 3.1 The key strategic plans for children’s services in Fife are subject to a complete review every three years, in line with the statutory planning period for children’s services prescribed in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The most recent review was concluded in the summer and was informed by a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment undertaken by the Children’s Services Partnership.
- 3.2 The Education and Children’s Services Directorate played a significant role in developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for children’s services. The evidence base for the Assessment has also been used in updating the Education and Children’s Services Directorate Plan.
- 3.3 The improvement priorities for the Fife Children’s Services Plan reflect the need to:
- Address the significant challenges related to **Health & Wellbeing** including: mental health, physical health and activity and sexual health and substance use
 - Improve our approach to **Supporting Families** including: No Wrong Door and Whole Family Wellbeing
 - Improve **Engagement of Children, Young People and Families** including in: service design, participation and voice
 - Better meet **the Needs of our Most Vulnerable Children and Young People**, including: Care Experienced young people, those on the Child Protection Register and those on the edge of care
 - Address a lack of **Equity and Equality** across a range of forms of disadvantage, from the social (e.g. poverty) to the individual (e.g. additional support needs, ethnicity, disability)
- 3.4 The improvement priorities – and improvement actions – set out in the Education and Children’s Services Directorate Improvement Plan align with and will help to support delivery of the Fife Children’s Services Plan 2023-26.
- 3.5 The improvement priorities for the Education Service in 2023-26 are:
- Improving **Health & Wellbeing**. This work will complement and support the work being undertaken by the wider children’s services partnership
 - Improving **Attendance and Engagement**. This work links closely to work to improve our approach to supporting families – as well as the supporting the rights-based approach taken to children’s services delivery
 - Improving **Achievement** (including literacy and numeracy, as well as wider achievement).
 - Improving **Positive Destinations**

In addressing all of these issues, attention will be paid to addressing the challenges of **equity and equality** – with a particular focus on reducing the equity gap seen across educational outcomes for a range of learners.

3.6 Work to deliver the improvement priorities for the Education Service will be supported by its ongoing collaboration with other local authorities in the South East of Scotland, through the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC). SEIC has identified two shared priority areas for improvement during 2023-24, which are:

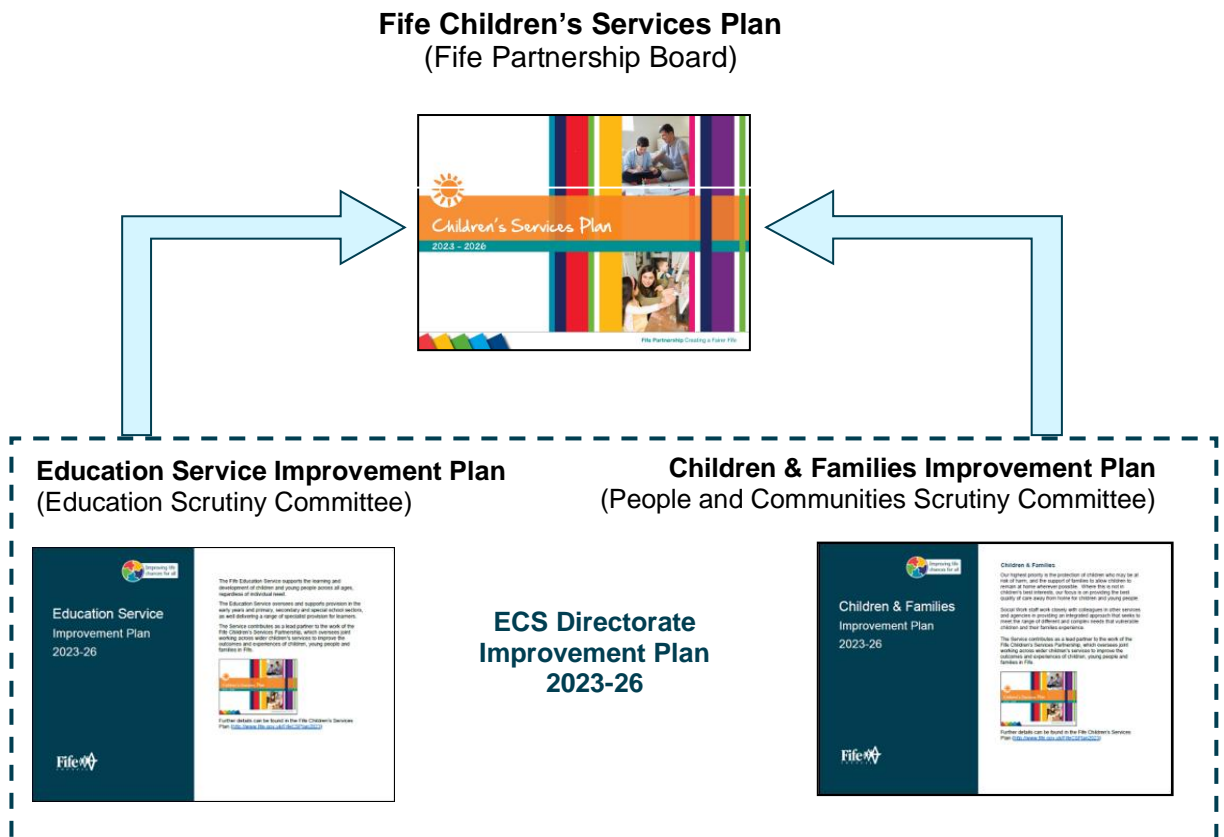
- Literacy: P2 – P4 writing
- Learning pathways and positive destinations

3.7 The improvement priorities for Children and Families Social Work are:

- Relationship-Based Practice
- Early and effective whole system approach
- Partnership
- Continuous Improvement
- Workforce Development

These themes reflect the key areas of service development most needed to ensure that the needs of our most the **Needs of our Most Vulnerable Children and Young People** are well met.

3.8 The figure below provides a summary overview of the way in which the Directorate Improvement Plan (incorporating the Education Service Improvement Plan and Children and Families Improvement Plan) will support delivery of the Fife Children’s Services Plan. The figure also shows the committees that will provide scrutiny of the delivery of these plans.



4.0 Supporting the Plan 4 Fife

- 4.1 The Education and Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 and Fife Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 align with key aspects of the Plan for Fife 2021-24 update. In particular:
- They reflect the importance of The Promise and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as key policies within the “Renewal Landscape”
 - They reflect the continuing importance of ensuring “Opportunities for All” in achieving a “Fairer Fife”, including: mitigating the impact of poverty, closing the attainment gap and improving health
 - They support ongoing work: to close the attainment gap, promote children’s rights, improve learning pathways from school on to continuing education, employment, training and volunteering, supporting emotional and physical wellbeing and developing wrap around support in specific service areas

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Directorate Plan 2023-26 has been developed following consultation with staff – both within the Directorate and as part of wider children’s services planning. It is informed by a wide range of feedback from children, young people and families gathered over the course of the past year.
- 5.2 The Plan aligns closely with supports delivery of the Fife Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 and Plan for Fife.
- 5.3 The committee is asked to consider and approve the ECS Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26.

List of Appendices

1. Education and Children’s Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26.
2. Fife Children’s Services Plan 2023-26 (see: www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023).
3. South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) Regional Improvement Plan 2023-24 (see: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/seicollabportal/seic-plan/>.)

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Education & Children's Services Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26



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2. Education Service Improvement Plan 2023-26	Pages Edu 1-28
Including Improvement Priorities and Improvement Plans for early years and school education	
3. Children & Families Improvement Plan 2023-26	Pages C&F 1-11
Including Improvement Priorities and Improvement Plans for children and families social work	

Our Directorate Improvement Plan

Introduction

Fife's Education and Children's Directorate is one of the largest in Scotland. We strive to provide high quality education and social work services to children, young people and families.

All children and young people matter regardless of race, age, sex, gender, disability or family circumstances. We want to ensure that all children and young people experience an inclusive, equitable and supportive environment that encourages them to have a strong voice in their learning and development.

The Directorate Improvement Plan that follows aligns with a number of other strategic plans that support the Directorate's work, and contributes to delivering the Plan 4 Fife, enabling the Directorate to continue working to achieve our purpose of **Improving Life Chances for All**.

Partnership and collaboration with a range of other agencies and services – including: the wider Fife children's services partnership, the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC), and other national and local bodies – is key to ensuring positive outcomes for all.

The Directorate Improvement Plan sets out, at a high level, the challenges and barriers faced by children and young people in their lives and learning and how our services plan to address these. It outlines our key strategic priorities and actions to provide direction across the Directorate describing how, collectively, we aim to improve the outcomes and experiences of all of Fife's children, young people and their families over the period 2023-26.

Our Directorate Improvement Plan

Our communities, children and young people and our services

The geography of Fife

Fife has a mix of urban areas, small towns and rural areas. Overall, the proportion of each type resembles the geography of Scotland.

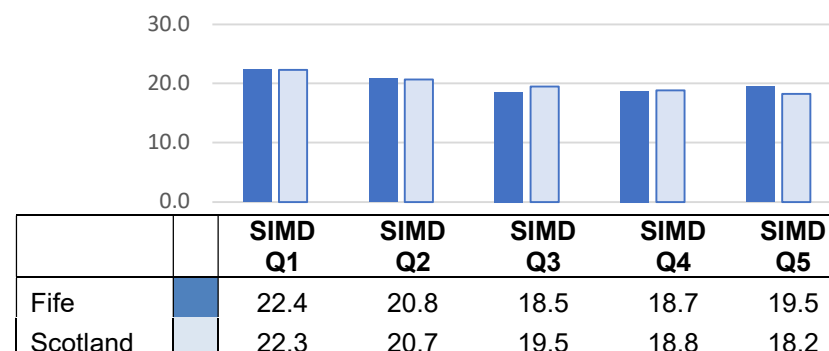
Area	Urban	Small towns	Rural
Fife	64.1%	17.7%	18.2%
Scotland	71.7%	11.2%	17.1%

However, Fife's main urban areas (Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, Glenrothes and the Levenmouth area) lack the scale and structure of settlement seen in and around Scotland's four largest cities (classified as large urban areas).

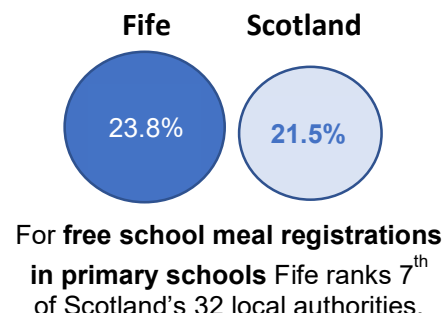
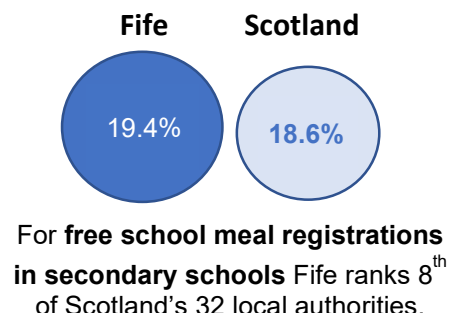
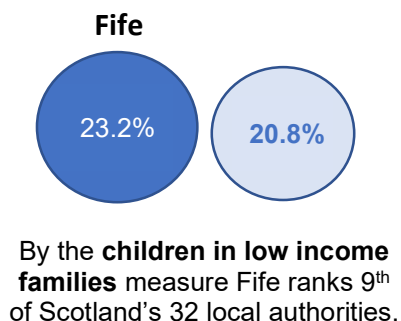
Area	Large urban	Other urban	Accessible small towns	Remote small towns	Access-ible rural	Remote rural
Fife	0.0%	64.1%	17.7%	0.0%	18.2%	0.0%
Scotland	37.8%	33.9%	8.6%	2.6%	11.6%	5.5%

Area deprivation in Fife (SIMD)

The table below shows the geographical distribution of school pupils in Fife and Scotland, based on the SIMD Quintile where they live. SIMD Q1 areas are the most deprived in Scotland, SIMD Q5 areas are the least deprived. The profiles of Fife and Scotland are very similar.



Measures of child and household poverty



Why are the SIMD profiles of Fife and Scotland similar, if Fife has higher levels of child poverty?

In general, SIMD over-represents poverty in large urban areas and under-represents poverty in other types of area. Fife's lack of any large urban area means that it's levels of child poverty are not fully represented by its share of SIMD quintile 1 (SIMD Q1) areas.



Children & young people we support

- 71,746 children and young people, aged 0-17 years.
- 748 Children Looked After.
- 136 children on the Child Protection Register.
- Approximately 3,000 children and young people supported by social work at any time.
- 6,452 registrations for early years provision.

- 49,621 pupils in Fife schools (27,367 in primary, 22,095 in secondary and 159 in special schools).

The table below gives further information about some key groups of interest within the total cited above.

Group	Number	%
With an additional support need	14,438	29.1
Living in SIMD Quintile 1	11,116	22.4
Speaking English as an Additional Language	2,916	5.9
Minority Ethnic	2,827	5.7
Assessed as having a disability	1,063	2.1
All school pupils	49,261	100.0



How we support our children & young people

- 13 children and families social work area teams, plus additional teams providing specialist support.
- 174 FTE senior and main grade social workers, and 124 FTE social work assistants and other qualified staff.

- 156 schools in Fife (133 primary schools, 18 secondary schools and 5 special schools).
- 3,656 FTE teaching staff (1,815 primary schools, 1,653 secondary schools, 99 special schools and 89 centrally employed).



Note on data sources

- Data on schools, school staff, pupil numbers, early years provision – taken from annual census returns for the start of the 2022/23 session (Scottish Government).
- Data on population numbers taken from the June 2021 Mid Year Population Estimate (NRS).
- Data on children & families social work provision taken from CLAS census return of 31 July 2022 (Scottish Government) and annual local authority staffing returns (SSSC) and management information (for involvements).

Our Directorate Improvement Plan

Our Directorate Purpose and Our Values

The Education and Children's Services Directorate was established in 2014, bringing together a wide range of council services for children, families and communities in Fife.

In its first year, the Directorate developed a common purpose statement: **Improving Life Chances for All**. The Directorate's purpose was reviewed by leaders from across the Directorate's services and teams, as part of the Directorate Improvement Plan 2021-23. It was assessed as continuing to provide a clear statement of our shared goal: working together to improve life opportunities for children, young people and families across Fife, with a particular focus on closing the equity and equality gap faced by many disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.



The Directorate also has an established set of shared values, to inform the way that our services are developed, designed and delivered – and to provide a clear framework to influence practice and inform decision-making. They are:

- **Compassion** - *showing empathy, sensitivity, kindness, understanding, a non-judgemental attitude, and actively engaging to help and support every child.*
- **Ambition** – *being ambitious for every child and doing all that we can to remove challenges or barriers to their happiness, development, learning and achievement.*
- **Respect** – *acknowledging and upholding the dignity and rights of every child, being inclusive and celebrating diversity, actively listening and giving a voice to every child.*
- **Equity** – *fairness, justice, without bias or discrimination – removing or mitigating the impact of any barriers that children may in their lives, enabling all to thrive and flourish.*

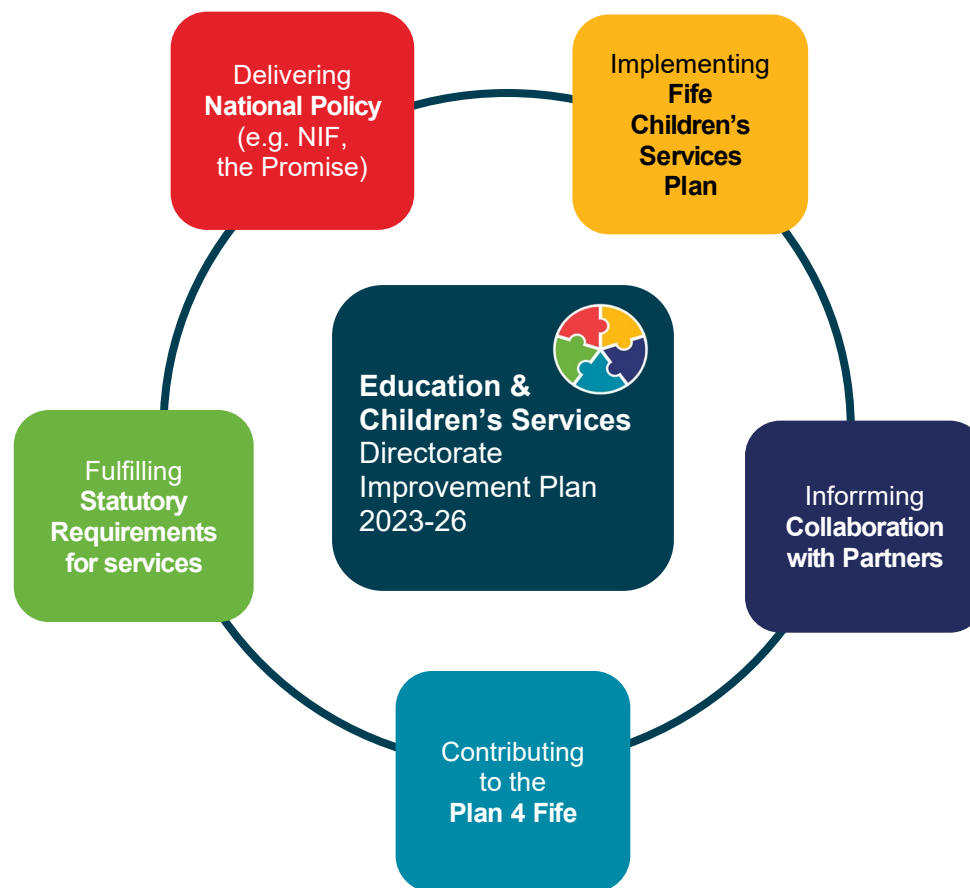
The Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26 provides a basis for the Directorate to continue striving to achieve our purpose, and to further develop services that reflect our shared values.

Our Directorate Improvement Plan

The Role of Our Plan

The Directorate Improvement Plan provides a basis for working with a range of partners at national and local level, enabling the Directorate to:

- Deliver **national policy**, including: the Promise, Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), Whole Family Wellbeing and the National Improvement Framework for schools.
- Support the implementation of the **Fife Children's Services Plan**, for which the Directorate provides a lead on behalf of Fife Council.
- Fulfil key **statutory requirements** for the planning and delivery of services.
- Inform **collaborative working** with other Council services and wider partners to promote, support and safeguard the wellbeing of children, including: Corporate Parenting, Child Protection, Children's Rights, and actions to mitigate Child Poverty.
- Inform Fife's participation in the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) for schools and early learning settings.
- Describe the Directorate's contribution to the **Plan 4 Fife**, Fife's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.



Our Directorate Improvement Plan

The structure of our Directorate Improvement Plan for 2023-26

The last three-year strategic planning period for children's services in Fife – from 2020 through to 2023 – covered a period in which we saw the impact of a major, global pandemic (the Covid-19 pandemic) and the beginnings of a period of recovery.

In developing the current Directorate Improvement Plan, we have sought to identify the most significant challenges and barriers to life opportunities faced by children, young people and families in Fife. Page 13 provides an overview of these. Many of these challenges reflect a need to focus on core aspects of service delivery – to help sustain and further strengthen recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. They also reflect the importance of ensuring that – as outcomes and experiences improve for children, young people and families across Fife – these also reflect a significant improvement in equity and equality.

In order to help ensure a clear focus for this work, the Directorate Improvement Plan 2023-26 is structured in the form of separate improvement plans for:

- The Education Services (including early years settings, schools and specialist provision)
- Children and Families Social Work.

The following pages set out these Improvement Plans.



Improving life
chances for all

Education Service Improvement Plan 2023-26

The Fife Education Service supports the learning and development of children and young people across all ages, regardless of their individual need.

The Education Service oversees, quality assures and supports provision in the early years and primary, secondary and special school sectors, as well delivering a range of specialist provision for learners.

The Service contributes as a lead partner to the work of the Fife Children's Services Partnership, which oversees joint working across wider children's services to improve the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families in Fife.



Further details can be found in the Fife Children's Services Plan (<http://www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023>)

Review of wider evidence

A key element in developing the Education Service Improvement Plan was work undertaken to review educational outcomes for children and young people in Fife. This work contributed to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that was undertaken to support development of the Fife Children's Services Plan 2023-26. Further details regarding the JSNA can be found in pages 6-10 of the plan (see: www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023).

The table on the following page summarises some of the key challenges highlighted by the wider evidence base on educational outcomes reviewed in developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Overview of current scorecard outcomes

The table below shows outcomes across a range of key measures for school education in Fife. The data reflects the most recent data published at national level (generally, for 2021/22 outcomes). The data on the left provides a comparison with the national average for Scotland. The performance quartile figure on the right is based on a poverty-adjusted benchmark comparator, which allows for influence of poverty on educational outcomes (see appendix 1 for further details).

	Outcomes compared with Scotland			Benchmark
	Fife	Scotland	Gap with Scotland	Performance quartile
Level 4 numeracy - by end S4	89.5	87.9	1.6	1
Level 5 numeracy - by end S4	61.5	61.6	-0.1	2
Level 4 literacy by end S4	92.1	92.0	0.1	2
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Literacy	68.4	70.5	-2.1	3
Attendance - Secondary schools	88.2	89.1	-0.9	3
Initial Positive Destinations	94.8	95.7	-0.9	3
Follow-up Positive Destinations	92.1	93.5	-1.4	3
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Numeracy	74.8	77.9	-3.1	3
Level 5 literacy - by end S4	70.3	74.5	-4.2	3
Attendance - Primary Schools	93.0	94.0	-1.0	4
3 or more Nat 5 passes by end S4	51.7	61.3	-9.7	4

There are some core strengths in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Overall, outcomes tend to sit close to the poverty-adjusted benchmark comparator. Aspects of attendance and wider achievement reflect a particular, continuing challenge.

Key challenges identified through our review of outcomes

Health & Wellbeing

- School data shows a significant increase in the number of young people with additional support needs related to family issues and **mental health**.
- We are seeing increasing issues in school relating to **relationships & behaviour** (e.g. self-regulation, distressed behaviour, violence and aggression and bullying).
- **Staff wellbeing** is an important contributor to an effective and improving education system.
- Further developing our partnership approach to **family support** will enable better support for distressed young people and improved whole family wellbeing.

Attendance & Engagement

- **Non-attendance** is a key factor in lower attainment and achievement. It has seen a sustained decline for a number of years and was adversely affected by the Covid pandemic
- **Non-attendance** is increasing significantly for young people with additional needs related to **family and mental health issues**
- **Engagement and meaningful participation** are key for effective service design and delivery. This includes children, young people, families and staff.
- **Partnership working** across children's services is key to improving whole family wellbeing and engagement. It will be important to strengthen the links between schools and wider partnership work and planning.

Achievement

- Achievement of CfE ACEL levels (ACEL) fell during the Covid pandemic and the **attainment gap** widened. In the past two years we have seen the beginning of recovery for CfE declarations in stages P1, P4 and P7.
- Numeracy at SCQF levels 4 and 5 are above benchmark attainment by end of S4.
- Although literacy at SCQF level 4 is above benchmark attainment by the end of S4, attainment for literacy at SCQF level 5 is below benchmark attainment.
- Measures of **cumulative attainment at National 5 by end of S4** are significantly lower than national comparators
- Evidence from cohort studies (e.g. Growing Up in Scotland) shows that closing the attainment gap requires **early intervention and appropriate, sustained support** – effective tracking and monitoring is key to achieving this

Positive Destinations

- Have been consistently below national rates of **positive destinations** over a number of years – and remain below national outcomes.
- Have begun to close gap with national for positive destinations, **with most schools seeing improvements** in 2022.
- Now matching national outcomes for SIMD Q1 and have been **closing the equity gap** for other aspects of disadvantage.
- However, a **significant equity gap** in outcomes remains.

Equity and Equality

- Poverty and other forms of social disadvantage remain barriers for children, young people and families that cut across across all educational outcomes.
- Outcomes are generally, poorer for a number of groups of learners (disability, young carer, ASN, etc) and significantly poorer for children those facing with **multiple forms of disadvantage**
- Outcomes are generally significantly poorer for **care experienced children** and children on the **child protection register**
- It is important to recognise and value the **diversity** of our children, young people and families. Our approaches must be anti-discriminatory for those with **protected characteristics**.

Our focus for improvement for 2023-26

In order to address the challenges highlighted on the previous page, the Education Service Improvement Plan addresses four key improvement priorities for the period 2023-26:

- Priority 1 – Improving **Health & Wellbeing**
- Priority 2 – Improving **Attendance and Engagement**
- Priority 3 – Improving **Achievement** (including literacy and numeracy, as well as wider achievement)
- Priority 4 – Improving **Positive Destinations**

For each of these outcomes there are significant differences in outcomes relating to equity and equality. These include – for example, differences in outcomes relating to measures of poverty or deprivation (SIMD, registration for free school meals), Additional Support Needs for learning, or being care experienced.

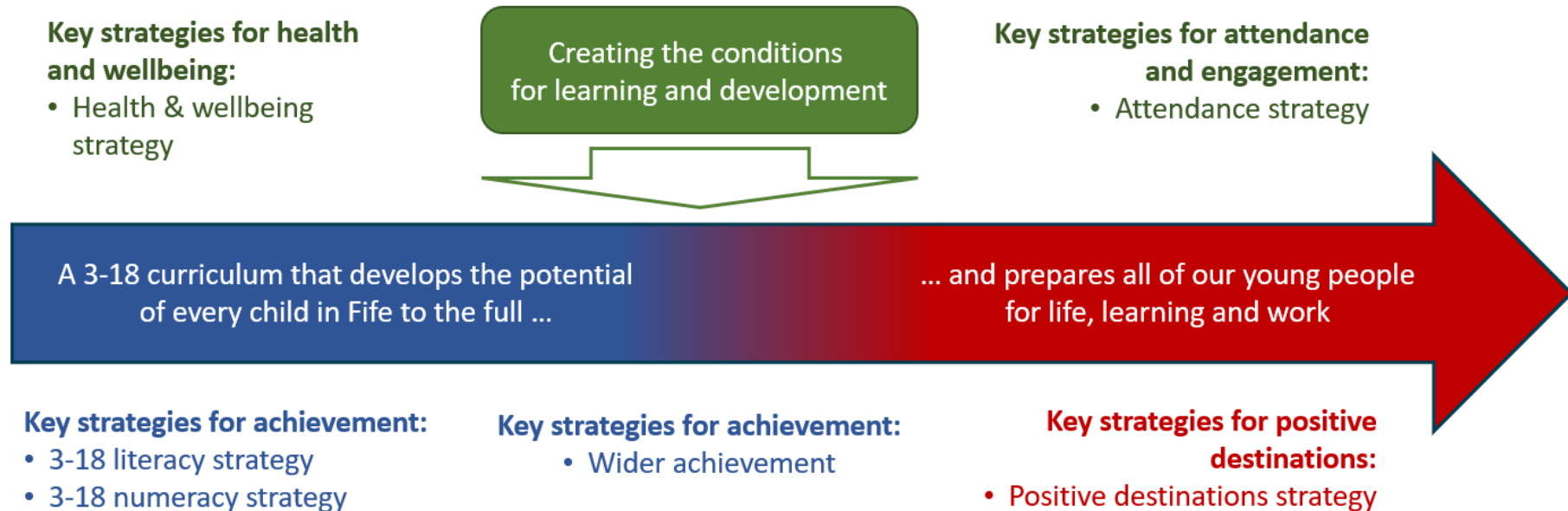
For this reason, **Equity and Equality** is recognised as a cross-cutting challenge which will need to be addressed across all of our improvement activity. Central to addressing this challenge will be work to promote the rights of our children and young people.

The pages that follow provide an outline of our planned improvement actions to address the challenges highlighted above.

Our key strategies to support improvement

In order to provide a framework for strategic planning and improvement across priority areas within the Education Service Improvement Plan, the service has identified a number of key strategies to ensure continuing improvement.

These are summarised in the figure below.



Whilst strategies and policies have already been developed across these areas, the aim is to create a simpler, more coherent strategic framework which ensures that:

- Fife's 3-18 curriculum meets the needs of all learners into the future, supporting every child and young person to develop skills for learning, life and work.
- There is a clear description of the way that work undertaken by the Education Service supports the Plan 4 Fife in delivering a socially just, sustainable and equitable Fife (for example, through work to close the equity gap in educational outcomes and by embedding Learning for Sustainability within the curriculum).
- There is a more focussed narrative about key strategies for improvement, supported by SMART measures of impact.

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 1 – Health & Wellbeing

(A full **Health & Wellbeing Strategy 23-26** accompanies this Improvement Plan)



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this? (Outcome)	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
<p>Improving Mental & Physical Wellbeing (Anxiety, Confidence, Self-Harm & Body Image)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children, young people, staff and their families have increased access to support for their mental health with greater focus on targeted support for groups vulnerable to poor mental health including care experienced, LGBT+ and children with Additional Support Needs. • Increased capacity and confidence of adults who support young people at universal and additional levels, building their understanding of their own, and of children and young people's mental health needs. • Improved use of data to enable the development of targeted resources to inform approaches to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people and staff. • Increased access to sport & physical activity for our most vulnerable and / or disadvantaged children & young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission, support and promote programmes and tools to support mental health and wellbeing, nurturing approaches, develop emotional literacy and regulation across schools and communities (e.g., Kitbag, The Decider Skills, Seasons for Growth and Peer Mediation). • Pilot mental health multi-agency triage system in secondary schools for a 6-month period providing a single point of access to the most appropriate in-service to meet Children Young People's needs. • Extend parent engagement wellbeing development and participation sessions. • Continue roll-out of 'See Me See Change'. programme across secondary schools to encourage pupils, staff and the wider school community to develop and initiate actions to address mental health stigma and discrimination. • Ensure transition programming from Early to Primary, Primary to Secondary and Secondary to Positive Destinations includes elements of wellbeing. • Increase the range & quality of sport, physical activity & wider wellbeing opportunities across all schools with a focus on equality, diversity & inclusion within our practice. • Establish and maintain relationships with partners & key stakeholders to improve children & young people's likelihood of lifelong participation in sport & physical activity, and to improve / maintain a positive mental & physical wellbeing. 	<p>Outcomes Health & Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Wellbeing Indicators</p> <p>Health & Wellbeing Survey 2025</p> <p>Active Schools My Sport Data</p>	<p>Wellbeing Governance Group</p> <p>QIO H&WB Health & WB Leads</p>

<p>Staff Wellbeing – Workload & Relationships & Behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of positive relationships and behaviours between staff, children and young people in all educational settings. • Improved use of data to enable the development of targeted resources to promote practice which helps to ensure that children, young people and staff feel safe and happy in educational settings. • Improved Education employee experience through equitable workplace practices, inclusion and engagement using Our People Matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote attendance through wider achievement and wellbeing, celebrating and recognising the success of learners through increased wider achievement opportunities across Secondary schools. • Work in partnership with key stakeholders to devise systems and processes for tracking and developing the skills for learning life and work that derive from a wide range of activities including sport, mentoring, coaching, entrepreneurship, voluntary work or fundraising. • Ensure wellbeing improvements are evidenced in school and Early Learning Centre improvement planning. • Implement the national recommendation of ensuring Education leadership staff have the opportunity to engage with colleagues in a supportive and collegiate approach to professional reflection, learning and development, within a confidential professional relationship to reflect on the experiences and impacts of work, on wellbeing. • Develop the professional learning programme for all headteachers at all stages of their career with a focus on universal, additional and intensive support for wellbeing. • Implement wide-ranging and high-quality strategies to promote positive relationships and behaviours in all educational settings, between children, young people and staff including Anti Bullying Policy, Social Media Policies & Curricular Resources related to Gender Based Violence (MVP) • Monitor and evaluate impact (Performance Info) more effectively in H&WB and ensure this is communicated more effectively. • Analysis of H&WB Survey shared with partners and localities with accompanied support to develop actions locally for improvement and improve targeted PSE (Personal & Social Education) delivery. 	<p>Staffwise Sep-Nov 2024</p> <p>Evidence from ELPs/LPs during Session 23-24</p>	<p>Wellbeing Governance Group</p> <p>Relationships & Behaviour Strategy Group</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Education Service employee experience through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working to ensure all staff are aware of, confident to and actively supported in completing, the feedback activities relevant to them. - acting on the feedback provided to us. • Ensure our practitioners have confidence that people policies and procedures are applied fairly and in consideration of individual situations. • Ensure our practitioners feel encouraged and supported to identify & undertake development activities in support of their role, career aspirations and wellbeing to ensure professionalism. • Implement reviewed PSE skeleton overview across Fife with associated guidance and expectations. 		
Effects of Poverty on Wellbeing - Widening of Health Inequalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved support for adults delivering the Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood (RSHP) resource to children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of and communication about the RSHP resource by providing support to schools, parents and carers. • Develop a forum on glow for RSHP. Share and discuss ideas on delivery from teachers, partners can share further support materials e.g. video links, policy updates etc. • Resources being developed by the RSHP National Group - Fife to follow model and utilise developed resources. 	<p>Outcomes Health & Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Wellbeing Indicators</p> <p>Children & Young People Health & Wellbeing Survey 2025</p>	<p>Wellbeing Governance Group</p> <p>Childrens Services Wellbeing Group</p>
Lack of Awareness of H&WB Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to Health & Wellbeing advice, support and information through the development of a H&WB Hub enabling children, young people and staff to support their health and wellbeing and guide others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a new service level communications strategy to ensure communications are consistent across all educational settings and central teams. • Consider additional funding to support a H&WB post connected to the creation and sustainability of a H&WB Hub in partnership to ensure internal and external partners can access resources. 		Wellbeing Governance Group

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 2 – Attendance & Engagement



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this?	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
Ensure universal approaches to addressing attendance are fully implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to date policy. • Recording systems consistently understood and applied. • Effective use of data to monitor attendance by staff in schools and centrally. • Processes to address attendance issues in place, understood and applied. • Build Quality Improvement capacity and capability so staff have knowledge, skills and confidence to lead improvement activity. • Reduce exclusions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refresh Fife Education attendance policy. • Schedule attendance strategy group meetings. Consider Terms of Reference + links to strategic planning groups. Invite representatives across the partnership. • Promote attendance resources pack. • Clear strategic messaging to schools on expectations surrounding attendance (policy). • Establish Quality Assurance mechanisms to ensure implementation of policy. • Implementation of Agreed Reduced Attendance/flexi-schooling processes. • Include online lesson coding in resources. • Understand better reasons for exclusions. Review and refresh exclusion policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy updated and evident across Local Authority. • Consistent approaches in relation to attendance. • Quality Assurance processes and supporting documentation in place. • Schools are actively tracking and reviewing attendance data. • Working Time Agreement includes improvement work on improving attendance. • Attendance is a standing agenda item at cluster/school meetings. • Reduction in exclusions. 	Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)
Ensure universal approaches to addressing attendance include learners with specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review systems and recording processes for managing attendance, including coding of online lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement effective and transparent recording systems processes. • Develop training strategy to build practitioner confidence working with new systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common transparent systems of managing and recording attendance. • Practitioners confident in using revised systems. 	Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)

<p>provision (Pupil Support Service, Learning with Care, Home Educated, Gypsy & Traveller Education, residential schools) and vulnerable groups (e.g., edge of care, displaced people).</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate attendance data for Pupil Support Services, home education, online lessons, Approved Reduced Attendance / flexi-schooling. 	<p>Quality Improvement Officer (Equity)</p>
<p>Ensure we understand better reasons for low and non-attendance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake review of data on attendance. • Use Quality Improvement tools and techniques to understand our processes better (cause and effect, force field analysis, process mapping) and ensure we are aligning change ideas to root causes of low/non-attendance. • Review overall strategy for managing low and non-attendance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focussed range of evidence - Power BI. More high level than Quality Improvement tools. • Professional Learning to equip staff with the Quality Improvement knowledge, skills and confidence to drive improvement work focused on attendance. • Implement systematic use of tools such Promoting Attendance Toolkit. • Build on National and International research. Conduct literary review and instigate local research. • Map/review attendance/family support workers role and impact. 	<p>Short-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of Quality Improvement tools (e.g., fishbone, process map, driver diagram) by schools to understand systems and root causes for low attendance. • Involvement of Young People and families in understanding root causes to low attendance. • Tracking attendance data over time (school/stage/targeted group/Young People) to test and learn what works. <p>Medium-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of systematic improvement work focused on attendance (improvement posters). • Demonstrable improvements in attendance at (stage/target group/individual level). 	<p>Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)</p> <p>Improvement Co-ordinator (Quality Improvement)</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of improvement journey – what has been tested, learning and impact. <p>Long-term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased attendance at school/Local Authority level. Integrated attendance/family support model (No Wrong Door). 	
Contribution of parents/carers and partners to support attendance universally and intensively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make explicit links between attendance and safeguarding. Address how to support learner attendance when schools have exhausted all resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review missing in education processes and understating of purpose. Review attendance policy with parents/carers and partners to ensure continuum of support from universal to intensive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refreshed and embedded missing in education process, built into overarching attendance policy. Refreshed attendance policy with clear roles and responsibilities for all partners including timescales. 	Quality Improvement Officer (Attendance/Engagement)

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 3 – Achievement



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this?	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
<p>Improve opportunities for the progressive development of learner skills, knowledge and attributes through wider achievement opportunities across the BGE and Senior Phase.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider current Fife LMI, National DYW (Developing Young Workforce) policy (including the Careers Education Standard) and the recommendations from national independent reviews and policy decisions (Hayward & Withers) to determine how this will be implemented across Fife's schools and early learning centres. Develop a Fife core approach to Wider Achievement which supports the progression of learner skills, knowledge and attributes. Develop Wider Achievement pathways with ongoing opportunities for recognition/ accreditation/ celebration. Establish expectations and guidance at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Wider Achievement & Skills Strategic Steering Group – Cross Sector representation. Wider Achievement & Skills Strategic Steering Group develop a clear rationale, set of aims, expected impact and actions to ensure a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people. Include Fife members of National co-design groups (Profiling, Interdisciplinary Learning, Learner Pathways) and Fife participants of SEIC (South East Improvement Collaborative) Learner Pathways and Positive Destinations programme to inform strategy development. Sub-group established to consider the four capacities from a Fife learners' lens and Labour Market sector information to inform a potential Fife Wider Achievement core approach. Audit Wider Achievement programmes across Fife's Schools and Early Learning Centres and their impact on improving learner outcomes. Identify and map out core Wider Achievement pathways that maximise outcomes for learners and build progressively (3-18). Ensure effective Wider Achievement transitions to enable learners to begin to build a relevant personalised pathway reflecting strengths and areas for development. Build on cluster and locality best practice models to scope out opportunities for a shared focus on 	<p>Rationale & Action Plan completed.</p> <p>Feedback from children, young people, parents, other services and employers.</p> <p>Core approaches to Wider Achievement are adopted across Fife schools and EYCs.</p> <p>Completed Audits and summary of findings to inform next steps.</p> <p>Four capacities and LMI are reflected in school and EYC planning and policy (unique to each context).</p> <p>Exemplification of example Wider</p>	<p>Education Manager, Quality Improvement Officers – Curriculum & DYW</p> <p>Education Support Officers (STEM/ Learning for Sustainability/Outdoor Learning/ Curriculum)</p> <p>Wider Achievement Senior Coordinator</p>

	<p>stages to ensure that all children and young people experience a broad, coherent and progressive programme of wider achievement opportunities.</p>	<p>employability sectors that are unique to geographical areas and related skills and knowledge that will be key for learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and share guidance on the establishment or development of a broad, coherent and progressive wider achievement programme across stages. • Design approaches to sharing good practice and moderation of programmes/ outcomes related to Wider Achievements across the totality of the curriculum to develop of the four capacities. • In line with national guidance, develop approaches to tracking and monitoring children and young people’s skills development and engagement in Wider Achievement opportunities. 	<p>Achievement Fife learner Pathways Wider Achievement Guidance completed, shared with ELCs and Schools.</p> <p>Evidence of implementation in Standards & Quality Reports, Learning Partnerships and HMIE Inspections.</p>	
<p>Strengthen universal support across settings for children and young people with additional support needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and embed a clear Fife wide professional learning strategy for staff in all sectors, which builds confidence in staff adapting universal approaches to their context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Learners’ Service (SLS) will continue to deliver a robust PL offering for all Support for Learning Staff (SfL) led by the Principal SfL teachers (other services support delivery when appropriate) throughout session 23/24 • The partnership between SLS and the Professional Learning Team will aim to enhance the collection of information regarding the evaluation and effects of this program on SfL staff, their practice and the impact of C/YP. • SLS and EP Service will create an additional core approach around fostering inclusive environments and social communication, underpinned by the CIRCLE and SCERTS framework. • Simultaneously SLS and EP service will review the existing universal professional development offerings for staff throughout 	<p>C/YP on the cusp of placement to an enhanced provision, remain in their mainstream setting.</p> <p>Feedback from staff, demonstrating increased confidence in their practice.</p> <p>Improved evidence of robust planning to meet all of the needs of learners.</p> <p>Exemplars of good practice that can be shared with others.</p>	<p>Supporting Learners Service – Headteacher</p> <p>Professional Learning Team</p> <p>Educational Psychology Service</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a suite of tools to support the assessment and planning of need from universal - intensive. • Provide enhanced quality assurance tools to identify expectations within our provisions. 	<p>23/24 aimed at supporting C/YP with additional support needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLS, EP and PL services will continue to support the PL offerings for Pupil Support Staff across Fife, building on the work completed during the summer project. • Develop a specific training offer to support approaches for neurodivergent learners in conjunction with the Educational Psychology Service over 2023/24 • Connect this refreshed programme with the existing PL team universal offer which is aimed at supporting secondary BGE to meet learning needs in S1-S3 through the use of the Workshop for Literacy and Conceptual Understanding in Numeracy approaches. • Extend the current PT/DAS support network for secondary schools, potentially into SEIC, to reflect on the role in raising attainment and sustainable approaches to learning and teaching, to include PTs in mainstream who have a support role. • An explicit commitment to professional learning within the Directorate's ASL strategy • The steering group for Assessment and Planning for additional support and wellbeing needs will implement their calendar of actions with a focus on streamlining paperwork, refreshing CSP guidance, training and delivering core messages in session 23/24. • SLS will support the ASC provisions to embed the use of the ASN Planning toolkit in session 23/24. Extend this to the Secondary DAS provisions from August 2024. Extend the use 	<p>Early intervention training resulting in less applications to enhanced settings at the point of transition.</p>	
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		<p>of the core planning tools for mainstream use, where appropriate, from August 24.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the HGIOASL toolkit during 2023/24 to provide clear expectations against core quality indicators across all provisions. 		
<p>Continue to close the poverty-related attainment gap within the BGE and into the Senior Phase in literacy and numeracy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment across all stages within the BGE (Broad General Education), particularly at points of transition, e.g., P7-S1. Continue to ensure core approaches to learning, teaching and assessment of Literacy and Numeracy are embedded across all schools, e.g., SEIC Literacy Early Years Resource, Workshop for Literacy and Conceptual Understanding in Numeracy. Strengthen approaches to moderation across all stages within the BGE, at school, cluster, local authority and SEIC level. Review approaches to course choices at BGE into Senior Phase to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop and improve universal, targeted & intensive school engagements and professional learning for schools and practitioners across all sectors, based on core pedagogical approaches, including the effective use of quality improvement methodology. Target points of transition, e.g., Nursery to P1 and P7 – S1, and the quality of learner’s experiences in literacy and numeracy across learning in S1-3. Implementation of the Strategic Equity Fund Plan Year 2, 3 & 4, including the establishment and scaling up of key projects targeting support based on attainment and attendance data, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising Attainment Principal Teachers (Literacy & Numeracy) - Principal teacher posts for identified clusters to work across schools to plan targeted support in literacy and numeracy, to build capacity in the use of core approaches and to support moderation of national standards of achievement. Virtual Classroom and Tutoring - Develop an offer of 1-1 tutoring and virtual learning to strengthen-engagement of children and young people in learning and to improve school attendance and engagement in learning. Initially targeting children at P6 and P7- 	<p>CfE Attainment across P1, P4, P7 & S3 – improving trends in percentages of children and young people achieving expected levels and further closing of the attainment gap between Q1 and Q5.</p> <p>Feedback from staff, children and young people, and parents on the impact of approaches.</p>	<p>Achievement & Attainment Reform Strategic Group and all associated Steering Groups.</p> <p>Strategic Equity Fund Steering Group</p> <p>Professional Learning Team</p> <p>Strategic Sector Groups</p> <p>3.1 Networks</p> <p>Subject Networks</p> <p>BGE Tracking Steering Group</p> <p>Assessment & Moderation networks (QAMSOs)</p> <p>Early Years Quality Improvement Networks</p>

	<p>ensure continued development of literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a BGE Tracker across all sectors with consistent approaches to recording, monitoring, analysing and reporting on children's progress. 	<p>Quintile 1 and 2 with attendance of between 50-79%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Literacy Quality Improvement writing bundle will target P5 and then P4 cohorts below 60% 1st level writing attainment. Deliver tailored Writing Pedagogy engagements with targeted schools. Embed the use of Fife's Writing Assessment & Moderation Resource for primary and secondary BGE. ○ Numeracy - Support spread of Conceptual Understanding of Numeracy Approach in targeted clusters with secondary PTCs. Develop class level support for assessing and describing achievement of a level in the BGE at P1, P4, P7, S3. • BGE Tracking Steering group to complete design and piloting of BGE Tracking System. Implementation of BGE Tracking system across all sectors over 2 years followed by ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the use of tool to improve planning and assessment of children's progress. • Strengthen Assessment & Moderation networks across all localities, through involvement of links from every school, and maximising the expertise of quality assurance and moderation officers (QAMSOs) across schools and clusters. 		
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Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 4 – Positive Destinations



What is the key issue or challenge?	What do we need to do to address this?	What actions will be needed? (What is the timescale for doing this?)	What evidence will we have of progress, completion or impact?	Who will lead on this action?
Strategic approach to improving initial and sustained destinations for all young people in Fife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise current processes in place. Increase the use of datasets and tracking and monitoring procedures across all schools. Build capacity across the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) system to ensure consistency of approaches at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data sessions for all relevant practitioners Data workshops with partners Moderation and review of data Promote and review data highlights and next steps. Engaging with SG and Insight data Workshop with DHTs and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Coordinators to review data and extract key messages for schools, risk groups. Review and monitor stretch targets for attendance and also positive destinations, consider strategies and cohorts within this. Outcomes meetings in place for all schools in line with improvement planning and actions for improvement, priorities with a focus on leaver data and identification of gaps. Focus on sustained destinations in both follow up activity and wider participation. Identification on target groups – S4 summer leavers, S5 winter leavers and S3 who are not engaged or attending. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PD data Attendance data Positive trend of L&N stretch targets in line with school targets Improved outcomes for young people in line with stretch targets: Power BI and Insight training offered and taken up by all secondary schools and relevant central team staff. Tracking of priority groups 	EM (Positive Destinations)
In order to close the gap, an active focus on those young people who require additional support to engage in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of those young people who fit into these categories – attendance, engagement, SIMD Q1, ASN, Care Experience, FSM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritising sign up and engagement with DYW programmes. Engaging with S4 summer leaver data, working with Opportunities for All (OfA) teams and partners to deliver programmes which maximise impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor programmes and track to PD status. Identify those in risk groups with early interventions noted. 	EM, QIO (Positive Destinations)

<p>activities related to successful post school destinations, including expanding the offers available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of opportunities to address attendance and engagement opportunities. • Targeted approaches identified with partner interventions. • Identify revised No One Left Behind (NOLB) funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition support for S4 summer leavers, link to 16+ teams, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), College, partners. • Measure impact of current activities and partnerships in terms of engagement, numbers, link to destinations as appropriate as well as school and pupil views. • Develop locality approaches for DYW initiatives utilising Labour Market Information (LMI). • Working towards the achievement of PD stretch target for 2023/24 of 95.2%. • Increase in number of bespoke packages to support improvements in destinations across Fife. • Increase in No One Left Behind (NOLB) impact across our young people. • All schools have participated in gathering pupil voice to inform Fife practice and partner activity. • Improvement in follow up sustained destination data and participation of 16–18-year-olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for partners to engage. • Identify gaps in provision. • Monitor impact of programmes across schools and cohorts as well as partner provision. 	
<p>Personalised and intensive support to allow young people to access a range of opportunities in school, including wider achievement and accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early identification of groups/cohorts. • Tracking and monitoring of potential leavers. • Priority groups in terms of risk groups, S3 cohorts, S4 summer leavers, S5 winter leavers. • Development of opportunities to engage young people. • Devise systems and processes for tracking and developing the skills for learning life and work that derive from a wide range of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing support and challenge across a proportionate model, with focus on priority schools of DYW and PD. • Develop locality-based test of change for Wider Achievement taking cognisance of LMI and targeted cohorts. • Targeted support for groups who are not improving. • Identification of programmes and wider achievement opportunities with identified skills and progression pathways. • Map out Wider Achievement across the SCQF to maximise accreditation tariff points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of young people requiring support from senior phase but also BGE. • Tracking and monitoring of this group and impact of inputs. • Improvement in accreditation data. • Impact on those in risk groups. • Viable WA models that can be upscaled across localities. 	<p>EM, QIO (Positive Destinations) Senior Active Schools Coordinator</p>

	wider achievement opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive promotion of volunteering and entrepreneurship. • Strategic approach across the school. • Pupil support input and planning for this group. • Partner interventions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased tariff points for learners linked to involvement in WA. • Increased numbers of learners involved in volunteering and entrepreneurial activities. 	
Development of partnership working to ensure collaborative solutions for improved and sustained positive destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Destination Partnership Group with clear roles and responsibilities alongside partner contribution and expectation. • School participation in SEIC and National Initiatives. • Planned review of EasyP as an effective mechanism to ensure reduction in negative destinations. • Links to Enterprise and Employability Directorate and other partners strengthened to support young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of DYW calendar for 2023/24 with inclusion of activity and targets for Universal, Additional and Intensive approaches as well as KPI measures • Partnership meeting to review leaver data from 2022 in line with the use of the datahub to support and develop a strategic approach to the use of data for improvement. • Partnership approach to complete update of leaver data to support improved sustained data in April for publication in June. • Wider use of gathering pupil views to review the school session in terms of destinations, DYW and employability. • Identification of S4 summer leavers, S5 winter leavers and S3 as priority groups; planning underway for this • Identification of actions for schools to monitor sustained destinations for pupils in line with April data gathering and June publication. • Improve DYW links to schools and outcomes of young people linked to destinations as a main focus area to ensure impact is proven. • Increased business engagement through Young Persons Guarantee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DYW data and KPIs to be included. • Destinations Partnership Group ensures a focused offer of activity with all partners aligned in shared aims. • Pupil focus group overview findings 	EM, QIO (Positive Destinations) Opportunities for All Coordinator

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigorous monitoring of NOLB outcomes and Fife approach of EASYP • Consider wider scope of 16+ key worker team as a full partnership approach. 		
Creation of a range of universal and bespoke learning pathways, including wider achievement provision and accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of work-related learning (WRL) across partnerships. • Creation of a collaborative approach to WRL, supported by guidance and practice documents. • Clear link to improving positive and sustained destinations. • Development of employability within in all secondary schools • Develop targeted approaches to ensure the work experience entitlement for all school leavers. • Develop accreditation pathway for work experience and volunteering. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in WRL and Work Experience group, leading planning in schools • Work Related Learning partnership strategy group in place to support a Universal, Additional and Intensive model across BGE and Senior Phase • Foundation Apprenticeships (FAs) in Fife group in place to review and improve the offer and delivery of FAs to all secondary schools; partner membership across schools, college and council engaged in this; also, to consider the lowering of withdrawals and improved marketing – to be reviewed and revised for 24/25 • FA Quality Assurance check on practice and process, including time allocation for delivery and approaches by the 10 Frameworks. • Embedding Career Education Standards within the curriculum rationale and design in all secondary schools • Increase in young people engaging in the apprenticeship family as part of the SCP and post school opportunities. • Creation of a work experience policy, supported by relevant accreditation. • Focus on volunteering within schools, supported with accreditation as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in work related learning within the curriculum in schools. • Development of WRL approach and guidance across Fife. • Increase in Fife DYW KPIs. • All schools engaged in CES activity from S1-S6 • Increase in FA and MA numbers. • Increase in number of FAs offered and delivered across Fife. • Increase in those completing FAs successfully. • Increase work experience placements for leavers. • Increased presentations for Work experience SQA / Saltire etc. • Increase in number of Modern 	QIOs ESO

			Apprenticeships (MAs) taken up by school leavers. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase number of young people engaged in volunteering	
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How we will work to improve Equity and Equality

In a world that is so varied, equality and diversity must be promoted throughout our schools.

Equality and diversity is the concept of accepting and promoting people's differences, in line with the Equality Act (2010). The fundamental goal when promoting equality is to raise awareness and make sure that all individuals are treated equally and fairly, regardless of their personal characteristics.

The national discussion paper - ***All Learners in Scotland Matter: The National Discussion on Education*** - May 2023 highlights that:

“Education needs to include learning about all forms of diversity, discrimination, and disadvantage for children and young people and for education workers and support staff, including attention to curriculum, teaching and learning resources, and to diversifying the workforce.”

Our aim is to create an inclusive learning environment – a safe place without prejudice – where learners have the opportunity to thrive. Successfully teaching and raising awareness of diversity works to highlight individual characteristics and traits that make people unique rather than different.

All key strategic areas of work across the directorate have a responsibility to ensure that their work maintains a focus on equality and diversity. It must reflect an ambition to close the gap in outcomes and experiences for a range of targeted groups.

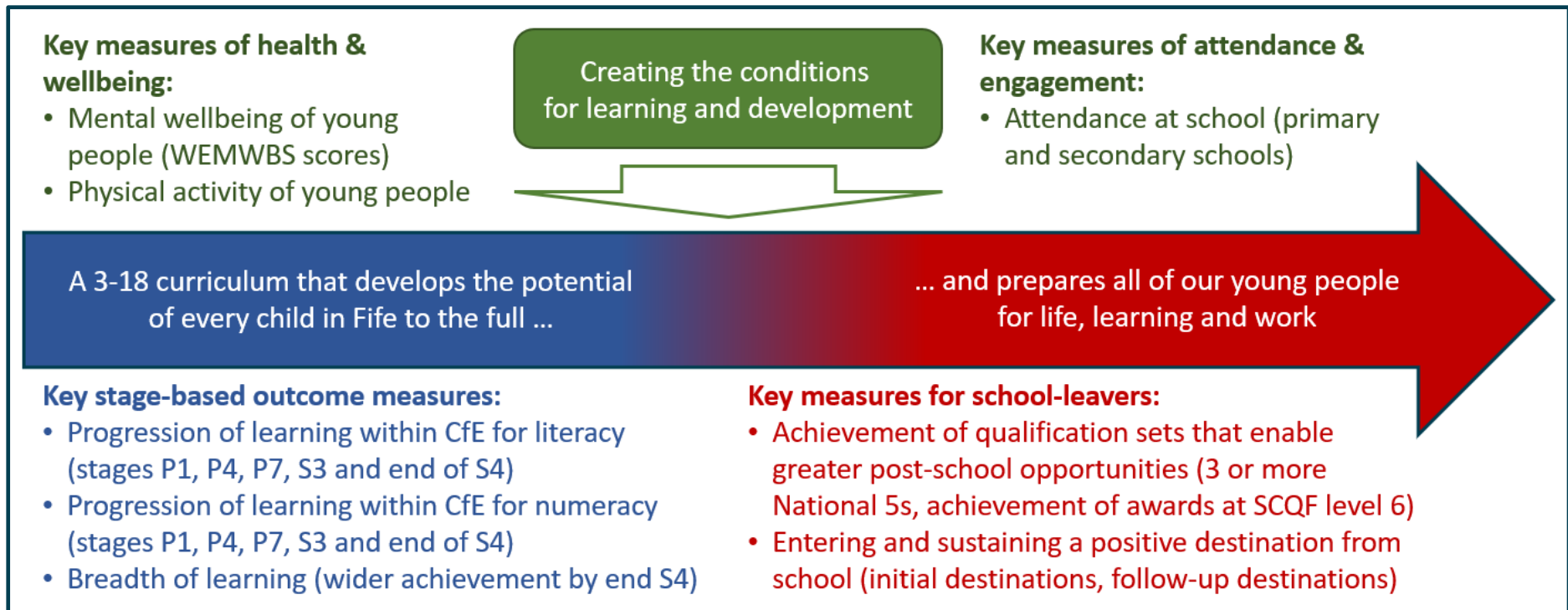
Key actions that we will take to progress this are:

- Develop systems and processes to support the monitoring of outcomes for pupils with protected characteristics.
- Monitor general progress in improving outcomes for children and young people affected by issues of equality and diversity.
- Work across the wider directorate team towards meeting the requirements and recommendations of Teaching in a Diverse Scotland (Nov 18).
- Support and develop all leaders understanding of the requirement of the Equality Act (2010).

How we will measure our progress in improving outcomes – The Education Service Scorecard

The figure below provides an overview of the measures that will be monitored on the Education Service Scorecard. These have been chosen to provide:

- Performance measures across the key strategies of the Education Service.
- A long-term framework for measuring our progress in improving outcomes for children and young people.



These measures will provide the basis for reporting to Education Scrutiny Committee, including:

- Reports on particular strategies and outcomes throughout the year by relevant lead officers.
- An annual progress report on the improvement plan priorities, which will inform an updating of the improvement plan for each school year by the lead officers for each of improvement priority.

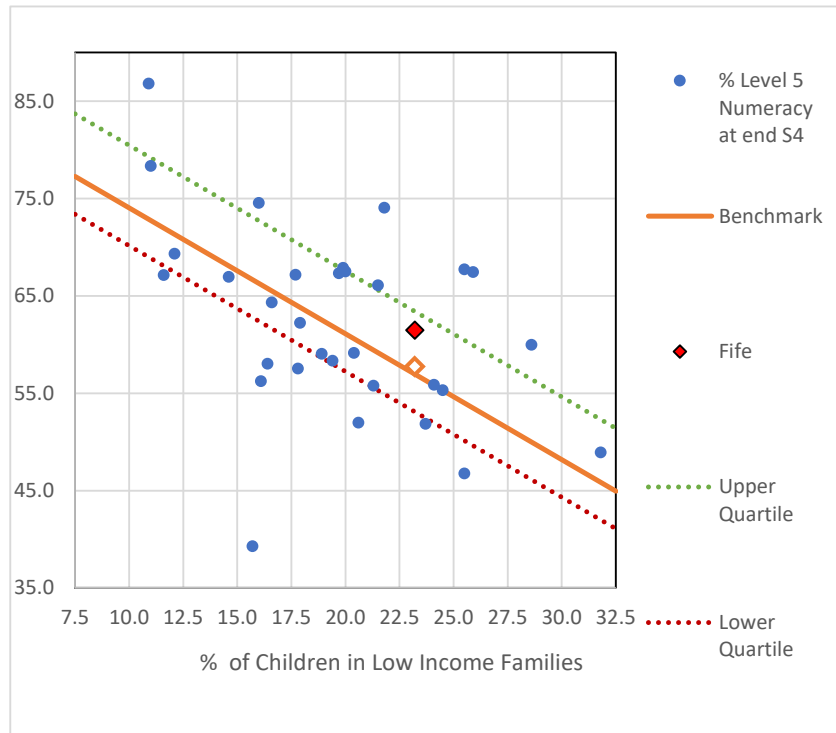
Our approach to supporting further improvement

The Education Service is committed to using proven and high-quality improvement approaches to support continuing improvement across Fife schools. In order to further this aim, the service:

- Is a member of **EFQM** – the improvement organisation. The service is using the EFQM model to develop a self-evaluation framework to inform and help prioritise further service improvement. It is also using opportunities provided by membership of EFQM to learn from the experience of other, similar organisations across Scotland and sector-leading organisations from across the world.
- Works in partnership with the **Children and Young People’s Collaborative (CYPIC)** to strengthen our use of a range of quality improvement tools and approaches, within classroom settings and at a system level. Our work with CYPIC is well established and has led to significant success at the National Quality Improvement Awards. We are now working to improve the impact that this work has at a system level – through improving the way that we plan and deliver scale and spread of improvement.
- Is a partner in the **South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC)**, working with schools in Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders to share learning and to support improvement in every type of early learning and school setting.



Appendix 1: A poverty-adjusted view of educational outcomes



The figure on the right shows a scatterplot of data for Scotland's 32 local authorities. The data in this case is for the percentage of S4 learners achieving an award in numeracy at SCQF level 5; this data is plotted against a standard measure of child poverty (Children in Low-Income Families).

As can be seen, there is a general tendency in the data for local authorities with low levels of child poverty to have higher attainment (towards the top-left corner of the plot), and for local authorities with high levels of child poverty to have lower attainment (towards the bottom-right). The relationship between child poverty and outcomes seen here is generally apparent for educational outcomes of all forms.

The solid orange line through the data (running from top-left to bottom-right) shows how expected outcomes vary with child poverty. The dash green and red lines reflect upper and lower quartile outcomes on the same poverty-adjusted basis.

In terms of raw numbers, outcomes in Fife for numeracy at SCQF level 5 are almost exactly the same as the national average (Fife 61.5%, compared with Scotland 61.6%).

However, the figure above enables us to allow for the influence of poverty on outcomes. On this poverty-adjusted basis, Fife's outcomes (shown by the solid, red diamond) are close to the upper quartile of performance (the green dash line) and above the national average (the solid orange trendline through the data).

Given the levels of child poverty in Fife, we would "expect" outcomes in line with the open orange diamond (directly below Fife's data, but sitting on the solid, orange trendline). The open orange diamond provides a "like-for-like", benchmark comparator figure for Fife; it reflects the national average outcome, given the levels of child poverty seen in Fife. On this basis, Fife is performing above national outcomes (Fife 61.5%, compared with a benchmark outcome of 59.1%).

The table below shows Fife’s current performance across a range of educational outcomes on this poverty-adjusted benchmark basis.

	Outcomes compared with Scotland			Poverty-adjusted benchmark			
	Fife	Scotland	Gap with Scotland	Benchmark outcome	Gap with benchmark	Performance quartile	
SCQF level 4 numeracy - by end S4	89.5	87.9	1.6	86.2	3.3	1	
SCQF level 5 numeracy - by end S4	61.5	61.6	-0.1	59.1	2.4	2	
SCQF level 4 literacy by end S4	92.1	92.0	0.1	91.2	0.9	2	
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Literacy	68.4	70.5	-2.1	68.8	-0.4	3	
Attendance - Secondary schools	88.2	89.1	-0.9	88.8	-0.7	3	
Initial Positive Destinations	94.8	95.7	-0.9	95.5	-0.7	3	
Follow-up Positive Destinations	92.1	93.5	-1.4	92.9	-0.8	3	
CfE Achievement in P1, P4, P7 - Numeracy	74.8	77.9	-3.1	76.5	-1.6	3	
SCQF level 5 literacy - by end S4	70.3	74.5	-4.2	72.7	-2.4	3	
Attendance - Primary Schools	93.0	94.0	-1.0	93.9	-0.9	4	
3 or more Nat 5 passes by end S4	51.7	61.3	-9.7	59.0	-7.3	4	

The measures shown in the table above reflect standard, national measures for educational outcomes across the improvement priorities in this Education Service Improvement Plan (see page Edu|23).

Appendix 2: Glossary

The table below defines abbreviations used in the text of the Education Service Improvement Plan.

ASN	Additional Support Needs.
AART	Awareness Raising and Response Training (Child Protection).
BGE	Broad General Education - (Age 3 to end of S3)
CARM	Care and Risk Management Guidance.
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence.
CSWO	Chief Social Work Officer.
CP	Child Protection.
CPC	Child Protection Coordinator <u>or</u> Child Protection Committee dependent on context.
CPPM	Child Protection Planning Meeting. (Previously CPCC – Child Protection Case Conference).
C&YP	Children and Young People.
CYPIC	Children and Young Peoples Improvement Collaborative
DCPC	Depute Child Protection Coordinator.
DO	Development Officer.
DYW	Developing the Young Workforce.
ELC	Early Learning Centre.
EP	Educational Psychology/Educational Psychologist
ESO	Education Support Officer
EYLO	Early Years Lead Officer.
FMR	Free Meal Registration
HWB	Health and Wellbeing.
JII	Joint Investigation Interview.
IRD	Initial Referral Discussion.
LGBT+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender/Transsexual people.
LMI	Labour Market Information
MVP	Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme (see: educationmvp.co.uk)

NOCC	Notification of Cause for Concern.
NOLB	No One Left Behind
PD	Positive Destination/s
PSE	Personal and Social Education.
QAMSO	Quality Assurance Moderation Support Officer
QIO	Quality Improvement Officer
RSHP	Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood education (see: https://rshp.scot/)
SCIM	Scottish Child Interview Model.
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
SLS	Support for Learners Service
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SW	Social Work.
WEMWBS	Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales
WRL	Work Related Learning



Children & Families Improvement Plan 2023-26

Children & Families

Our highest priority is the protection of children who may be at risk of harm, and the support for families to allow children to remain at home wherever possible. Where this is not in children's best interests, our focus is on providing the best quality of alternative care for children and young people.

Social Work staff work closely with colleagues in other services and agencies in providing an integrated approach that seeks to meet the range of different and complex needs that vulnerable children and their families experience.

The Service contributes as a lead partner to the work of the Fife Children's Services Partnership, which oversees joint working across wider children's services to improve the outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families in Fife.



Further details can be found in the Fife Children's Services Plan (<http://www.fife.gov.uk/FifeCSPlan2023>)

Introduction

Poverty and the legacy of COVID-19 continue to impact on children's rights, resulting in lifelong consequences linked to children and young people's health, social connections, early development, education, play and learning. When poverty is combined with other issues such as mental health problems, domestic abuse or substance misuse – the outcomes for children can be poor and the challenges of parenting overwhelming.

For the reasons outlined above, our Children's and Family Social Work Services Plan will continue to have a targeted and early intervention focus on Fife's disadvantaged and vulnerable children, young people and families – this includes our care experienced/looked after children and young people, those on the "edges of care", those with additional support needs and those facing multiple forms of social disadvantage.

This plan builds on our achievements from previous plans and ensures that our commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and young people remains central to all that we do.

5 high-level themes act as the pillars of our plan:

- Relationship-Based Practice
- Early and effective whole system approach
- Partnership
- Continuous Improvement
- Workforce Development

Our plan is underpinned and informed by legislation, The Promise, GIRFEC, National Child Protection Procedures and our own Belonging to Fife Strategy. To support our plan, there is a strong emphasis on partnership working – we know that working together with families and other stakeholders is more effective and ensures that our finite resources are used effectively.

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 1 – Relationship Based Practice



- We will continue to develop our relationship-based practice approach - ensuring that our assessments and interventions reflect strengths and vulnerabilities within families.
- This will create opportunities for families to understand and take ownership of safe decision making and planning for children.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Build resilient family networks to improve care and support for children. At the beginning of each intervention, we will work with families to build a realistic family plan to meet each child's needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will establish a Relationship-Based Practice Group that will drive and develop the ongoing implementation of relationship-based practice across our teams. 	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More children and young people will remain safely living with their families – the balance of care will shift from foster care and residential care towards children “looked after” at home or with family members. • Children and families will be empowered to make “family led” decisions, which will improve children’s lived experiences. 	C&F data analysis Evaluation and feedback activity
Listen to the voice of children and parents and reflect them in our assessments and plans - they will be fully involved in decisions made about them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will re-assert social work values across all areas of our work, ensuring children’s rights are front and centre of everything we do. 	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families will develop confidence, resilience and resources to find solutions to meet their own needs. Kinship carers report satisfaction with the support 	Evaluation and feedback activity

<p>Treat families with respect - acknowledging that parents are the experts in knowing and understanding their children's needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop performance indicators to help us measure the extent to which our work with families is effective and relationship-based. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task completed 	<p>Evaluation and feedback activity</p>
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Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 2 – Whole System



- We will offer early and effective support to children and families.
- Children and young people will be supported to live at home or with extended family.
- When children’s needs and circumstances change, it is important any transition of care is managed sensitively.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
<p>Ensure that early help is easily accessible and offers good quality, solution-focused support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will review our “front-door” policies/practice - ensuring that we are managing referrals effectively. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families will benefit from timely and effective interventions in response to their needs. 	<p>Data analysis of referral outcomes and referral sources</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the context of delivering “whole family support”, we will undertake a mapping exercise relating to existing family support services. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families will grow in confidence/resilience and provide secure boundaries and greater opportunities for their children and young people. 	<p>Data analysis of referral outcomes and referral sources</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to promote the principles of The Promise and The Belonging to Fife Strategy in social work practice. 	<p>April 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families and staff are able to articulate/ acknowledge that children’s needs are at the centre of practice and planning. 	<p>Audit activity and surveys of families/staff</p>

<p>Ensure that children in care maintain links with immediate and extended family and opportunities for returning home or to extended family, are kept open and explored thoroughly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to strengthen our assessments, care plans and reviewing processes for children “looked after” away from home - exploring opportunities for reunification with family at the earliest opportunity. 	<p>December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The balance of care will shift in favour of children and young people “looked after” by extended family 	<p>Data analysis and Audit activity and surveys of children and their families</p>
<p>We will minimise the number of changes of social worker in each child’s journey.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that any transitions are planned, managed sensitively and consider the views of the child or young person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people are consistently seen and seen alone, with their lived experience fully understood. • Children and young people tell us that they enjoy meaningful relationships with their social worker. 	<p>Data analysis and Audit activity and surveys of children and their families</p>

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 3 – Partnership



- The Children's Services Partnership is committed to the principles of inclusion and relationship-based practice with children and young people – endeavouring to keep children at home with their family, in school and accessing the normal range of community services.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Ensure that all children, young people and their families benefit from receiving the right support at the right time and for as long as they require it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners to implement the National Guidance for Child Protection. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer children and young people are subject to statutory interventions. • Children and young people are protected from abuse and neglect and feel safer. 	<p>Data analysis</p> <p>Surveys of children and their families</p>
Improve the health, well-being and educational outcomes of Fife's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners to embed the refreshed GIRFEC policy. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people are happy, healthy and receive an inclusive education where they can learn and achieve. 	<p>Surveys of children and their families</p>

<p>Ensure that young people leaving care experience a successful transition into “independent” living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with partners to refresh and revise our Corporate Parenting Plan. • With other corporate parents, we will develop more effective ways in which to meet to the needs of young people leaving care. 	<p>September 2023</p> <p>August 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range and choice of tenancy/housing support on offer to young people is developed. 	<p>Data analysis</p> <p>Surveys of children and their families</p>
<p>Involve children and young people in the design and development of partnership improvement work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a Participation and Engagement Framework for the partnership. 	<p>December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can evidence the impact/influence children and young people have had on service development 	<p>Evidence of influence on service design and delivery</p>

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 4 – Continuous Improvement



- We will develop a culture of continued learning, reflection and innovation at all levels of the service.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Ensure that any service improvement/developments are informed by the voices of children, young people parents and carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate Mind of My Own outcome data – ensuring any developing themes are identified. 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families benefit from high quality social work support and challenge that addresses their needs. • Service delivery and design has been influenced by children and young people. 	Data analysis and surveys of children and their families
Learn from: audits, quality assurance, self-evaluation exercises, feedback, complaints and learning reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will coordinate a calendar of quality assurance activity across the service - this will drive practice improvement and develop a 'high support - high challenge' culture. 	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice continually develops and evolves based on learning from children and families and from ideas and innovation. 	Data analysis and surveys of children and their families

Improvement Plan 2023-26

Priority 5 – Workforce



- We recognise that our workforce is the foundation to our success.
- Our workforce is skilled, experienced, effectively trained and delivering high quality relationship-based practice which improves the lives of Fife’s vulnerable children, young people and families.

What are we trying to do better?	Actions we need to take	Timescales	What evidence will we have of completion or impact?	Evidence Source
Think creatively relating to how we recruit and retain good quality experienced practitioners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to review the skills, experience and competence of our workforce and support opportunities for career development. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and families benefit from consistent and meaningful relationships with their social workers. 	Recruitment and retention analysis of data
Grow our own workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to invest in training and developing our staff. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers and other practitioners have the capacity and skills to undertake focussed work with children and families. 	Staff wellbeing survey
Retain and develop an experienced workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide opportunities for networking and sharing of effective practice. 	April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers and other practitioners have the capacity and skills to undertake focussed work with children and families. 	Staff wellbeing survey

<p>Recover from COVID-19 and increase face to face and hybrid meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake research relating to impact of COVID-19 on assessment and planning. • Continue to work with national groups (COSLA, Social Work Scotland and the Scottish Government) in highlighting the challenges in this area. 	<p>December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of working patterns and other service data 	<p>Service activity data</p>
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Community Wealth Building – Progress Report

Report by: Gordon Mole, Head of Business and Employability Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of the report is to provide a progress update at the six month stage in relation to the Community Wealth Building (CWB) Policy Framework approved in April 2023.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet Committee members are asked to:-

- (1) note and comment on progress against the CWB Policy Framework;
- (2) endorse the direction of travel for priority development work identified for council implementation of Community Wealth Building; and
- (3) agree that future progress reports are circulated to Cabinet Committee members for briefing and information with an annual report to the relevant Council and Fife Partnership committees.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implication arising from this progress report.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. Existing systems and processes will require to be redesigned to support both the implementation of a CWB approach and to influence practice and cultural shifts. This will be undertaken at a service level in line with adaptation towards a CWB model of delivery.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA is not required as this report does not propose any changes to existing policies and practices.

The Fairer Scotland Duty requires the council to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. The strategic approach to Community Wealth Building in Fife is strongly focused on delivering fair outcomes and reducing inequality.

Consultation

The Community Wealth Building Support Group which has Fife Council Head of Service and Community Planning Partner representation has been involved in the development of this progress report. The Community Wealth Building Support Group reports to the Recovery & Reform Leadership Board as part of Fife Partnership governance arrangements.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Finance have been consulted on this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an internationally recognised approach to economic design to tackle long-standing economic challenges and transform local economies by considering the ways in which the public sector, in partnership with the private, third and community sectors, can ensure more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in communities and localities.
- 1.2 It seeks to use the economic levers available to ‘anchor organisations’ such as local authorities, health and social care bodies, the third sector, further and higher education institutions and enterprise agencies, to better support their local and regional economies. Anchor organisations are typically large employers with a strong local presence in an area. They can exert sizable influence through their commissioning and purchasing of goods and services, through their workforce and employment capacity and by creative use of their facilities and land assets. Positive use of these aspects can affect social, economic and environmental change in a locality or region.
- 1.3 Fife Council, as Scotland’s third largest local authority, is a significant ‘anchor organisation’ and has committed to implementing a CWB approach to how it uses the resources at its dispersal across the whole organisation, in operational delivery and in the service change planning process. In April 2023, Cabinet Committee approved the CWB Policy Framework as the primary guiding policy framework through which the organisation will align to deliver the economic, social and environmental benefits set out in the Plan for Fife.
- 1.4 Fife Council has also committed, via Fife Partnership, to work with other anchor organisations to develop local approaches to embedding CWB systems and approaches to the delivery of services, aligned to the Plan 4 Fife themes of Inclusive Growth and Jobs, Thriving Places, Opportunities for All and Community-Led Services.
- 1.5 The revised Fife’s Economic Strategy 2023-2030 includes, for the first time, an underpinning theme of Community Wealth Building, recognising the importance of community wealth in delivering an economy which is stronger, greener and fairer. The strategy was approved by Cabinet Committee at its meeting of 1 June 2023 and endorsed by Fife Partnership in August 2023.

2.0 CWB – Progress and Priority Development Work

- 2.1 Table 1 sets out our commitments towards a bolder shift towards a CWB model across the delivery of all services and our progress against the five pillars of CWB activity at this six-month stage:
 1. Spending
 2. Workforce
 3. Land and Property
 4. Inclusive Ownership
 5. Finance
- 2.2 Emphasis has been placed on development work to advance pillars 1 and 2 in recent months with priority focus areas for the next six months identified in pillars 3 and 4.

- 2.3 Work is also underway to develop metrics and to align monitoring and evaluation with the recently adopted Fife Economic Strategy where possible.
- 2.4 Exploratory work with partners is planned for the next six months to support spread and scale of CWB approach particularly in relation to procurement and community benefits and a life chances approach to progressive recruitment across anchor partners.

Table One: CWB Pillar Definitions and CWB Policy Actions for Fife

1. Spending Pillar

<p>Pillar definition: Maximising community and business benefits through procurement and commissioning, developing good enterprises, Fair Work and shorter supply chains.</p>
<p>Overview of activity: This includes a focus on ways to achieve greater economic, social and environmental benefits such as growing investment in local businesses, supplier development and innovation, and ensuring the delivery of tangible community benefits.</p>
<p>What this will achieve: Higher levels of spend with SMEs, micro-businesses and inclusive business models resulting in business growth and improved, resilient local and regional economies.</p>

<p>Pillar 1: Spending</p>	
<p>Fife Current Position: Strong foundation of year on year increases in % of local spend in the procurement and commissioning of services. Fife is significantly higher than the national average. Established practice in the development and capture of community benefit clauses and integrated working with economic development in developing the local supply chain.</p>	
	<p>Next Steps to Advance CWB</p>
<p>Local Procurement Spend</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising local spend of the Fife public pound • Supporting the development of shorter supply chains and local opportunities • Exploring opportunities for joint procuring with partner anchor organisations
<p>Community Benefits Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising community benefits by embedding the successful Madras College / Dunfermline Learning Campus community benefit approach to all suitable capital projects • Aligning private sector opportunities via community benefit clauses with employability and life chances recruitment approaches • Development of community projects bank to design in and direct community benefits towards local initiatives in the community and third sectors, piloted in S&W Fife • Enhancing the monitoring of and long term outcomes of community benefit clauses.

<p>Local Supply Chain Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplier Development Programme and Meet-the-Buyer Events • Promoting access to finance and expert help • Trade shows & learning journeys • Local and regional supply chain and cluster development • Promoting the circular economy
<p>Progress at 6 months to October 2023:</p> <p>The Council’s revised Scheme of Tender Procedures was approved in June 2023, with new conditions to support the Community Wealth Building agenda, including a formal requirement to consider at least one ‘local’ Fife based supplier in any quotation exercise (below regulated value £50k supplies/services and £2m works).</p> <p>The Council’s Corporate Procurement function is working with senior managers to promote these changes, and wider procurement approach before rolling out across the organisation.</p> <p>Use of Public Contracts Scotland (PCS) Quick Quote will enable the Council to monitor compliance and impacts, in addition to work with the Fife supply base.</p> <p>An increase of the works threshold to align with legislative value of £2m, now allows Quick Quote (or potential for direct award) for contracts under this value. Previous threshold was £500,000 meaning works between £500k and £2m were being openly tendered.</p> <p>To ensure greater levels of synthesis across functions, the Council’s Economic Development team now attend the Procurement Review Board (internal governance board to approve procurement activity at relevant stage gates) to provide supplier insight and a ‘critical friend’ role.</p> <p>Review of feedback process from tenderers/prospective tenderers, with particular focus on Fife based suppliers.</p> <p>The Council’s Affordable Housing Team and Corporate Procurement are working to standardise a community benefits approach in the construction area through the use of a Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMS) approach. The scope of the work is covering both Design and Build and Direct Award to developers where they hold third party rights to the land.</p> <p>Levenmouth Rail link – Roads & Transportation and Procurement have secured additional community benefit commitment from Network Rail through increased spend to the project via Leven Bridges & Mountfleurie Bridges.</p> <p><u>Look ahead for next 6 months:</u></p> <p>A focus on capacity building with Communities and Corporate Development – contacts in place for onward engagement at operational level on community/project support.</p> <p>For Fife Business Week 2023, a Meet the Buyer event on 9th November. Construction focus and will have Fife Council, Network Rail, Hub East Central Scotland and BAM Construction exhibiting to allow local suppliers to discuss contract, supply chain and sub-contracting opportunities Fife Council Meet the Buyer All events and training listings Supplier Development Programme (sdpscotland.co.uk)</p>	

Build Fife project – This project is being led by Fife Council & Hub East (partner for delivery of Dunfermline Learning Campus) as part of their social value commitments and in conjunction with Tier 1 contractors the national Supplier Development Programme and Business Gateway Fife. The 8 week programme is aimed at local construction and related sector businesses with aspirations for growth (turnover circa. £1-£2m currently). Organisations will learn from business experts, engage directly with Tier 1 contractors as well as develop relationships with fellow businesses. The programme is carefully designed to help organisations improve their business capabilities, open opportunities for growth. The Council is working with Hub East to establish this programme with view to promote at the Meet the Buyer event.

The Council has implemented joint reporting and articulation of benefits with Fife College which uses the TOMS approach. This approach will be further refined for the replacement of Inverkeithing High School to include alignment with local community priorities.

Work is underway in developing a pilot community project bank model in South and West Fife, working with Fife Voluntary Action and the West Fife Villages Forum. This pilot will develop a model of local development and prioritisation of community benefit activity, to be approved annually by area committee. The project bank will be used to guide Procurement colleagues to match community benefit activity to relevant contracts.

The Council's work on community benefits was highlighted at a national Scape conference on 22 September.

2. Workforce Pillar

Pillar definition: Increasing Fair Work and developing local labour markets that support the prosperity and wellbeing of communities.

Overview of activity: Ensuring public sector anchor organisations and other employers embed Fair Work principles, promoting the payment of the real Living Wage; recruiting locally, from groups who face inequalities and are furthest from the labour market; and promoting work that is secure, provides flexible working and training opportunities and supports the workforce to have an effective voice.

What this will achieve: Access to local and fair employment opportunities, fairer wages, skills development opportunities and improved wellbeing of employees.

Pillar 2: Workforce

Fife Current Position: Sound experience in delivering online application processes and success in integrating recruitment approaches and systems to 'ring-fenced' employability programmes. Flexible and adaptable approaches tested to support Services to fill recruitment gaps / test campaigns / target priority groups and learning captured.

Fife was the first place in the United Kingdom to secure a 'real Living Wage' town status, for Glenrothes. Through a dedicated action group, significant increases have been seen in businesses becoming accredited RLW employers. This continued to grow through the pandemic, but now requires additional focus to extend to other Fife places.

	Next Steps to Advance CWB
Recruitment & Employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigned recruitment approaches which help applicants overcome digital and process barriers • Targeted recruitment from priority groups who face inequalities and who are furthest from the labour market • Establishment of a 'life chances' approach to a proportion of core Fife Council vacancies • Employability programmes to be designed into recruitment processes for identified posts – as an initial position before rolling out more widely - with guaranteed job outcomes for participants
Fair Employment & Real Living Wage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Work conditionality terms for grants & contracts reviewed in line with Scottish Government conditionality for the expenditure and draw-down of grant funding. • Implement a roll-out of the Real Living Wage Fife-wide – beginning with the next town focus on Kirkcaldy. • Encourage that commissioned activity funded through government grants, requires suppliers and delivery organisations to be accredited Real Living Wage employers. • Amend grant award conditions, including ALEOs and Trusts requirements to include expectation of progression towards RLW.
<p>Progress at 6 months to October 2023:</p> <p>Targeted recruitment from priority groups who face inequalities and who are further from labour market. Fife Council have been able to partner with Fife Gingerbread who have provided funding to offer placements for 8 lone parents recruited to roles to give them experience in Housing, Local Offices and the Contact Centre. These placements commenced in late September 2023.</p> <p>There has been significant work on the Life Chances Model - Guaranteed Interview Scheme over the last six months, with the scheme having been developed to enable employability participants who successfully complete a placement with the Council and who meet the minimum essential criteria for the job to receive a guaranteed interview. Initial support was given by Trade Unions at the Workforce Consultation Group and was ratified by JNCF on 12th September 2023 for deployment. The recruitment policy and procedures will be updated and communications across the organisation arranged.</p> <p>Alongside the above, work has also commenced with the Employability Team on the next stage of Life Chances model to look at how Council services who have hard to fill/high volume vacancies can be supported to align with employability programmes and consider ringfencing or guaranteeing jobs in these areas for employability participants on successful completion. A workshop to help design and develop this next phase is being organised and will take place by the end of the year. This will include representatives from Employability, HR, Services and Trade Unions.</p>	

To further Targeted Local Recruitment, The Council's HR team is continuing to work with DWP and a Jobs Fair to Dunfermline was held on 28 September 2023 in Dunfermline, with service representatives on hand to talk to people about what vacancies the Council has to offer and answer questions about what it's like to work with the council. Teams from across the council were in attendance, including housing, catering, grounds maintenance, cleaning, early years and pupil support, childcare, adult social care, waste operations and clerical/admin. More information is available at www.fife.gov.uk/jobsfair2023.

The Council continues to work with businesses to deploy progressive recruitment models of employment, including in the advanced manufacturing and construction sectors. A greater number of businesses will be approached in the remainder of 2023/2024 to roll out activity.

3. Land and Property Pillar

Pillar definition: Growing social, ecological, financial and economic value that local communities gain from land and property assets.

Overview of activity: Productive use of anchor organisation land and property, for example through diversified ownership models including community ownership, and tackling vacant and derelict land and buildings

What this will achieve: Land and property are used for the common good and benefit communities, SMEs and micro-businesses and the environment.

Pillar 3: Land & Property

Fife Current Position: Progress has been made in streamlining our arrangements for Community Asset Transfers (CATs) and providing stronger engagement with interested community bodies. To date Fife has completed 12 successful CATs totalling approx. £1.1 million investment to communities to support a wide range of projects, including community hubs, music projects and environmental assets. In addition, community organisations have been supported through support in kind assistance providing additional community benefit. Organisations assisted range from local sports clubs through to valued 3rd sector partners, such as the YMCA and The Cottage Family Centre.

Fife Council continues to promote the productive re-use of vacant and derelict to deliver better economic, social and environmental outcomes for communities across Fife. This includes optimising use of our allocations to the Scottish Government's 'Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF)' to invest in initiatives which will have a highly visible impact on long-term vacant and derelict sites particularly in our town and neighbourhood centres. These retain a sharp profile within the Council's 'Reform and Recovery' Programme particularly within the Climate Emergency, Leading Economic Recovery and Community Wealth Building workstreams. The 'Recovery and Renewal' Plan4Fife 2021-2024 Update (August 2021) states a desired outcome under the heading of Community Wealth Building is to see "More vacant, derelict and contaminated land brought into productive use".

Information on Vacant and Derelict Land in Fife can be accessed through the annual reports and interactive map of sites on the Council's website: [Planning Information and Land Use Audits | Fife Council](#)

	Next Steps to Advance CWB
Land and Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign systems and process to deliver wider social benefit through the use of land and assets • Develop a joint public asset register with anchor partners • Stronger engagement and on-going support for community bodies seeking asset transfers • Lobby at a national level to secure a more streamlined and strengthened route towards securing Compulsory Purchase Orders which remain the best means for councils and communities to take control of derelict land for the purposes of community regeneration.
Vacant & Derelict Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Vacant and Derelict Land Delivery Plan 2023/24 to progress CWB delivery models, in areas such as community opportunities to develop natural capital. • Optimise use of VDLF to support the remediation and re-use of long-term vacant and derelict sites • Bolster delivery of Fife Council's 'Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan' in the context of reuse of vacant and derelict land including support for Community Renewables and tree planting initiatives. • Unlock further public and private funding to deliver jobs, affordable homes and low carbon/green initiatives on vacant and derelict sites • Working with other Councils, lobby the Scottish Government on expansion of the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund to deliver allocations of ringfenced patient capital to more than 5 councils each year.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how Section 75 requirements under the Planning (Scotland) Act and National Planning Framework can be used to enhance wider CWB goals beyond the direct mitigations of impacts of development
<p>Progress at 6 months to October 2023:</p> <p>Scottish Ministers have approved the Council's Vacant and Derelict Land Delivery Plan for 2023/2024, which includes a focus on climate adaptation and community wealth approaches, and strategically links to community-level ownership and management of natural capital, including reforestation and rain garden projects. Further roll out of this work will take place over the next six months.</p> <p>National Planning Framework 4 includes a policy that developments that include 50 or more homes, and smaller developments if required by local policy or guidance, should be accompanied by statements of community benefit. The scope of the Local Development Plan review and interim policy guidance includes an assessment of how the statement of community benefit can require a statement of how proposals contribute to CWB.</p>	

Over the next six months, further consideration will be given as to the use of Section 75 requirements under the Planning (Scotland) Act including taking learning from the community project bank pilot in West Fife, and analysis of good practice in the use of Section 106 for community benefits by English local authorities, following discussions with the CLES-led CWB Community of Practice, in which Fife is an active member.

Fife Council awaits the outcome of Scottish Government’s consultation on the introduction of Community Wealth Building legislation and potential new duties for local authorities and national agencies. As part of discussions with Scottish Government through the consultation period, it was agreed that Fife Council would share detail of a potential Section 75 approach when developed.

4. Inclusive Ownership Pillar

<p>Pillar definition: Developing more local and inclusive enterprises which generate community wealth, including social enterprises, employee-owned firms and cooperatives.</p>
<p>Overview of activity: Promoting greater diversity in the business base by encouraging formation and development of inclusive business models¹ which support the local retention of wealth.</p>
<p>What this will achieve: More inclusive and democratically owned enterprises and assets which means the wealth created locally and by local people stays in those communities in the form of incomes and profits rather than being extracted out.</p>

<p>Pillar 4: Inclusive Ownership</p>	
<p>Current Position: The Fife business base is dominated by smaller businesses, with 96% of Fife's businesses employing fewer than 250 employees. There is a package of business and third sector support available across Fife within the Council’s Economic Development and Community Development teams, Business Gateway Fife, and Fife Voluntary Action.</p>	
	<p>Next Steps to Advance CWB</p>
<p>Developing the Local Economy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding support for community ownership, social enterprise and community owned businesses through a new streamlined process for alternative ownership start-up support, drawing on the expertise of business support organisations and national agencies, through a virtual hub model. • Identify opportunities to support transitions to alternative delivery models for community-led services and supply chain opportunities. These would require public sector organisations to support transition over a multi-year commitment in the use of such services.

1 Co-operative Development Scotland: Blog

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a town centre housing approach to facilitate 20 minute neighbourhoods and higher levels of local spend • Work with anchor partners to pool land for housing • Explore the potential for a green building supply chain
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Progress at 6 months to October 2023:

Following approval of the revised Fife’s Economic Strategy in June 2023, and endorsement by the Fife Partnership in August 2023, a delivery plan is being produced to move into activity, with a focus on a small number of priorities with the greatest potential to help achieve the aim of ensuring that more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in Fife and its communities for the benefit of all.

An initial action is the development of appropriate support for alternative business models, such as social enterprises and cooperatives. Fife Council is working with Co-operative development Scotland, a delivery function of Scottish Enterprise, in a series of workshops for development of co-operative business models.

Over the next six months, a mapping and review of social enterprise support provision will set out the key points of engagement for community capacity building, third sector input and business support activity to ensure a cohesive pathway towards social enterprise creation. Business Gateway Fife already reports significant interest in social enterprise start-ups in 2023/2024.

The Town Centre Housing approach, jointly funded by Housing Services and Business & Employability Services, continues to identify sites linked to masterplanning activity which could facilitate spend in town and city centres.

Use of smart approaches for delivery have been considered through a series of workshops leading up to the June 2023 Dunfermline City Conference and work is now underway to develop a roadmap approach to delivering a wellbeing economy in the city.

5. Finance Pillar

<p>Pillar definition: Ensuring that flows of investment and financial institutions work for local people, communities and businesses.</p>
<p>Overview of activity: Increasing investment and re-circulating wealth within local economies including through access to affordable credit and business finance.</p>
<p>What this will achieve: Money and investment stays in a local area and is available to support communities and businesses.</p>

Pillar 5: Finance

Current Position: The credit union movement has a 20-year history in Fife with three Fife-based community credit unions currently in operation; Kingdom Community Bank (KCB), Benarty & Lochgelly Credit Union and North East Fife Credit Union. Fife Council staff have a payroll arrangement with Kingdom Community Bank (the only Fife-wide credit union), but also with a local authority regional credit union – Tay Valley Credit Union, based in Dundee. Credit union membership in Fife is approximately 12,000 members - with KCB accounting for 90%. Loan value across Fife is just under £2m and savings on deposit around £7.5m. There is scope to further increase credit union membership and maximise the use of capital.

Next Steps to Advance CWB

Financial Inclusion

- Further develop the role of credit unions and general financial inclusion provision to support financial resilience and wellbeing.
- Explore the potential of credit union lending to businesses
- Explore community-led access to finance models for e.g. counter service provision in communities.

Progress at 6 months to October 2023:

Kingdom Community Bank's (KCB) membership continues to grow with 400 new members this year to date.

KCB is participating in the UK Government's Multiply fund and offering informal learning sessions to members and non-members on basic budgeting and making ends meet. This includes a session about avoiding financial harms and loan sharks. KCB has identified that more people are seeking loans without the ability to repay them and there are an increasing number of people seeking loans to pay for bills.

KCB is opening a branch in Dunfermline before the end of 2023 in partnership with Fife Voluntary Action and Fife Council. Local project work continues with food pantries to encourage regular saving, even modest amounts, in a project being funded by Fife Council at locality level in SW Fife.

A major focus this year for KCB has been in responding to the requirements of the new Consumer Duty for regulated financial firms (which includes community banks and credit unions) which is being implemented by the Financial Conduct Authority. Its purpose is to reinforce values around fairness – making it harder for firms to lend money to those who cannot reasonably demonstrate that they can afford to repay it without facing further hardship. The first element of the Duty came into effect during summer.

Fife College is a payroll partner for KCB too – this was set up a number of years ago and there remains scope to add other anchor partners to a savings at source approach.

Lending for business is currently not being considered due to the extent of development work and repositioning of the KCB required, the current 'cost of doing business' and the level of risk this would expose for KCB.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 A commitment to Community Wealth Building was confirmed by Fife Council in 2020, with early actions focusing on engagement with other anchor organisations, the creation of effective governance models and implementation of priority measures, as set out in the adopted CWB Delivery Plan for 2022-2023. The introduction of a policy framework in April 2023 provided a direction to services to further implement CWB approaches within the design and delivery of provision.
- 3.2 This report provides progress against CWB actions at the six month stage noting that focus has been on development and delivery under pillars 1 and 2; Spending and Workforce where good progress is being made to embed new processes and practice into mainstream approaches. The focus of the next six months will be enhanced delivery under pillars 3 and 4, Land and Property and Inclusive Ownership.
- 3.3 Priority development work for the next six month period will work alongside delivery planning of Fife's Economic Strategy and will focus on together with stronger alignment of delivery, metrics, monitoring and evaluation.
- 3.4 Participation in the national CLES-led Community Wealth Building community of practice will enable Fife Council to share learning with local authorities at different stages of the CWB implementation journey.
- 3.5 A focus for the Community Wealth Building Support Group will be to support partners to develop their own organisational responses to CWB by sharing learning from Fife Council experience to date and supporting development.

List of Appendices

1. Community Wealth Building – Fife Anchor Charter

Background Papers

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

- Community Wealth Building Policy Framework – 6 April 2023 - Cabinet Committee

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Community Wealth Building – Fife Anchor Charter

Our economy should work for everyone.

We are committed to a thriving Fife for all communities.

Community wealth building provides some solutions.

Community wealth building is a people-centred approach to local economic development. It redirects wealth back into the local economy and puts control and benefits in the hands of local people.

Community wealth building uses the economic levers available to Anchor Institutions to develop resilient, inclusive local economies with more local spend and fair employment, as well as a larger and more diverse business base - ensuring that more of our wealth is owned locally and benefits local people.

Anchor Institutions are organisations that are rooted in places by their purpose, histories, land and assets, and established local relationships. We, as Fife's Anchor Institutions, have a powerful role to play to embed community wealth building practice in Fife. By increasing community wealth, all communities improve, wellbeing improves, and people thrive.

Anchor Charter Mission Statement

To commit to long term collaboration between Fife Anchor Institutions to reframe the development of our local economies and environments through a Community Wealth Building approach. We have a shared goal to deliver a more inclusive and sustainable approach to economic development, which achieves wider social benefits and promotes social justice, environmental sustainability, and prosperity for all as part of a wellbeing economy. This includes a commitment to take the necessary decisions and action in each anchor institution and to report on progress to Fife Partnership.

5 Pillars of Community Wealth Building – Our Anchor Pledges

Pillar Purpose	Pillar Objective	Anchor Pledge
<p>Procurement</p> <p>We commit to using our spend to support a diverse local business base</p>	<p>Maximise economic, social and environmental benefit for the community by developing dense local supply chains comprising local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, cooperatives and other community owned enterprises.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to undertaking supply chain and spend analysis and working towards increasing local spend wherever possible • Proactively engage with other anchor institutions to identify and progress joint procurement opportunities, while supporting local businesses to bid and respond to opportunities
<p>Fair Employment</p> <p>We commit to being a fair employer</p>	<p>Create fair and meaningful employment opportunities by recruiting from priority groups, paying the living wage and building progression routes for workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards becoming a Living Wage Employer • Seek to recruit locally and from priority groups where appropriate, for example, young people, people with long-term health problems, people experiencing poverty • Commit to providing secure, safe employment, addressing gender pay imbalances and developing strategies for in-work progression and wellbeing support • Ensure workers are respected and have access to trade union membership.
Pillar Purpose	Pillar Objective	Anchor Pledge
<p>Land & Assets</p> <p>We commit to the productive use of our land and assets to support communities and enterprises</p>	<p>Anchors are often major land holders and can support equitable land development and ownership models, including the imaginative use of assets for community and wider social and economic use, and which help to address climate change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to undertaking an asset review to identify opportunities for Community Wealth Building • Proactively support communities who wish to use or develop underutilised assets

<p>Financial Power</p> <p>We commit to harnessing and growing local wealth</p>	<p>Increase flows of investment within local economies by harnessing wealth that exists locally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to invest in environmentally sustainable local economic development opportunities • Support and promote progressive finance initiatives, including local credit unions • Encourage staff and service providers to shop locally and ethically, supporting 'Keep it Local' campaigns
<p>Plural Ownership</p> <p>We commit to supporting plural ownership of the economy</p>	<p>Advance inclusive economic ownership models such as local SMEs, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, cooperatives, community enterprises and mutually owned companies and thus enable more wealth that is generated locally to stay within the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively engage with communities to co-produce local services and initiatives • Commit to involving local SMEs, employee-owned businesses, social enterprises, cooperatives and community owned enterprises in local supply chains

We commit to this Anchor Charter to deliver Community Wealth Building in Fife.

Fife's Homelessness Reduction Plan 2023/25

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report has been prepared to highlight the positive progress that has been made in reforming housing access and homelessness services but highlight the difficulties created by the significant pressures facing services. The report identifies a number of priority areas where policy change, coupled with additional external funding is required to address the challenges within homelessness.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (1) agree the proposed policy positions set out within the report;
- (2) approve the Homelessness Reduction Plan attached, specifically where additional external resource would be required;
- (3) agree that officers will present and discuss the report with the Housing Minister and key Scottish Government staff to bid for additional financial and non-financial resources to deliver key priorities; and
- (4) agree that a bi-annual update will be provided to Cabinet with key elements of the delivery plan subject to more detailed scrutiny on a regular basis, aligned to the SHR Assurance Statement.

Resource Implications

Homelessness Services continue to operate within budget and governance of external Scottish Government funding is provided by the Ending Homelessness Together in Fife Programme Board. This governance ensures that homelessness funding and budget is directed to key priority areas. The report highlights recent announcements that create the ability to bid into Scottish Government funding to alleviate pressures on statutory temporary accommodation, specifically a £60m national homelessness fund within the existing Affordable Housing Programme.

Legal & Risk Implications

Fife continues to regularly breach statutory duties to provide temporary accommodation as well as the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. The situation has been escalated internally and reported to the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Impact Assessment

Fife and other local authorities are currently experiencing significant pressures on housing and support services which is being escalated through CoSLA, SOLACE and ALACHO.

A full EQIA has been completed which confirms a range of positive impacts for people in housing need and who may be homeless (Appendix 2).

Consultation

Officers have engaged with key elected members and through appropriate fora in the production of the policy proposals. Further consultation through the normal housing and partnership channels will be provided as part of the implementation process.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper highlights the changes made within homelessness services with a renewal, rather than recovery focus. This has been generated through Fife's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) as a positive shift towards rapid rehousing by default but limited by the funding available which did not match the initial RRTP 'ask' of government. The report recommends a number of proposed policy positions and proposes areas to be highlighted to Scottish Government where additional financial and resource support is required to make a positive impact on services to homeless people.

2.0 The Current Fife Position

- 2.1 Fife is currently managing homelessness services in the context of unprecedented and specific pressures on temporary accommodation continuing to flow from the long-term effects of the pandemic compounded by the cost of living crisis. The council is working to maximise housing supply and continuing to deliver the Affordable Housing Programme but is calling on the Scottish Government for national leadership and additional investment in new supply to meet the needs of those presenting as homeless and in housing need more generally.
- 2.2 Fife is fully committed to addressing homelessness through the revised Ending Homelessness Together Programme Board which was formerly known as the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Board. This commitment has been demonstrated in a number of ways through the delivery of our strategic change programme;
- The creation of a new Housing Options based front line service, bringing roles together to provide a greater focus on homelessness prevention and options.
 - Ongoing work to increase, diversify and re-provision temporary accommodation within the context of the RRTP.
 - A positive organisational response to the Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court decision affecting temporary accommodation to enable over 600 households to remain in their home as a permanent tenancy or move to a home to allow homelessness duty to be discharged. This is largely complete and mainstreamed into practice to flip 100 tenancies per year.
 - Increased investment in property acquisitions with a focus on homelessness and housing need.

- Action to decommission Unsuitable Temporary Accommodation. One former nightshelter in Dunfermline has also been re-provisioned and commissioned as community-based core and cluster in dispersed sites. A further five accommodation units managed by the council have been re-provisioned as Rapid Access Accommodation.
- The reliance on B&B / Hotel type accommodation has also been reduced as a result of industry factors with a commitment to eradicate use other than exceptional circumstances.
- The development of new models of supported accommodation and accommodation with support for customer groups. This also includes an assertive outreach service for revolving door homeless customers commissioned as tests of change or other experimental approaches in partnership with the voluntary and charitable sector.
- The establishment of the biggest Housing First for Youth programme in the country which is now being upscaled by a partnership approach between the council, Rock Trust, Turning Point Scotland, Bethany Christian Aid and Fife Woman's Aid. The aim is to generate 115 live Housing First tenancies and a whole systems approach to housing, health and social care.
- Progress has been made in re-commissioning over £8m of voluntary sector housing support and homelessness service in alignment with Fife's RRTP with a view to promoting prevention, tenancy sustainment and crisis response.
- The development and augmentation of intervention services building on the best practice model for woman experiencing domestic abuse (WHIR Project) and the positive work that already exists in relation to care experienced young people, offenders and other at risk groups.
- The creation of a new Housing Options Platform linked to the Fife Housing Register Partnership framework which provides direct access to over 99% of social rented stock (around 40,000 homes) in the area.
- Specific projects developing priority to interventions in key priority areas such as the Private Rented Sector.

2.3 Homelessness presentations have not been increasing until relatively recently, but recently published Scottish Government statistics confirm a 7% increase in new presentations and an increasing caseload of unmet need. Intelligence suggests that there are a number of factors affecting this, which is supported by the Scottish Housing Regulator's Thematic Study into Homelessness, published on 9 February 2023¹ and the more recently report produced by SOLACE, CoSLA and ALCHO².

- The number of customers presenting from the Private Rented Sector has more than doubled in the last year.
- The number of relationship breakdowns, specifically violent or abusive relationship breakdowns have increased during, and since the pandemic.
- Demands on homelessness services have increased as the capacity of the prison and hospital provision has become even more pressurised. This is a pressure in terms of the numbers but also the specific housing requirements normally associated with households due to specific needs or the management of risk in communities.
- There is little doubt that the cost of living crisis, coupled with wider economic and social environmental factors, are impacting the demand for homelessness services.

¹ [Homelessness services in Scotland: A thematic review - February 2023 | Scottish Housing Regulator](#)

² [Housing in Scotland Current Context and Preparing for the Future - July 2023 \(solace.org.uk\)](#)

- Housing supply pressures as a direct and indirect result of the pandemic are leading to more people reaching crisis point and being unable to exercise housing options in any other way. This is impacting temporary and permanent accommodation options and resources.
- There is no specific correlation between the rate of new presentations and the demand for temporary accommodation with far more new households, and those waiting for a permanent home, requiring temporary accommodation.
- There is also the sense of a changing profile of the demographics and vulnerability of customers, particularly those within temporary accommodation. This vulnerability ranges from a customer group with no previous experience of requiring housing / homelessness / welfare assistance to customers with extreme and complex needs presenting significantly challenging behaviours.
- At this stage, we are not clear around the impact of the changes in legislation around Intentionality or the abolition of local connection. Analysis work is ongoing and will be fed through the policy development process in due course.

2.4 The considerable investment, resource and wider commitment that has been applied in relation to humanitarian resettlement work should also be noted. This commitment has meant that, although Fife is currently home to one of the largest populations (proportionately) of hosts / sponsors (not including those residing in the hotel estate) in Scotland. To date, there has been very limited impact on the housing / homelessness system due to the work of the Interim Resettlement Team and partnership working arrangements. It is not clear how long this will be a sustainable position but progress and issues in relation to this work will continue to be reported to Cabinet separately.

3.0 Homelessness Pressures

3.1 The progress highlighted above demonstrates there has been significant progress in developing services to support households in vulnerable housing circumstances and those that become homeless. However, services continue to operate in an environment of unprecedented pressures with ongoing breaches in statutory duties and obligations which are most acutely based in temporary accommodation. The following gives an overview of the pressures, linked to policy commitments with a view to continuing the longer-term journey to End Homelessness in Fife Together. These are embedded in a set of priority actions in the Reduction Plan contained within Appendix 1 which Members are asked to endorse.

Temporary Accommodation Pressures

3.2 A financial and resource commitment is required to support the reprovision of Fife's hostels and buildings that are no longer fit for purpose and cannot be reconfigured. This would support the acquisition of new buildings to provide integral accommodation with housing access hub facilities to support Fife's No Wrong Door / People Support / Whole systems approach to those with homelessness and wider issues. A number of buildings have potentially been identified but additional capital investment would be required to procure and make them operational in the short term. This could be around £5m subject to further investigation and appraisal brought through the Council's Investment Strategy Group to apply due diligence. This would only be possible with external funding support, targeting around forty Unsuitable Accommodation Order Breaches arising from legacy hostel type accommodation on an ongoing basis and support a reduction from 70+ hotel/B&B spaces.

In addition, a further £1m of external investment is required to develop a Private Sector Leasing Scheme to release more properties back into the social rented sector. Committee previously approved the development of a model but it has been unsuccessful in gaining any momentum within the Private Rented Sector for a number of reasons. A business case is currently being developed to be presented to SG Officials to ease homelessness pressures and as part of a longer-term accommodation strategy for Ukrainian Displaced Persons (UDPs)

In addition to re-provisioning buildings, work will continue to:

- pursue property flips / conversions to build on the momentum created as a result of the Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court Judgement and in line with RRTP priorities;
- reduce reliance and ultimately eradicate the use of B&B / Hotel type accommodation in the short-term but increasing focus on community based properties and turnover. Some additional accommodation unit type accommodation in Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy will also provide an element of winter resilience

Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention

- 3.3 Fife Council has worked with the Chartered Institute of Housing to publish the RRTP Resourcing and Monitoring Reports³. These reports highlight the significant risks to ongoing transformational change work due to uncertainty around future RRTP and Prevention Scottish Government funding which is due to end in March 2024. Cabinet support is requested for officers to work through the Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group and other groups to lobby Scottish Government for a long-term financial and resource commitment to allow continuity of planning and service development. This would provide more sustainable arrangements to be put in place within internal and commissioned services with a view to:
- mainstreaming tests of change where there is a positive impact on customer journeys and experience
 - build strong sustainable partnerships across homelessness services, particularly building an enhance spectrum of housing, accommodation with support and supported accommodation options
 - create new, integrated ways of preventing homelessness and pathways for those most at risk of homelessness
 - plan and prepare for a Public Sector Homelessness Prevention Duty which is likely to be included in a Housing Bill during 2024

Housing Supply

- 3.4 Officers will continue to implement a transfer led allocations policy to stimulate turnover and meet the needs of tenants and that a homelessness or priority need will require to be met as part of the allocations chain. This may be a direct allocation to a statutory homeless household or a diversion to replace temporary accommodation stock.
- 3.5 Fife's ability to deliver and enhance the Affordable Housing Programme has been recognised nationally but further resources are required as part of the £60m commitment contained within Scottish Government's response to the Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group to increase supply through individual bids in the following areas:

³ [0362-rapid-rehousing-transition-plans-report-2-v3.pdf \(cih.org\)](#)

- Supporting an accelerated Acquisitions Policy to meet the needs of households with specific housing needs and those that have spent extended periods in temporary accommodation due to supply issues.
- Increase resources and focus on Long Term Empty Homes (LTEH) or other buildings capable of being reprovioned as residential accommodation within the private and public sectors. This recognises that there are models of good practice in bringing LTEHs into use but to increase pace at scale requires financial support delivered through the local authority to address repairing and other issues.
- A financial commitment to protect tenants in the Private Rented Sector similar to the Covid measures and protections for mortgages.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has provided a focus for strategic transformation of services but has been impacted by a number and range of environmental factors. These factors are not restricted to Fife and the national situation has been widely highlighted in the media and various publications. The report suggests that a number of these factors are likely to endure for an extended period and proposes a number of policy positions the Council could take to improve outcomes for people in vulnerable housing circumstances and those that become homeless.

John Mills
Head of Housing Services

List of Appendices

1. Homelessness Reduction Plan and Priority Actions
2. Equality Impact Assessment

Report Contacts:

Gavin Smith
Service Manager Housing Access
Email: gavin.smith@fife.gov.uk

Homelessness Reduction Plan and Priority Actions

Action	Theme	Benefit	RAG	Estimated Cost	Outcome
Continued and increased national investment and support for the Affordable Housing Programme	Housing Supply	Increasing supply for non-complex needs Increased ability to generate transfers and turnover. Ability to meet specific needs	G	Funded but subject to national subsidy and local investment constraints due to HRA pressures and affordability measures	Reduce Homeless Backlog Ability to meet a range of housing needs. Generate turnover and value for tenants
Accelerate the Property Acquisition Policy to meet housing and homelessness needs	Housing Supply	Ability to meet specific needs. Pace of supply and response to need. Delivery structure in place	A	50 Properties are funded but could be increased linked to TAHP and subsidy	Increase diversity of supply Potential homeless prevention measure.
Increased focus on Long Term Empty Homes (LTEH) funding for repairs	Housing Supply	Return 100-200 LTEH to residential use. Focus on town centre residential or commercial buildings or Rural dimension	R	£2m No Funding currently available	Reduce empty homes Reduce homeless backlog Address deprivation issues as part of a wider master planning / community based approach.
Increase funding to support PRS Leasing Scheme to augment temporary accommodation	Housing Supply	Reduce LA/RSL properties to the allocation pool. Increase diversity of temporary accommodation Economic benefits to stabilise the PRS	R	£1m No Funding currently available	Reduce pressure on LA/RSL stock Direct support to PRS landlords within a social arrangement Increasing standards in the PRS Platform for improved relationships between LAs and PRS
PRS Resilience Fund to sustain tenancies in the PRS	Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention	Reduce eviction and illegal eviction in the PRS.	A/R	£500k	Reduce homelessness presentations and acceptances. Ability to 'bridge' and link to PHP

Homelessness Reduction Plan and Priority Actions

Action	Theme	Benefit	RAG	Estimated Cost	Outcome
		Existing work programme in Fife linked to RRTP. Increase support to voluntary sector and advocacy services		£50k Test of Change currently funded through SG RRTP / Prevention Funding	Reduce pressure on temporary accommodation
Hostel Reprovision Fund	Modernising Temporary Accommodation	Reduce UAO Breaches Eradicate buildings and services that are not fit for purpose. Re-modelled services to support No Wrong Door / Whole Systems Approach.	R	£5m £1m HRA Funding in the budget. Would require individual business proposals progressed through the Council's ISG framework.	Improved service and outcomes where temporary accommodation can't be avoided. Holistic approach to service delivery. Support led interventions to minimise the negative impacts of temporary accommodation.
Long Term Voids Funding	Funding and Building Capacity	Increased supply to Resettlement or Temporary Accommodation. Properties brought back into use more quickly. Processes can be mobilised relatively quickly. HRA resources focussed on new supply.	A	£600k Ongoing examination of longer-term voids and feasibility with no detriment to the allocations pool	Contribution to Resettlement Strategy or impact on homelessness

Homelessness Reduction Plan and Priority Actions

Action	Theme	Benefit	RAG	Estimated Cost	Outcome
RRTP Funding enabling long term planning	Funding and Building Capacity	<p>Longer term planning for Tests of Change and existing work.</p> <p>Long term commissioning Ability to engage with partner services.</p> <p>Ability to focus on prevention.</p>	A	Subject to funding mechanism beyond 2023/24	Ability to sustain and enhance strategic progress around Housing First, transforming customer journeys through joined up services and use of resources at community level
Long Term Accommodation Strategy for Resettlement	Funding and Building Capacity	<p>Ability to plan resources and address housing supply pressures.</p> <p>Capacity to generate additional residential supply from non-conventional sources.</p>	R	<p>Resource Cost</p> <p>SG to take the lead in developing a Long-Term Accommodation Strategy in partnership with LAs</p>	<p>Increase the diversity of accommodation, housing and support offers.</p> <p>Increase overall residential capacity.</p> <p>Increase investment in the sector.</p>
Integration across SG Divisions and local partnerships	Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention.	<p>Engagement of sectors with a focus on prevention Increasing the offer to customers with complex needs or challenging behaviours.</p> <p>Increase accountability across housing, health and social care.</p>	A	Resource Cost	<p>Increase and change public perceptions of homelessness.</p> <p>Increase responsibility for homelessness and prevention.</p> <p>Potential to generate additional resources or align resources across strategic priorities.</p>
Pausing Policy Change / Prioritising Policy Change	Housing Options and Homelessness Prevention.	Ability to prioritise and manage change.	R	Resource Cost	Develop a programme of managed change within a human rights framework.

Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Assessment

Part 1: Background and information

Title of proposal	Homelessness Reduction Plan
Brief description of proposal (including intended outcomes & purpose)	The Homelessness Reduction Plan recognises the significant pressures on the housing access and homelessness system. The Plan sets out a series of Policy and resourcing positions which will require external support to ensure compliance with statutory duties and improve customer experience.
Lead Directorate / Service / Partnership	Ending Homelessness in Fife Board
EqlA lead person	Gavin Smith, Service Manager, Housing Access
EqlA contributors	Key Representatives of Fife Partnership including Voluntary Sector representatives
Date of EqlA	September 2023

How does the proposal meet one or more of the general duties under the Equality Act 2010? (Consider proportionality and relevance on p.12 and see p.13 for more information on what the general duties mean). If the decision is of a strategic nature, how does the proposal address socio-economic disadvantage or inequalities of outcome?)

General duties	Please Explain
Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Ensuring equality of opportunity for all households in vulnerable and fragile housing circumstances including those that become homeless unavoidably
Advancing equality of opportunity	Recognises that homelessness and housing vulnerability can impact on education, employment and social opportunities. Preventing and resolving homelessness aims to promote life opportunities and mitigate the potentially damaging impacts of homelessness
Fostering good relations	Creating opportunities to promote a no wrong door and case managed approach to those facing homelessness
Socio-economic disadvantage	Similar to Advancing Equality of Opportunity
Inequalities of outcome	Take a targeted approach to recognise that some communities may be more likely to become others and develop services and approaches that respond to different life circumstances

Having considered the general duties above, if there is likely to be no impact on any of the equality groups, parts 2 and 3 of the impact assessment may not need to be completed. Please provide an explanation (based on evidence) if this is the case.

The Plan aims to improve access to services and welfare support to all and ensure statutory duties are met. The Plan recognises that some society groups may be more likely to experience homelessness and the adverse impacts associated with housing vulnerability directly and indirectly. The groups most likely to experience homelessness and housing vulnerability are people experience domestic abuse, care experienced young people, those with a history of offending, veterans and people leaving other institutional settings such as hospitals. There is emerging evidence in the growth of LGBT and gender identity increasing within those at risk of homelessness and this is being monitored.

Part 2: Evidence and Impact Assessment

Explain what the positive and / or negative impact of the policy change is on any of the protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
Disabled people	X		
Sexual orientation	X		
Women	X		
Men	X		
Transgendered people	X		
Race (includes gypsy travellers)	X		
Age (including older people aged 60+)	X		
Children and young people	X		
Religion or belief	X		
Pregnancy & maternity	X		
Marriage & civil partnership	X		

Please also consider the impact of the policy change in relation to:

	Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact
Looked after children and care leavers	X		
Privacy (e.g. information security & data protection)	X		
Economy	X		

- Please record the evidence used to support the impact assessment. This could include officer knowledge and experience, research, customer surveys, service user engagement.
- Any evidence gaps can also be highlighted below.

Evidence used	Source of evidence
1. Homelessness Prevention Strategy Group Papers and Task and Finish Group Reports – Temporary Accommodation and Prevention	T&F Group Final Reports
2. Homelessness Research	Crisis – 75 Ways to Prevent Homelessness, Crisis Annual Returns, SG Statistical Bulletins and Research Programme, CIH Resources
3. Housing in Scotland – Current Context and Preparing for the Future – July 2023	Housing in Scotland Current Context and Preparing for the Future - July 2023 (solace.org.uk)
Evidence gaps	Planned action to address evidence gaps
1. Housing and Support Needs Assessment of the Homelessness Community was last completed in 2021. Action to update the Research needs to be considered by the Board	Board to consider updated the Strategic Needs Assessment
2. Evidence around the impact of homelessness on the LGBT community is a gap	Work with local providers following Frontline Fife Research

Part 3: Recommendations and Sign Off

(Recommendations should be based on evidence available at the time and aim to mitigate negative impacts or enhance positive impacts on any or all of the protected characteristics).

Recommendation	Lead person	Timescale
1. None		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Sign off

(By signing off the EqIA, you are agreeing that the EqIA represents a thorough and proportionate analysis of the policy based on evidence listed above and there is no indication of unlawful practice and the recommendations are proportionate).

Date completed: 26/09/23	Date sent to Community Investment Team: Enquiry.equalities@fife.gov.uk
Senior Officer: Gavin Smith	Designation: Service Manager (Housing Access)

Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil – Housing Improvements

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: Ward 22

Purpose

This report outlines the outcomes of a review of fire safety at Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil and that the council replaces the external wall insulation at the high-rise flats as well as improvements to internal fire safety works at the flats and other fire safety mitigations.

Council officers are designing an overall housing improvement programme of works, which includes the replacement of the existing external wall insulation with an alternative mineral wool form of insulation. This report seeks Cabinet endorsement for the programme of works, running for the next 12 months.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (1) note the main findings of the review of fire safety at Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil;
- (2) endorse the proposed programme of works and proposed improvement works at Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil as outlined in Section 4.1 of this report;
- (3) agree that the HRA Capital Budget will meet the costs of the project in 2023/24 and 2024/25; and
- (4) agree that progress reports will be made to the Levenmouth Area Committee on a regular basis.

Resource Implications

To fully implement this report's recommendations and, following discussions between Housing, Property and Building Services, the current estimated costs of the project is £4m-£4.5m spread over two financial years. The existing HRA Capital Budget 2022-25 has the capacity to absorb these costs.

Additional revenue costs arising from the project such as consultation and housing management costs will be met from the existing HRA budget.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are legal implications for the council if failures in health and safety requirements are identified and no action or ineffective action is taken. The refreshed Fire Risk Assessment for Swan and Memorial Courts has been completed mid-September 2023 alongside the Quarterly Fire Inspection by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS). Specific risk mitigation measures are proposed as part of the works programmed outlined in Section 4.1 of this report.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed as there is no change to council policy as a result of this report.

An Environmental Assessment has been carried out using the Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT). A range of beneficial and mixed impacts were identified. There is a potential short-term impact due to construction process and activities. Long term benefits resulting from the provision of high quality, energy efficient affordable homes result in lower carbon emissions and increased health and wellbeing of tenants. (Appendix 1)

The programme of works makes a positive contribution to the council's refreshed Climate Change Plan and the Local Housing Strategy by improving the energy efficiency to the EESSH2 standard and reducing fuel poverty within the blocks.

Consultation

The Housing Service has consulted with council tenants in Swan and Memorial Courts, the Levenmouth Area Convener and Ward 22 members. Consultation with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Government is ongoing.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Fife Council is required to carry out regular fire safety risk assessments for all its twelve tower blocks where it has an ownership control. The most recent assessment for Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil in 2020 identified a range of further improvements that were needed to improve fire safety works to the internal areas of the two blocks. An experienced contractor was engaged to carry out these works but, following delays and logistical problems, the contract was ended by mutual consent.
- 1.2 In March 2023, work began on a review of these works and was extended to include an assessment of external wall insulation to the blocks, mainly through a desktop survey and latest fire safety advice.

2.0 Review Findings and Recommendations

- 2.1 Swan and Memorial Courts were the first Tower Blocks in Fife to be improved with External Wall Insulation (EWI) in 2012 and 2013. The EWI used was a phenolic tile with a render finish. The tile was attached straight onto the buildings without any space between the walls and the EWI. This fully complied with the building standards in force at that time. The lack of any cavity means that there is not the potential for a "flue" effect found in other tower block fires in England. However, it is now clear that phenolic contain some combustible material and therefore there may be an element of risk.
- 2.2 The review also identified a lack of 360-degree access around the buildings due to the topography at the rear elevations. The council and the SFRS have reviewed this as part of the review of the Fire Safety Assessment completed on 20 September 2023 for both blocks.
- 2.3 Taken together with the need to progress the internal fire stopping works that the original company was engaged to complete, our review identified an increased fire risk at Swan and Memorial Courts which requires urgent attention.

- 2.4 It is important to stress that the review that has been undertaken at Swan and Memorial Courts is not pertinent to any of the council tower blocks in Fife because of the different mineral wool material used to install EWI. One block in Kirkcaldy remains to be clad with EWI in 2024 and that will be based on the mineral wool EWI when tenders have been returned.

3.0 Taking Action

- 3.1 Following the review, the council's Housing Management Executive met on 6 September and have agreed that the following actions be taken forward in response to the consultant's findings and recommendations. The actions are outlined in the following paragraphs.

3.2 **Additional advice regarding the EWI cladding and the tiles containing combustible material.**

Buildings Research Establishment (BRE) are to be instructed to provide additional advice on the combustibility of the existing phenolic EWI to include, where possible, physical testing and the results are to be reported back as soon as is practicable. The purpose of this advice is to provide additional confidence that there is low risk of existing EWI tiles catching fire. However, as a precaution and to bring the blocks at Swan and Memorial Courts in line with the other Tower Blocks in Fife, the Head of Housing Services has taken the view that the existing cladding should be stripped down and replaced with mineral wool EWI. This is the main action for the council to take to remedy the updated fire risk assessment. Current estimate for both blocks is £2m-£3m. This would be met from HRA Capital contingencies (ESSH2 budget). The remedial works will be led by Property and Building Services.

3.3 **Internal Fire Stopping Works**

Since the Grenfell fire, the council has completed a range of work to improve the overall fire safety of the Tower Blocks in Fife. This included the installation of 60-minute fire doors to all flats and sprinklers to the ground floor areas. The Tower Block Review Group had anticipated that further works at Swan and Memorial Courts would be progressed as Business as Usual prior to the broader review. All outstanding internal works identified by the updated fire risk assessment will be progressed as a priority by Building Services.

3.4 **Improving the Energy Efficiency of the Tower Blocks**

The council should also take the opportunity to upgrade the Tower Blocks to ESSH 2 standard. It is expected this work will take up to 12 months to complete, with the two blocks being upgraded simultaneously to reassure members and tenants. Improvement work will include kitchen and bathroom replacement, as well as a heating upgrade. In addition, fire compartmentalisation will be improved by installing 120-minute fire stopping walls. Housing and Building Services will assess the implementation of the Scottish Quality Housing Standard works (SHQS) and the impact on tenants while the works are in progress.

3.5 **Introduction of an evacuation plan for residents**

The current policy agreed with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is that, should there be an outbreak of fire in a Tower Block, tenants should stay put in their flats until safely evacuated by SFRS. The review has recommended a shift in this policy and that the council and the SFRS agree a full evacuation plan for tenants should the SFRS Commander on the ground at any fire incident believe that this is the correct course of action to protect tenant safety. The current advice from SFRS is that it is Business as Usual with no change to current policy. A change in this policy would be for the SFRS to decide.

The council and SFRS are reviewing current fire safety arrangements. The provision of a fire evacuation plan and evacuation alert system will be taken forward as an interim measure to reduce risks during the period of the programme of works. The council will also redesignate a safe and clearly identified area on each floor for those requiring assistance.

3.6 Meetings with the SFRS on 7 September and 11 September 2023

The findings of our review have been fully shared with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. Representatives at a senior level from the council and the SFRS were present at both meetings. On both occasions, the formal advice from the SFRS is “Business as Usual”. They believe that their existing policies and procedures will deal with a fire outbreak in one of the blocks. The SFRS are comfortable that a fire would not rapidly spread across the buildings. This view from the SFRS was confirmed again following the Fire Risk Assessment update visit on 13 September 2023.

3.7 Communications with Tenants and Members

Our approach through experience is based on the following principles:

- To be open and transparent with members and tenants
- To get on the ground quickly and carry out face to face visits to tenants and follow that up with clear fire safety advice in partnership with SFRS
- To be visible and closely engage with tenants over a period of time

A team of Housing officers began communication and engagement with the council tenants on 13 September 2023. The team have visited all vulnerable tenants and drop-in sessions in the tenants' lounges have been held by Housing and the SFRS. The team is on site some weeks ahead and will continue to engage with tenants. The buildings are staffed by an on-site team of Housing Caretakers and Concierge staff 24/7. Initial feedback from staff is that there has not been a significant number of concerns or questions raised by our tenants.

4.0 Proposed Programme of Works

4.1 In response to the updated Fire Risk Assessment and to mitigate the identified risks, the proposed programme of improvements to Swan and Memorial Courts involves:

- the early completion of internal fire stopping works to the communal areas in both buildings;
- the strip-down of the existing EWI and replacement with a suitable mineral wool based EWI tile;
- the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms with the installation of appropriate fire stopping in each flat;
- an upgrade of the electric heating system will be made to Infra-Red Heating already installed at Forth View Flats in Kirkcaldy; and
- the installation of a fire evacuation alarm system to both blocks with the specification to be agreed in consultation with the SFRS.

4.2 Housing, Property and Building Services are currently preparing a programme of works starting in September 2023 and running to September 2024. The estimated overall cost of the programme is £4m-£4.5m and this will be met over two financial years from the ESSH2 budget within the HRA Capital Plan 2022-25.

- 4.3 Housing Services are arranging additional staff resources to be recruited to double up the Concierge cover for the period of the works and this will be reviewed by September 2024.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Improving the fire safety of our tower blocks in Fife and the safety of our tenants and residents is paramount to the council. Following a review of fire safety at Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil it is proposed that we undertake various improvement works to the flats to include, as a precaution, replacement of the existing EWI. These works will be delivered at pace to ensure that the highest standards continue to be met and that tenants can be reassured that they remain safe in their homes at Swan and Memorial Courts. The proposed improvement programme is supported by an updated Fire Risk Assessment which has been completed by the Corporate Health and Safety team, with input from SFRS.
- 5.2 The council needs to implement the agreed programme of improvements at pace, particularly the external fire stopping works and installation of an interim fire evacuation alarm system. Regular progress reports will be made to the Levenmouth Area Committee to ensure that the council's timeline for the identified works is being met.

John Mills
Head of Housing Services

Report Contacts

John Mills
Head of Housing Services
E-mail: john.mills@fife.gov.uk

List of Appendices

1. FEAT assessment

Appendix 1 - Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) for Swam & Memorial Courts Improvements

Please complete the white cells below:

Project name:	Swan & Memorial Court, External Wall Insulation (EWI) replacement	Committee report title :	Swan and Memorial Courts, Methil - Housing Improvements
Committee name & date:	Cabinet Committee 5 October 2023	Have the proposals been subject to any other formal environmental assessment?	No
Completed by:	Ian Dawson	Completed on:	22 September 2023

Instructions: Officers submitting a paper to Committee should complete this assessment tool to screen the proposals for environmental risks, and submit a completed copy of worksheet 1 to democratic services along with your Committee paper. **Please complete all of the white cells on the first sheet of the workbook and answer all 10 questions.** It should take less than half an hour to complete even for the most complex of projects, and less than 10 minutes for more straightforward policies and projects. Please do not edit the data validation fields on worksheet 2.


Sign off: Report authors and service managers should sign off the assessment on worksheet 1. Committee conveners / clerks should also sign off the assessment to show that it has been taken into account during the decision making process.

Help: Please refer to the guidance notes and links (columns, H, I and J of this sheet) if you are unsure how to answer. This sheet also details contacts who can help you to answer questions if you are unsure. If you require additional guidance or support please contact the Climate Change and Zero Waste team in Refsol (Fife Council's environmental ALEO) and they will help you to complete the assessment.

A. Wildlife and biodiversity		Answer	Comments
Fife Council is committed to protecting and enhancing Fife's natural heritage.		Please select an option:	Please clarify your response
1	What impact will the proposals have on wildlife (including protected sites and species)?	No impacts / not applicable	
B. Impacts on people		Answer	Comments
Fife Council is committed to protecting and enhancing the wellbeing of our people.		Please select an option:	Please clarify your response
2	What impact will the proposals have on environmental nuisance? (i.e. visual impacts, traffic, noise, vibration, odour, dust, particulates, smoke)	Negative / harmful impact	Increased construction activity during the replacement works. Disturbance to tenants will be mitigated as far as possible.
3	What impact will the proposals have on human health or wellbeing?	Beneficial impact	Positive impact as EWI and heating upgrades will meet EESSH2 standard. Increased fire safety as low risk material being replaced with non combustible material.
C. Pollution		Answer	Comments
Fife Council is committed to protecting and improving air, water and soil quality.		Please select an option:	Please clarify your response
4	What impact will the proposals have on pollution (including pollution to air, water or soil)?	No impacts / not applicable	
D. Climate change		Answer	Comments
Fife Council is committed to cutting carbon emissions and making Fife more resilient.		Please select an option:	Please clarify your response
5	What impact will the proposals have on greenhouse gas emissions?	Beneficial impact	Positive effect in energy efficiency as electrical heating system in flats is being upgraded.
6	What impact will the proposals have on resilience to the adverse effects of severe weather events, including flooding and landslips?	No impacts / not applicable	
7	What impact will the proposals have on flooding and sites designated as being at risk of flooding or sea level rise?	No impacts / not applicable	
E. Resources and waste		Answer	Comments
Fife Council is committed to using resources efficiently and minimising waste.		Please select an option:	Please clarify your response
8	What impact will the proposals have on how much waste is generated or how waste is managed?	Negative / harmful impact	Existing EWI to be removed will be a waste product
9	What impact will the proposals have on energy use and the consumption of material resources?	Beneficial impact	Positive impact on energy efficiency as EWI being replaced and bocks upgraded to meet EESSH2.
F. Cultural heritage		Answer	Comments
Fife Council is committed to protecting Fife's cultural heritage.		Please select an option:	Please clarify your response
10	What impact will the proposals have on cultural heritage (including designated heritage / archaeology sites or listed buildings)?	No impacts / not applicable	

FEAT Score Summary

The cells below will complete automatically - do not edit

Good practice (green)	3	More than 3 green answers indicates that the environmental impacts of proposals have been well managed, that the project is appropriately sited and that opportunities to enhance the environment have been taken. It is recommended that (subject to other discussions) the policy change should be considered favourably.
Data gaps or mixed impacts (orange)	0	More than 3 orange answers indicates either that the proposals will have mixed impacts, or that the environmental impacts from the proposals are not well understood. Liabilities could arise as a result. Consistently selecting the 'don't know' option could also indicate that the assessment has not been completed with sufficient care and attention. If there are more than 3 'don't know' responses, it is recommended that the assessment is repeated with support from the Climate Change and Zero Waste team or the relevant topic help contacts listed in the guidance column, so that data gaps can be filled. It is recommended, subject to other discussions within the Committee, that the proposals are not approved until environmental impacts are better understood.
Environmental red flags (red)	2	More than 2 red answers indicates that the project could unintentionally cause wide-ranging damage to the environment and / or that negative impacts are not being appropriately mitigated, or that a policy is not in keeping with the local environment. It is recommended that the proposals are revised with guidance from the appropriate Fife Council environmental experts (i.e. Climate Change and Zero Waste team, Floods team, Biodiversity team, Environmental Services etc) so that environmental liabilities and risks can be minimised. It is recommended, subject to other discussions within the Committee, that the proposals are not approved until environmental liabilities are minimised as far as reasonably practicable. Where a policy affects an area with heritage value or at risk of flooding, some red flags are inevitable but providing that these are explained satisfactorily in the comments section of the assessment this is acceptable.
No impacts identified (grey)	5	More than 3 grey answers indicates either that the policy change has very few environmental impacts or that the assessment has not been completed properly. This may be because the policy is well designed, or does not interact with the wider environment. However it is recommended that if Committee is concerned that environmental impacts have been overlooked, that the assessment is repeated with support from the Climate Change and Zero Waste team so that a more comprehensive understanding of environmental impacts can be provided for decision making.
SCORE TOTAL	10	 If the score total cell (cell D39) turns red this indicates that the assessment has not been fully completed. Please recheck the assessment and make sure you have selected an answer for all 10 questions.

Now please sign-off the assessment

FEAT Assessment Sign-off

The cells below will complete automatically - do not edit

Sign off	Name	Date
Project manager	Ian Dawson	22 September 2023
Service manager	Helen Wilkie	22 September 2023
Committee clerk		

Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) - data validation

Do not edit or delete cells on this page

Validation list response	Count
Beneficial impact	3
A mixed impact (good and bad)	0
Negative / harmful impact	2
No impacts / not applicable	5
Don't know	0
	10

Password = FEAT

River Leven Regeneration – Capital Funding

Report by: John Mitchell, Head of Roads and Transportation Services

Wards Affected: 13,14, 15, 21 & 22

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to progress delivery of the Mountfleurie Active Travel Bridge through Network Rail and their contractor as part of the River Leven Regeneration Programme.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

- (1) approve Option 2 in the Business Case (see Appendix 1) to deliver the new active travel bridge at Mountfleurie at an estimated cost of £5.8m with Network Rail and their contractor through an Implementation Agreement; and
- (2) note that further reports will be presented to this committee to consider the final Business Cases and delivery agreements for the On-Road Active Travel Network; Riverside Park, Glenrothes; and River Park Routes, Leven.

Resource Implications

The cost to deliver the Mountfleurie active travel Bridge is estimated at £5.8m. It is intended that this cost would be funded through Sustrans funding (£1.368m) and the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (£4.39m). There will be minimal recurring revenue costs of approximately £20k per year which will be funded from Fife Council's Roads and Transportation Services' budgets.

In terms of external funding for the River Leven Regeneration Programme, £25.18m is potentially available, comprising £19.4m from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund (LUF) and £5.772m from Sustrans' Places for Everyone Funding (PFEF). The Sustrans' award includes £1.368m for Mountfleurie Bridge.

The Sustrans' award is based on match funding through the overall LUF Grant award and requires to be delivered by March 2024.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Leven Rail Link is programmed to be reinstated by spring 2024. Consequently, the council needs to deliver this bridge prior to this to avoid the excessive construction costs associated with delivering the works over a live rail line and in a timeframe to allow the utilisation of funding from Sustrans (by end of March 2024) and UK Government (by end of March 2025).

Fife Council requires to sign an Implementation Agreement with Network Rail to enable their contractor to construct the bridge on behalf of the council. An assurance of funding is necessary to enable the agreement to be signed.

The full risk implications of the project are contained within Appendix 1.

An EqIA and a Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) is not required as this report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices. An EqIA has been developed by Network Rail's designers to support the detailed design of the structure.

Consultation

There has been consultation with the Financial Services, Community Services, Legal Services, Transport Scotland and Network Rail in developing this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 4 November 2021, the Policy and Co-ordination Committee (2021.PC.97 para. 329 refers) delegated to the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and the Executive Director (Enterprise and Environment), in consultation with the Co-Leaders, to complete and submit the Levelling Up Funding applications once the deadline for the next round of Levelling Up funding was announced. On 25 August 2022, Cabinet Committee (2022.CC.6 para. 10 refers) delegated to the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and the Executive Director (Enterprise and Environment) to complete the Legal Agreements with the UK Government in the event any of the Levelling Up Funding Applications were successful. The council has now entered into a Minute of Understanding with the Department for Transport as part of the Levelling Up Funding award for the River Leven Regeneration Programme.
- 1.2 The River Leven Regeneration Programme is focussed on place-based regeneration projects with a view to improve connectivity, tourism, the natural asset and provide the first sections in connecting Leven with Loch Leven through an active travel route. The projects included within the LUF award are Leven Connectivity (Active Travel and River Park Routes) and Riverside Park, Glenrothes.
- 1.3 The Mountfleurie Active Travel Bridge forms a key link within the Active Travel Network and is required to maintain the route of the Core Path to connect Mountfleurie and Kirkland within Leven.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 The detailed design of Mountfleurie Bridge has been delivered through a Sustrans grant funding award. Fife Council is currently working with Network Rail to agree an Implementation Agreement to allow the bridge to be constructed by spring 2024 as part of the works for the Leven Rail Link. The key issues still to conclude include agreements for land purchase, site investigation and ground works. The planning application for the bridge was lodged on 27 July 2023 and is due to be assessed for determination of the planning application in early November 2023. The Business Case for the project is detailed in Appendix 1 which considers two options with the recommendation being Option 2, the implementation of a new active travel bridge at Mountfleurie.
- 2.2 In order to allow the bridge works to be completed to programme, it is necessary for Fife Council to sign an Implementation Agreement which will allow Network Rail's contractor the necessary lead in time to order the fabrication of the bridge, construction of the significant earthwork embankments and complete the structure by the opening date of spring 2024. An indicative layout of the bridge is shown in Appendix 2.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The Leven Rail Link and associated programmes will bring over £150m of direct investment to the Levenmouth area which is a key regeneration focus of Fife Council.
- 3.2 The Mountfleurie active travel bridge provides a key link to connect the communities of Leven. Delivery of the bridge through Network Rail and their contractor, as part of the works for the Leven Rail Link, provides an efficient mechanism to deliver key infrastructure to improve access for the local community and visitors.
- 3.2 The opportunity presented by the UK Government's Levelling Up Funding and Sustrans' Places for Everyone Funding offers an efficient and timely mechanism for Fife Council to deliver the Mountfleurie Active Travel Bridge.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Mountfleurie Bridge Proposal & Business Case (PF01)

Appendix 2 – Mountfleurie Bridge

Background Papers

- Policy and Co-ordination Committee, November 2021, Item 8: Levelling Up Fund Update [Public-Agenda-Pack-for-Policy-and-Co-ordination-Committee-4th-November-2021.pdf](#)
- Cabinet Committee, 25th August 2022, Item 11: Levelling Up Fund Update [Agenda-and-papers-for-the-Cabinet-Committee-25th-August-2022.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#)

Report Contacts

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Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 (48 00 87)
Email: michael.anderson@fife.gov.uk

Project Manager	Michael Anderson (Service Manager, Structural Services) and Susan Keenlyside (Service Manager, Sustainable Transport & Parking)
Project Sponsor	John Mitchell, Head of Roads & Transportation Services
Approval board(s)	Cabinet Committee
Date & version	01/09/23 V1.0

Section 1: Proposal

1.1 What is the project going to do?

Network Rail is going to construct the Mountfleurie active travel Bridge and associated earthworks on behalf of the Council through an Implementation Agreement. The active travel bridge at Mountfleurie will provide a key link in the Levenmouth Connectivity Project, connecting employment and residential areas and linking to the proposed River Leven Park project. The new rail line will be the reinstatement of the rail bridge to maintain the core path route. The Levenmouth Connectivity Project will create an exemplar network of paths and cycleways as part of the River Leven Regeneration Programme.

1.2 Why should we do it and what will happen if we do not?

1.2.1 Project background

In August 2019, the Scottish Government announced the commitment to reinstate the Leven Rail Link by 2024. An adopted core path is located at the Kirkland Yard site (Mountfleurie) which the new railway line will cross, severing access between Rosemount Grove and Steelworks Brae.

To ensure connectivity between housing and employment areas, and to ensure that the core path does not require to be stopped up or diverted where it crosses the railway line, it is essential that a new active travel bridge is installed before the new railway line becomes live in order to maintain access.

A paper was presented to the Investment Strategy Group on 30 May 2023 to seek approval for the delivery of the River Leven programme (which includes Mountfleurie active travel bridge) awarded UK Government Levelling Up Funding and Sustrans' Places for Everyone funding.

A report was approved at Fife Council Cabinet Committee on 29 June 2023 which sought approval to progress delivery of the River Leven Regeneration Programme (Leven Connectivity Projects and Riverside Park, Glenrothes) through the UK Government Levelling Up Funding (LUF) and Sustrans' Places for Everyone Funding.

1.2.2 Project justification

The Levenmouth railway line will deliver substantial social benefits and societal opportunities, unlocking access to cultural activities and attracting business and investment, improved infrastructure for the area and improved active travel links in compliance with Government policy and design standards. It supports the Council's strategic priorities set out in the Plan for Fife - Thriving Places, Inclusive Growth and Jobs, Opportunities for All and Community Led Services.

The active travel bridge is key to ensuring continued connectivity for local communities once the new Levenmouth railway line is constructed. The bridge will ensure that a coherent and complete network of paths is available to encourage and support active travel in the area.

1.2.3 Urgency and consequences

The bridge is required to ensure connectivity between local communities when the new rail link opens in Spring 2024.

In addition, the funding for the active travel bridge has been identified via the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund and Sustrans Places for Everyone (PfE) funding. The funding is time limited. Delivery funded by Sustrans PfE must be completed by 31 March 2024 and the Levelling Up must be completed by 31 March 2025.

1.2.4 Lessons learned

The project will be delivered by Network Rail via their contractors, Story Contracting. Network Rail have a proven track record from other similar projects to deliver the infrastructure within the timescale.

1.3 What are the key deliverables/outputs of the project?

An exemplar and iconic active travel bridge that will ensure connectivity between local communities.

- The structure will comply with Sustrans quality and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) requirements and DfT LTN 1/20.
- The design minimises ongoing maintenance and repair costs.

1.4 What are the desired outcomes and benefits?

Outcome	Benefit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in cycle flow. • Increase in pedestrian flow. • More people traveling actively for functional journeys. • User satisfaction (transport). • Number of day visitors (LUF Application forecast an increase of 55,000 across both projects) • Percentage of adults who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. • Percentage of customers/visitors/users who report a positive experience. • Percentage of residents who report a sense of belonging in their local area. • Percentage of visitors who are likely to recommend the place to family or friends. 	<p>A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan with baselines and targets will be developed for up to 5 years after the end of construction as part of the Sustainable Growth Agreement for the Leven Programme that will meet the needs of the Levelling Up funding.</p> <p>Annual visitors to Levenmouth are forecast to increase by approx. 30,000. There will be an annual increase in visitors of 1% per year. This increase is expected to generate an additional economic benefit of £8.9m (discounted) over 30 years.</p>

1.5 What are the known costs and timescale? How will this be funded?

1.5.1 Costs

Total expected one-off cost	Total expected recurring cost
<p>£ 5.76 m Cost</p> <p>Funded by: £1.37m PfE £4.39m LUF</p>	<p>The estimated revenue costs for the Mountfleurie Bridge will be approximately £20k per year. These values are based on industry standards with a multiplication factor of 3 included for future inflation. No significant maintenance will be expected for 25 years after the bridge is constructed, where it will require re-painting.</p>

(Note: PfE is provisional until confirmed 18/09/23).

One of the performance indicators to be developed for the Works Contract is to design in lower costs of ongoing maintenance and repair. These costs will be managed within Roads & Transportation Services budgets.

1.5.2 Resource requirement

Resource Type	Task/Skills	FTE required
Project Manager	Project Management – monitoring and reporting	0.4 FTE for the project duration (28 weeks)
Service Manager, Structural Services	Structural and project management expertise	Ave. 0.2 FTE for the project duration (28 weeks)
Lead Consultant - Key Projects, Roads & Lighting Contracts	Contract Management	0.2 FTE the project duration (28 weeks)
Technician Engineer/Contract Management	Civils and utilities	Ave. 0.1 FTE for the project duration (28 weeks)
Project Support	Assisting PM with monitoring and reporting	Ave 0.1 FTE throughout project (28 weeks)
Accountant/Finance Technician	Financial monitoring	0.01 FTE (7 months)
Legal	Title checks, contract procurement	Less than 0.01 FTE (7 months)
Estates	Land Acquisitions	Ave 0.1 FTE for the project duration (28 weeks)

1.5.3 Project timeline

Mountfleurie Active Travel Bridge (Construction by NR / Story)	Start	Finish
Planning	27/07/23	13/11/23
Land Acquisition	17/08/23	16/11/23
Implementation Agreement	29/03/2023	10/11/23
Bridge fabrication	13/11/23	01/03/24
Construction	19/2/24	14/06/24

1.5.4 Funding availability

one-off	Yes
recurring costs	Yes

1.5.5 Resource availability

Resource Type	Task/Skills	Availability
Project Manager	Project Management – monitoring and reporting	Yes
Service Manager, Structural Services	Structural expertise	Yes
Technician Engineer/Contract Management	Civils and utilities	Yes
Project Support	Assisting PM with monitoring and reporting	Yes
Finance Accountant/Technician	Financial monitoring	Yes
Quantity Surveyor	Cost Control	Yes
Legal	Title checks, contract procurement	Yes

1.6 What are the known pre start-up risks?

Risk description	Probability score (1-5)	Impact score (1-5)	Overall score (probability x impact)
The project must be delivered in a challenging timeframe if Sustrans PfE funding criteria and funding deadline of March 2024 are to be met. The scope and scale of the works are complex and onerous. There is a risk that delivery does not proceed to timetable or spend profile.	4	4	16
The project must be delivered in a challenging timeframe if LUF funding criteria are to be met. The scope and scale of the works are complex and onerous. There is a risk that delivery does not proceed to timetable or spend profile.	4	4	16
Continued national and international supply issues limit available materials and the supply of skilled labour. These may result in increased costs and also delay to the delivery.	2	5	10
Contractors do not have capacity to deliver the projects being tendered. Multiple tenders may be required to secure a contractor.	2	3	6

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Section 2: Business Case

2.1 What is the scope of the project?

2.1.1 Output

Project outputs are defined in [Section 1.3](#) of this document. Any updates to project outputs will be made in Section 1.3.

2.1.2 Resources

Project resources are defined in [Section 1.5.2](#) of this document. Any updates to project resources will be made in Section 1.5.2.

2.2 Who are the key stakeholders?

A stakeholder mapping exercise has been undertaken and the stakeholders are categorised in the PF13 for the project.

Keep Satisfied

- SEPA (regulator)
- Health & Safety Executive
- Public Protection team
- Roads Network Management
- Development Management
- Structural Services

Manage Closely

- Network Rail, Green Action Trust and Sustrans
- Convener of Glenrothes and Levenmouth Area Committees
- Ward Councillors

Monitor

- Non-impacted neighbours – residents and businesses
- General Public

Keep Informed

- Area Councillors
- MP
- MSPs
- Impacted neighbours – residents and businesses.
- Department for Transport

2.3 What are the options to deliver the project?

Option 1:	Do Nothing Core path would be closed once new rail line is constructed
Cost	No capital one-off costs No recurring costs
Time	Not applicable.
Quality	Not applicable.
Resource	The investment in support of the reintroduction of the rail link looks to help regenerate the economic, social, and environmental benefits to the Levenmouth area. This option does not help support that vision as it would sever connectivity between local communities and close a core path.
Scope	None
Risk	Closing the core path would require a legal process with statutory consultation. It is anticipated that there would be substantial objection to this closure with a likelihood that it may be rejected, and Fife council would have to provide a suitable alternative crossing point beyond the rail and connectivity projects, with no identified funding source.
Benefits	None.

Option 2:	New active travel bridge at Mountfleurie funded by Sustrans PfE and LUF and delivered by Network Rail (via Story)
Cost	£5.76 m PfE (deadline 31 March 2024) £1.37m (provision until 18/9/23) LUF (deadline 31 March 2025) £ 4.39m
Time	The project is required to be delivered at pace to ensure connectivity is retained between local communities once the new railway line is constructed. The project is required to be delivered at the pace required to fully utilise the Places for People funding.
Quality	The civil engineering contractors have a proven track record and experience of delivering complex rail and infrastructure projects within other Local Authority areas.
Resource	The Council's resources required are available.
Scope	Design and construction of a new footbridge with a 120 year design life in compliance with the relevant European and British design standards and British Highway standards
Risk	The risk is that the project may not be delivered at the pace required to fully utilise the Places for People funding. Reputationally this may affect future applications for funding.
Benefits	The forecast economic, social, and environmental benefits would be realised.

2.4 What is the recommended option from Section 2.3 to deliver the project?

From the options outlined in Section 2.3, Option 2 – “New active travel bridge at Mountfleurie funded by Sustrans PfE and LUF and delivered by Network Rail (via Story)” represents ‘best value’ and optimises investment.

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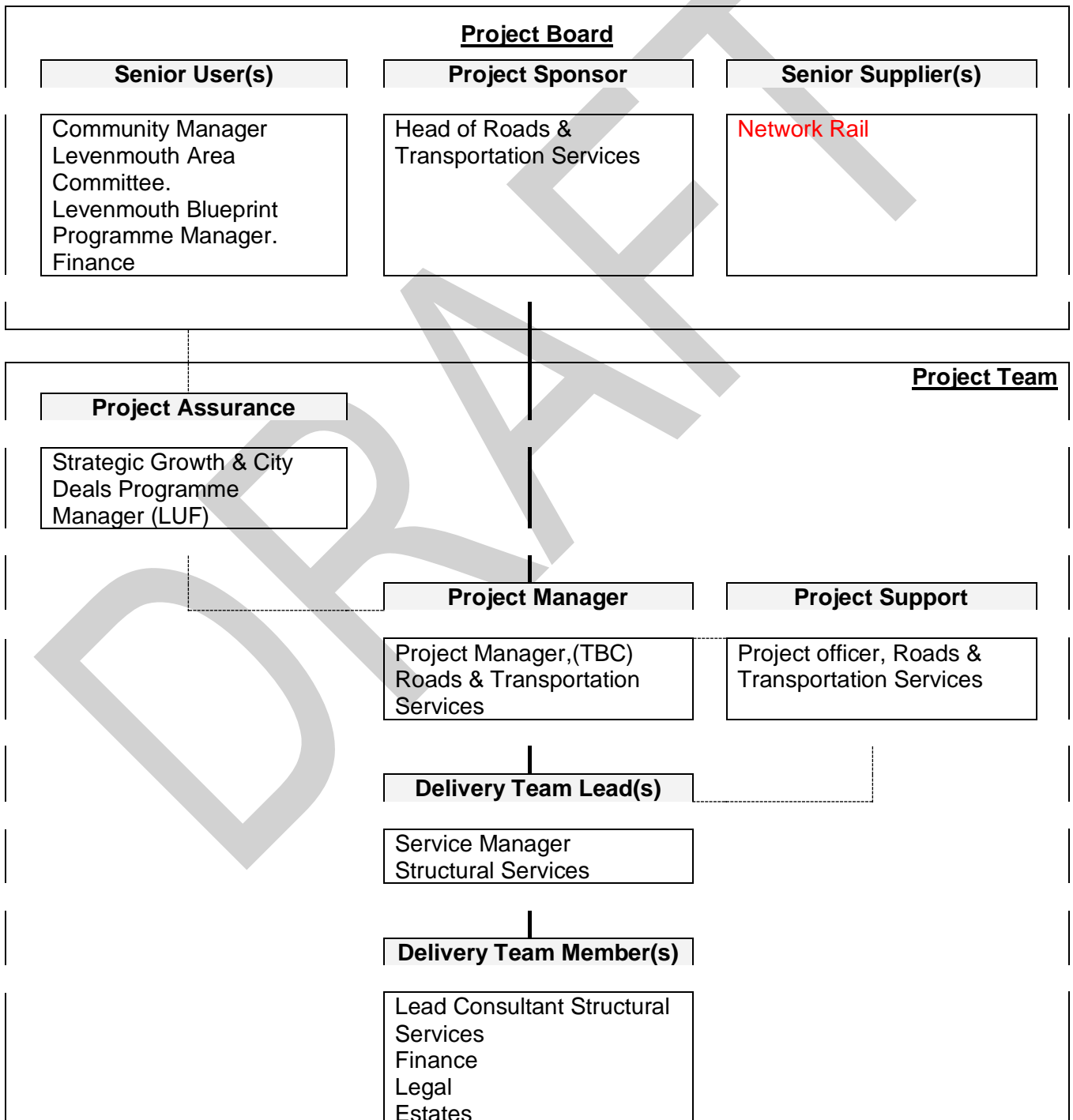
Section 3: Project Structure

3.1 What is the governance arrangement?

This project will have a formal Project Board with a Project Sponsor, Senior User(s), and Senior Supplier(s). The existing Leven Programme governance will be used as far as possible. This will be set up during Quarter 3 2023/24 for the duration of the project.

3.2 Project structure chart and project roles

Note: For specific guidance on what each role entails see the [Change & Improvement FISH site](#) for more details.



3.3 Business Case sign-off

Approved by	Role	Date approved
Michael Anderson	Service Manager Structural Services	
John Mitchell	Project Sponsor	
Caroline Ritchie	Finance Representative/ Service Accountant	

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Mountfleurie Bridge



Fife Council Response to Scottish Government Consultation on Mandatory Training for Elected Members Dealing with Decisions Relating to Planning Matters

Report by: Pam Ewen, Head of Planning, and Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To seek approval of a proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the provisions for mandatory elected member training which were set out as enabling legislation in the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

Link: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/mandatory-training-planning-elected-members/pages/4/>

Recommendation(s)

Members are requested to:

1. review and approve the proposed consultation response;
 2. authorise officers to submit the consultation to the Scottish Government; and,
 3. delegate to the Head of Planning and Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in conjunction with the Convener and Conveners of the Fife LRB, West and Central and the North East Planning Committees to include additional comments agreed by this committee and respond to the consultation.
-

Resource Implications

Some of the proposed changes would have impacts on workload in terms of the capacity needed to deliver the training by officers and commitment of time from elected members. The training requirement would be managed within existing Service resources.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal or risk implications in responding to this consultation because it is a response to an invitation to comment on the implementation of national planning legislation.

Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment and other impact assessments are not required because this is a consultation response to proposed implementation of planning legislation. The Scottish Government undertakes the relevant Impact Assessments in relation to legislative changes which are as noted in the Scottish Government's report.

The Heads of Service for Finance, and Legal and Democratic Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. In addition, discussions were also held with Cllr Altany Craik, Cllr Jonny Tepp (Convener, North East Planning Committee, Cllr David Barratt, (Convener, West and Central Planning Committee), Cllr Kathleen Leslie (Leader of the Conservative and Unionist Group) and Cllr Derek Glen.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Scottish Government is undertaking a rolling review of various areas and legislative provisions regarding planning legislation. An independent review of the Scottish planning system '[Empowering planning to deliver great places](#)' was published on 31 May 2016. The review was carried out by an independent panel, appointed by the Scottish Ministers, and operated independently of the Scottish Government. The independent panel recognised that skills and training for elected members is an important part of an efficient planning system but were concerned that training requirements were not always enforced. They recommended that skills development was required in a number of priority areas and that 'training of elected members should be mandatory, monitored and enforced'.
- 1.2 The legislative provisions to introduce mandatory training for elected members was included in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, alongside a package of measures to improve the performance of the planning system as a whole. [Section 45 of the Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), once in force, will prohibit elected members from carrying out certain specified planning functions if they have not completed training specified by Scottish Ministers. These functions are to be specified in regulations and may, for example, include the determination of planning applications.
- 1.3 The consultation was published on the Scottish Government's website on the 13 July and runs until 26 October 2023.
- 1.4 The Scottish Government consultation poses 13 questions and Appendix 1 includes proposed responses framed around the responses from the elected members involved in the consultative discussion so far undertaken.
- 1.5 The areas covered by the proposed changes relate to:
 - establishing views on whether elected members who do not have appropriate training should be prevented from participating in planning related decisions;
 - the role of Scottish Government and local authorities in setting the content of and delivering the proposed training;
 - the method of delivering the training and responsibility for determining the content;
 - whether there should be a formal test;
 - how the benefits of training and knowledge can be measured in terms of improved decision making and/or performance; and
 - should completion of the training be made public and where should it be publicised.

- 1.6 Appendix 1 details the full text of the questions posed in the consultation and proposed responses based on the comments received thus far from discussions with elected members.

2.0 Consultation Response

2.1 The full consultation response is attached in Appendix 1 of this report which includes the detail of the text to be submitted in response to each question posed in the consultation paper but, the main issues raised and summary of the responses are as follows:

- general support for introducing mandatory training to all members involved in making planning related decisions;
- agreed that there was logic to having a tiered approach to delivering the training with a higher level for all members with a more in-depth programme for those members who sit on planning committees or the Local Review Body;
- while it was considered that there may be some benefit to having a broad national framework set out by Scottish Government in terms of content and there could be a role for a high-level information package on planning which could be online, there was a firm view that the main lead and detailed training should be delivered by local authorities and tailored to the local needs and policy context;
- the Scottish Government consultation paper set out a range of topics which they believe should be covered in any training programme, as noted below:

Importance of a plan led system:

- Overview of the legal framework.
- Development plan at a national and local level.
- Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Place Plans.
- Planning policy and guidance.
- Wider strategic landscape including the National Performance Framework and United Nations Strategic Development Goals.

Planning application process:

- Types of planning applications and consents and the different considerations and processes.
- Hierarchy of development and differences between national, major and local developments.
- Overview of the process prior to elected members involvement which includes pre-application consultation, pre-application discussions, validation, fees, consultation, engagement, technical assessments and site visits.
- Schemes of delegation.

Decision making at committee:

- Overview of the information likely to be contained in committee reports.
- How to identify planning considerations by understanding what material considerations are and how they should be treated.
- How to consider stakeholder and community views.
- How to take a decision and provide robust reasons for decision.
- Use of conditions to ensure they are exercised in a fair, reasonable and practical way.

Role of elected members:

- Conduct and behaviour.
- Understanding at what stage in the process they can talk to planning officers, applicants and communities.

Post decision:

- Dispensing conditions.
- Legal agreements i.e., planning obligations.
- Appeals process.
- The functions and processes of Local Review Bodies.

It was agreed the topics are an appropriate selection to represent the broad base of issues which should be covered in training. It was noted that additional information on enforcement should also be included;

- In relation to the inclusion of a test as part of the training this was considered not to be a reliable metric to demonstrate proficiency and knowledge of the subject with the recommendation that the focus should be on regular CPD and a rolling programme of events following the delivery of a comprehensive training session following each election cycle;
- It was considered on balance that members attendance and or completion of the training should be made public, and that this information could be published on the council website and included in performance reports; and,
- In terms of monitoring the long-term effects of the training it was considered that there was no clear simple representative means to do this as the complexity of the planning decision making process and the subjective elements of it in many areas meant that defining a qualitative measure in this context was challenging.

2.2 While the nature of the questions required definitive yes/no responses many of these required more nuanced consideration and the consultation responses have provision to elaborate on the reasons for particular answers. While in many cases there was unanimity in the response in others, there was not a unified position and that is reflected in Appendix 1.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Cabinet members are asked to consider and agree the final proposed responses as set out in Appendix 1 and agree that these are submitted to Scottish Government as the formal response from Fife Council to the consultation report on mandatory training for elected members.

List of Appendices

1. Proposed Responses from Fife Council to Scottish Government Consultation on Mandatory Training for Elected Members.

Background Papers

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

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/mandatory-training-planning-elected-members/pages/4/>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/empowering-planning-to-deliver-great-places/>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/13/part/4/crossheading/training-for-taking-planning-decisions/enacted>

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Consultation on mandatory training for elected members determining planning related decisions.

Link - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/mandatory-training-planning-elected-members/pages/4/>

Only the text set out in the “Proposed Response” sections below will be submitted to the Scottish Government consultation through the electronic portal.

QUESTION 1: Should the determination of planning applications be the only specified function that elected members are prohibited from doing until training requirements have been completed?

[yes/no]

While there was a consensus that formal training was undoubtedly necessary, it was recognised that this may add an additional burden to the workload of elected members. Comment was made that having such formalised training may assist in encouraging members to participate in planning committees. The logic of mandatory training for planning is mirrored in the current arrangements for members who sit on the Pensions Committee and Licensing. It was also recognised that the public and applicants are entitled to rely on the decision making in regulatory functions being made by informed members. Given that planning legislation specifically requires certain major applications and key stages of the Local Development Plan to be considered at Full Council all elected members need a good knowledge of the planning system. Having considered the context of the question the members disagreed that only those determining planning applications would be prohibited from making decisions until they received training.

Proposed Response:

No – all members should be required to undertake a level of training that informs the members of the planning framework and system before being permitted to determine planning related decisions. A further, more in depth level of training should be required for members involved in determining planning applications relating to development management such as the LRB and the two Planning Committees.

QUESTION 2: Should the training requirements vary for elected members depending on whether they participate in a planning committee, Full Council or Local Review Body?

[yes/no]

The feedback from the members on this question was very much that the training should be tiered in terms of its content with those sitting on planning committees and the Local Review Board having a more in depth and detailed suite of training. The response to the question was therefore as set out below:

Proposed Response:

Yes – as outlined in the previous response, all members would benefit from mandatory training on the planning system to assist with constituency matters and their role in Full Council where the strategic decisions are made. A more in-depth training requirement would benefit those members on the LRB and the two Planning Committees where development management knowledge is relevant.

QUESTION 3: Should the mandatory training be focused on the key principles and knowledge of the planning system?

[yes/no]

The members consulted agreed with this statement but also were of the view that building case studies into the training would be helpful and represent real life scenarios.

Proposed Response:

Yes – with recognition of the strategic framework that is relevant to the development management role of the planning authority to assist in informing members of the framework that is plan led and particular to their area.

QUESTION 4: Do you agree with the list of topics to cover?

There was consensus that the list of topics set out in the Scottish Government's consultation document provided a comprehensive list of the important elements of the planning system and legislation which the training should cover.

[yes/no]

Proposed Response:

Yes. All members considered that the topics set out in the Scottish Government's question provided the key core elements which the training should cover.

QUESTION 5: Are there any other topics that you think should be covered in the mandatory training?

Having discussed the list of topics set out in question 4 members also considered more detail on the strategic elements of the planning system in terms of the hierarchy of developments and the context of the strategic nature of planning would be helpful to understanding the overall context of the planning process. The importance of the plan led system and local area policies should also form part of the training. It was also recognised that training focussed on enforcement would also be beneficial.

Proposed Response:

Yes – as aforesaid, the hierarchy and framework of the strategic position as defined from the development management regulations of individual applications needs to be outlined. An understanding of the LDP and area's policy context should be part of the learning.

Members also considered that there would be benefit from a focus on the context around enforcement and the challenges presented in that particular field. The inclusion of case studies would also be of assistance to set the training in the context of real-life scenarios.

QUESTION 6: Which would be your preferred option for how the training could be delivered? (please check all that apply)

- **Option 1** - Training could be delivered in-person with the Scottish Government setting out the overarching key principles which the training should cover, and it would then be up to each local authority to develop the detailed content and deliver the training.
- **Option 2** - Training could be delivered in-person with the Scottish Government developing the mandatory training programme and the detailed content, with each Local Authority delivering the training to the elected members in-person.
- **Option 3** - Training could be delivered online with the Scottish Government developing (or procuring) an online training course for elected members to access individually at a time that suits them.
- **Option 4** - Training could be delivered online with the Scottish Government undertaking a procurement exercise where a preferred training provider is chosen with local authorities then being required to appoint this person to facilitate the training online to their elected members.
- **Option 5** - None of the above

Proposed Response:

None of the above. Rather a hybrid of the options could be explored. Option 3 with generic high level basic training being delivered online with the Scottish Government developing/procuring an online basic training course for all elected members, provided this could be rolled out timeously. This would enable members to undertake this at a time suitable to them and provide the same standardised level of training for all members to understand the same basic framework of the planning system. Otherwise, each local authority should prepare and deliver a training package following the basic content as set out in Question 4.

The individual local authorities could then provide a much more in-depth level of training to those members on the LRB and the two planning committees tailored to the policy context in place for each local authority.

If online training modules were available, these would enable members to access these in between the scheduled sessions with edited highlights being made available for the public to access to assist them with understanding the role of elected members.

The training and schedule should be sufficiently robust to account for new members having to replace trained members for whatever reason within required timeframes.

QUESTION 7: Do you have any further comments on how the training could be delivered?

In considering the response to this question there was further discussion and reflection on the answers to the questions above and having done so the following response is proposed:

Proposed Response:

If the training was delivered in a two-tier manner as proposed and outlined above, it would benefit all local authority members having completed the same core training on the planning system whilst providing more specialised training to those members determining planning applications and reviews, with further training on the policy context regulating their area.

There was a view that the training should be delivered in modules with sessions for further learning – for example: sessions on NPF4; material considerations; use of conditions.

QUESTION 8: Should there be a requirement for elected members to have passed a test before being allowed to undertake a planning decision?

[Yes/No]

In the discussions with members, it was recognised that there are positive and negative aspects to that form of assessment. On balance it was considered that while a test would provide evidence at a point in time it was not necessarily a reliable metric of embedded understanding and competency on the planning system and the member's ability to undertake the quasi-judicial role that they take in the process.

Concern was expressed that testing would make being on a planning committee/LRB potentially even more restrictive, burdensome and unattractive than already exists in terms of being able to voice the community concerns and available time/pressure placed on members who are already busy. It was however also recognised that formal mandatory training and completion of online courses are already required for those members who sit on the Regulation and Licensing Board and the Pensions and Finance Committee.

There were also concerns expressed that potentially, the use of a test might leave members exposed if they act in a manner which is perceived to be incorrect in assessing and deciding an application.

On balance, it was considered that a means of continual quality assurance through regular training sessions on specific topics together with the main block of training for all members at the start of a new administration was better than a test. It was also recognised that regular attendance at committee also builds knowledge and experience.

Proposed Response:

Given the need for a Yes or No response on balance it is considered that the submitted answer is **No** with the prevailing view being in favour of regular CPD rather than a single test event.

QUESTION 9: How often should elected members be required to retake the training?

Please tick.

- once every year
- once every election cycle
- training should not need to be retaken
- Other

Please add any comment in support of your answer.

Having discussed the merits of or need for a test in question 8 this had also touched on the cycle of training and when it should be provided and in what form. It was considered that a main block of training to all members and a more specific package for those sitting on planning committees and the LRB should be delivered at the start of each election cycle but with regular training sessions for those sitting on planning and LRBs as set out in the response to the preceding questions.

Proposed Response

Once every election cycle: this seems balanced in relation to capacity, with new members joining after by-elections having to complete the training within a timeline of becoming elected. The availability of an online training package and a rolling CPD programme would also provide opportunities for regular refresh of knowledge.

QUESTION 10: Should elected member's completion of the training be made available to the public?

[yes/no]

Different views were expressed on this issue however the majority were in favour of the information being made public. While concern was expressed that publicising the attainment level or completion of training in whatever form may lead to a focus on that rather than the decisions reached where contentious matters were being considered, it was also recognised that the formalisation of the training and the activity undertaken would be subject to Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Request legislation and could be released on request. The publicising upfront would be more transparent.

Proposed response

Yes in the interests of transparency and fairness but aware that such data might be used against members in the context of questioning decision making or how they may have voted on a particular matter.

QUESTION 11: If the completion of training is made public, do you think the information being provided within Planning Performance Framework (PPF)/ statutory annual reports and on the Local Authorities website are sufficient?

[yes/no]

If no, where should the information also be made available?

Members considered that these sites and publications provided logical places for the information to be publicised.

Proposed response

Yes. The provision within PPF or other annual reports and the local authority web site would be natural places for the information to be registered and made available.

In Fife Council Democratic Services maintain a register of all members' individual training. Completed training for planning could also be included in this register.

QUESTION 12: Do you have any comments / suggestions on the best ways to monitor the long-term effects of the mandatory training of elected members?

Members reflected that this question was particularly difficult in terms of framing a relevant metric. The question focusses on the definition of an apparent qualitative metric linked to the delivery of the new training programme to demonstrate the benefit and value of members having undertaken it. It was noted that having a test and monitoring and reported attendance at training events were binary metrics, but these did not provide a reflection on the actual decision outcome. Given the responses above where there was no support for a test, members were of the view that longer-term monitoring of the frequency and cost of awards of expenses against the council at appeal may provide some indication of an issue but there was no real meaningful metric which would provide an insight into a qualitative measure of decision making.

Proposed response

Yes as set out below:

We would suggest that monitoring beyond requiring the members to pass a test and attend training raises particular challenges. Firstly, how would each individual member's performance be monitored and/or the committee or review that was relevant to determine that context?

To monitor members determining applications against officer recommendation would potentially fetter the judgement that the members are entitled to take as the appointed decision-maker for the planning authority. To compare Department of Planning and Environmental Appeals that are sustained with other local authority appeals would be meaningless as every planning application and appeal/review is looked upon “de novo” (a new) and determined on its own merits.

The number of occasions and or amount of award of expenses against the council may provide some measure of the quality of informed decision making but it was noted that other than a clear or extreme pattern emerging the definition of a day to day measure was not easily defined in the context of the wide range of issues that the determination of a planning application may rest on.

QUESTION 13: Do you have any comments on the impact assessments undertaken as part of the consultation on mandatory training on planning for elected members?

Proposed response

No

Transfer of Ownership – Shuna and Bargany Swords

Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service

Wards Affected:

Purpose

This document seeks the approval for the transfer of ownership of two swords from the Museums' Collections managed by Fife Cultural Trust (OnFife):

1. The Shuna sword to the Kilmartin Museum in Argyll. Discovered on the island of Shuna in Argyll in 1874.
2. The Bargany sword and scabbard to National Museums Scotland (NMS) in Edinburgh. Discovered at Bargany, Girvan, Ayrshire before 1843.

At Kilmartin, the Shuna sword will be a focal object of their new permanent display opening in autumn 2023 in the refurbished museum. At NMS, the Bargany sword is part of the long-term display about Scotland's early history in Chambers Street in Edinburgh.

Recommendation

The committee is asked to approve the transfer of ownership of each sword from Fife Council to respectively Kilmartin Museum and National Museums Scotland.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications as the swords have been on long-term loan to Kilmartin Museum and National Museums Scotland since 1996 and 1998, respectively.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no significant legal restrictions on the proposed transfers.

This proposal follows the guidelines of the Collections Trust's SPECTRUM professional standard and the Museums Association's Toolkit for Ethical Transfer, Reuse and Disposal.

In accordance with the council's Museums Collections Development Policy, expert advice and the views of stakeholders as noted below have been sought. This advice has supported the proposed transfer and no stakeholder has raised any significant objections or concerns.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

We have consulted the following community stakeholders about the transfers and received no objections:

- Douglas Speirs, Fife County Archaeologist
- St Andrews University Museums
- The Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee
- Lismore Gaelic Heritage Centre
- Bute Museum
- Rozelle House Museum and Galleries (South Ayrshire Council Museums)
- Kilmartin Museum
- National Museums Scotland
- Fife Council Legal Services

1.0 Background

- 1.1 With effect from 1 October 2012, the council entrusted, amongst others, the management and operation of its Museums to Fife Cultural Trust (“FCT”). This included the management of the Museums’ Collections but ownership of the collections was not transferred to FCT and title remains with the council. The swords are therefore Fife Council assets.
- 1.2 Both of these swords ended up in North East Fife District Council Museums’ (now part of the Fife Cultural Trust Museum collections managed on behalf of Fife Council) collection due to a bulk transfer of ownership from the University of St Andrews when the university’s archaeology museum and the archaeology department closed due to financial difficulties in 1988. Both swords are currently on long-term loan:
 - The Shuna sword to the to Kilmartin Museum, Argyll & Bute since 1996; and
 - The Bargany sword and scabbard to National Museums Scotland (NMS) at the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh since 1998.

Both museums have expressed interest in acquiring these objects for their collections.
- 1.3 The majority of the archaeology collections transferred to North East Fife District Council Museums by the university originated from Fife.
- 1.4 If these swords were offered to OnFife Museums’ collection today, the offers would be rejected as they do not meet our Collections Development Policy. Instead, OnFife Museums team would suggest to the swords’ owner to offer the swords to other museums (such as Kilmartin Museum and the NMS).
- 1.5 Having the ownership of these swords permanently transferred to the museums named above would ease the pressure on OnFife staff time and resources as they would no longer need to spend time on administering the loans, nor would FCT be responsible for the cost of care and conservation of the swords.

2.0 Issues and Options

Issues

- 2.1 Both swords lie outside OnFife Collections Development Policy 2019-2023. According to the policy, “except where otherwise stated, the geographical remit of all collecting will be within the boundaries of Fife”. The swords were found on the west coast of Scotland (Ayrshire and Argyll).
- 2.2 There is no known link to any other archaeological material in our collection.
- 2.3 According to the Museum Association’s Code of Ethics for Museums, the Museum collections should be used for public benefit. In OnFife museums, potential for the use of these objects for display or public engagement is limited as our museums' main mission is ‘caring for, developing and celebrating Fife’s culture and heritage.’
- 2.4 Both swords are in stable but fragile condition. If they were to remain in the OnFife collection, then OnFife would be responsible for any possible future conservation and collections care costs.
- 2.5 Both swords are on long-term loan. Loan administration takes up staff time and resources (renewing and following up on loan agreements every two years – as required by Museums Association - and visiting the museums to check the conditions of the items on loan).

Options

- 2.6 OnFife have explored the following options:
 - Terminate loans and have the swords returned to OnFife Museums.
 - Offer to transfer the ownership of these swords to different museums.
 - Continue to have these swords on loan to NMS and Kilmartin Museum.
 - Transfer the ownership of the swords to NMS (Bargany sword) and Kilmartin Museum (Shuna sword) recommended option.
- 2.7 The recommendation is to transfer ownership of the objects as they are already at these museums and no further discussions are needed around who is responsible for collecting or delivering the objects, any conservation work or packing needed, insurance and transport costs, etc.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The recommendation is for the permanent transfer of the ownership of Bargany and Shuna swords. The former to the National Museums Scotland, the latter to the Kilmartin Museum. These swords are already on long-term loan at the venues for which they are best suited.

Background Papers

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

- Collections Trust's SPECTRUM professional standard
- Museums Association's Toolkit for Ethical Transfer, Reuse and Disposal
- Museum Association's Code of Ethics for Museums
- OnFife Collections Development Policy 2019-2023

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