

Thursday, 21 March 2024 - 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 are asked to declare any interest in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **CIVIC BUSINESS BULLETIN** 3
4. **MINUTES** – Minutes of the meetings of Fife Council of 7 December 2023 and 22 February 2024. 4 - 21
5. **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

Minutes of meetings of the Council's committees and sub-committees, as contained in the volume of minutes uploaded to the intranet and Fife Council website, are submitted for accuracy.
6. **LEADER'S REPORT** 22 - 25
7. **QUESTION TIME** 26 - 28
8. **FIFE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN EVIDENCE REPORT** – Report by the Head of Planning. 29 - 31
9. **NOTICE OF MOTIONS** – Report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services). 32 - 34
10. **BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE PROVOST AS A MATTER OF URGENCY**

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

14 March 2024

If telephoning, please ask for:

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Agendas and papers for all Committee meetings can be accessed on www.fife.gov.uk/committees

BLENDED 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.

Civic Business Bulletin

Former Councillor and Provost of Dunfermline, Les Wood

Les Wood sadly passed away earlier this year. He became a Labour councillor in 1964 at the age of 20, later becoming Council Leader and Provost of Dunfermline around 1972. He carried out this role for over 10 years. He stepped away from politics for several years until he was re-elected as an independent councillor in the late 1980s. He retired from the Council in 2007.

Les was well regarded by all who knew him. He was a talented musician and some members may remember the marvellous performances Les & his band gave at the Golden Wedding Tea Dances that the Council used to hold.

Our condolences go to his family at this sad time.

APSE Scottish Apprentice Awards

Congratulations go to Todd Arthur, Plasterer, Building Services, who won 3rd Year Apprentice of the Year. Another National Award to add to his collection.

It should also be noted that we had finalists in every year category.

New Years' Honours List

Commander of the Order of the British Empire was awarded to Professor Kenneth Falconer for services to mathematics (St Andrews)

Commander of the Order of the British Empire was awarded to Professor Andrew Pettegree for services to literature (St Andrews)

Officer of the Order of the British Empire was awarded to Professor Colva Rony-Dougal for services to education and mathematics (St Andrews)

Member of the Order of the British Empire was awarded to Mr Andrew Arbuckle for services to farming and his community in Fife (Newburgh)

Member of the Order of the British Empire was awarded to Mrs Susan Walker for services to young people (Dunfermline)

British Empire Medal was awarded to Mr Robert Barnes for services to young people in his community in Fife (Methil)

British Empire Medal was awarded to Mr John Minhinick for services to people living with Parkinsons (Aberdour)

British Empire Medal was awarded to Mr Robert Nellies for services to cricket and his community in Fife (Falkland)

British Empire Medal was awarded to Mr Sam Young for services to the community in Dunfermline

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL – BLENDED MEETING

Council Chamber, 6th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

7 December 2023

10.00 am – 12.50 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Leishman (Convener), Tom Adams, David Alexander, Blair Allan, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, John Caffrey, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Rod Cavanagh, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Jean Hall Muir, Judy Hamilton, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Gary Holt, Andy Jackson, Margaret Kennedy, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Carol Lindsay, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian, David MacDiarmid, Julie MacDougall, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Derek Noble, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Gordon Pryde, Bailey-Lee Robb, David Ross, Sam Steele, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Ross Vettrano, Craig Walker, Darren Watt, Daniel Wilson, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Fiona Corps, David Graham and Cara Hilton.

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

100. CIVIC BUSINESS BULLETIN

Decision

The council noted the Civic Business Bulletin.

101. MINUTE

The Provost, seconded by Councillor Erskine, moved that the minute of the meeting of 21 September 2023 be approved.

Decision

The council approved the minute.

102. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Minutes of the undernoted committees and sub-committee, as contained in the volume of minutes were submitted for accuracy:-

- (1) West & Central Planning Committee of 13 September, 11 October, 8 November 2023.
- (2) North East Planning Committee of 18 October 2023.
- (3) Fife Planning Review Body of 23 October 2023.
- (4) Regulation and Licensing Committee of 5 September, 3 October 2023.
- (5) Cabinet Committee of 7 September, 5 October, 2 November 2023.
- (6) Standards, Audit & Risk Committee of 28 September, 9 November 2023.
- (7) Pensions Committee of 28 September 2023.
- (8) Glenrothes Area Committee of 4 October 2023.
- (9) Levenmouth Area Committee of 4 October 2023.
- (10) City of Dunfermline Area Committee of 24 October 2023.
- (11) Kirkcaldy Area Committee of 31 October 2023.
- (12) North East Fife Area Committee of 25 October 2023.
- (13) Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 14 June, 6 September, 1 November 2023.
- (14) South and West Fife Area Committee of 21 June, 6 September, 1 November 2023.
- (15) Education Scrutiny Committee of 18 September, 14 November 2023
- (16) Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 26 October 2023.
- (17) People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 16 November 2023
- (18) Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee of 12 September 2023.
- (19) Fife Health & Social Care Integration Joint Board of 28 July, 29 September 2023.

Decision

The council noted the minutes.

103. LEADERS REPORT

The council considered a report by the Leader of the Council on a number of strategic issues. The Leader provided updates on a number of issues in response to questions from members.

Decision

The council noted the leader's report.

104. QUESTION TIME

In terms of Standing Order 9.3, the following questions were submitted:-

Question 1 from Councillor Ian Cameron

What discussions has the Spokesperson for Health & Social Care had with NHS Fife, about the rising cardiology waiting times across the Kingdom?

2023 FC 108

Answer (Spokesperson for Health & Social Care)

Can I start by congratulating the NHS Fife Cardiac Arrhythmia and implantable devices team who won Cardiology Team of the Year at the Scottish Healthcare Awards a couple of weeks ago and to thank the staff for the fantastic work they are doing in a critical area of care.

I have received questions from other Cllrs regarding Cardiology waiting times so despite the efforts of staff there are obviously still concerns around waiting times for cardiac procedures in Fife and across Scotland.

Following my appointment to the Health Board I have already raised this with a number of individuals including the Chief Executive, Medical Director and Director of Acute Services.

I have received the following answer from the Chief Executive of NHS Fife.

“Prior to covid Cardiology in Fife performed well. At the end of 2019/2020 only 25 patients were waiting longer than 12 weeks for an appointment. As a result of the pandemic and the stepping down of out-patient activity the Cardiology Service now has a backlog and a much longer waiting list.

Current waits as at the end November 2023 are 704 patients waiting longer than 12 weeks. The picture nationally is very similar to what NHS Fife is experiencing.

NHS Fife continues to take actions to improve waiting times.”

Supplementary Question

I received a letter from a constituent who was put on the cardiology waiting list in October 2022 and was told there was a 29 week waiting list, after 32 weeks they were then told it was a 41 week wait and were then advised of a 64 week wait, what do I say to this lady now as we are approaching winter?

Answer (Spokesperson for Health & Social Care)

I am sorry to hear about the specifics of the Councillor’s constituent and I am happy to write to the Chief Executive of NHS Fife to ask her to look into this specific case.

In preparing for today’s answer, I also spoke to the British Heart Foundation who share concerns over rising cardiac waiting times across Scotland. While the pandemic undoubtedly had an impact on these services, there were signs of pressures on health services building already.

We know that health budgets are under incredible pressure and I know we are coming back to that issue later in the agenda. With 1 in 7 people on NHS waiting lists across Scotland, I hope NHS Fife can work with Scottish Government to find a solution which will help improve the situation and improve waiting times for cardiology and other services across the country.

2023 FC 109

Question 2 from Councillor Al Clark

Given the recent storm damage, what can be done to support St Andrews Harbour following the destruction and the £1.5m bill to fix the harbour. What options of funding can Fife Council support with to get the repairs at least started and show commitment to repairing the historic Grade A listed site, that is also a tourist attraction as well as a working harbour providing employment?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy & Strategic Planning)

Fife Council representatives met with the St Andrews Harbour Trust on Wednesday 15 November 2023 to discuss the damage incurred to the harbour following storm Babet. To help safeguard the collapsed slipway, a temporary support measure will be implemented as quickly as possible through funding from Fife Council Roads and Transportation Services budget. The Trust will also be supported by the Service in the design of a permanent repair and in helping to source funding for the permanent repair.

Question 3 from Councillor Jonny Tepp

What is the current IJB budget overspend and the projected year-end deficit? What steps are being taken to close this gap and will services or council budgets be impacted?

Answer (Spokesperson for Health & Social Care)

The current projected overspend for financial year 2023-24 (as at September 2023) is £1.468m.

The governance in relation to any overspends is managed through the Integration Scheme. The scheme stipulates that where there is an overspend then a recovery plan is required. Should there be a remaining overspend at the end of the financial year then this will either be met from:-

1. any IJB reserves; or
2. from both Fife Council and NHS Fife through the risk share agreement that is in place.

As there are only 6 months of actuals included in the projected outturn it is reasonable to assume that final outturn position is likely to change from the current reported position. As a result, the position will be closely monitored throughout the financial year and further corrective action taken as required.

Oversight of this process is through the IJB which has 16 voting members consisting of 8 elected members from Fife Council. Financial Monitoring updates are presented to each meeting of the IJB with the next meeting scheduled for early February.

Supplementary Question

Are there any indications that the deficit is actually being brought under control or do we anticipate this widening and how does it interplay with the wider NHS budget if at all or is it completely ringfenced?

2023 FC 110

Answer (Spokesperson for Health & Social Care)

The funding for the IJB is provided by both Fife Council and NHS Fife and discussions are underway as normal as part of the budgetary procedures and discussions.

There are regular updates to the IJB regarding financial performance. We are still dealing with the after effects and implications of the pandemic and I was sad to see last year that the Scottish Government clawed back over £21m of funding from the IJB.

With Scottish Government budget being announcement on 19 December I expect there will be more clarity after that and I am happy to keep the councillor informed and discuss any specific concerns or explain the process in more detail.

Question 4 from Councillor David Alexander

How many void or empty properties does the housing service currently have by area committee?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing & Building Services)

Currently there are 313 properties in change of tenancy, 209 subject to repairs and 104 in allocation with the area team. I don't have a snapshot for each area but that should be reported to members at ward meeting.

Supplementary Questions

What is being done to improve this?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing & Building Services)

There is a sprint going on between Housing Services and Building Services to improve voids turnaround which have gone down from 58 days to 36 days and will continue to work on this. We had no turnover at all after Covid so very encouraging.

Question 5 from Councillor Nicola Patrick

Can the coalition leader advise why there is a backlog of some 150 disabled parking bays awaiting installation?

Answer Spokesperson for Finance, Transportation & Strategic Planning)

It is correct there was a backlog of requests and this was caused by a large volume of requests and a change/lack of staff in dealing with them however an officer within Roads and Transportation Services has been working full time to address the backlog. 100 have been dealt with and the other 50 will be cleared by end of January 2024. New applications are being dealt with by other officers to allow staff to tackle the backlog. Going forward dedicated officers have been identified to offer capacity to allow applications to be dealt with in a timely manner.

Question 6 from Councillor Derek Glen

With reference to support for Low Carbon Heating Schemes and Local Community Climate Projects, is Fife Council planning to support further district energy distribution schemes such as the one from Lochhead Recycling Centre to the Linen Quarter in Dunfermline and the one supplying Fife House from the RWE plant; and if so are these centred on landfill waste, or do they also include other renewable sources such as solar and geothermal and if so when will we have a report to Full Council to consider the options available to us?

Answer (Spokesperson for Environment & Climate Change)

Fife Council views District Energy Schemes as an essential component in tackling the climate emergency. Fife Council have a statutory requirement under the Heat Network (Scotland) Act 2021 to identify potential opportunity areas for District Heating. Our Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (approved at Cabinet on 30 November) includes an initial assessment of potential areas.

While we support such schemes in principle, we believe that further work needs to be undertaken to assess the technical feasibility, the financial viability and the most appropriate delivery models for any expansion or new schemes.

How we intend to progress this will be outlined further in our revised Climate Strategy (for January Cabinet committee) and note the analysis above will be undertaken as part of the LHEES Delivery Plan which is being prepared in 2024 for reporting back to committee. The assessment work will include engagement sessions with members to keep them informed and input to the process.

We would highlight that we do not view Landfill gas as a long-term solution, particularly given the introduction of the ban on biodegradable municipal waste going to landfill in 2025. As such we will include other heat sources (for example, mine water, sewer and Waste Water Treatment Works, heat from rivers and the sea, waste heat from industry and business such as Energy from Waste) during the assessment process.

On the broader point of “Local Community Climate Projects”, we would note that we are currently supporting the Fife Communities Climate Action Network in undertaking feasibility studies for local community owned renewable energy generation. The Climate Change team in Planning would be happy to brief any member who is interested in this area.

In terms of Standing Order 9.3(7) the Provost advised that Questions 7 and 8 from Councillor Wilson would be taken together and one supplementary question allowed.

Questions 7 & 8 from Councillor Daniel Wilson

Can the Transportation spokesperson provide an update on the discussions with external partners in relation to a safe crossing at Double Dykes?

What records are being kept of meetings and discussions with Fife Council (officers and spokespersons) and external agencies including but not limited to Network Rail, Transport Scotland and Sustrans in relation to the closure and potential reopening of the crossing at Double Dykes.

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Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy & Strategic Planning)

In terms of an update on discussions with external partners relating to a safe crossing at Doubledykes, we have continued to meet with Transport Scotland and Network Rail to look at solutions and find a positive way forward together. There are obviously impediments that we are trying to overcome.

Like Scottish Government we don't keep verbatim minutes on discussions from meetings we have but rest assured we continue to try to take this forward. We had Network Rail attending Glenrothes Area Committee last week.

Supplementary Question

Given that communication is the issue here I would like to invite you to Thornton or Coaltown community council meetings in January and give more detail to them.

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy & Strategic Planning)

Happy to meet the community councils but will be a very similar discussion. Until we have a solution that meets the aspirations of the community anything earlier is premature and I am not going to over promise and underdeliver and that is where we are as an area committee. Happy to discuss further.

Question 9 from Councillor Carol Lindsay

How has inflation impacted on the original costing for scrapping Bulky Uplifts and what impact will the recently issued SEPA Guidance about measures that will have to be taken when collecting and disposing of items of furniture that contain Persistent Organic Pollutants, have on service, the recycling rates and costs?"

Answer (Spokesperson for Environment & Climate Change)

There is no inflationary cost impact on the Free Bulky Uplift Service. The business case erred on the side of caution with vehicle hire and fuel costs which has provided enough contingency to cover fluctuations in the rate of inflation.

The Domestic Waste Service will be able to continue collecting and disposing of furniture that contains 'Persistent Organic Pollutants' (POPs) with minimal disruption. New risk assessments will be required for operatives who collect the items and there will be only one disposal site at Lower Melville Wood but this shouldn't impact normal service levels. There will be no impact on recycling rates as 'POPs' items were not recycled before and went to landfill. These materials will now be sent to an energy from waste plant for permanent destruction. There will be an increase in disposal costs but the Service really needs 12 months of data to establish what that figure will be.

105. CHANGE TO LIST OF COMMITTEE POWERS

The council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which proposed a minor amendment to the List of Committee Powers to remove the determination of national planning applications or major applications

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significantly contrary to the Development Plan from the functions reserved to Fife Council and to delegate this function to the Cabinet Committee.

Decision

Subject to an amendment proposed by Councillor Beare and seconded by Councillor Steele, the council agreed:-

- (1) that Committee Powers be amended as set out at section 3.1.7 to remove the determination of national planning applications or major applications significantly contrary to the Development Plan from the functions reserved to Fife Council and amend Committee Powers to include the following in Section 9.0 Fife Planning Committees:-
 - (i) an ad-hoc Planning Committee be established from time to time, as required, to consider the determination of national planning applications or major applications significantly contrary to the Development Plan only and will comprise 21 members* of the Council, who are members of the North East Fife Planning Committee, West and Central Planning Committee or the Planning Review Body, based on the political balance of the Council as a whole.

Consideration of a report for a relevant application will be chaired by the Convener of the North East Fife Planning Committee or the West and Central Planning Committee. Which Convener will chair consideration of an application will be determined by the Proper Officer (in consultation with the Executive Director (Enterprise and Environment) and the relevant Conveners). Normally, this will be the Committee Convener within which all or the majority of an application site is located.
- (2) that the above may be further considered in the ongoing review of Committee Powers and would not be subject to a motion to rescind when the Committee Powers document returns to Council for consideration and would be further reviewed by Council before the 2025 summer recess; and
- (3) to delegate authority for any consequential amendment to Fife Council's governance documentation required by the above to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

**A committee of 21 would on the current Group sizes comprise SNP 9, Labour 6, Liberal Democrats 4, Conservatives 2 , the Conveners of North East Planning Committee and West and Central Planning Committee will be allocated seats as part of their (political) Group allocations.*

106. FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF DUNFERMLINE

The council considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services requesting members to ratify the decision of the City of Dunfermline Area Committee to award the peacocks of Dunfermline the Freedom of the City of Dunfermline.

Decision

2023 FC 114

The council ratified the decision of the City of Dunfermline Area Committee to award the peacocks of Dunfermline the Freedom of the City of Dunfermline.

107. **APPOINTMENT TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - ST ANDREWS LINKS TRUST AND ST ANDREWS LINKS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to appoint a non-elected member representative to both the St Andrews Links Trust Management Committee and the St Andrews Links Trust.

Decision

The council agreed to:-

- (1) reappoint Tom Gallacher, a nominee from the local golf clubs to the St Andrews Links Management Committee, for a second term, for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2027; and
- (2) to reappoint Sandra Tuddenham, a nominee from the local golf clubs to the St Andrews Links Trust, for a second term, for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 am and reconvened at 11.45 am.

Councillor Lothian left the meeting during the recess.

108. **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

The council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services requiring the council to consider motions submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 10.

Motion 1

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

NHS Fife Overspend

“Council notes the recently reported overspend of £10.9 million in NHS Fife and understands the concerns of residents of Fife about this service. Some of these worries include concerns of staff being overstretched and access to services.

Following on from these concerns, Council requests that the Council leader write to the Scottish Health Secretary to request that he provides information on what support the Scottish Government are providing to resolve this situation.”

Amendment 1

Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Steele, moved as follows:-

Delete text as it appears on Page 43 with:

“Fife Council notes from NHS reports that Fife Health Board are in constant contact with the Scottish Government in terms of revenue and Capital funding.

2023 FC 115

Fife Council also notes that the Health Service in Scotland is the best in the UK, with more Doctors, and more Nurses, per head of population, and no days lost to industrial action, despite being under severe pressure due to increased demand and Scottish Government resources being reduced because of unfunded Tory-created inflation.

Fife Council abhors the undermining of the work of our health care professionals for petty political reasons and will support in every way it can our health and social care staff who are facing another Winter under extremely challenging circumstances.”

Amendment 2

Councillor Ellis, seconded by Councillor Leslie, moved as follows:-

At the end of the first paragraph - add in an additional sentence that says:

"Residents, specifically in South and West Fife, have felt the full brunt of changes to services, including the loss of an A&E with all its support services and the lack of a full maternity facility."

With the agreement of the Provost, the movers of both the motion and amendment 2 agreed to conjoin. The conjoined motion read as follows:-

NHS Fife Overspend

“Council notes the recently reported overspend of £10.9 million in NHS Fife and understands the concerns of residents of Fife about this service. Some of these worries include concerns of staff being overstretched and access to services.

Residents, specifically in South and West Fife, have felt the full brunt of changes to services, including the loss of an A&E with all its support services and the lack of a full maternity facility.

Following on from these concerns, Council requests that the Council leader write to the Scottish Health Secretary to request that he provides information on what support the Scottish Government are providing to resolve this situation.”

Roll Call

For the Conjoined Motion- 36 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Lockhart, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, John Caffrey, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Gary Holt, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Julie MacDougall, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For Amendment 1 - 32 votes

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Councillors David Alexander, Blair Allan, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Andy Jackson, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Sam Steele, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

The council agreed in terms of the conjoined motion.

Councillor O'Brien joined the meeting during consideration of the above motion.

Motion 2

Councillor MacDougall, seconded by Councillor Craik, moved as follows:-

“Council supports Prostate Cancer UK campaign “Boys Need Bins” highlighting the issue of incontinence waste among men with prostate cancer allowing them to safely and hygienically dispose of incontinence products easily and with dignity. Council will, where possible, encourage providers of public and workplace toilets in our area to make male sanitary bins available in their facilities.”

Decision

The council agreed the motion unanimously.

109. BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE PROVOST AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

It was noted that there was no business was brought forward under this item.

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THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL – BLENDED MEETING

Council Chamber, 6th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

22 February, 2024

**10.15 am - 11.45 am
and 12.15 pm - 2.40 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), Tom Adams, David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Rod Cavanagh, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Jean Hall-Muir, Judy Hamilton, Alycia Hayes, Cara Hilton, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Gary Holt, Andy Jackson, Margaret Kennedy, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian, David MacDiarmid, Julie MacDougall, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Derek Noble, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Gordon Pryde, Bailey-Lee Robb, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker, Darren Watt, Daniel Wilson, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Blair Allan, John Caffrey and David Graham.

110. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

111. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2024-2027 – REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES

In connection with the consideration of the General Fund Revenue Budget 2024-27, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advising of the terms of section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which restricted the voting rights of elected members who were in arrears in respect of the payment of community charge or council tax. The report also referred to the provisions of the Councillors' Code of Conduct which enabled members to participate, discuss and vote on matters relating to the setting of the council tax without the need to declare a financial interest, notwithstanding that members might have an interest in any item of expenditure;
- (b) Local Government Finance Circular No. 8/2023 providing details of the provisional total funding allocations for each council for the financial year 2024-25;

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- (c) report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided members with sufficient information to enable the council to approve a budget for 2024-27 as required by statute; and
- (d) Administration's Motion and Revenue Budget Proposals 2024-27.

Administration's Motion

Councillor David Ross, seconded by Councillor Altany Craik, moved as follows:-

"That the Council:-

1. Approves the report by the Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Services) and the resolution for the levying and collection of council tax and rates for the year 2024-25 as detailed below and specifically:-
 - (a) notes the details of the provisional settlement announced by the Scottish Government as outlined in Finance Circular 8/2023, and the terms of the settlement as outlined in the letter from Deputy First Minister, dated 19 December 2023;
 - (b) agrees a freeze of council tax for the financial year 2024-25 at Band D equivalent and the revenue budget which can be sustained by this level of income;
 - (c) notes the indicative levels of expenditure, subject to further detailed analysis in respect of the financial years 2025-26 and 2026-27;
 - (d) approves the prudential indicators;
 - (e) agrees an additional contribution of £17.1m to the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership;
 - (f) agrees that the Council set for 2024-25 the Council Tax at £1,385.18 for valuation Band D properties and proportionately for other Bands; and
 - (g) approves the terms of the Administration's Budget Statement and the attached investment proposals.
2. Agrees that early work commences in relation to the development of options for the preparation of the 2025-26 and 2026-27 revenue budgets.

RESOLUTION FOR THE LEVYING AND COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX AND RATES FOR THE YEAR 2024-25

Fife Council resolves for the financial year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March, 2025 as follows:-

- (i) in terms of Section 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf to set the amount of council tax to be paid in their area in respect of a chargeable dwelling listed in valuation Band D at £1,385.18 and to determine the amounts for all the valuation bands as follows:-

2024 FC 119

Valuation Band	Council Tax
A	£923.45
B	£1,077.36
C	£1,231.27
D	£1,385.18
E	£1,819.97
F	£2,250.92
G	£2,712.64
H	£3,393.69

- (ii) in terms of sections 7 and 7B of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, to levy within their area the non-domestic rate as prescribed by the Scottish Ministers and in accordance with the relevant Non-Domestic Rates (Levying) (Scotland) Regulations."

SNP Amendment

Councillor David Alexander, seconded by Councillor Derek Glen, moved as follows:-

"That the Council:-

1. Approves the report by the Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Services) and the resolution for the levying and collection of council tax and rates for the year 2024-25 as detailed below and specifically:-
 - (a) notes the details of the provisional settlement announced by the Scottish Government as outlined in Finance Circular 8/2023, and the terms of the settlement as outlined in the letter from Deputy First Minister, dated 19 December 2023;
 - (b) agrees a freeze of council tax for the financial year 2024-25 at Band D equivalent and the revenue budget which can be sustained by this level of income;
 - (c) notes the indicative levels of expenditure, subject to further detailed analysis in respect of the financial years 2025-26 and 2026-27;
 - (d) approves the prudential indicators;
 - (e) agrees an additional contribution of £17.1m to the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership;
 - (f) agrees that the Council set for 2024-25 the Council Tax at £1,385.18 for valuation Band D properties and proportionately for other Bands; and
 - (g) approves the terms of the SNP Group's proposals outlined in Appendices 1 to 3 in the attached Statement.
2. Agrees that early work commences in relation to the development of options for the preparation of the 2025-26 and 2026-27 revenue budgets.

**RESOLUTION FOR THE LEVYING AND COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX
AND RATES FOR THE YEAR 2024-25**

Fife Council resolves for the financial year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March, 2025 as follows:-

- (i) in terms of Section 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf to set the amount of council tax to be paid in their area in respect of a chargeable dwelling listed in valuation Band D at £1,385.18 and to determine the amounts for all the valuation bands as follows:-

Valuation Band	Council Tax
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G	£2,712.64
H	£3,393.69

- (ii) in terms of sections 7 and 7B of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, to levy within their area the non-domestic rate as prescribed by the Scottish Ministers and in accordance with the relevant Non-Domestic Rates (Levying (Scotland) Regulations".

Roll Call

For the Administration Motion - 39 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Bain-Lockhart, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Margaret Kennedy, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougal, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For the SNP Amendment - 30 votes

David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alie Bain, David Barratt, Auxil Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Andy Jackson, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

Accordingly, the Administration motion was carried.

2024 FC 121

112. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2024-2025 (INCLUDING OPTIONS FOR THE HRA & GENERAL FUND HOUSING ACCOUNT (GFHA) RENTS AND CHARGES)

In connection with the consideration of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024-25, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) joint report by the Head of Housing Services and Head of Finance which brought forward budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account with a view to determining rent levels and other charges which would apply during 2024-25; and
- (b) Administration's Motion on the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024-25.

Administration Motion

Councillor Judy Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Gordon Pryde, moved as follows:-

"That the Council: -

1. Approves the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024-25 report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Finance and agrees the following:
 - (a) Approves a rental increase of 5% for 2024-25 HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (b) Approves a rental increase of 5% on Homelessness Temporary Accommodation to keep rental increase on the General Fund Housing Account in line with increases on HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (c) Approves a reduction to the Tenant Support Funding of £0.200m to be replaced by funding from the Welfare Reserve fund proposed in the General Fund Revenue Budget, and the use of £0.222m from the HRA reserve to close the Budget Gap for 2024-25.
 - (d) Approves the terms of the Administration's HRA budget statement attached.

FIFE COUNCIL HRA REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25

	2024-25
	£m
Estimated Budget Gap in Year as per report by Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services	7.020
Increased income generated by 5% Rental Increase	(6.598)
Revised Budget Gap	0.422

2024 FC 122

Proposed Reduction in Budget by Administration

Reduction in Tenant Support Funding	(0.200)
Reduction in HRA Balances	(0.222)
Revised Budget Gap	0.000

SNP Amendment

Councillor Brian Goodall, seconded by Councillor Lesley Backhouse, moved as follows:-

"That the Council: -

1. Approves the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024-25 report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Finance and agrees the following:
 - (a) Approves a rental increase of 4% for 2024-25 HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (b) Approves a rental increase of 4% on Homelessness Temporary Accommodation to keep rental increase on the General Fund Housing Account in line with increases on HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (c) Approves a reduction in Tenant Support Funding of £1.500m to be replaced by decommitting balances in the general fund (previously set aside for Workforce Change costs), and the use of £0.242m from the HRA reserves to close the Budget Gap for 2024-25.
 - (d) Approves the terms of the SNP's HRA proposals attached in Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1

FIFE COUNCIL HRA REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25

	2024-25 £m
Budget Gap in Year as per report by Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services	7.020
Increased income generated by 4% Rental Increase	(5.278)
Revised Budget Gap	1.742
Proposed Reduction in Budget by SNP	
Reduction in Tenant Support Funding	(1.500)
Reduction in HRA Balances	(0.242)
Revised Budget Gap	0.000

Note: £1.500m will be replaced for Tenant Support Funding from decommitted general fund balances."

Roll Call

For the Administration Motion - 38 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Bain-Lockhart, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougal, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For the SNP Amendment - 30 votes

David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alie Bain, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Andy Jackson, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Ross Vettrano, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

Accordingly, the Administration motion was carried.

Leader's Report

1. Fife Babies Memorial

I attended the event to mark the completion of the Fife Babies Memorial Garden in Dunfermline Park in December along with other councillors. The Garden symbolises acknowledgement for the babies whose ashes were not returned to their families as a result of our historic cremation practices.

The Provost and the Chief Executive both spoke at the informal gathering, along with a representative of the families. The Garden provides a quiet place for remembrance, contemplation and reflection.

2. Babcock International

I visited Babcock International in Rosyth along with the Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Strategic Planning.

We were given a presentation on the operations at Rosyth including developments in advanced digital ship building and on progress with the development of the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus.

AGIC is a collaboration between Babcock International, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Strathclyde, Fife College, Fife Council, Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland. It aims to deliver international knowledge, skills and innovation while supporting local employment, benefiting the economy and reinforcing the UK's position as a global leader in large-scale advanced manufacturing.

3. Scottish Cities Week

I attended the second annual Scottish Cities Week event in London in January, along with Leaders of the other 7 local authorities representing Scottish Cities, and the Scottish Government.

The event gave the opportunity to meet with a wide range of investors and with Government agencies with the aim of promoting the 8 Scottish Cities individually and collectively in terms of economic opportunity.

4. Cupar Flooding

I visited Cupar following the serious flooding events at the end of December and attended the meeting organised by the Community Council at which Council officers made a presentation on short and longer terms actions that are proposed to address flooding in this area.

In the short term Council officers will be taking steps to deploy flood pods in the area, and provide greater assurance in terms of keeping grates and gullies clear. The previous flood study will be reviewed and updated as a basis for longer term preventative work. On the basis of discussion at the meeting I have asked officers to consider powers available to the Council as regards 'dredging' of the Eden further downstream and whether this is likely to improve the situation.

5. Climate Fife 2024

The Climate Fife 2024 Strategy and Action Plan has been approved by the Cabinet Committee and a successful launch event was held in the Adam Smith Theatre on 1st March.

6. EDAS Presentation on Community Wealth Building

In February I participated with Council officers in a presentation on Community Wealth Building as part of an online event organised by the Economic Development Association Scotland. This was also attended by the Minister for Community Wealth and Public Finance, Tom Arthur MSP, and provided a useful forum to share experiences and discuss the proposed legislation.

7. Benefits Checker and Energy Efficiency Training

I attended half day training courses on the Fife Benefits Checker and on Energy Efficiency in January. Not only did this give me additional knowledge to help provide assistance to constituents but it allowed me to hear from a wide range of staff about their experiences of using these tools in their varied work situations. I know some other Elected Members have undertaken these courses and I would recommend them to councillors.

I am particularly pleased to see how advanced we are in joining up benefits checks with applications and look forward to these skills being rolled out to many more staff over the course of the coming year.

8. Equal Pay

Following the Cabinet Committee decision last year, the project team to support the Equal Value Assessment is in place and training of the team is underway before going live with the evaluations on those posts in the scope of the Employment Tribunal judgment.

The Council is working with joint TUs and a project proposal has been shared with them. An Independent Adviser has been sourced. Both these issues will be discussed at the next meeting of the Project Governance Board. Employee comms are in hand to help the workforce understand the scope and purpose of the exercise. The appeal (on points of law) is with the EAT and we await confirmation of the date for the hearing.

9. Food Poverty Meeting

I hosted an online event with Fife's foodbanks and other community food providers at the end of January to discuss their current experiences, the ongoing collaboration between the Council and community groups on food poverty and the developing work on food and growing strategies.

10. H100 Project

I attended the most recent briefing on the H100 hydrogen heating pilot project in Methil in January along with other elected Members. At that point the demonstration homes were being set up and around 240 houses had been signed up for the project. Members were able to hear about the progress made and the safety measures in place and also the training that is underway in collaboration with Fife College.

I subsequently met with Mark Wilde the Chief Executive of SGN – Scottish Gas Networks – who are operating the project, to discuss the project and the possibilities of wider collaboration and development with SGN in Fife.

11. Rosyth – Dunkirk Ferry

The possibility of a new ferry route from Rosyth to Dunkirk has been under discussion for some time, though there is no immediate prospect of this being introduced.

Forth Ports and key partners are still in discussions with Scottish Government and Dunkirk Stakeholders to continue to develop a proposition that may stimulate funding opportunities to see the route established. The Council is supportive of such a new ferry route being established and has been working with Douglas Chapman MP to see how it might support this proposition.

12. 1:1 Digital Devices for School Pupils

The Council hosted a visit from Scottish Borders Council to discuss the introduction of 1:1 digital devices for school pupils. Scottish Borders has already implemented this and it was very interesting to hear from their officials and councillor about their approach and their experiences. They provided strong evidence of the benefits of this approach and our officials will now take this away as they develop our own business case for roll out of digital devices.

13. Fife Partnership Board

The Fife Partnership Board met in February and received a presentation from the MOD Engagement and Community Support Officer for Leuchars, providing an insight into the community linkages and future plans for the base.

The Board also considered papers on community Wealth Building, the Life Chances Model for recruitment and the Anchor Programme and Strategic Plan developed for NHS Fife.

This led to a useful discussion on future collaboration across the Partnership.

The Scottish Ambulance Service was also welcomed as a new partner member and their Head of Service for the region gave a very interesting introduction to how the Ambulance Service might contribute to the Partnership.

14. City Region Deals

The Tay Cities Deal Joint Committee held its latest meeting at the Eden Campus in Guardbridge in December followed by a tour of the Campus which has been partly funded through the city region deal.

The most recent meeting of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Joint Committee approved the business case for tranche three of the Fife Industrial Innovation Investment Programme.

15. COSLA Leaders

The February meeting of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities Council Leaders considered a number of public items including the development of a 10 Year Population Health Plan and the development of Digital Strategy with the Scottish Government and received a presentation on the report on councillors remuneration from the Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee. This report will now go to Scottish Government for consideration.

In private session Leaders considered reports including progress on introducing a Cruise Ship Levy, Education Assurance and Minimum Learning Hours, the expansion of Free School Meals to P6/7 qualifying for Scottish Child Payments and the National Care Service.

16. COSLA Special Interest Groups

The Innovating, Developing and Transforming SIG received a very interesting presentation from Glasgow City Council on their long term approach to children and families services that has similarities with Fife's own approach and is demonstrating long term success in this area of work.

The Housing SIG received presentations from Scottish Futures Trust and Scottish Government on use of vacant land for housing and from Homes for Scotland and the National Landlord Association.

The Group agreed its programme of work for the rest of the year which will include consideration of housing supply and demand and a look at models of finance for affordable housing.

**Councillor David Ross
Leader of Fife Council
Fife House,
North Street,
Glenrothes**

12th March 2024

Fife Council

21 March 2024

Item 7 - Question Time

Question 1 from Councillor Sean Dillon

Following a freedom of information request, it has been found that there are currently 77 streets in Fife with streetlights that have outstanding repairs. The first of these was reported in March 2023. Could the Administration update councillors on what progress is being made to resolve this matter and will they commit to putting pressure on Scottish Power to see these repairs resolved as soon as possible?

Question 2 from Councillor Nicola Patrick

On the 4th May 2023 cabinet committee received an update on how services were working together to tackle damp and mould in domestic properties owned by fife council.

When will the service provide an update report to cabinet on the progress made, which will also address: the waiting times for inspections and rectifications, and how many properties have had to be revisited after initial works were undertaken to resolve reoccurring issues/complaints from tenants.

Question 3 from Councillor Sean Dillon

How many dog attacks have Safer Communities responded to over the last 12 months?

Question 4 from Councillor Rosemary Liewald

I am aware that work has taken place in regard to timeframes for Housing Functional Needs Assessments to be carried out. I am also aware that this work is broken down into priority categories.

Can I ask for a breakdown of each category with timeframes for each.

Question 5 from Councillor Rosemary Liewald

- 1) What assessment has the Housing Service made in relation to addressing the energy-inefficient housing ('non traditional/steel framed' homes and those with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of below C)?
- 2) How many council domestic properties fall into the category of being energy-inefficient housing ('non traditional/steel framed' homes and those with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of below C)?
- 3) When will we have a report to Cabinet Committee with a funded programme to address the poor insulation in energy-inefficient housing ('non traditional/steel framed' homes and those with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of below C), including the options of internally insulating these properties?

Question 6 from Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb

To ask the Leader if he will provide an update on the decentralisation agenda given we are almost two years into his governance arrangements.

Question 7 from Councillor Sarah Neal

How many potholes assessed as Grade 2 have been repaired within 5 days in the past six months and how many have not been repaired within 5 days in the past six months?

Question 8 from Councillor Andy Jackson

The council's housing acquisitions policy was adopted in 2020.

When will a revised policy be brought to committee and what input will members have in the development of a revised policy?

Question 9 from Councillor Lesley Backhouse

Question 1

How many Homeless families and individuals have been allocated council or RSL homes in each of the last 5 years.

Question 2

Given we have around 800 single people at risk of homelessness how many more 1 bedroom properties have we built or purchased over the last 3 years?

Question 3

The empty homes policy shows that in the last 3 years 39,41 and 62 properties were brought back into use of which 2,5, 19 were bought through using the SG subsidy of £40k per home. How many of these homes are still empty

Question 4

How many homes purchased using the SG subsidy of £40k have been demolished in each of the last 3 years?

Question 10 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

Warwick close property purchases Leuchars

Since the purchase of seven homes from the MOD in September 2022 some 18+ months ago. These homes are still empty resulting in over £40k loss in rental income with no date in sight for completion of the renovation works.

Can we have an explanation for the delays and confirmation of when these desperately needed family homes will be ready?

Question 11 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

Fife Sports and Leisure Trust

Given the additional funding to FSLT to improve opening hours primarily in North East Fife coming to an end this financial year, can the leader confirm if North East Fife will still have access to these expanded hours?

Fife Local Development Plan Evidence Report

Report by: Pam Ewen, Head of Planning

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To present the Fife Local Development Plan Evidence Report for the Council’s approval as required by statute.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the council:

- (1) notes the report by the Head of Planning agreed by the Cabinet Committee meeting held on 8 February 2024 for referral to Fife Council; and
- (2) approves the Fife Local Development Plan Evidence Report (Appendix 1), as required by statute, for submission to the Scottish Government’s Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) to undertake the Local Development Plan Gate Check.

Resource Implications

Preparation of the Evidence Report is part of Planning Services’ work programme and is prepared within existing staff resources.

On submission of the Evidence Report to the Scottish Government’s Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA), a Gate Check is undertaken. Gate Checks are conducted by the DPEA and costs will be charged to the Council on an hourly charge rate as happens with plan examinations at the end of the plan making process. Planning Services has budgeted £30,000 on basis of three months for the Gate Check. However, as that stage is new and untested, delays or an extended Gate Check will increase cost. Any additional costs will be an additional pressure on Planning Services’ budget in 2024/25.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended¹ (“the Act”), and as supplemented by the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023, requires planning authorities to prepare an Evidence Report which contains sufficient information to enable the planning authority to prepare a local development plan.

¹ Amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

The legislative requirements, including engagement with specified groups of people and key agencies as prescribed together with the Council's views on matters specified in the Act have been met as set out within the Evidence Report's Annexes 1 and 2, respectively. The Act requires the Evidence Report to be approved by full Council before it is formally submitted to the Scottish Ministers for independent assessment at the Gate Check to ensure that there is a sound evidential basis on which to prepare the local development plan.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report concerns data sources and assessment but does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices. An environmental assessment is not applicable for this report because it does not directly impact the environment. An assessment using the Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) is not required as there is no recommended change to policy.

Consultation

All key council services with a role in land use planning and related legal and financial matters and NHS Fife are represented on the Local Development Plan Board and have been involved in discussions on the scope and content of the Evidence Report. Heads of Service have also provided information included in the Evidence Report. Thirteen LDP2 elected member briefings have been issued since 2021 and councillors have been involved in workshops over the past three years to inform the scope of the Evidence Report and as data has been gathered. A workshop for a joint meeting of the Economy, Transportation and Climate Change and Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committees was also held on 8 December 2023. Cabinet Committee considered the Evidence Report at its meeting on 8 February 2024.

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

1.0 Background

- 1.1 A new Local Development Plan will be prepared for Fife to replace the current FIFEplan which was adopted in 2017 and needs to be reviewed. Before preparing the new plan, the Council, as planning authority, must prepare an Evidence Report, the purpose of which is to support the quality and effectiveness of the local development plan. The Evidence Report is assessed at what is known as the Gate Check which will provide an independent assessment of whether the Council as planning authority has sufficient information to prepare a new Local Development Plan. Cabinet Committee agreed the Evidence Report at its meeting on 8 February 2024 and to refer it to full Council for approval as required by statute.
- 1.2 The new Local Development Plan will become the spatial expression of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, *Plan4Fife*. The Evidence Report is the first stage of plan preparation; it is not the stage which sets out where development should and should not go, how Fife's places should change, or local policies to shape that change. The next stage; the Proposed Plan will set out those proposals.
- 1.3 For clarity, the current FIFEplan Local Development Plan (2017) remains as the adopted Plan and, together with National Planning Framework (NPF) 4, is the Development Plan for Fife against which planning applications are determined.

2.0 Discussion

- 2.1 Evidence Reports and Gate Checks are new. No planning authority has yet gone through the Gate Check process and although guidance has been published by Scottish Government, some uncertainty exists. The compliance checks undertaken by Planning Services with Legal and Democratic Services on the Evidence Report confirm that it satisfies the legislative requirements. Community-led information from recent engagement by other Council Services has also been used to identify local initiatives and issues of interest to respective communities. The Cabinet Committee report (Appendix 1) summarised the issues the new plan will address across Fife and at locality level, and the information on which the plan will be based.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The Evidence Reports is the first step in a new style of local development planning. The place-based model adopted for the Fife Evidence Report complements the Council's people and places operating model and will help to better align the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, *Plan4Fife*, when it is reviewed so the local development plan represents the spatial and land use aspects of *Plan4Fife*.
- 3.2 The Evidence Report is not the Local Development Plan; rather, it sets out the information on which the new plan will be founded and explains what the Council needs to plan for. It is considered to provide the necessary evidence to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan which is the next stage in the process.

List of Appendices

- [Fife Local Development Plan 2 Evidence Report](#)
 - Annex 1 - [Meeting legislative requirements](#)
 - Annex 2 - [List of data sources used in the Evidence Report](#)
 - Annex 3 - [Matters required to be included in Evidence Report](#)
 - Annex 4 - [Summary of engagement](#)
 - Annex 5 - [Summary of known areas of agreement and dispute on the Evidence Report](#)
 - Annex 6 - [Review of FIFEplan \(2017\)](#)
 - Annex 7 - [Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods](#)
 - Annex 8 - [Housing Issues Introduction & Legislative Requirements](#)
 - Annex 9 - [Housing Need](#)
 - Annex 10 - [Local Housing Land Requirement](#)
 - Annex 11 - [Local Housing Land Requirement Technical Paper](#)
 - Annex 12 - [Localised Housing Issues](#)
 - Annex 13 - [Waste Management](#)

Background Papers

- Report by the Head of Planning to the Cabinet Committee meeting held on 8 February 2024: Fife Local Development Plan Evidence
- [Minute \(para. 205\) of the Cabinet Committee meeting held on 8 February 2024](#)

Report Author:

Bill Lindsay, Service Manager (Policy & Place)

Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 Ext. 471776 - Email: bill.lindsay@fife.gov.uk

21 March 2024

Agenda Item No. 9

Notice of Motions

Report by: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

In terms of Standing Order No. 10, the attached notice of motions have been submitted.

Recommendation(s)

Council is asked to consider the motions.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Legal & Risk Implications

Not applicable.

Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Lindsay Thomson
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

Tel. 03451 55 55 55 Ext No 442180

Email: lindsay.thomson@fife.gov.uk

Motion 1

Fostering a Culture of Respect and Inclusivity in Local Government

The Council aspires to promote a culture of respect, inclusivity, and accountability, free from bullying, misogyny, and discriminatory behaviours, ensuring that elected office positions are safe for all councillors to express their opinions without fear of harassment or discrimination.

Council notes:

- That despite progress since women's representation in local governance, statistics indicate there is still a significant gender disparity within Scotland's councils, with only 35% of councillors being women in the last election in 2022, and Fife Council comprising 36% women councillors.
- The report from the Local Government Commission highlights a disturbing trend of female councillors opting not to seek re-election due to the toxic culture within council chambers and meetings.
- That structural and cultural issues, as identified by the COSLA Councillors Survey, contribute to this trend, necessitating urgent action to support diverse representation.
- That sexism, double standards, and other forms of discrimination such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism persist within society and local government politics, posing significant barriers to inclusive representation.
- That a toxic culture in the council chamber discourages women, as well as individuals from other marginalised groups, from participating in local government.
- The SLARC recommendation for fair compensation to attract a more diverse range of candidates underscores the need for systemic change to create a safer and more equitable environment in elected office positions.

Council, therefore:

- Reaffirms its commitment to diversity, equality, and fair representation in local government and to upholding standards of behaviour and respect amongst all elected members.
- Calls on the leadership of all regional and national political parties to promote clear and consistent messaging that sexist and discriminatory behaviours are unacceptable, especially amongst elected representatives at whatever level.
- Agrees to engage with relevant organisations to further develop its policies aimed at addressing issues of bullying, misogyny, and discrimination.
- Recommends that the Cross Party Leaders Group considers standards of behaviour and respect as a standing item on its agenda and encourages the development of appropriate training on all forms of discrimination for councillors.

Proposed by Councillor Aude Boubaker-Calder

Seconded by Councillor Jan Wincott

Motion 2

Housing Emergency

Council notes with great concern

- the extreme pressures on housing and homelessness in Fife;
- that despite the approval of a medium term Homelessness Strategy 2024-2027 and the progress made over recent months in reducing void turnaround times, with reprovisioning of temporary accommodation and in increasing the number of properties available for relet, the number of households assessed as homeless and waiting for a tenancy and the number of families with children in temporary accommodation remains worryingly high;
- that like other local authorities across Scotland, Fife faces difficulties in meeting its statutory duties in regard to homelessness;
- pressures on the Housing Revenue Account that required a 5% rent increase;
- that Fife did not receive any of the additional £2m revenue funding for temporary accommodation announced by the Scottish Government prior to December 2023.
- the significant cut of 26% in the national Affordable Housing Programme made by the Scottish Government that will impact on the Council's own new build affordable housing programme, and the lack of additional capital funding as a consequence of the UK Budget.

Council therefore agrees to declare a Housing Emergency and requests the Head of Housing to work with partners to bring forward a Housing Emergency Action Plan to the Cabinet Committee in June, to supplement and accelerate already agreed actions and to address the Housing Emergency in Fife.

Council also calls on the Scottish Government to reverse its decision to cut the affordable housing programme budget by 26%.

Proposed by Cllr Judy Hamilton
Seconded by Cllr James Calder