

Environment & Protective Services Sub-Committee



Due to Scottish Government guidance related to COVID-19, this meeting will be held remotely.

Thursday, 24 June, 2021 - 3.00 p.m.

AGENDA

Page Nos.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – Members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest(s) in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTE** – Minute of Meeting of Environment & Protective Services Sub-Committee of 27 May 2021. 3 - 4
4. **REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRES AND BOOKING SYSTEM** – Report by the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment 5 - 15
5. **ENVIRONMENT, FINANCE & COMMUNITIES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** 16 - 17

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.

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17 June, 2021

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THE FIFE COUNCIL - ENVIRONMENT & PROTECTIVE SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING

27 May, 2021

10.00 a.m. – 10.45 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Ross Vettrains (Convener), David Barratt, Rod Cavanagh, Gavin Ellis, David Graham, Sharon Green-Wilson, Jean Hall-Muir, Judy Hamilton, Andy Heer, Gordon Langlands, Jane Ann Liston (substituting for Jonny Tepp), Derek Noble, Dominic Nolan and Jan Wincott.

ATTENDING: Keith Winter, Executive Director, Enterprise and Environment, Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment, Ross Speirs, Service Manager (Structural Services), Rick Haynes, Lead Consultant, Flooding, Shoreline and Harbours, Enterprise and Environment; and Elizabeth Mair, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

189. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order 7.1.

190. MINUTE

The Sub-Committee considered the minute of meeting of the Environment & Protective Services Committee of 25 March 2021.

Decision

The Sub-Committee agreed to approve the minute.

191. SEVERE FLOODING – AUGUST 2020 UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment providing an update on progress of investigation and mitigation works regarding the August 2020 flood events across Fife and seeking agreement to the proposed list of projects identified for progression in the capital works programme in 2021-23.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted that work continued with the investigation and development of mitigations where appropriate on the collated Priority Flooding List;
- (2) agreed that the projects identified in paras 3.2 and 3.4 of the report be progressed within the flooding capital programme in 2021-23; and
- (3) agreed that a further update report be provided to this Sub-Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2021.

(Councillor Gavin Ellis joined the meeting during consideration of the above item)

192./

192. ENVIRONMENT & PROTECTIVE SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee noted the current Environment & Protective Services Sub- Committee Forward Work Programme, which would be updated as appropriate.

24 June 2021

Agenda Item No. 4

Review of the Operation of the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres and Booking System

Report by: Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This follows a request from the Fife Council Committee of 25th May 2021 to review the operation of the Recycling Centres and Booking System. The report provides a description of the current approach and the role of the booking system and related measures involved in operating the 11 Household Waste Recycling Centres in Fife.

Recommendation(s)

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- 1 Support the continued Covid related measures in place in the operation of the facilities and the resulting benefits to staff, the community and the Council, as a consequence of the booking system operation.
- 2 Endorse the continued operation of the booking system, which have been put in place by Fife Resource Solutions to meet its statutory duty.
- 3 To consider the report and whether any review of the booking system as operated is required looking forward.

Resource Implications

Because of the benefits that are realised as a consequence of the management measures that are in place including and not least from the applied booking system, there are no additional resource implications. Removal of any of the measures, however, will have consequential implications in terms of safety, efficiency or finance, which is estimated to be in the region of between £0.800m to £1.5m per annum. This is based on a potential failure to control a return of trade (commercial) waste and waste from neighbouring authorities as per previous pre-covid experiences.

Legal & Risk Implications

Uncontrolled access to Household Waste Recycling Centres presents a risk to employees and members of the public, as many of the sites have a relatively small footprint, are accessed directly via main roads and it was clear that these could not be opened safely in compliance with national COVID-19 guidance without having control over visitor numbers, new operating procedures and traffic management controls onsite. This also addresses aspects of the operation pre-covid and which on reflection are now deemed as requiring a greater focus.

The current measures ensure compliance with the Council's statutory duty in terms of its Environmental Duty of Care as set out in the Refuse Disposal Amenity Act 1978, the Waste Management Licensing (Scotland) Regulations 2011 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended by the Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012). They also ensure compliance by the Council's contractor, Fife Resource Solutions, which manages the Centres on behalf of the Council, with its statutory duty in terms of the Health & Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to have regard for the health and safety of its employees and the public at large.

The approach taken to operating the Centres also follows the industry best practice guidance produced for the United Kingdom by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) (4)

Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required because this report does not propose a change to existing policies.

Consultation

Finance and Corporate Services have been consulted in preparing this report.

During the development and introduction of the current control measures, consultation was conducted with the Trade Unions, who supported the current arrangements in line with covid protocols and guidance.

Any changes to the agreed measures would require consultation with the Trade Unions.

1.0 Background

Revisions to site operating practice during COVID-19 restrictions.

- 1.1 Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic a number of reports were brought to the sub-committee over the past 3 years regarding concerns relating to the safety and compliance of the operation of the recycling centres. This was in relation to safe operation of the sites and managing commercial waste at the sites. A revised access policy was introduced alongside a number of enhanced safety measures (height barriers, body cameras for staff, automatic number plate recognition etc) to improve management of the sites. Despite these improvements it was apparent that approximately £1m of commercial waste was still being deposited as household waste on site.
- 1.2 The Covid-19 pandemic placed significant pressures across all of Fife Resource Solutions (FRS) services, partly through reduced staff levels following self-isolation guidelines, while also severely reducing the opportunities for external income required to fully subsidise Fife Council activity.
- 1.3 FRS in partnership with the Council, took the decision to close all Recycling Centres in Fife following the announcement by the Prime Minister and the First Minister on 23 March 2020 that every citizen must stay at home (except for very limited purposes). These closures were also in line with Scottish Government (SG) guidance on social distancing and are for the safety of both staff and members of the public.
- 1.4 In preparation for the reopening of sites when permitted by the Scottish Government, FRS compiled a reopening strategy in liaison with Police Scotland, Trade Unions and Fife Council including AT&E Roads & Transportation. The strategy was designed to be flexible in order to adapt to changes in Government Guidance at short notice and enable the service offering to evolve in response to the effects of the virus.

- 1.5 Unlike some other local authorities that operate only 2 or 3 recycling centres, Fife operate 11 of which the majority are quite small in size, and this presented a number of challenges in being able to reopen them safely and efficiently within a restricted environment.
- 1.6 Site-specific plans were drawn up which included, in addition to physical distancing measures and operational procedures, the recognition that further staff safety measures were necessary to ensure that staff well-being was protected and that staff were, as far as practical, safeguarded from abuse, factors that were recognised by the joint Scottish Government and COSLA working group.

2.0 Household Waste Recycling Centre Booking System

Managed reopening with a booking system

- 2.1 Prior to reopening Household Waste Recycling Centres in June 2020, it was apparent that there would likely be overwhelming demand from residents for access to the sites across Scotland and would require further mitigations to ensure the safe reopening. Police Scotland played a key role in working with the Council and the safe opening of the sites in terms of vehicular movements on the road network.
- 2.2 The introduction of a booking system to control demand for site access worked well. Residents were able to pre-book safe access to Household Waste Recycling Centres with minimal on-site waiting time, whilst ensuring staff and the public were suitably protected and COVID-19 industry and site-specific guidance could be strictly adhered to.
- 2.3 By contrast at the time, television, press and social media were reporting public frustration at long queues, incidents of violence and Police-advised closure of sites in local authority areas where sites did not have booking systems and demand overwhelmed the infrastructure of what was now restricted access due to COVID-19 measures.
- 2.4 At the time of writing this report the majority of councils 20 out of 32 Scottish Local Authorities confirming through response to a Scottish Waste Managers Network Survey that a form of booking system was being used and a further 7 councils were considering implementing a system in the near future to control access to their sites particularly in relation to traffic volumes.
- 2.5 The booking system has been an effective tool for FRS in terms of managing the sites in a safe and efficient manner and is seen as a suitable system moving forward once the restrictions are eased.

Booking System Benefits

- 2.6 As well as enabling the safe reopening of sites during a pandemic, the current booking system measures have resulted in additional benefits in relation to everyday health and safety, site operations and finance aspects. These benefits are also applicable post the covid pandemic.
- 2.7 The booking system has eliminated previous on-site and off-site risks associated through the ability to safely manage user demand to match capacity at each site whilst ensuring suitable access is available. This ensured the safe and smooth operation of the sites with no undue queuing of traffic or congestion on site during peak periods.
- 2.8 Maintaining control of the number of vehicles on site affords staff and site users greater safety due to fewer vehicle and internal pedestrian interactions, thereby demonstrating the site operator is actively managing safety by assessing risk and introducing control measures.

- 2.9 Safety is further enhanced by having reduced numbers of vehicles on site as customers are now more likely to have space to park alongside their required skip and not have to carry materials within the site, thereby reducing the risk of slips/trips, strains and injury or accidents from heavy or protruding materials striking persons or other vehicles. Also for the operator there is more opportunity to better resource plan in terms of deployment of plant and equipment due to the controlled use of the sites and knowledge of the type of waste that is to be deposited. This allows FRS to deploy their assets more effectively across the service.
- 2.10 The benefit of the booking system is further highlighted in the health and safety statistics contained within appendix 1, which highlights that in the year since the introduction of the booking system, there has been:
- a 100% reduction in the reported instances of abusive behaviour towards staff.
 - a 70% reduction in lost days to staff absence and
 - a 79% reduction in instances of slips, trips and hazards.
- 2.11 The use of the booking system improves the safe working conditions to further demonstrate compliance with duties under The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations through a willingness to ensure the health, safety and well-being of staff, via reasonable practicable preventative measures.
- 2.12 Trade Unions were consulted during the development and introduction of the Household Waste Recycling Centre booking system and any changes would involve further consultation.

Staff Feedback

- 2.13 Once Fife returns to level zero in terms of the covid restrictions there will be a push on FRS to return all sites to the pre-pandemic opening times.
- 2.14 In addition to a survey of users of the site, a further survey was carried out of FRS staff. The feedback and comments from staff members made it abundantly clear that the booking system has transformed the working environment within the sites. The most overwhelmingly consistent commentary from staff via the feedback forms was:
- Sites no longer become unmanageable and unsafe at peak times and the steady flow of traffic makes operation much more efficient.
 - The level of derogatory comments, abusive and threatening behaviour aimed at staff from unauthorised site users with vans and trailers was significant and a major stressor for staff. The booking system and restrictions on vans & trailers has eradicated this behaviour and staff no longer dread coming to work.
 - The booking system has resulted in substantial improvements to their working environment and they unanimously request that it remains in place.
 - They now have the ability to ensure visitors are depositing materials in the correct containers minimising contamination.

Improvements to customer experience

- 2.15 There is widespread familiarity and acceptance of online and telephone booking systems amongst the public via commonly used services such as click-and-collect shopping, medical appointments and the emergence of food delivery and taxi-like services.
- 2.16 The Household Waste Recycling Centre booking system is an easy-to-use online system. It gives residents the confidence to know that when they have booked a slot for their waste, they will be able to travel to the site, will not have to wait in a queue and have enough time to unload their waste without delay in a safe environment.
- 2.17 With the elimination of peak-time overcrowding, site users are able to approach the skip they require and, with the minimum of carry distance necessary, deposit their waste safely without having to manually carry it between other parked or manoeuvring vehicles.
- 2.18 When a resident makes an online booking a confirmation e-mail is sent providing a reference to the booking that can be used when accessing the users chosen site. A reminder e-mail is also sent 24 hours before the booking slot time. Slots can be booked online at any time of day or night removing the need to wait on phone lines opening or be held in a telephone queue to make a booking
- 2.19 During the booking process the Terms and Conditions of use and any site restrictions on vehicles and waste types are clearly signposted and any mismatching of waste and vehicle types with site acceptance criteria are filtered out. Filtering at the time of booking helps eliminate misunderstandings and avoids customers turning up at sites that are unable to accept either their waste or vehicle type.
- 2.20 Bookings can now also be made by telephone if the resident does not have access to online facilities or if they prefer to speak with a Fife Council Contact Centre representative. To date 125 bookings have been made via telephone call.
- 2.21 The system provides the ability to update residents who have booked slots about unforeseen circumstances such as site closures, e.g., due to adverse weather conditions. This proved invaluable in February 2021, when adverse weather caused site closures and wasted journeys by residents were avoided.
- 2.22 Residents can book a slot at a day and time convenient to them up to 6 days in advance and also including on the day should it be required. The current system controls allow a resident to book up to 3 car slots each week and vans once per week. Additional slots are available to manage exceptional circumstances, e.g. moving home. The booking system allows for one-click cancellation of slots should the user no longer wish to use the facilities.

3.0 Review of Site Operations

- 3.1 A survey of residents visiting Fife's Household Waste Recycling Centres was carried out and ran from the 14th of April 21 to the 12th of May 21 (results are attached in Appendix 2). It is important to FRS to gather feedback and engage with residents using the sites to try to improve the system and the experience whilst on site, while understanding and accepting that we continue to operate under COVID protocols. Over a 4-week period, 3,287 residents completed the survey.

- 3.2 82% found the booking process to book their slot 'very easy' or 'easy' with a further 12% finding it neither easy nor difficult.
- 3.3 Over 93% of respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their visit to the recycling centre from arrival to departure. A further 4% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 3.4 70% of respondents found booking their own slot reduced the time they had to wait when arriving at the site and their journey through the site. This highlights the reduction in queuing, both to access the sites, and within the sites, resulting in less vehicle idling and easier access to skips ensuring appropriate materials are placed into the correct skips to maximise recycling.
- 3.5 Over 55% of residents surveyed found that having a pre-booked slot encouraged them to give more thought to how they managed their household waste and recyclables. Giving more thought to managing household waste and recyclables can be anything from improving the use of household recycling bins, encouraging re-use, re-purposing as well as cutting down on the number of journeys made to sites. These actions support both the Fife Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan 2020-2030 and the Zero Waste Fife – Resource Strategy and Action Plan.
- 3.6 54% of respondents prefer the booking system with their own time slot to the previous system where booking was not required. This also came across in the response to the final question where suggestions or comments were invited. 25% of those going on to provide text answers stated their support for the system as opposed to 20% stating they did not support it.
- 3.7 One of the common themes was provision of more slots or additional opening days which was addressed by opening Dalgety Bay & Kirkcaldy an additional day from week commencing the 31st of May and increasing overall slots by 25% across sites from the 20th of May. There were suggestions to improve the online booking system which will be reviewed and implemented to make the booking process easier. A common positive was how helpful staff were and how clean and tidy the sites were.
- 3.8 The above changes have resulted in the current capacity across all 11 sites now being 908,440 available slots per year.
- 3.9 As COVID-19 related considerations are further relaxed, national tier and guidance permitting, the number of available slots will be increased to maximise the throughput of the sites whilst still retaining the control and spacing required to reduce the risks noted above from on and off-site traffic management. This will eventually see in excess of 1,100,000 slots available per year across the sites.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 Over the last 16 months the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant and unforeseen changes to the delivery of services throughout Fife. The operation of the household waste recycling centres has been no different in terms of the challenges faced, yet through continued dialogue between Fife Council, FRS and the trade unions, the sites have managed to operate safely, despite numerous challenges.
- 4.2 The mitigation measures previously applied, including the more recently introduced booking system put in place since June the 1st, has continued, and will continue to evolve, to ensure all staff and site users remain safe during the pandemic conditions and restrictions.

- 4.3 Once Fife Council returns to post pandemic service delivery conditions there will be an expectation that sites will reopen to their original agreed schedules. This will take into account the experience gained from the current operating arrangements as well as the measures that have been adopted pre-covid to ensure the sites continue to operate to the same high standards that are currently present.
- 4.4 The booking system, whilst not introduced to deliver savings, has resulted in far greater control of waste streams that are processed through the centres. The current financial benefit from the system is estimated at being between £0.8m and £1.5 m.

List of Appendices

1. Health and Safety Statistics
2. Residents Survey Results

Background Papers

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

- (1) Joint Scottish Government and COSLA guidance: Coronavirus (COVID-19): reopening and managing household waste recycling centres

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-reopening-and-managing-household-waste-recycling-centres/pages/waste-service-priorities-annex-a/>

- (2) Fife Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan 2020-2030
- (3) Zero Waste Fife – Resource Strategy & Action Plan

- (4) WRAP – Household Waste Recycling Centres Guide:

<https://wrap.org.uk/resources/guide/household-waste-recycling-centres-hwrccs-guide>






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	Pre-Booking System	Since Booking System
Abusive Behaviour towards staff	Staff subject to frequent abusive behaviour from suspected traders almost on a daily basis. A log of serious incidents including assaults, shows there were 6 serious incidents involving suspected traders in 2018, 2 of which required police intervention. In 2019 there were 13 serious incidents logged, 4 of which required police intervention	No serious incidents logged. 100% reduction
Reported Slips, Trips, Falls & Property Damage	Average of 19 reported incidents per year	Average of 4 per year. 79% reduction
Staff Absence	01.06.19 – 31.05.20; 31 Absences by 23 employees and working days lost totalled 433	01.06.20 – 01.06.21; 13 absences by 12 employees and working days lost totalled 136. 70% reduction
Staff Survey	Staff found it very difficult to manage sites and the volume of waste being deposited at peak times. The requirement to challenge suspected traders to tackle abuse resulted in elevated stress levels and high staff turnover	100% of staff feel sites are a safer environment and advise and that the steady flow of visitors results in sites being much more manageable. Staff find role much less stressful and state that booking system has resolved the issue of daily abuse of the sites by commercial users and subsequent abusive behaviour



Survey results final 12 May 2021

Household Waste Recycling Centre Booking System



1. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very difficult, 5 being very easy) how did you find the booking process for your slot at the recycling centre?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1. Very difficult		1.43%	47
2. Difficult		4.90%	161
3. Neither easy nor difficult		11.74%	386
4. Easy		23.94%	787
5. Very easy		58.00%	1907
		answered	3288
		skipped	0

2. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very dissatisfied, 5 being very satisfied) how did you find your visit to the recycling centre from arrival to departure?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1. Very dissatisfied		1.70%	56
2. Dissatisfied		1.09%	36
3. Neutral		4.05%	133
4. Satisfied		17.67%	581
5. Very satisfied		75.49%	2482
		answered	3288
		skipped	0



3. Has booking your own slot to visit the recycling centre reduced the time you have had to wait when you arrived at the site and your journey through the site?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		69.98%	2301
No		30.02%	987
		answered	3288
		skipped	0

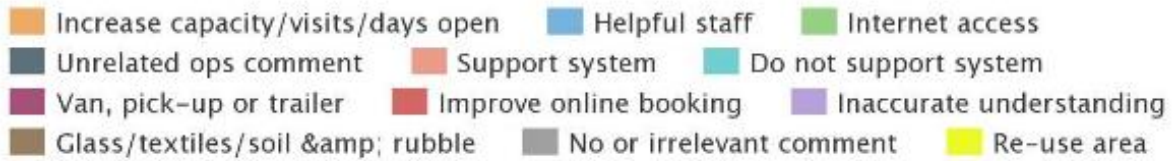
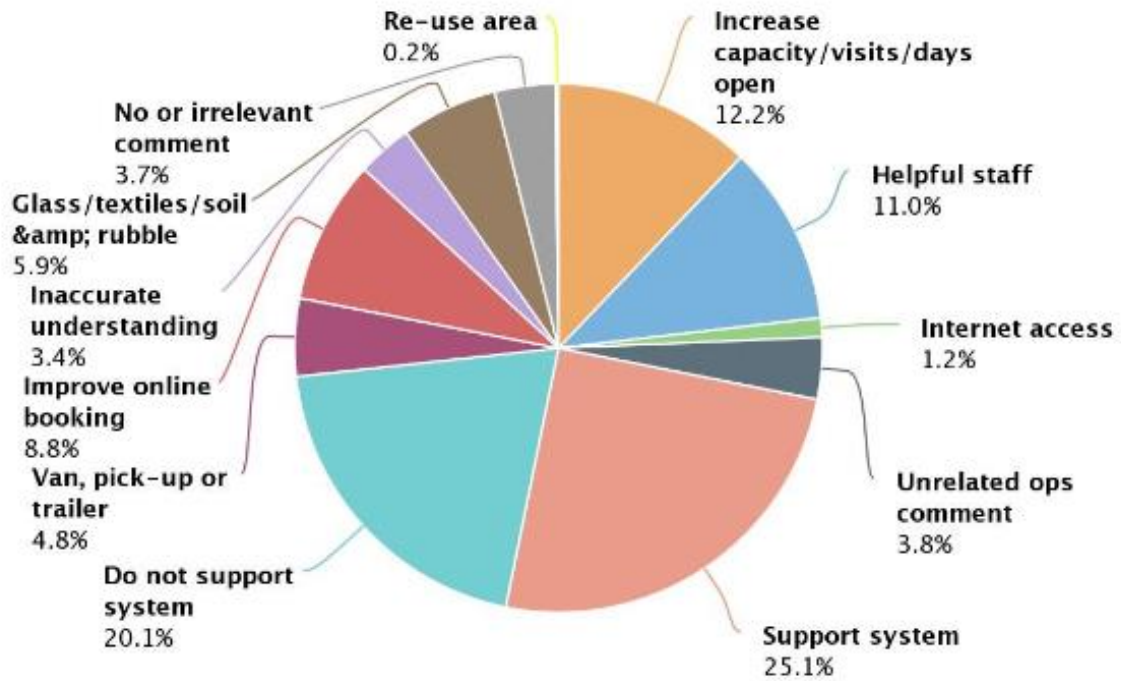
4. Does having to pre-book your visit encourage you to give more thought to how you manage your household waste and recyclable items?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		55.38%	1821
No		44.62%	1467
		answered	3288
		skipped	0

5. Do you prefer the current booking system with your own time slot to the previous system when booking was not required?

		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		53.68%	1765
No		46.32%	1523
		answered	3288
		skipped	0

User Comments



Agenda Item No.5

Environment & Protective Services Sub-Committee

Forward Work Programme as of 16/06/2021 1/2

Environment & Protective Services Committee of 2 September 2021			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Illegal Puppy Farming	Assets, Transportation and Environment	Nigel Kerr	
Radiation at Dalgety Bay	Enterprise and Environment	Nigel Kerr	
Fife's Air Quality Strategy 2021-25 & Amendments to Air Quality Management Areas	Economy, Planning and Employability	Kenny Bisset	
Annual Performance Report (Protective Services, PSOS & Waste Operations) Inc. complaints	Enterprise and Environment	Nigel Kerr	
2021/22 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn	Finance and Corporate Services	Ashleigh Allan, Barry Collie	
2021/22 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn	Finance and Corporate Services	Ashleigh Allan, Barry Collie	
Flooding Update	Assets, Transportation and Environment	Ross Speirs, Rick Haynes	
Presentation on Radiation at Dalgety Bay			
SFRS Annual Report	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service		
SFRS Draft Local Plan	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service		

Environment & Protective Services Committee of 18 November 2021			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Scotland's Proposed Deposit Return Scheme (Including Recycling Points Review)	Enterprise and Environment	Ross Spalding	
Environmental Vandalism Strategy	Housing Services, Environment & Building Operations, Protective Services	Mark Mccall	
Mossmorran & Braefoot Bay Community and Safety Committee - Updated and Revised Governance Documents	Enterprise and Environment	Nigel Kerr	
Mossmorran & Braefoot Bay Community and Safety Committee - Annual Report	Enterprise and Environment	Nigel Kerr	

Agenda Item No.5

Environment & Protective Services Sub-Committee

Forward Work Programme as of 16/06/2021 2/2

Environment & Protective Services Committee of 18 November 2021			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Public Bodies (Climate Change) Duties Reporting 2020-21 (Inc. Carbon Management Plan and Climate Fife Report)		Ross Spalding	
2021/22 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn	Finance and Corporate Services	Ashleigh Allan, Barry Collie	
2021/22 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn	Finance and Corporate Services	Ashleigh Allan, Barry Collie	

Environment & Protective Services Committee of 10 February 2022			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Private Garden Care Scheme Update	Assets, Transportation and Environment	John Rodigan	
2021/22 Capital Monitoring Projected Outturn	Finance and Corporate Services	Ashleigh Allan, Barry Collie	
2021/22 Revenue Monitoring Projected Outturn	Finance and Corporate Services	Ashleigh Allan, Barry Collie	
SFRS 6 Monthly Report	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service		

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Decomissioning Submarines	Enterprise and Environment	Nigel Kerr	
Fife Council Biodiversity Duty Report 2018-2020	Enterprise and Environment	Johanna Willi	3-yearly report, last reported 3/12/20. Next due 2023.