

People and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Committee Room 2, 5th Floor, Fife House, Glenrothes

Thursday, 8 June, 2023 - 10.00 am



AGENDA

	<u>Page Nos.</u>
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct 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 People & Communities Scrutiny Committee of 23 March, 2023.	4 – 8
4. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE LOCAL PLAN 12 MONTHS PERFORMANCE REPORT – Report by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	9 – 28
5. FIFE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE – Report by the Head of Housing Services	29 – 66
6. VOIDS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT – Report by the Head of Housing Services	67 – 74
7. TENANT LED SCRUTINY INTO SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF THE HOME – Report by the Head of Housing Services	75 – 108
8. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OUTCOMES PROGRESS 2021-2023 – Report by the Head of Communities and Corporate Development	109 - 132
9. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – Report by the Executive Director, Finance & Corporate Services	133 – 136

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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Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Finance and Corporate Services

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1 June, 2023

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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.

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
BLENDED MEETING**

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

23rd March, 2023

10.00 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Eugene Clarke (Convener), Blair Allan, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Alex Campbell, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougall, Lynn Mowatt, Bailey-Lee Robb, Sam Steele, Ann Verner, Kathleen Leslie (substitute for Darren Watt) and Jan Wincott.

ATTENDING: Michael Enston, Executive Director - Communities; Kathy Henwood, Head of Children & Families & Criminal Justice; Alan Small, Independent Adult Protection Committee Chair; Audrey Valente, Chief Finance Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership; Diarmuid Cotter, Head of Customer and Online Services, Customer Service Improvement; Ashleigh Allan, Finance Business Partner, Helen Guthrie, Accountant, Lesley Kenworthy, Finance Business Partner, Alison Binnie, Finance Business Partner, Finance and Corporate Services and Michelle Hyslop, Committee Officer, Committee Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Chief Superintendent Derek McEwan, Police Scotland.

APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Allan Knox.

Prior to the start of business, the Convener intimated the intention to vary the sequence of items from that on the agenda, to take item 13 (para 50) directly after item 5 (para 49) due to the presenting officer requiring to attend urgent business.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

47. MINUTE

The Committee considered the minute of the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting of 19th January, 2023.

Decision

The Committee approved the minute.

48. POLICE SCOTLAND LOCAL POLICING PLAN - ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland which provided members with an oversight of the proposed local policing plan.

Decision/

Decision

The Committee endorsed the draft local policing plan.

49. CUSTOMER CONTACT MANAGEMENT

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Customer and Online Services, which outlined the strategy and actions being taken to enable delivery of the Council's ambition for integrated contact management, with a single view of customer experience.

Decision

The Committee: -

- (1) reviewed the strategy and overall ambitions; and
- (2) considered the implementation of a holistic approach to be taken for online, telephone and face to face services.

50. ADULT PROTECTION ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Independent Adult Protection Committee Chair, updating members on the biennial report and work of the Adult Support and Protection Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the report.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 a.m. and reconvened at 11.45 a.m.

Councillor Jan Wincott temporarily left the meeting during consideration of the following item and Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb left the meeting at this stage.

51. 2022-23 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUTTURN – COMMUNITIES

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director of Communities, updating members on the projected outturn position for the 2022/23 financial year for the areas in scope of the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to Communities and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

Decision

The Committee noted the current financial performance and activity for the 2022/23 Revenue Monitoring as detailed in the report.

52. 2022-23 CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – COMMUNITIES

The Committee considered a joint report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services and the Executive Director of Communities, updating members on the Capital Investment Plan and projected financial outturn position for the 2022/23 financial year.

Decision

Decision

The Committee noted the current performance and activity for the 2022/23 Capital Monitoring as detailed in the report.

53. 2022-23 REVENUE BUDGET & CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES & CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director of Education and Children Services and the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, updating members on the forecasted financial position for the 2022/23 financial year for the areas in scope of the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services.

Decision

The Committee noted: -

- (1) the current financial performance and activity for both revenue budget and capital plan as detailed in the report; and
- (2) the projected outturn position and relevant areas of projected over and under spend within the Service.

Councillor Alistair Cameron left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

54. 2022-23 REVENUE BUDGET PROJECTED OUT-TURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

The Committee considered a joint report by the Director of Health and Social Care and the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, updating members on the 2022/23 projected outturn for the Fife Council Social Care Services for Adults and Older People.

Decision

The Committee noted the current financial performance and activity as detailed in the report.

55. 2022-23 CAPITAL PLAN PROJECTED OUTTURN – HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

The Committee considered a joint report by the Director of Health and Social Care and the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, updating members on the Health and Social Care Capital Investment Plan and projected outturn for the 2022/23 financial year.

Decision

The Committee noted the current performance and activity across the 2022/23 Financial Monitoring as detailed in the report.

Councillor Jan Wincott rejoined the meeting at this stage.

56./

56. FIFE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, updating members on the work of the Fife Corporate Parenting Board (FCPB) and developments planned to improve the Corporate Parenting agenda across Fife.

Decision

The Committee noted: -

- (1) the intention of the Corporate Parenting Board to ensure Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) in Fife were supported, with the best offer from their 'corporate parents' to reach their full potential;
- (2) the progress made within the last 6 months, informing the strategic plan and developing narrative of expectation across all 'corporate parents' in Fife; and
- (3) this was the second of the agreed 6 monthly update/analysis reports to be considered by the relevant Committee.

57. CHIEF SOCIAL WORK ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Social Work Officer, acknowledging that the Education and Children Services Committee agreed that an annual report on the role of the Chief Social Work Officer would be presented at the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the report.

58. PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, asking members to consider the future workplan for the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The Committee: -

- (1) noted the content of the forward work programme for the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee;
- (2) acknowledged that Councillor Goodall asked officers to consider allocating the Rockgelly report to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (3) agreed that a report on housing services would be brought to a future Committee to look at voids and its impact on housing allocations; and
- (4)/

2023 PCS 25

- (4) agreed that a report would be brought to a future meeting to look at the housing functional needs assessments and the impact this has on service delivery, and explore any work being done to reduce the backlog on housing services.
-

8 June 2023

Agenda Item No. 4

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Local Plan 12 Months Performance Report

Report by: Mark Bryce - Local Senior Officer - Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report provides the Committee with incident information for the period 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023. The incident information enables the Committee to scrutinise the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Fife - Local Senior Officer (LSO) Area - against its key performance indicators (KPIs)

Recommendation(s)

The committee is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the progress across a range of KPI's within this report.

Resource Implications

Not applicable

Legal & Risk Implications

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 provides the statutory basis for fire reform, including the responsibility to:

- Put in place statutory planning and reporting requirements including providing facilities for consultation;
- Make new arrangements for strengthening local engagement and partnership working, including a new statutory role in the LSO and development of local fire and rescue plans linked to community planning, along with clear powers for local authorities in relation to the provision of fire and rescue services in their area.

Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment checklist is not required as this report does not have any immediate implications for service delivery and policy.

Consultation

This document is circulated amongst SFRS Fife LSO managers to enable areas of high incidence to be scrutinised for reduction strategies.



ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

April 2022 – March 2023

Covering the activities and performance in support of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Fife 2021



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**
Working together for a safer Scotland

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**

ABOUT THE STATISTICS IN THIS REPORT

The activity totals and other statistics quoted in this report are provisional in nature and subject to change because of ongoing quality assurance and review.

Because all statistics quoted are provisional there may be differences in the period totals quoted in our reports after original publication which result from revisions or additions to the data on our systems.

From 2015-16 onwards responsibility for the publication of end-year statistical data transferred from the Scottish Government to the SFRS. This change of responsibility does not change the status of the figures quoted in this and other SFRS reports reported to the Committee.

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DEFINITIONS

Accidental Dwelling Fire

Building occupied by households, excluding hotels, hostels and residential institutions. In 2000, the definition of a dwelling was widened to include any non-permanent structure used solely as a dwelling, such as caravans, houseboats etc. Caravans, boats etc. not used as a permanent dwelling are shown according to the type of property. Accidental includes fires where the cause was not known or unspecified.

Fire Fatality

A person whose death is attributed to a fire is counted as a fatality even if the death occurred weeks or months later.

Fire Casualty

Non-fatal casualties consist of persons requiring medical treatment including first aid given at the scene of the fire, but not those sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor for a check-up or observation (whether or not they actually do). People sent to hospital or advised to see a doctor as a precaution, having no obvious injury are recorded as precautionary 'check-ups'.

Deliberate Fire

Includes fires where deliberate ignition is merely suspected, and recorded by the FRS as "doubtful".

Non-Domestic Fires

These are fires identified as deliberate other building fires or accidental other building fires.

False Alarms

Where the FRS attends a location believing there to be a fire incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal

Where the FRS attends a non-domestic location believing there to be a fire incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.

Primary Fires:

- Buildings (including mobile homes) fit for occupation (i.e. not wholly derelict) and those under construction.
- Caravans, trailers etc.
- Vehicles and other methods of transport (not derelict unless associated with business e.g. scrap metal).
- Outdoor storage (including materials for recycling), plant and machinery.
- Agricultural and forestry premises and property.
- Other outdoor structures including post-boxes, tunnels, bridges, etc.

Secondary Fires

- Single derelict buildings.
- Grassland etc., including heath, hedges, railway embankments and single trees.
- Intentional straw or stubble burning.
- Outdoor structures, including: lamp-posts, traffic signs and other road furniture, private outdoor furniture, playground furniture, scaffolding, signs and hoarding etc.
- Refuse and refuse containers.
- Derelict vehicles (a vehicle without a registered keeper).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This annual performance report for the period April 1st 2022 to March 31st 2023 inclusive provides comparative data across the previous three years for the same period. The KPI's detailed below are drawn from the SFRS Fife Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2021 priorities and are shown in bold text;

- **Domestic Fire Safety**

Continuously monitor the number of accidental dwelling fires

Continuously monitor the severity and cause of accidental dwelling fires

Continuously monitor the number and severity of fire related injuries

- **Deliberate Fire Setting**

Monitor the number, type and cause of deliberate fire setting incidents in Fife

- **Built Environment**

Monitor the number and severity of fire related incidents in our relevant premises

- **Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals**

Monitor and challenge each Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS) incident across Fife

- **Transport and Environment**

Monitor the amount of water related incidents

Monitor the frequency of attendances at Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs), as well as the number and severity of injuries. These will be monitored alongside Police Scotland RTC incidence information

2.0 PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

2.1 The table below provides an annual summary of activity 2022-2023 compared with 2021-2022

It aims to provide – at a glance – our direction of travel during the current reporting period.

<p>Accident Dwelling Fires</p>  <p>2022/2023: 180 2021/2022: 212</p>	<p>ADF Fatal Casualties</p>  <p>2022/2023: 2 2021/2022: 2</p>	<p>ADF Non-Fatal Casualties</p>  <p>2022/2023: 17 2021/2022: 33</p>
<p>Deliberate Primary Fires</p>  <p>2022/2023: 192 2021/2022: 173</p>	<p>Deliberate Secondary Fires</p>  <p>2022/2023: 961 2021/2022: 891</p>	<p>Non-domestic Building Fires</p>  <p>2022/2023: 130 2021/2022: 104</p>
<p>Fatal Casualties in Non-Domestic Building Fires</p>  <p>2022/2023: 0 2021/2022: 0</p>	<p>Non-Fatal Casualties in Non-Domestic Building Fires</p>  <p>2022/2023: 0 2021/2022: 2</p>	<p>Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals</p>  <p>2022/2023: 1,772 2021/2022: 1,631</p>
<p>Road Traffic Collision (RTC) Incidents</p>  <p>2022/2023: 134 2021/2022: 145</p>	<p>Fatal RTC Casualties</p>  <p>2022/2023: 5 2021/2022: 0</p>	<p>Non-Fatal RTC Casualties</p>  <p>2022/2023: 66 2021/2022: 115</p>

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

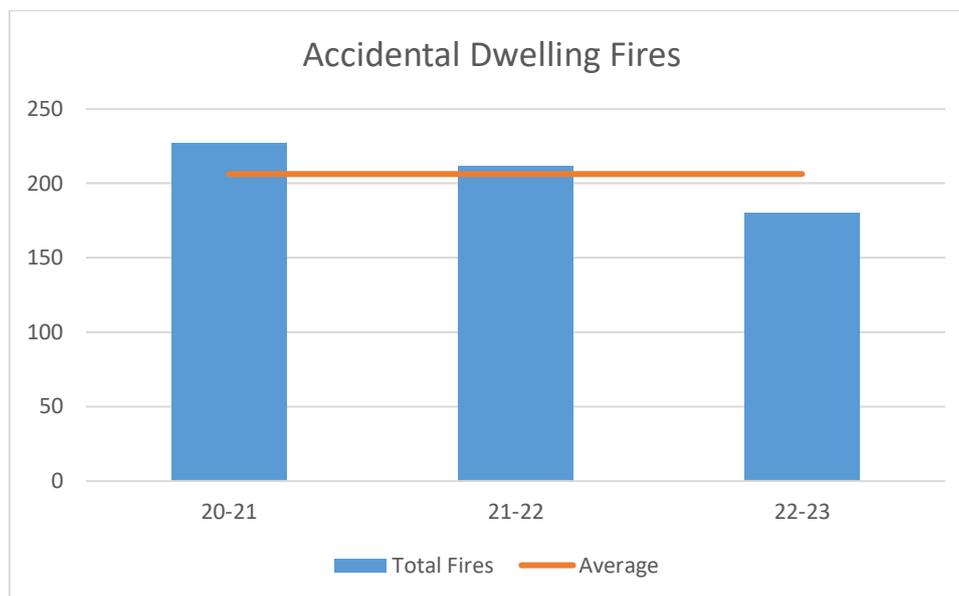
Of the indicators, the following performance should be noted for the annual period April 1st 2022 to March 31st 2023 inclusive comparing data across the previous three years for the same period;

- The number of **Accidental Dwelling Fires*** has seen a 15% decrease from the same period the previous year, this is a 10% reduction from the previous three-year average.
- There were 2 **Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatal Casualties** during this period. The number of **Accidental Dwelling Fires Non-Fatal Casualties*** was 17. This is a 29% reduction from the previous three-year average.
- The number of **Deliberate Primary Fires** during this period one was 192. This is an 8% increase in the three-year average and a 11% increase compared to the same period last year.
- The number of **Deliberate Secondary Fires*** during this period was 961. This is a 7% increase in the three-year average and a 8% increase compared to the same period last year.
- The number of **Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) caused by automatic fire alarms (AFAs) in non-domestic buildings** during this period was 1772. This is an 11% increase in the three-year average and a 8% increase for the same period the previous year.
- The number of **Road Traffic Collisions*** during this period was 134. This is an 8% reduction from the same period 2022, this is a 9% reduction in the three-year average.
- The number of **Fatal RTC Casualties** during this period was 5, the three-year average is 4. The number of **Non-Fatal RTC Casualties*** was 66. This is a reduction of 43% compared to the same period last year and below the three-year average.

*Further detail around this is captured within Sections 3 and 4

3.0 Domestic Fire Safety

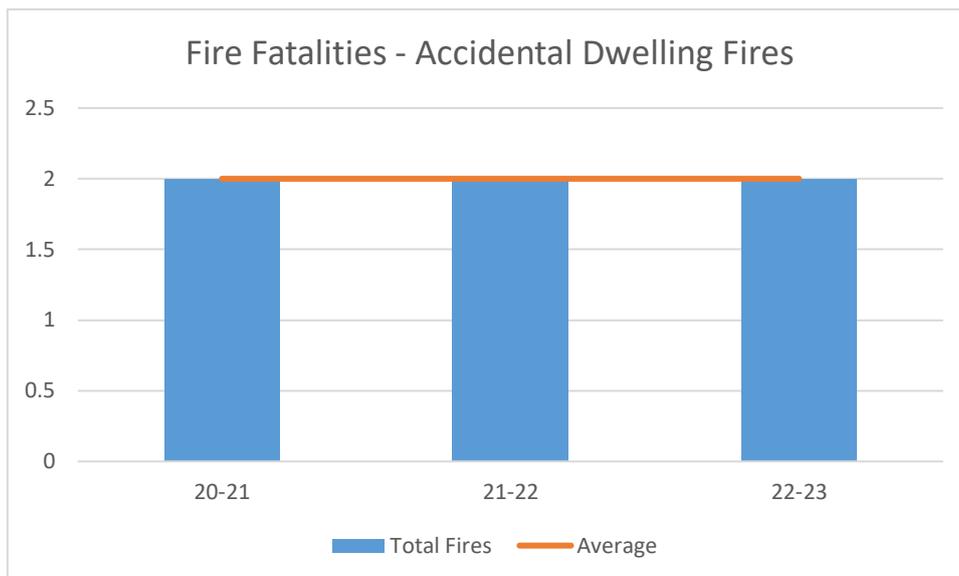
- 3.1 Accidental Dwelling Fires have decreased by ten incidents when compared to the previous year figures.



Graph 3.1 Accidental Dwelling Fires: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

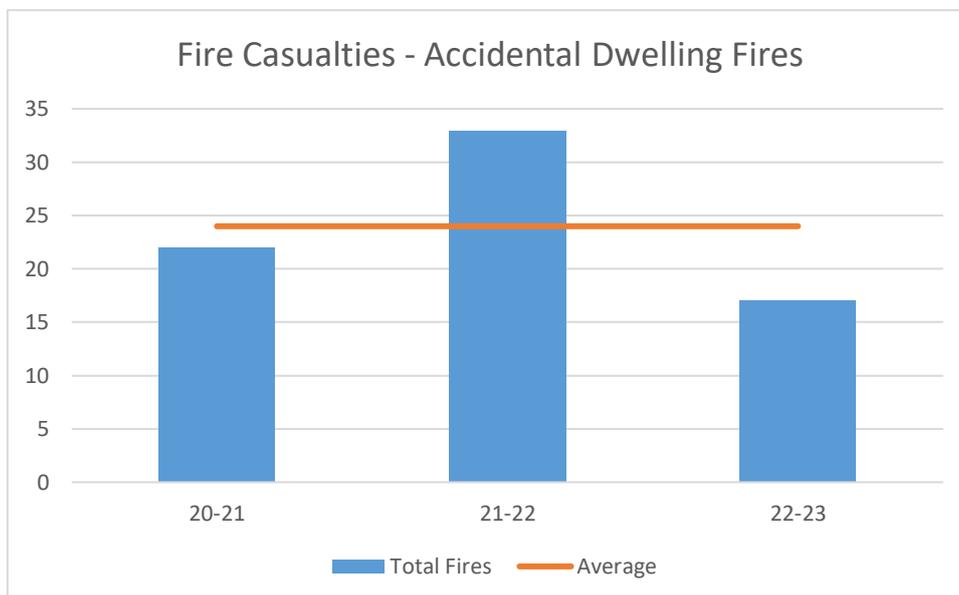
- 3.2 This reporting period has seen a 10% reduction in Accidental Dwelling Fires from the previous three-year average of 206. Fire casualties have reduced from 33 to 17.
- 3.3 The vast majority of Accidental Dwelling Fires were caused within the kitchen by cooking, with 72% being restricted to either no fire damage or limited to the item first ignited.
- 3.4 It is pleasing to note that 70% of those addresses had a detection system and that 65% of those operated and raised the alarm (on a number of occasions there were insufficient products of combustion to activate alarm, fire discovered by person.)
- 3.5 67% of the incidents were resolved either without SFRS intervention, or by removal. 28% required the use of a Hose Reel Jet.
- 3.6 The information above describes a continued trend of reduction in severity. This can be attributed to the high number of detection systems being fitted by SFRS and partners, which give an early warning of fire.

3.7 Fire Fatalities – Accidental Dwelling Fires



Graph 3.7 Accidental Dwelling Fire Fatal Casualties: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

3.8 Fire Casualties – Accidental Dwelling Fires



Graph 3.8 Accidental Dwelling Fire Casualties: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

3.9 Tragically there were two fire fatalities recorded for the reporting period. These were males aged between 20 and 29 and 30 and 39, an alarm was present and it operated.

3.10 Non-fatal fire casualties have reduced by 16 this period compared to 2021 to 2022.

3.11 Of the non-fatal casualties recorded, 11 had to be transferred to hospital for treatment. 11 incidents involved properties with no detection systems. 35% of the incidents resulted in no damage to the building, with six incidents affecting an area contained to the room of origin.

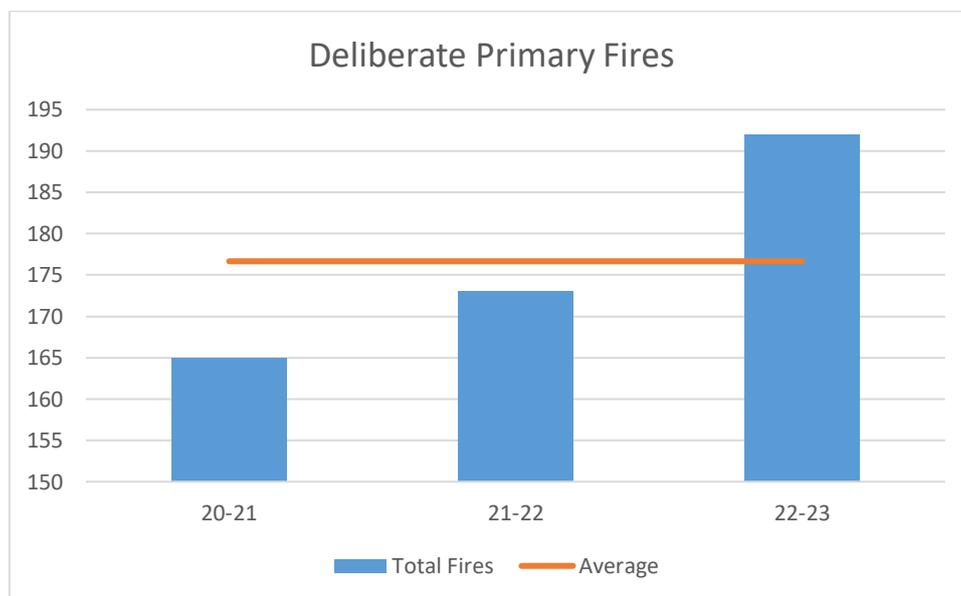
3.12 Domestic Fire Reduction Strategy

Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) play a vital part in our strategy to reduce the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires. This involves a comprehensive assessment, carried out by a trained assessor, which examines the levels of fire risk within the home. It provides a means to mitigate the risk through the provision of guidance, advice and, if required, the installation of long life battery operated smoke and heat alarm(s).

HFSV performance is no longer based on the number visits achieved within a year. Performance is now targeted on how many HFSV referrals remain outstanding within SFRS databases. Referrals are made from house occupants and partner agencies daily therefore this number constantly fluctuates.

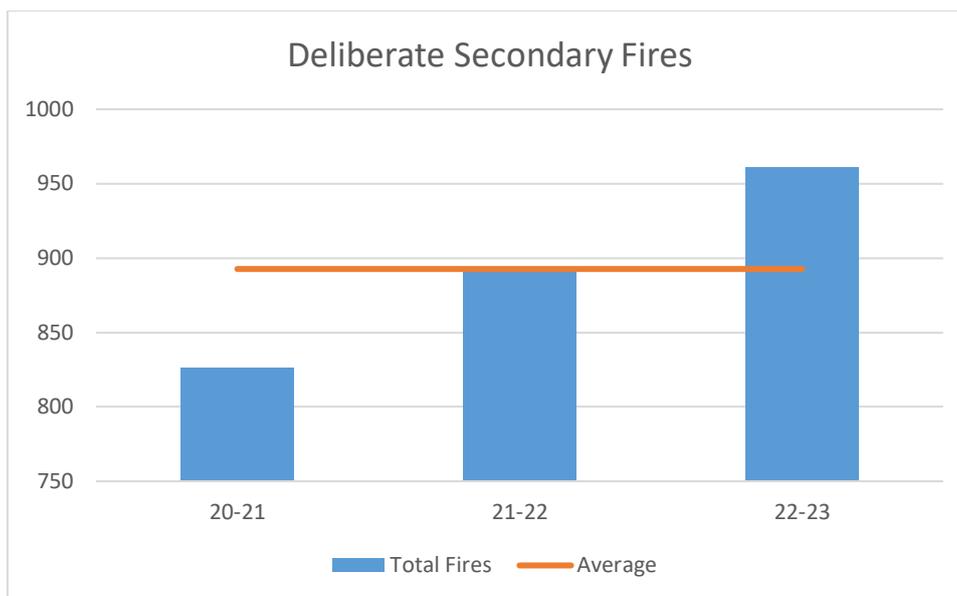
4.0 Deliberate Fire Setting

4.1 Deliberate Primary Fires



Graph 4.1 Deliberate Primary Fires: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

4.2 Deliberate Secondary Fires



Graph 4.2 Deliberate Secondary Fires: 1st April – 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

4.1 Deliberate Secondary Fires

4.2 Deliberate fires can be broken down into two categories, primary and secondary. Primary fires generally involve property and include buildings, caravans, motor vehicles and plant and machinery. Secondary fires are often minor and include the burning of rubbish, grass and derelict properties.

4.3 Graph 4.2 above shows that Secondary Deliberate fires have increased by 7% from the same period last year.

4.4 Deliberate Fire Reduction Strategy

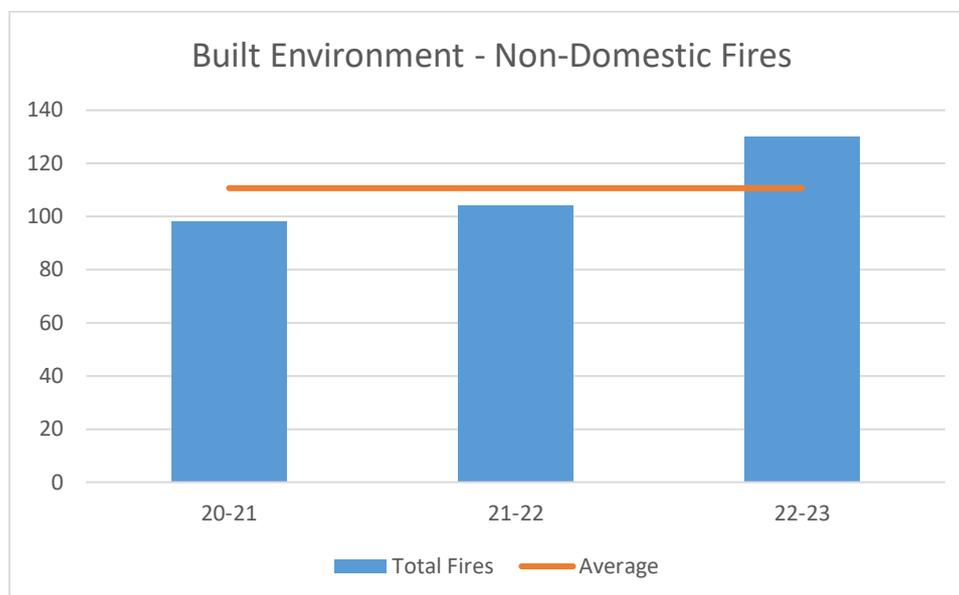
We continue to target schools in high activity areas to deliver talks regarding the dangers and consequences of deliberate fire setting. These talks take place normally in April and October, which are the peak periods of activity.

We will continue to work with our Police and Local Authority partners to identify deliberate fire setting incidents early to ensure that solutions are implemented to prevent further incidents.

We will also liaise with premises occupiers, particularly in town centres, to give advice on refuse storage and security which can be a cause of deliberate fires.

5.0 Built Environment

5.1 Built Environment – Non-Domestic Fires



Graph 5.1 Built Environment Non - Domestic Fires: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

5.2 The table above shows that Non-Domestic Fires had previously shown a modest but consistent increase over the previous three years across Fife.

5.3 There has been one fatality resulting from incidents within Built Environment Non-Domestic Fires for this period.

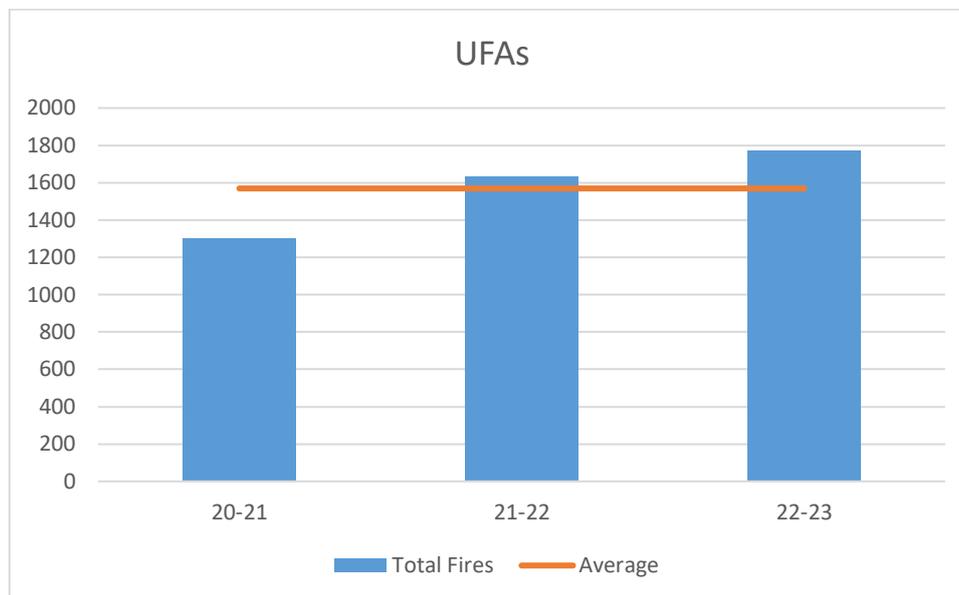
5.4 Built Environment Fire Reduction Strategy

We continue to deliver a programme of fire safety audits in relevant premises - as detailed within section 78 of the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 - identified as high risk on an ongoing basis. We also complete thematic audit programmes where patterns emerge of incidents in a particular risk group.

As well as the audit programmes described above, we also deliver 'post fire audits' which take place as soon as possible after a fire has occurred in premises. The purpose of these audits is to deliver further fire safety advice to the premises occupier, and to identify any issues which could be used to inform other similar premises types in order to prevent further incidents of a similar nature.

6.0 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals

6.1 An Unwanted Fire Alarm Signal (UFAS) can be defined as ‘any alarm activation which is not the result of a fire or a test’. UFAS incidents have fluctuated in Fife over the three-year period. The table and graph below details the incident numbers over three years.



Graph 6.1 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

6.2 This period has seen a 11% increase from the three-year average.

6.3 Reduction in Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Strategy

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) Reduction Strategies continue to be managed and monitored by an ‘UFAS Champion’ who contacts premises occupiers after each UFAS incident, to discuss the activation, as well as strategies to reduce or eliminate. This strategy, along with a number of others had seen the numbers of UFAS decrease significantly for the first time in a considerable period. The UFAS Champion will continue to engage robustly with Fife Council Education and NHS in order to address this recent spike and drive these types of incidence down.

7.0 Transport and Environment

7.1 These will be monitored alongside Police Scotland RTC incidence information

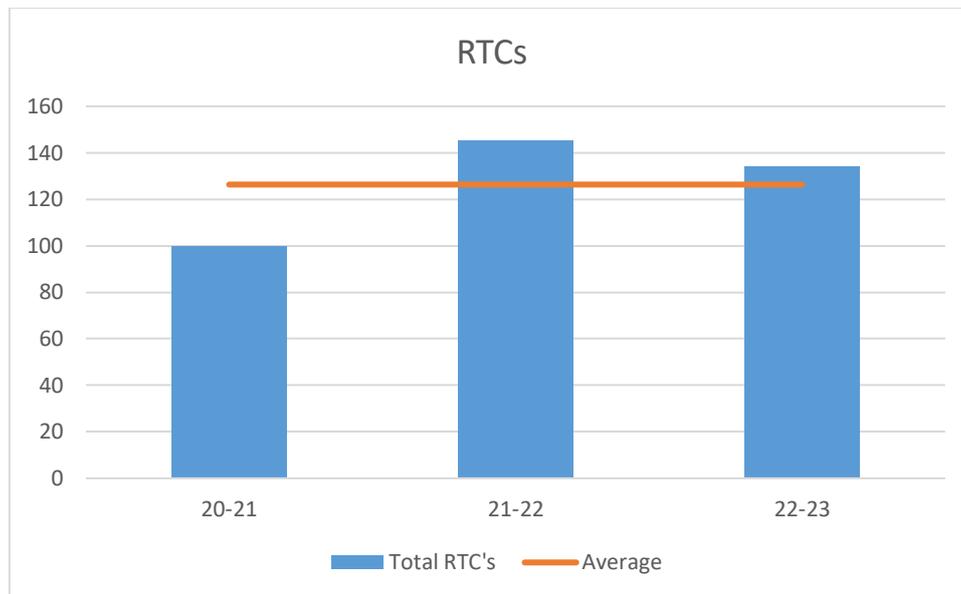
7.2 Water Related Incidents

Water related incidents caused by environmental factors are thankfully rare. 153 flooding incidents were attended during this period. 10% related to pumping out following localised pluvial flooding.

There were 7 reported incidents which required trained SFRS Water Rescue personnel to enter waterways to perform rescues.

7.3 Road Traffic Collisions

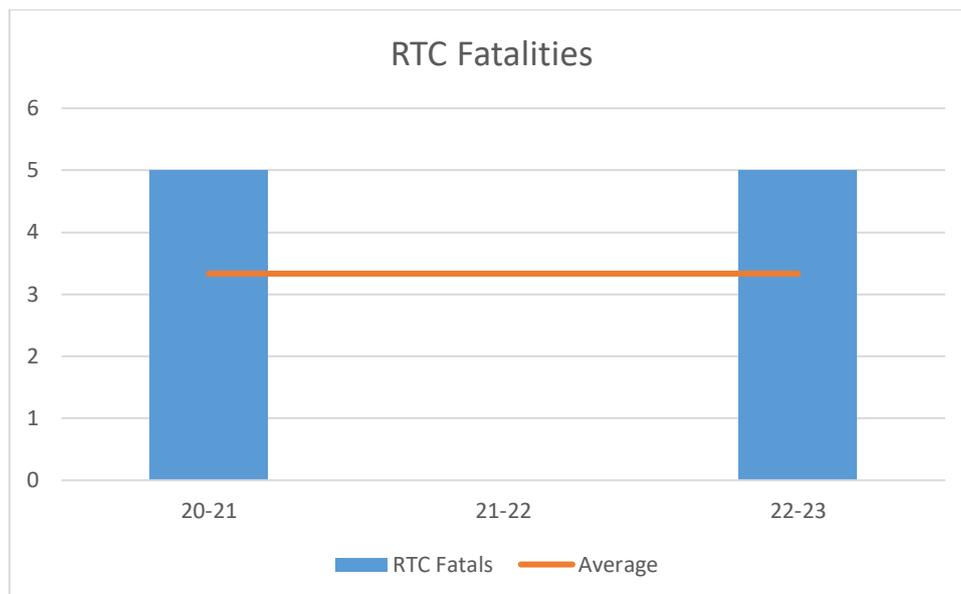
As SFRS generally only attend RTC's of a serious nature, where persons are trapped, the figures below do not capture every RTC which occurs within Fife.



Graph 7.3 Road Traffic Collisions: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

7.4 RTC's have seen an 8 % reduction from the same period 2022 to 2023 and 9% above the three-year average.

7.5 RTC Fatal Casualties

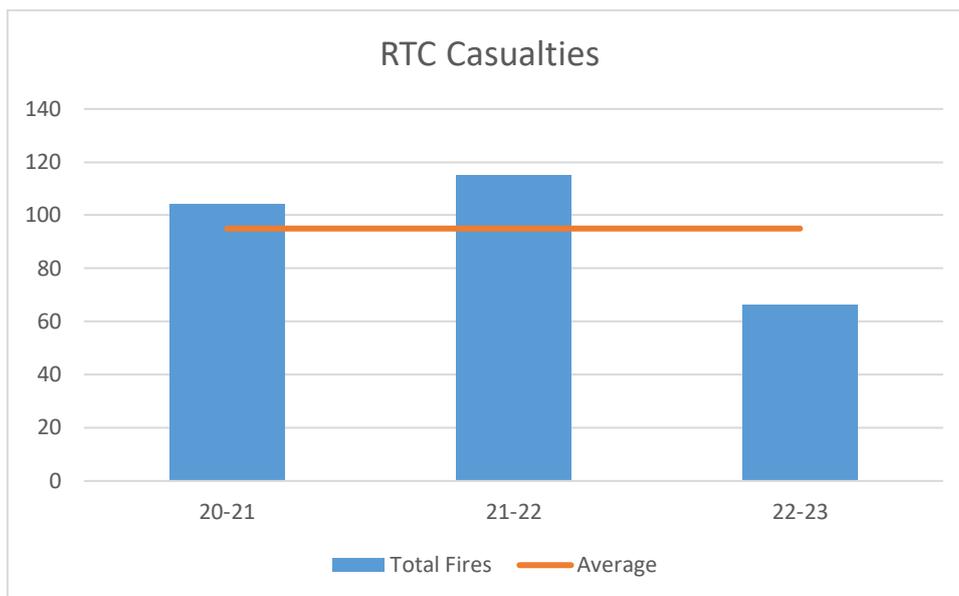


Graph 7.5 Road Traffic Collision Fatal Casualties: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

7.6 RTC Fatalities

There were 5 RTC fatalities recorded during the reporting period.

7.7 RTC Casualties



Graph 7.7 Road Traffic Collision Casualties: 1st April – 31st March 2022 – 2023

7.8 RTC Casualties

The reporting period has seen a reduction of 49 casualties when compared to 2021 to 2022, with this year's casualty figures 30% less than the three-year average. Again, this can be attributed to the COVID19 Lockdown/Restrictions during the same period in 2021.

7.9 Transport and Environment Related Incident Reduction Strategy

SFRS Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Fife LSO area, along with our partners, out with COVID19 restrictions deliver valuable educational projects including 'Safe Drive Stay Alive', 'Drive Wise', 'Child Car Seat Safety Checks', 'Cut It Out', 'Biker Down' and the 'Fife Water Safety Initiative'.

8.0 Conclusions

Specific indicators, including Accidental Dwelling Fires and Fire Casualties have decreased and the severity of those accidental dwelling fires has also decreased significantly. The number of Deliberate Primary and Secondary fires, Non- Domestic fires, RTC's and RTC casualties have all increased, new innovate ways to educate within COVID restrictions are being explored with key partners and some of these are now being delivered.

We will continue to manage demand reduction strategies linking in with key partner agencies to create a safer place to live, work and visit with some wider partnership work examples undertaken below.

Community Safety – Community Safety Action Team

Sample of Partnership Activities April 1 2022 – 31 March 2023

Education

- 114 Sensory impaired alarms fitted throughout the Fife area.
- SFRS referral pathway training session given to 507 persons
- Road Safety – Drive wise 65+ held within Glenrothes , Tulliallan Police College a young driver event for the Police Scotland Youth Volunteer Scheme.
- Corporate Parenting events supporting the Methil area supporting Fife Council.
- 18 fire setter interventions programmes were complete regarding specific fire setting incidents within the Fife area.
- Road traffic offenders group delivered Kirkcaldy fire station.
- 2 Fire skills course delivered at Methil and Dunfermline fire station
- Youth Volunteer Scheme has commenced at Methil station young persons from the Levenmouth area.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- Involvement with Kirkcaldy and Templehall ASB group
- All Fife secondary schools engaged with and offered face to face intervention or presentations for the school to deliver.

Bonfire Night

- High School and Primary schools across Fife have received Bonfire night safety material

Background Papers

SFRS Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Fife Local Authority Area 2021. Link - <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-area/east/east-local-plans.aspx>

Report Contact

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8 June 2023

Agenda Item No. 5

Fife Community Safety Partnership Update

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: All wards

Purpose

The report will update on the progress of Fife Community Safety Partnership (FCSP) in delivering against the current Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan 2022-23.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- Consider and comment on progress to date

Resource Implications

Delivery of the Safer Communities function in Fife relies on the continued commitment and resources of all existing partner agencies across statutory and voluntary sectors, in particular Fife Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and NHS Fife.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no additional legal and risk implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary at this time as no new policies or policy changes are proposed.

Consultation

Ongoing and regular consultation takes place with community safety partner agencies, particularly at point of refreshing the annual delivery plan.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Fife Community Safety Partnership (FCSP) was re-established in 2019 to take forward joint approaches to community safety in Fife. It aims to work in partnership to ensure that people who live in, work in, or visit Fife can live in confidence and without fear for their own or other people's safety.
- 1.2 The main role of the FCSP is to implement and oversee the community safety vision in Fife: *A safe community is strong, cohesive, vibrant, participatory, liveable, and one where people can go about their daily activities in an environment without fear, risk, harm or injury.*
- 1.3 In addition to the above the FCSP delivers the community safety element of the 'Thriving Places' theme within the Plan for Fife and oversees work to fulfil the current ambition '*All our communities benefit from low levels of crime and antisocial behaviour*'.
- 1.3 Following local council elections in 2022, current membership of the FCSP comprises four elected members (representing each political party) and the following core agencies:
- Police Scotland
 - Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 - Fife Council (Safer Communities, Housing, Education, Criminal Justice Social Work)
 - NHS Public Health
 - Fife Alcohol and Drugs Partnership
 - Fife Violence Against Women Partnership
 - Fife Centre for Equalities
- Most recently Cllr David Graham was appointed FCSP Chair and to date has chaired two meetings.
- 1.4 In addition to the above, smaller working groups carrying out themed work streams may include other agencies dependent on the topic.
- 1.5 The FCSP current priorities for the current financial year (2022-23) are as follows with more information relating to the underlying themes in appendix 1:
- Priority One – Unintentional Harm
 - Priority Two – Tackling Offending
 - Priority Three – Antisocial Behaviour
 - Priority Four – Community Justice.

2.0 Current Landscape – Challenges and Opportunities

- 2.1 FCSP January 2023 Update (appendix 2) identifies the efforts of community safety partners to address issues which have required a partnership response in Fife during this current financial year to date.
- 2.2 FCSP held a workshop on 3rd February 2023 to refresh the focus of the Partnership for the coming financial year (2023-24) and to develop an achievable Delivery Plan in line with the Recovery and Renewal agenda. Key partners and elected members reviewed the priorities, identifying gaps in service, emerging trends and areas requiring a specific focus on prevention and early intervention. Attendees reported an extremely positive meeting, and it was agreed that vital to the success of Partnership activity were:
- Appropriate representation from relevant partners at main Partnership meetings and at the smaller thematic working groups
 - The fluidity of the Delivery Plan, to support the ever-changing landscape of community safety
 - The ability to hold partners to account.
- 2.3 Navigating the ever-changing landscape around stretched resources of all community safety partners which have been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic and its legacy remains a challenge for all community safety partners and indeed for the Partnership as a whole. The commitment towards prevention brings both financial and operational challenges for those also responsible for providing crisis support.
- 2.4 Partners have committed to developing a refreshed Delivery Plan but note the challenges associated with taking account of the emerging trends and national priorities, alongside satisfying community safety needs of local communities.
- 2.5 Partners have committed to ensuring stronger links between the CSP and the local 'People and Place' meetings. Most often this link is made through members of the CSP attending local meetings wearing 'two hats', representing both their own organisation and thinking of the wider community safety needs/implications. This remains both an opportunity and a challenge with individuals being reminded to continue to 'think with community safety in mind'.
- 2.6 Both individually and as collective partners have committed to continuing to actively find out what the residents of Fife believe are the local community safety priorities. As well as attending the more traditional forums for engagement (Community Councils, Tenants and Residents Forums)

engagement takes place via social media, local events and day to interaction with individuals. As above while recognising the fundamental importance of responding to what is heard, balancing expectations and aspirations against resourcing and operational capacity is a constant challenge.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to consider the progress to date in taking forward work to deliver safer communities in Fife and provide comment and feedback.

John Mills
Head of Housing Services

List of Appendices

1. FCSP priorities and underlying themes 2022-23
2. Fife Community Safety Partnership 2023 Annual Review 2022-23

Background Papers

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973: None

Report Contact:

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Priorities and Underlying Themes 2022-23

PRIORITY 1 – UNINTENTIONAL HARM (Led by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service)

Themes:

- Home Fire Safety
- Home Safety (under 5's and vulnerable adults)
- Water Safety (outdoor bodies of water)
- Road Safety

PRIORITY 2 – TACKLING OFFENDING (Led by Police Scotland)

Themes:

- (Violence against Women- FCSP will support FVAWP action plan)
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Counter Terrorism
- Hate Crime
- Cyber Crime

PRIORITY 3 – ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (Led by Fife Council)

Themes:

- Public space ASB (with a specific focus on deliberate fire setting and off-road vehicle nuisance)
- Private space ASB (with a specific focus on delivering improved outcomes for those experiencing ASB in a private space setting)

PRIORITY 4 – COMMUNITY JUSTICE (Led by Fife Council)

Themes:

- Supporting effective delivery of the Community Justice model
- Promoting effective partnership engagement to reduce re-offending.

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

Prevention - Early Intervention - Social Isolation - Poverty - Lived Experience - Homelessness - Health Inequalities - Substance Abuse- Mental Health

Fife Community Safety Partnership
Delivery Plan 2022-23
Annual Review



Thinking with community safety in mind

Community Safety Priority - Prevention Delivery in Partnership

THEME – PARTNERSHIP & PREVENTION DELIVERY

Promote collaboration and information sharing at a local level to innovate local solutions

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Finalise Information sharing protocols	<i>Progress the ISP for the CSP. IA have confirmed that until the application has been assessed the legacy Fife arrangement is to stand.</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan (2023-26) Work ongoing to update ISP (currently sitting with Police Scotland national unit)
CSP leads to ensure Operational Managers are working towards early intervention and prevention	<i>Information sharing in respect of crime trends to be driven at local level.</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Community Managers to attend full FCSP meetings
	<i>Information pertinent to specific campaigns will be co-ordinated and provided in line with the events calendar.</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on campaigns is shared and subsequently promoted by all partners via Social Media etc. Partners support the Fife Suicide Prevention Network, including Colin Speight Project; attendance at Fife Suicide Prevention Network Groups (Core Group, Location of Concerns Group and Communications Group) all of which support planning of the Fife Suicide Prevention Strategy and the annual Fife Suicide Prevention Campaigns.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
	<i>Identify opportunities for youth involvement</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Youth Volunteer Schemes being run by both Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
	<i>Consultation between leads to consider benefits of monthly meeting.</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Monthly Priority Leads meetings now take place.

THEME – REDUCING HARM & VULNERABILITY

Deliver targeted campaigns to reduce harm and vulnerability.

(This section has now been incorporated into the retitled REDUCING HARM priority in the Delivery Plan for 2023-26)

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Develop a partnership communication strategy to maximise the audience for general advice and target hard to reach communities.	<i>The communications strategy to include dissemination around the preventions calendar.</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Move to new Comms section of 3 year Delivery Plan
National / Local Campaigns.	<i>Shut Out Scammers</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23
	<i>Suicide Prevention</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23
	<i>Mental Health Awareness Week</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23

Community Safety Priority 1 – Unintentional Harm

Sarah Robertson, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Unintentional Harm: *Unintentional Harm and Injury has been defined as predictable and preventable unintentional physical and psychological harm and injury.*



THEME – UNINTENTIONAL HARM

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Create awareness raising opportunities to understand the signs and causes of unintentional harm in the home	<i>Use social media, press and community events to support campaigns</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Move to new Comms section of 3 year Delivery Plan

THEME – FIRE SAFETY

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires, fire casualties and fatalities	<i>Develop partnership approach to help identify those most at risk of fire in Fife</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Nationally Partnership Referrals and Risk Recognition training is available to all partners. The national referral system categorises the level of risk an individual is. See SFRS Website.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<p>ONGOING – add to 3 year plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions underway to introduce a Partnership Approach to Home Safety which would include Fire Safety. A Joined-up approach should develop a strong management and reporting framework, enabling accountability and transparency in working towards the achievement of the unintentional harm agenda. • Work is ongoing to develop the Fire Hoarding Strategy.
	<i>Deliver awareness education to prevent incidents</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23
	<i>Provide equipment designed to provide early warning and mitigate the damage caused by fire, where an incident does occur</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where identified by partners, detectors are fitted where appropriate/necessary to protect the most vulnerable. Interlinked alarms are only fitted into owner-occupied homes where the individual / household is assessed as “high risk” through the Home Fire Safety Visit assessment process. • If the individual / household does not meet these criteria safety advice, information and details of the revised legislation will be provided during the visit. • Interim detection can also be supplied if the property has no detectors at present.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire retardant bedding and blankets are issued at risk assessed properties to potentially reduce the consequences if a fire were to start within the bedroom • Sensory Impaired Alarms fitted as necessary.
	<p><i>Offer experiential training to care providers across Fife to help reduce the risk of our most vulnerable residents being involved in dwelling fires</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <p>Support provided in relation to Corporate Parenting events and engagements, including “The Promise Event” Career option focused / Consequences of Fire / Foster Carers Association Scotland, safety information including CPR training provided to young people / MCR Pathways mentoring with young people.</p>
	<p><i>Work with partners to support the provision of assistive technology within the home to increase occupant safety.</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <p>SFRS work collaboratively with Telecare and Fife Health & Social Care Partnership to ensure resources are provided those most vulnerable.</p>
	<p><i>Use partnership Community Safety Calendar to plan themed activities and community events throughout the year.</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <p>Move to new Comms section of 3 year Delivery Plan</p>

THEME – HOME SAFETY

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Reduce the number of accidents within the home	<i>Promote information and knowledge sharing between services about the most vulnerable people in our communities</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <p>Through HRSV outcomes referrals and signposting to all partners including Adult and Child Protection services is in place. In addition to this, training opportunities for Stakeholders is available where information and knowledge is shared. Information sharing is also provided through national campaigns sharing themed community safety messages utilising social media platforms, Television and Radio.</p>
		<p>ONGOING – add to 3 year plan</p> <p>Discussions underway to introduce a Partnership Approach to Home Safety. A Joined-up approach should develop a strong management and reporting framework, enabling accountability and transparency in working towards the achievement of the Home Safety / Unintentional Harm agenda.</p>
	<i>Support vulnerable residents to live independently</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home safety visits to elderly and vulnerable people have fully resumed throughout Fife following the easing of Covid restrictions. • Community Safety engagement events targeting various home and fire safety issues have been held across the Kingdom.
<i>Support families with children under 5 years of age</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home safety visits for families with children under 5 have fully resumed throughout Fife following the easing of Covid restrictions. 	

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Safety engagement events targeting various home and fire safety issues have been held across the Kingdom, most recently in relation to the dangers of button batteries.
	<i>Use partnership Community Safety Calendar to plan themed activities and community events throughout the year.</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <p>Move to new Comms section of 3 year Delivery Plan</p>

THEME – WATER SAFETY

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Reduce accidental drowning deaths in Fife by 50 per cent by 2026 and reduce risk among the highest-risk populations, groups and communities	<i>Develop multi-agency water safety group</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <p>The Fife Water Safety Group meets quarterly with attendance from water safety partners from across Fife.</p>
	<i>Finalise and publish Fife's Water Safety strategy</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <p>A Partnership Approach to Water Safety (PAWS) document has been produced for Fife. This multi-agency approach to improving water safety in Fife combines the knowledge and experience of partners who best understand, and can manage, risks in and around water.</p>

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
	<i>Expand water safety education initiatives aimed at primary and secondary school pupils throughout Fife</i>	<p>ONGOING – add to 3 year plan</p> <p>Water Safety Education: 2023 school inputs are presently being planned by partners</p>
	<i>Develop other water safety education initiatives</i>	<p>ONGOING – add to 3 year plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Safety Engagement Days: A Coastal and Inland water safety engagement day is planned for 2023 in Fife and partners have also been asked to plan ahead for Drowning Prevention Day 2023. • Waterside Responders Scheme: The Fife Water Safety group has recently been awarded £2000 from Fife Charities Trust to buy throwlines for the Waterside Responders Scheme which will be rolled out across Fife this year. • Drowning and Incident Review (DIR) Process: DIR aims to gather data and understand the contributory factors of a water-related incidents to help gain a better understanding of how to prevent similar incidents occurring in future. A DIR tabletop exercise is planned for the water safety group in 2023. • Water Safety Concerns in Fife: Any concerns around water safety in Fife can be sent to the Fife Water Safety group where experts in water safety can collectively discuss the concerns and identify how to improve the situation.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Contribute to the reduction of water-related suicide in Fife.	<i>Promote the work of Fife Suicide Prevention Core Group</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Partners support the Fife Suicide Prevention Network, including Colin Speight Project; attendance at Fife Suicide Prevention Network Groups (Core Group, Location of Concerns Group and Communications Group) all of which support planning of the Fife Suicide Prevention Strategy and the annual Fife Suicide Prevention Campaigns.
	<i>Develop opportunities to contribute to the action plan created by Fife Suicide Prevention Group.</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 As above.

THEME – ROAD SAFETY

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads in Fife.	<i>Fife's Road Casualty Reduction Group will continue to take an overview of road safety activities and work with partners to coordinate initiatives and share data</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 The Road Casualty Reduction Group has been re-established after a period of inactivity following the coronavirus pandemic. The group is now chaired by PI Stuart Allan, Police Scotland with Sarah Robertson SFRS deputy chair.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<p>The group meets quarterly and the first meeting was held in December 2022 when a Terms of Reference was presented for members to consider and feedback on at the next meeting.</p> <p>The priorities of the group have been agreed as –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling drivers who are impaired. • Tackling high risk behaviour. • Educate young people, inexperienced road users and risk takers. • Support high risk groups, older people, motorcyclists, pedestrians, children & cyclists. • Support primary and secondary schools. • Speed enforcement at targeted locations. <p>Group membership includes Police Scotland Road Policing (Fife Division), Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Fife Safer Communities, Roads & Transport Services, Education & Children’s Services and East Camera Safety Unit.</p>
	<p><i>Work in partnership to raise awareness of the Scottish Government Framework for Road Safety up to 2030</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p>
	<p><i>Deliver road associated education programmes and events.</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p>

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<p>The Cycling Scotland Road Safety manager will attend the next RCRG meeting to brief on what initiatives/support they can assist with in Fife.</p> <p>Road Safety events developed and carried out during 2022-23 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivewise 65+ • In car Safety • Young Driver • Car seat checks <p>Safe Drive Stay Alive (SDSA)</p> <p>Inputs and follow Up Resource – Delivery of the SDSA programme has now moved fully away from Rothes Halls and is being delivered directly to each school. This is still a partnership project but is led and co-ordinated by Safer Communities Team.</p> <p>During 2022/23 all 18 high schools in Fife received the SDSA input and this year we also were able to deliver to St Leonard’s Private School in St Andrews. A total of 2480 pupils received the input.</p> <p>We have also produced a follow up resource for the guidance staff to use within PSE classes. This enables teachers to hold discussion with the pupils.</p> <p>SDSA Future – This year we have also filmed other partners so that we can keep the film up to date with the most relevant content. We are also in</p>

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		discussions with Education to pursue the option of SDSA being a set part of the curriculum rather than an opt in programme.

Community Safety Priority 2 – Tackling Offending

Adam Smith, Police Scotland



THEME – PREVENT VIOLENCE

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Address Violence Against Women through intervention with offenders.	<i>The CSP will support the FVAWP Action Plan.</i>	COMPLETE FOR 2022-23 Remove from Delivery Plan as a key task but retain as cross cutting theme for working groups. FVAWP now report independently to People & Communities Committee and Fife Partnership Board.
Address the link between ASB and violence (early intervention). Licensed premises / night-time economy:	<i>Joined up working between P Division's Licensing department, LSO's, local area community teams and Safer Communities to form joint campaigns</i>	COMPLETE FOR 2022-23 Since January 2022 numerous home safety visits have been carried out to victims of crime to reduce the risk of them becoming a repeat victim. During these visits victims have been given advice, safety equipment and assistance with funding to increase security of their property and referred on to relevant agencies where necessary.
	<i>Patrols to be carried out with a consistent approach taken around engagement, education and enforcement.</i>	COMPLETE FOR 2022-23 Personal safety talks provided to vulnerable groups, to encourage good safety practices when they are at home or travelling.
Deliver campaigns designed to reduce violence.	<i>Suggested Campaigns / Resources:</i>	COMPLETE FOR 2022-23

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
<p>Include National Campaigns and Local Campaigns, created in response to emerging trends/issues.</p>	<p><i>Consider Fearless Campaigns. Significant resources are available, covering an array of topics/crimes, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>County Lines/Cuckooing</i> • <i>No Knives Better Lives.</i> • <i>Bystander.</i> • <i>Get Consent.</i> • <i>Women's Safety</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the festive campaign period, talks and crime prevention stalls were held at various locations. This year these stalls incorporated safe night out information, including drinks covers, bottle spikeys and relevant literature. The message provided was about not only looking after yourself on night out, but those around you also. Considering the bystander approach and planning transport. A stall was held in St Andrews Student Association building in November. Festive Campaign also included leaflets drops by Fifes PSYV Groups. • Lone working talks provided to numerous charities and organisations this year have included Staff, Gingerbread Fife and Clued Up, among others. • These talks provide advice on how they the volunteers can keep themselves safe when working with their clients. They also include internet safety with them, regarding social media usage and settings. • Punch Beyond is a targeted initiative developed and led by Dunfermline Police Community Team with partners from Active Schools, Boxing Scotland and Trench Boxing Gym. It aims to improve the quality of life for young people in the region by giving them a range of new skills and insight into the consequences of violence. Through specialist workshops, education is provided to young people on the influences that cause conflict and violence, giving them guidance on how to rationalise these types of situations to make better choices. • Punch Beyond is a block of six boxing sessions at Trench Boxing Gym, in this environment we strive to encourage good fitness and wellbeing educating participants on the four core values of Boxing Scotland – courage, determination, respect and passion. Educational seminars focusing on the impact of violent activities and harm

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<p>reduction are presented by a range of agencies, including Police Scotland, NHS, SACRO, Active Schools and Barnardo's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The objective of this initiative is to enrol young people with complex backgrounds and additional support needs. These include those witnessing domestic violence in the family home, displaying violent behaviour and confrontation in public and private settings, isolated and self-harming, affected by parental mental health issues and positive role models. • Community Safety Partners continue to work alongside Fife Violence Against Women Partnership to further develop the 16 days of activism campaign each November to work together with other agencies to offer support to victims, along with an overall Woman's Safety Campaign across the year. • Violent crime in Fife has seen a 5.7% reduction in serious assault and 0.7% in common assault. Encouragingly, crimes involving offensive weapons and bladed instruments have reduced by 16.4%

THEME – COUNTER TERRORISM

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
<p>Delivered through PREVENT theme of the CONTEST strategy.</p> <p>Community engagement, in support of local and national campaigns, in tandem with Fife</p> <p>Multi-Agency CONTEST Group.</p>	<p><i>Provide briefings regarding the PREVENT referral process and introduction of the Scottish Government PREVENT referral form.</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the reporting period Police Scotland continued to work closely with members of the Fife Contest Multi Agency Group with continuous updates provided in relation to the Protect, Prepare and Prevent strands of the UK Governments Counter Terrorism Strategy. • Within the Prevent strand of the Contest strategy Fife and Police Scotland has seen the implementation of the Prevent Multi Agency Panel (PMAP) chaired by Local Authority and attended by relevant stakeholders. This implementation involved the training of key staff by UK Government’s Home Office and is now well established in Fife. • Prevent training was provided by Police Scotland and Local Authority staff to Fife stakeholders and includes Social Work Children and Families, Supervised lodgings, Education Child Protection Co-Ordinators and Social Work Adults team. • In May a Fife Council Move to critical workshop facilitated by Police Scotland raised key areas of work and identified lead services to drive work forward within Fife Council and in August Police Scotland held and presented safety briefings with local councillors providing them advice and a guide to personal security. • In addition to the continued work within the Protect and Prepare strand stakeholders attended Police Scotland Headquarters where they were provided with a tour of the newly created Multi Agency

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<p>Co-Ordination Centre (MACC). The arrangements were well received by all and it was agreed that a Multi-Agency exercise will take place in 2023 to test the current set up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Throughout 2022-23 the continuous good work by Fife Council staff recognised the training requirements of other services and working in partnership Police Scotland and Fife Council staff will provide additional Prevent training where it is required.
	<i>Future inputs to be delivered to the voluntary sector.</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan
	<i>Progress plans to discuss PREVENT within Fife Schools and have the PREVENT material available for both Primary and high school aged children.</i>	<p>COMPLETE FOR 2022-23</p> <p>Prevent training was provided by Police Scotland and Local Authority staff to Fife stakeholders, including Social Work Children and Families, Supervised lodgings, Education Child Protection Co-Ordinators and Social Work Adults team.</p>
	<i>Engage in multi-agency consultation for any and all PREVENT referrals.</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23
	<i>Implement agreed interventions and any follow-up partnership involvement.</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23

THEME –SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
<p>Raise awareness of human trafficking, county lines and Cuckooing.</p>	<p><i>Cuckooing/County Lines Awareness Inputs to be delivered to partners.</i></p> <p><i>Relevance to Safer Communities Teams/Housing/SFRS/SACRO/NHS etc. due to the likelihood of their attendance at vulnerable persons homes.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMPLETE for 2022-23 • Fife Partnership against Rural Crime (PARC) resumed in September 2022 allowing us to continue our work in rural safety while offering preventative advice to those involved helping us to work together to deter and disrupt rural crime. • Scottish Partnership against Rural Crime (SPACR) is a multi-agency partnership involving key organisations collectively working together to prevent, reduce and tackle rural crime, particularly from the ever increasing threat posed by SOCGs throughout Scotland. • Driven by SPARC, Police Scotland and several other English counterparts have formed ‘Operation Hawkeye’ specifically targeting transient criminals in cross border rural crime. Through co-ordinating effective and pro-active partnerships ‘Operation Hawkeye’ seeks to strengthen cross border working and reduce opportunities for those individuals intent on causing the greatest threat, risk or harm to rural communities on both sides of the border. • Multi-agency work has been ongoing regarding young people in residential care settings to prevent and disrupt County Line activity. Young people are often placed some distance from their hometowns to break connections with organised crime groups and prevent exploitation, with Fife hosting young people from across the UK. This has involved working closely with County Lines/Youth Risk Officers, Placement Teams and Social Work.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Policing Teams have compiled comprehensive intelligence packages and ensured that these are shared with local officers for their awareness and action where the young person is observed within the community. This has successfully prevented attempts by Organised Crimes Groups to re-connect with and further exploit young people.
Share relevant information and intelligence.	<p><i>Relevant information to be assessed and shared among partners in order to identify trends and inform a joined up preventative approach.</i></p> <p><i>i.e. – Links between Missing People and County Lines activity to be shared with relevant partners.</i></p>	COMPLETE for 2022-23

THEME – HATE CRIME

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Maximise opportunities for members of the public to report hate crimes and receive appropriate support.	<p><i>Increase the amount of third party reporting centres so organisations are better equipped to support staff, service users and the wider community in identifying and reporting hate crime and also provide</i></p>	<p>ONGOING – add to 3 year plan</p> <p>A multi-agency Hate Crime core group has been established in Fife, cognisant of HMICS recommendations.</p>

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
	<i>support through the police investigation.</i>	The Police Scotland Fife Division Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team (EDI Team) conduct a wide range of work throughout the year in conjunction with community safety partners, across all protected groups to raise awareness and understanding of hate crime and reporting. The team provide training in relation to Third Party Reporting and the Keep Safe scheme.
Increase awareness and understanding of Hate Crimes.	<i>Hate crime awareness training to be delivered with a view to assist people in understanding their rights, when they have been a victim and how to get help.</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan Being addressed by Hate Crime Core Group
Work with partners/schools who work with youth groups (stats highlight the majority of suspects are aged between 11-15 years) to educate young people on the impact their actions have, and encourage supportive and inclusive environments for youths - intergeneration working inter-racial working etc. (prevent).	<i>Delivery/co-ordinated by Schools Officers / CSO's with input from Partners. Uniformity across Fife so that each school is receiving similar levels of information.</i>	COMPLETE FOR 2022-23 Community Safety Partners provide training in relation to Third Party Reporting and the Keep Safe scheme. In recent months, refresher Third Party Reporting training has been delivered to new staff members at St Andrews University allowing better support for our student and wider community in St Andrews. The training profile was raised when officers attended the BAME Student Union Network group at St Andrews University alongside the University Campus officers. They offered some hate crime awareness and the different ways in which hate crime can be reported, highlighting the third party reporting through the trained members within the University. Ongoing links have been established with the Student Union group and the community safety partners.

THEME – CYBER CRIME

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
<p>Monitor emerging and evolving threat in respect of cybercrime.</p>	<p><i>Police Scotland now have unit dedicated to cyber prevention activities. Share with CSP to deliver any relevant products generated.</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cybercrime is a growing and evolving issue where even the most informed individuals can find themselves subject to a fraud. • When referrals are received, victims of fraud are provided with either advice over the phone, a leaflet pack is sent to them or a home visit. They are offered home visit to facilitate further discussion. • We are currently working in partnership with Trading Standards where we are completing the permission forms for TruCall Blockers. We then sent these to Trading Standards and one of their officers will attend and fit the equipment. To ensure more of these are fitted in homes to victims who are experiencing high volumes of telephone scams.
	<p><i>Preventions packages to be delivered by CSO's covering all age ranges.</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE FOR 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet safety talks have been provided to P6's in schools across Fife. We have also provided information stalls at some school parent's nights. These provide information of safeguarding young people while they are online, game age rating, talking to strangers, privacy settings and image sharing. They have numerous talks and parents night stalls coming up.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cybercrime information has formed part of the personal safety visits and commercial visits. For home safety visits, victims are given advice regarding passwords, scams and social media where relevant. During commercial visits businesses are signposted to SBRC and cyber essentials. They are also provided advice regarding passwords, scams and social media (staffs and business).
	<i>Consideration of video inputs to be recorded and made available online.</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan

Community Safety Priority 3 – Antisocial Behaviour

Joan Lamie, Safer Communities Team, Fife Council

THEME – PUBLIC SPACE ASB

Increased use of early intervention and prevention to tackle ASB, deliberate fire-setting and off-road vehicle nuisance

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Use local knowledge and data systems to identify those areas of Fife most affected by public space ASB.	<i>Identify data collection sources across all partners in local areas</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan To be addressed by new Public Space ASB working group
	<i>Develop local information sharing and intelligence led analysis</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 Operational meetings are ongoing in each of the seven local committee areas with representatives from SCT, Housing, Police Scotland and SFRS to discuss emerging/ongoing issues in each of the areas. The purpose is to develop a partnership response (public and private space) and if required significant challenges are escalated to local People and Place Groups and/or to groups such as Improving Levenmouth together/Kirkcaldy Together.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Develop opportunities for early intervention and prevention designed to educate people about the risks and consequences of public space ASB.	<i>Identify current opportunities and gaps around public space ASB being used by partners in each local area</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan. To be addressed by new Public Space ASB working group
	<i>Develop appropriate diversions tailored to the specific issues in local areas</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23 As the Covid restrictions eased, youth diversion activity has resumed and community safety partners supported the following initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a ‘Golf Diversion’ initiative in partnership with Fife Golf Trust and Dunnikier Golf Club. • ‘Mentors in Violence Prevention programme’ at Levenmouth Academy and St Columbas High School • F24 programme at Auchmuty High School • Two ‘Diversifire’ programs were delivered, covering West Fife and Lochgelly/Cowdenbeath localities. • Creative Change Collective in the Kirkcaldy area. • targeted inputs across Fife to pupils ranging from P5 - S4 focussing on ASB, including potential consequences and what the youth justice system looks like. • ‘No Knives Better Lives’ sessions within local High Schools and ‘off campus’ facilities, including Rimbeltan PSS. • Fire Setter Intervention engagement sessions with young people, which involved discussions around the dangers and consequence associated with fire setting to prevent future fire setting incidents/ASB.
Improve and promote local and Fifewide joint working between	<i>Identify effective routes for community engagement</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan.

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
agencies and communities involved in addressing public space ASB.		To be addressed by new Public Space ASB working group
	<p><i>Develop local responses to public space ASB</i></p> <p><i>(e.g. plan a partnership response for the period leading up to and including Bonfire Night</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of attacks by dogs during lambing season are unfortunately becoming more common. Community Safety partners delivered a pilot event at Falkland Estate on Friday 10th March to engage with members of the public and to provide awareness of the importance of keeping their dogs on the lead and under control, particularly during lambing season. This event also provided partners with the opportunity to speak to the public about dog fouling and other wildlife issues. • Due to the success of this event and following further reports about attacks in the Cowdenbeath committee area a similar event was hosted in Blairadam Forest on 12th April 2023. Whilst this event occurred outwith the reporting year, we felt it important to share this information now. The Blairadam Forest event was supported by more partners on the day, including Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Forestry Commission, National Sheep Association, SSPCA (Scottish Society Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), PARC (Partnership against Rural Crime) and Police Scotland. The event received national attention and was covered by STV, raising awareness at a crucial time in the lambing season and hopefully preventing further attacks across the country, not only in Fife. The plan is to make these annual events which will be held at various locations around Fife

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the weeks leading up to Bonfire night, partners promoted the dangers of fireworks and bonfires and the damaging effects that their misuse can inflict. Partners worked together to promote fire safety to the general public and to pupils in the primary and high schools in Fife. Particular attention was paid to local area trends and statistics provided through evidence based analysis. All with a view of combating anti-social behaviour in relation to illegal bonfires and the misuse of fireworks.
	<p><i>Expand proven local initiatives (such as Improving Levenmouth Together)</i></p>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities and gaps are identified on an ongoing basis through local People and Place groups to ensure tailored responses to specific area needs, with some areas forming subgroups or time specific working groups in response to emerging issues. Levenmouth area have meetings have focused on the public space element with an expanded their membership to include more partners such as CLD, Clued Up, Includem and SCT Youth Justice. This has ensured more effective partnership working through an early intervention response to emerging issues, by arranging joint working, joint patrolling, and local resources information sharing. This meeting runs in advance of the Improving Levenmouth Together Initiative and will provide this group with updates on emerging/ongoing issues and the partnership responses. South West Fife also has an ASB/vandalism group (chaired by Police and including representatives from SCT, SFRS, Fife Council CLD, Clued Up). It was agreed that local Police/SCT staff would liaise to coordinate intelligence, resources re patrols and intervention at identified times for more efficient joint

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<p>working and sharing up to date lines of communication and intelligence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Communities Youth Justice staff worked with local SWF education colleagues to arrange visits to local schools to provide 'ASB' inputs. • Kirkcaldy Area held a development session in September in advance of the formation of a Kirkcaldy Together Initiative, which has become an overarching group to help address public space ASB issues, facilitate partnership responses, engage with communities, and develop more positive opportunities for young people in the Kirkcaldy Area connected to ASB. Learning from the Levenmouth approach, this group has been developed to suit the needs of the local area, where issues raised by local communities via Neighbourhood Development Planning groups, partner organisations such as Education, Fire and CLD as well as third sector providers can be fed in, the group is co-chaired by Police and SCT. • In the previous quarter, Kirkcaldy area also formed a response to off road motorbike issues has seen a multi-agency approach with Police, SCT, Tenant Participation and Parks Streets and Open Spaces carry out site visits to identify problem locations and entry points to large grass area at "Rabbit Braes" with work underway to block the access to nuisance motorbikes and quads. Patrolling has seen intelligence gathered and has allowed positive action to be taken to seize vehicles and report offenders.
Promote pro-social behaviour via variety of social media platforms	<i>Scope current use of social media across all relevant partners</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan. To be addressed by new Public Space ASB working group

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media continues to be used regularly by various partners, with resharing of relevant partner information where appropriate. This includes targeted posts and campaigns in response to emerging/ongoing issues. • Social media continues to provide a means to raise awareness of how to report ASB as well promote services who can provide information and support.
Develop a youth justice strategy.	<i>Work with Children and Families Social Work Service to design an effective youth justice strategy</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan. To be addressed by new Public Space ASB working group
Develop and monitor the effectiveness of strategies and associated activity.	<i>Monitor, analyse and evaluate trends to determine effectiveness of strategies and policies.</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan. To be addressed by new Public Space ASB working group

THEME – PRIVATE SPACE ASB

Deliver improved outcomes for customers experiencing antisocial behaviour in a private space setting

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Create single point of contact for all private space ASB cases investigated by Fife Council	<i>Review/rewrite Fife Council ASB processes in consultation with partners and communities</i>	ONGOING – add to 3 year plan. To be addressed by new Private Space ASB working group
	<i>Recruit additional Safer Communities Team staff</i>	COMPLETE for 2022-23

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
Identify opportunities for community engagement in each of the 7 local areas	<i>Develop discussions at ‘people and place’ groups</i>	<p>COMPLETE for 2022-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent integration of Housing’s Tenant Participation Team with Safer Communities has strengthened opportunities for engagement with communities by all community safety partners. • Staff from community safety partners can attend residents’ meetings, allowing them to hear direct of ongoing issues and work with communities to help reduce the incidences and impacts. • Local ‘walkabouts’ continue to take place across Fife with community safety partners regularly in attendance. Again, this provides the opportunity to hear directly about local issues and respond appropriately.
	<i>Establish better working relationships with private landlords</i>	<p>ONGOING– add to 3 year plan.</p> <p>To be addressed by new Private Space ASB working group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is ongoing with the Private Rented Sector Team within Fife Council’s Housing Service to identify where improvements can be made • Similar work will be carried out with Tenant and Residents Groups throughout Fife
Facilitate opportunities for community-based solutions to private space antisocial behaviour	<i>Promote support services within local areas</i>	<p>ONGOING – add to 3 year plan.</p> <p>To be addressed by new Private Space ASB working group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fife Community Safety Support Service continue to provide practical and emotional support to those who are experiencing

KEY TASKS	ACTIVITY	STATUS/PROGRESS
		<p>ASB as well as offering mediation as a means of early resolution and prevention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is ongoing to raise awareness of FCSSS amongst community safety partners, with a pilot being held in Kirkcaldy with Police Scotland.



Community Safety Priority 4 – Community Justice

Tricia Spacey, Safer Communities Team, Fife Council

Impact of Covid 19

The coronavirus pandemic has presented global problems and new challenges. These are mirrored within the Justice System as Courts have battled to maintain services, prisons have had to take unprecedented actions and staff have had to consider their own safety whilst undertaking day-to-day tasks

It is important to note that while, the strategic focus on community justice was diluted during the pandemic, individual partners continued to show innovation, compassion and determination, developing and delivering services in new ways. Some of the initial changes, including virtual meetings, virtual client and customer interaction have proven to work well and will remain as options moving forward.

Individual service reports and our local annual return to Community Justice Scotland provide more detail on activity and outcomes and are suggested reading for more detail.

- [Community Justice Outcome Activity – Local Area Return Fife](#)
- [Fife Council Justice Social Work Service Priority and Development Plan](#)
- [Fife Justice Social Work Performance Review and Delivery Plan](#)

Fife Community Justice Working Group

More recently there has been an appetite and capacity to focus on the strategy underpinning local activity and the governance around it. Following the local elections earlier this year the decision was made to establish a Community Justice Fife Working Group, as subgroup of the wider Community Safety Partnership. While it remains appropriate for an overarching partnership which oversees

the local delivery of community justice and safety, it became apparent that it was not possible to discuss the wide variety of topics within one single meeting.

At the moment this group continues to oversee delivery of the existing [Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan 2021-2022](#). Work has not yet begun on developing a new plan because there have been significant national developments, not all of which have been finalised.

National Framework

2022 saw the publication of the revised [National Strategy for Community Justice](#), with new National Aims and Priority Actions which aim to safely reduce unnecessary use of justice interventions and to enable growth in community integration. This new strategy was informed by the cumulative evidence base of community justice activity since 2016 and engagement by Scottish Government with a wide range of stakeholders and sets out revised ministerial direction for partners.

Progress will be measured by the new iteration of the Outcomes, Performance & Improvement Framework. While we have received an indication of what priorities will be outlined in this framework, we are waiting for final confirmation before we begin to discuss further how we will develop our local activity in line with both national and local priorities.

Community justice in Fife is very much part of the wider community safety and community planning framework and, as such, recognises the importance of the review and refresh of Fife's Community Plan ([Plan for Fife Update - 2022](#)). With a focus on 'Recovery and Renewal' following the Covid pandemic, this revised vision will underpin the work of all local Community Justice partners, both as individual partners and when together as a partnership.

8 June 2023
Agenda Item No. 6

Voids Service Improvement

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

Effective and efficient Void management is a core HRA Budget and Business Plan priority with overspends in the repairs budget and income lost through properties being empty having critical short-, medium- and longer-term financial impacts. This paper has been prepared to present the revised and up-dated Housing and Building Services Voids Service Improvement Plan to improve the financial situation.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee:

1. considers and comments on the proposed Service Improvement Plan with a focus on customer and financial benefits.
2. notes the on-going Tenant Scrutiny Panel focus on Voids Improvement and agrees the Scrutiny Panel Report and any resultant action plan will be a feature of a future People and Communities Scrutiny Report.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resourcing impacts arising from this report with all actions proposed expected to be managed within existing budget and resource constraints. The actions proposed are intended to bring current functional overspends in 2022/3 back into line with the budget for 2023/24.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Council is exposed to significant financial and regulatory risk should there be a failure to improve performance in managing empty properties but there are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an EQIA as the proposed voids service improvement plan does not constitute a change of policy.

Staff across Housing and Building Services have been involved in the development of the Plan. There has been no consultation with tenants, customers, or other stakeholders at this stage, but this will be part of the implementation of the Plan.

1.0 Background

1.1 Prior to the Pandemic, Fife was achieving top quartile performance in Voids Management getting close to an average of 23 days to let and 0.98% void rent loss. During the Pandemic, Fife received the Housing Team of the Year accolade at the Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland Awards for the partnership effort to maintain a focus on void management, housing allocations and homelessness. Since then, a number of factors have contributed to current performance issues. Some of which are sector / industry wide and others specific to Fife.

- H&S working practices for Trades as well as increases in costs for materials and services
- Shortages of labour and materials
- Utilities sector issues
- Managing Change to create Housing Options Officers
- Contractor Management and procurement issues

1.2 A positive Partnership Workshop Event held online on the 17th February 2023, highlighted a number of areas for improvement and these are now being taken forward by a newly formed Voids Service Development Group and four specific Task and Finish Groups with a focus on;

- Termination and Key Management
- Meeting the Relet Standard
- Completing the Void - Customer Experience
- Technology Enabled Service Improvement

These will provide a service improvement focus and will supplement Area Voids Meetings, Contractor meetings and Building Services voids meetings which are following 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) disciplines with a focus on accountability.

1.3 In addition, the implementation of Fife's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and reaction to the Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court Judgement have created an interplay between mainstream and temporary accommodation voids that has never existed before. As Services move forward with rapid rehousing, property flipping, and diversion of stock will require to be mainstreamed and structures are being assembled to enable this direction of travel. The creation of a Voids Co-ordination Function within Housing & Building Services is central to the Service Improvement Plan as we look to maximise efficiency, control and accountability across Housing Revenue Account and General Fund Housing Account budgets. The current budget and strategic position show that voids budget is significantly

overspending and voids rent loss is tracking at 1.3% rent loss due to voids creating significant financial challenges.

2.0 Options and Issues

- 2.1 Housing Services have taken action to increase the functional focus on Void Management, establishing a delivery structure and partnership arrangements to provide the required focus on voids service improvement. The Hub approach of co-located working between Housing and Building Services within the Bankhead site aims to provide a policy, compliance and co-ordination to support effective and consistent working practices across the seven areas with decentralised decision making in response to local service needs and pressures.
- 2.2 The Partnership between the Services is vital within the Turnkey model to ensure the effective commissioning and co-ordination of works programmes reflecting different housing and wider environments. Partnership engagement is secured through joint meetings.
- Voids Service Development Group and Subgroups
 - Weekly Area Voids Meetings
 - Contractor and Utility Management Accountability Meetings
 - Regular Partnership Meetings led by Housing and Building Services Service Managers
- 2.3 Priorities are set and followed on the basis of the initial draft Service Improvement Plan attached as Appendix 1. This Plan will be kept reviewed and updated with progress reported to the Housing Management Executive (HME) and the relevant partnership groups on a quarterly basis to ensure;
- Continuous improvement in customer experience and satisfaction with the standard of new homes
 - Maximise income to the Council and make the best use of housing stock by reducing the time properties are empty and ensuring a consistent standard of repair and improvement works
 - Ensuring contractor accountability for key parts of the void management process
 - Develop a technology led approach to maximise efficiency of operational management arrangements
 - A modernisation approach to property and people management for all housing customers across mainstream and temporary accommodation
- 2.4 The Services recognise that the Plan has been developed in consultation with the joint services staff groups and this provides a focus for strategic improvement. However, there is a recognition that tenant's and other stakeholders understand the importance of effective void management and have selected Voids as the next priority focus area. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel has initiated a review of voids management in May 2023 with a report expected to be incorporated into a future People and Communities Scrutiny Committee Report.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Service Managers within Housing and Building Services are confident that the Service Improvement Plan can return to top quartile performance. The application of 4DX methodology within Building Services is starting to narrow the gap, but further focus is required from a whole systems perspective with the attached Plan highlighting areas of focus and a mix of early actions and longer-term strategic objectives to deliver sustainable improvement.

John Mills
Head of Housing Services

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Voids Service Improvement Plan

Report Contacts

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	Lead	Timescale	Risk	Intended Outcome	Links / Dependencies	Status / Progress
Establish a Voids Co-ordination Team within Housing Access Service						
Revised Lead Officer Structure to be established with a tenancy management and repairs focus	GS	Dec 22	H	Focus for Voids Service Improvement	Hsg Services Staff Structure	Complete
Develop and implement Quality Assurance Processes	DF	Dec 22	M	Embed learning and improvement to Service improvement Ensure Policy and Process compliance	CX Monitoring and Reporting Tools	Interim arrangement in place
Ensure monthly Area Void Management Meetings are effective	BP	Mar 23	H	Ensure end to end process accountability for performance		Still to ensure Fife Consistent Approach
Embed Quality Assurance, Training and Support approach across the service to ensure policy and process compliance	BP/LL	Ongoing	H	Ensure policy, process and practice compliance to achieve standards	Area Partnership Framework	Ongoing
Carry out a review of Voids Process to reduce handoffs and handovers						
Harmonise temporary accommodation and mainstream void management processes	GS	Dec 23	H	Maximise efficiency to match new ways of RRTP working	Hsg Services Staff Structure, Works commissioning and system improvements	Not Started
Carry out a review of Voids Management Roles and Responsibilities with a focus on the key stages	GS	Sept 23	M	Improved customer journey and outcomes for new tenants Clear lines of accountability in managing empty homes	4 Task Groups to focus on key process areas	Not Started
Carry out research to enhance the efficiency of work commissioning processes	GS	Jun 23	M	Ensure components are only replaced when needed Enhance tenant choices Reduce void times	Interim instruction in place via Building Services and agreed by Housing	To be reviewed
Examine potential integrations with Building Services to enhance commissioning arrangements	DA	Sept 23	M	Ensure the best possible use of technology to minimise empty properties and improve customer experience	Comis Replacement	Not started

Develop and implement a monthly Voids Budget Monitor						
Voids Management Budget Monitor to be presented to HME Monthly	GS/EL	Immediate	M	Maintain accountability for Void Rent Loss and Budget spend	Budget Monitoring cycle	Ongoing
Enhance Voids Contract Management Arrangements (Orbis)						
Ensure monthly contract management meetings promote accountability within the Voids process	BP	Ongoing	H	Maintain contractor performance and accountability	CX and Orbis Reporting	Ongoing
Enhance regular monitoring and compliance checks	BP	Ongoing	M	Ensure standards via Team checks on works orders and completions	Need to develop an enhanced quality assurance mechanism	To be reviewed
Establish budget monitor	BP/EL	Ongoing	M	Maintain contractor performance and accountability	CX and Orbis Reporting	Ongoing
Enhance Utility Maintenance and Management Arrangements						
Research the potential to establish a default Utility Supplier for mainstream and temporary tenancies	GS	April 23	H	Reduce time spent dealing with utility issues Generate the best service for Fife Develop a relationship to generate benefits for tenants and housing customers	Focus on mainstream voids and mature to temporary accommodation Potential to generate fuel poverty benefits for tenants	Agreement to be signed in April
Establish a dedicated staffing resource to manage Utility disputes and complex issues	GS	Sept 23	M	Deferred pending Preferred supplier arrangement	Test arrangements with Utilita and develop as required	Deferred
Develop, enhance and refine the Partnership with Utilita to maximise benefits to customers and as part of the Service Improvement Plan	BP/LL	Dec 23	M	Enhanced service performance Fuel Poverty benefits to customers Improved management of temporary accommodation and other dedicated resources	Partnership Agreement to be signed	Ongoing

Develop a 2023 Tenant in First Process to minimise repairs / component replacement during voids						
Establish a Partnership Service Development Group to enable process change	LL	Nov 22	M	Ensure consistency and continuity of voids process Develop service improvement recommendations and implement Enhance the partnership approach to voids management and improvement	None – representation to focus on Housing Services initially and develop partnerships at Area Level	Ongoing
Review and revise Component Replacement within Voids to improve efficiency of voids	GS/AB	Mar 22	H	Minimise void relet time Enhance customer engagement in component replacement Reduce voids budget spend on standardised components	SHQS / EESH works still to be completed – link to component replacement programme Accountable timescales and process within BS	Ongoing
Examine the use of technology within the Voids Process	DA	Dec 23	M	Ensure the best possible use of technology to minimise empty properties and improve customer experience	SDG Sub Group to be established	Not Started
Review and implement a Revised Relet Checklist / Standard (approved by Committee)	GS/AB	Dec 23	H	Sub Group to review Relet Standard and make recommendations to Committee for any changes	Review pending	Not Started
Enhance Tenancy Normalisation / Conversion Process to increase 0 day Voids						
Re-develop Pre-Exit Checklists and process with a focus on Voids Pathways	BP/LL TA Mgmt	Dec 23	H	Review Group to establish potential process improvements of a Voids Co-ordination Unit	Lessons learned from Pandemic and Kdy Sheriff Court Judgement	Priority is completing Normalisation Programme
Enhance pre-exit processes to divert the property to temp prior to CoT	BP/LL	Oct 23	H	Ensure the best use of stock across mainstream and temporary accommodation	Staffing / Resourcing issues	SDG prioritising activities
Establish Voids Co-ordination processes to manage mainstream and temp tenancies	BP/LL TA Mgmt	Dec 23	H	Review Group to establish potential process improvements of a Voids Co-ordination Unit	Lessons learned from Pandemic and Kdy Sheriff Court Judgement	Priority is completing Normalisation Programme

Review and revise tenancy management processes to minimise voids						
Focus on Decants, Tenants with Bail Conditions	JMcV/CAB	Apr 23	M	Ensure the efficient management of specific housing circumstances Manage overlap between voids and tenancy management processes	None	Finalised Advice Notes produced for approval
Enhance Key Management processes	BP / LL	Sept 23	M	Subgroup to review processes and make recommendations for any changes	None	Not Started

8 June 2023

Agenda Item No. 7

Tenant led scrutiny into Satisfaction with the quality of the Home

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to share with Members the findings of the recent tenant scrutiny panel report that considered the factors affecting tenants' satisfaction with their homes. This provides a valuable insight from those with lived experience and complements the information available through the annual tenant satisfaction survey. The report has been considered by the Housing Management Executive and a commitment given that a written response will be provided to the tenants' scrutiny panel by the Autumn on how their recommendations have been implemented. This will help inform actions that need to be included in the Housing Service Pathway to Improvement to improve tenant satisfaction as part of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) note and comment on the recommendations from the scrutiny panel report should inform improvement actions and performance targets for the year ahead, and
- (2) note that Housing Services will continue to work in collaboration with the tenants' movement in Fife and involve them in decision making. The tenant led scrutiny panel approach provides us with an opportunity to test and improve key performance areas and the services the Council delivers to tenants.

Resource Implications

The cost of continuing to support tenant led scrutiny can be met within existing HRA budget provision within the Housing Service.

Legal & Risk Implications

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

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed and is not necessary as the report does not propose a change to existing housing policies or programmes.

Scrutiny panels form a key part of Fife Council's Tenant Participation Strategy. This approach is supported through the Fife Tenants Forum, the three Tenants Federations and Tenants and Residents Associations across Fife. Tenants are involved in our policy and practice to ensure the services provided meets their needs.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Fife Scrutiny Panel has carried out tenant-led scrutiny of Fife Council's housing services for several years. This represents the 3rd report from the Scrutiny Panel. The panel members are volunteers who are recruited through Fife Tenants Forum. Training was provided and funding for an independent advisor to guide them through this process. The tenant satisfaction with the quality of the home indicator was selected because performance had deteriorated over several years and was below the national average based on benchmark comparisons with average scores across all local authorities in Scotland.
- 1.2 The scrutiny panel met over the course of a year and applied a thorough methodology to their approach. Relevant performance information was reviewed including a trend analysis of tenant satisfaction survey results and Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators. Staff were interviewed and answered follow-up written questions from the scrutiny panel. Inspections were also carried out to ready to let properties in various areas to assess the standard of accommodation being offered.

2.0 Report findings

- 2.1 The 'quality of the home' can be subjective and various factors will come into play to determine the levels of tenant satisfaction. The annual tenant satisfaction survey conducted in 2021 involving a sample of 700 tenants through a telephone survey showed that overall, most tenants (79.6%) were satisfied with the quality of their home, with 14.3% dissatisfied. The report recognised tenant satisfaction can be variable and often dependent on individual circumstances and the type of property where they live. Housing quality satisfaction levels are highest for tenants living in sheltered properties and bungalows. The property types where tenants are least satisfied with housing quality across all areas are those living in upper flats and multi-storeys. There is a correlation between lower levels of satisfaction where incidences of anti-social behaviour are reported.
- 2.2 Satisfaction with housing quality is closely aligned with how easy or difficult it is to heat the home and the perception of energy efficiency. The panel highlighted that almost one fifth of tenants were not satisfied their homes were energy efficient in the 2021 survey and this is likely to increase with the current cost of living crisis. The report advised where tenants are living in homes that do not yet meet EESSH standards it would be beneficial if they were updated annually on the position and the options being considered by the Council to bring these properties up to standard.

- 2.3 It was recognised factors affecting tenants' satisfaction with their home could extend beyond the physical condition of the property and be influenced by the external environment, location and immediate neighbourhood. Amenities available and the quality of the local environment can vary considerably across localities. The report highlighted the need to consider external aspects when preparing a property for re-letting. The approach to properties including communal entrances should be tidy, clean and welcoming. Open areas should be well maintained and free of rubbish before viewings are offered. Improvements to local environments are already being made through the implementation of the Revised Estate Management Approach.
- 2.4 Reasons for the refusal of offers of housing should be monitored to ensure that any outstanding repair or estate management issues are addressed in a timeous fashion. If there is a pattern of similar refusal reasons in an area this would identify where more remedial action is required. The importance of adequate training for new staff was mentioned so they can identify any property features or neighbourhood issues and ensure that applicants are matched to appropriate homes that best meet their needs. It was recommended information could be improved as part of the sign-up process for new tenants in flats where there is shared garden space so the boundaries and responsibilities for their upkeep are made clear from the start of the tenancy.
- 2.5 When the scrutiny panel inspected some older properties that were ready for let it was noted some only included a bath and no shower and it was felt this did not meet modern standards or expectations. It was recommended when properties are being upgraded then showers should be installed or at least the tiling and plumbing connections to make it easier for the tenant to do this themselves. This point was also reflected in the results of the tenant satisfaction surveys. The priorities for internal improvements have remained static over the last three years with better bathrooms being on top. The report recognised that tenant feedback has influenced the improvement programme with 30% of this budget in 2022/23 having been earmarked for expenditure on bathrooms.
- 2.6 The panel noted the annual satisfaction survey meets market research standards and supported the return to face-to-face interviews now that restrictions have been lifted. It was recommended that existing and alternative survey options should be discussed with the Fife Tenants Forum, to inform future survey contracts. Additional questions should be considered to probe more deeply into the reasons tenants have said they are not satisfied with the quality of their home. Area level satisfaction survey results should be discussed with the local Federations to provide us with a better understanding of tenant's priorities for their areas. This type of feedback is a useful inclusion for the Area Housing Plans and to identify where improvements should be made to homes and neighbourhoods.
- 2.7 The role of the tenant scrutiny is to test and improve landlord services. The panel found a lack of awareness on the part of front-line staff about the purpose of this exercise and what was expected from them. This will be addressed going forward through a staff briefing note and tenant participation training being provided for Area Housing staff. The recommendation for a tenant representation on the Down Your Street newsletter editorial board has been welcomed. This will enable us to quality check the information that is provided on performance and survey findings. It should also mean that future articles are more relevant and meet the needs of our tenants.

The Better Homes exhibition usually held at the Rothes Halls is an opportunity for tenants to find out more information about planned improvement and to demonstrate the use of new technology. It was recommended that demonstrations at this event be recorded, and videos shared through the Council's website and social media for the benefit of tenants who are unable to attend.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The work of the scrutiny panel provides us with a fresh pair of eyes and a valuable insight into how we are performing from the perspective of our tenants. They are our critical friend and are committed to working in partnership with us to make a difference. This will complement the performance information available through the annual satisfaction survey and the Annual Return on the Charter indicators submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 3.2 The findings from the Scrutiny Panel report information should be publicised through the Down Your Street tenant magazine, social media and be made available through the Council's website.

John Mills

Head of Housing Services

List of Appendices

1. Fife Council Tenant Led Scrutiny Panel Report into Satisfaction with the Quality of the Home

Background Papers

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

None

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FIFE

Tenant Led Scrutiny Panel



Scrutiny Report: Satisfaction with Quality of the Home

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Acknowledgements

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John Houston, Housing Professional (Tenant Participation).

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Kim Hunter, Bruce Combes, Melanie McAndrew, Housing Options Officers.

Pauline Duncan, Julie McDowall, Housing Management Officers.

Independent Advice and Facilitation:

Provided by North Star Consulting & Research.

1. Introduction

The Fife Scrutiny Panel has carried out tenant-led scrutiny of Fife Council's housing services for several years, looking at a particular service or function for each scrutiny exercise. Working with an independent advisor from North Star Consulting & Research, the scrutiny panel met in November 2021 and then between April 2022 and November 2022 to look at tenant satisfaction with quality of the home. This was on the basis that satisfaction levels have declined between 2017-18 and 2020-20 and are now below the national average.¹

1.1 The Scrutiny Process

The group carried out the following activities as part of their scrutiny of tenant satisfaction with the quality of tenants' homes:

- A review of the relevant Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators,
- A review of information from the previous three years' tenant satisfaction surveys,
- A review of performance information around satisfaction with and quality of council homes,
- A review of the written response from Housing Professional (Lead Housing Officer, Strategy) to questions posed by the scrutiny panel
- A review of an email response to follow-up questions raised by the scrutiny panel from satisfaction survey consultants, Knowledge Research,
- A formal interview with Housing Professional (Project Officer, Sustainability),
- Visits to vacant homes with local housing options and housing management officers.

More information is provided on each of these below:

1.2 Scottish Social Housing Charter

The Charter Indicator relevant for this scrutiny exercise is: **4: Quality of Housing:**

"Social landlords manage their businesses so that: tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair."

This standard describes what landlords should be achieving in all their properties. It covers all properties that social landlords let unless a particular property does not have to meet part of the standard. Beyond SHQS, landlords should be looking for cost-effective ways of achieving higher energy-efficiency standards for their properties, to provide warmer homes for their tenants and help to meet climate change targets. During this Charter's lifetime, the Scottish Government will consult on higher standards. If adopted, these new standards will form part of the next Charter".²

¹ Tenant satisfaction statistics throughout this report are taken from the following documents: Fife Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey: Survey Reports (authored by The Knowledge Partnership), 2018, 2019 and 2020.

² Extract from Scottish Social Housing Charter <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-housing-charter>

Performance against this Charter standard is monitored by the Scottish Housing Regulator through the following indicator/s in the Annual Report on the Charter (ARC) returns from all registered social landlords.³

- Indicator 7 – Percentage of tenants satisfied with quality of the home, measured by levels of tenant satisfaction.
- Indicator 14 – Percentage of tenancy offers refused.
- Indicator C9 – Number of self-contained stock exempt from the Scottish Social Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) at the end of the reporting year.
- Indicator 9.4.1 – Self-contained stock (% of fails) failing SHQS on one criterion
- Indicator 9.4.2 – Self-contained stock (% of fails) failing SHQS on two or more criteria
- Indicator C10 – Percentage of properties meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard in Social Housing (EESH).
- Indicator C11.1 – Properties anticipated to be exempt from EESH.
- Indicator C12 – Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs).
- Indicator C13.1 – Number of properties brought up to EESH during the reporting year.
- Indicator C13.2.4 – Total amount invested in bringing properties up to EESH (average per property).

The Scottish Housing Regulator considers satisfaction with quality of the home to be amongst the issues that matter most to tenants.⁴

1.3 Customer Satisfaction

The group reviewed and analysed information related to tenant satisfaction with quality of the home from the three most recent tenant satisfaction surveys (2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21).

The group also looked at information relating to satisfaction with repairs completed within 12 months of the tenant satisfaction survey.

1.4 Structured Interviews

The scrutiny group received written responses from housing professional (lead housing officer, strategy), and held a formal interview with housing professional (project officer, sustainability), on 22nd April 2022. The group agreed a list of questions which was sent to officers in advance of discussions/ written responses being provided. Anne Rocks acted as Chair and all group members present asked questions during the interview.

³ SHR – Charter Indicators and Data by Outcome and Standards <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/media/1787/charter-indicators-and-data-by-outcomes-and-standards-20220406.xlsx>

⁴ SHR – Areas that matter most to tenants: <https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/landlord-performance/national-reports/national-reports-on-the-scottish-social-housing-charter/national-report-on-the-scottish-social-housing-charter-headline-findings-2020-21#section-3>

1.5 Property Visits

To better understand what tenant concerns might be in areas or property types with lower levels of satisfaction, the group decided they would also like to visit a selection of vacant ready-to-let properties. Visits with local housing management officers were arranged to six properties across three areas between August and November 2022.

1.6 Fife Council Performance Monitoring

The group reviewed the most recent *Pathway to Improvement* committee report presented to elected members (October 2021) to better understand how the satisfaction survey results are considered, and follow-up actions agreed.

1.7 Information to Tenants

The group reviewed performance information relevant to quality of the home that is provided to tenants in the Scottish Social Housing Charter Reports 2021 and 2018, and in the *Down Your Street* tenant newsletter, Winter 2018 (this being the most recent edition to include the annual performance data). These include extracts from the overall satisfaction survey responses and from annual performance data reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

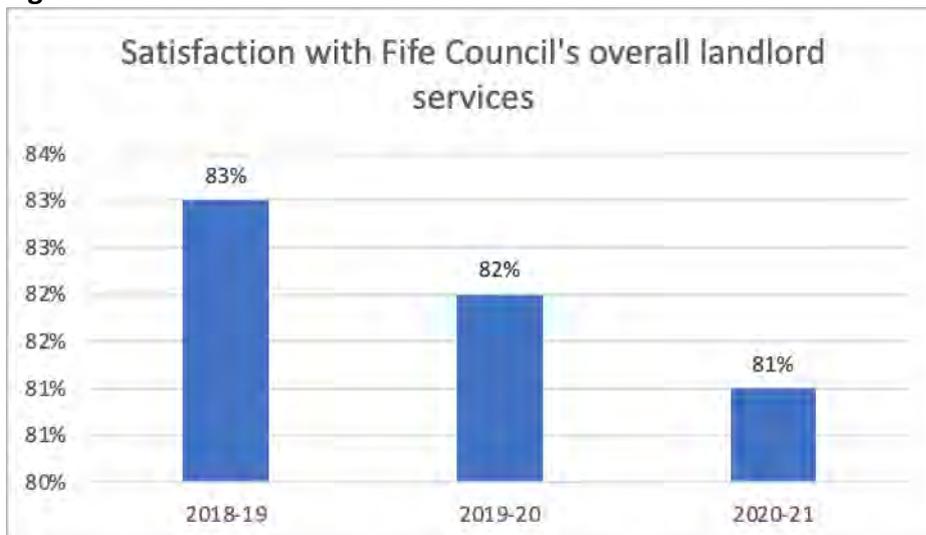
2. Findings

2.1 Customer Satisfaction

Data from the Tenant Satisfaction surveys between 2018-19 and 2020-21 provided a trend analysis of tenant satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the quality of their home, and a benchmark comparison with average scores across all local authorities in Scotland.

The level of tenant satisfaction with the overall landlord services provided by Fife Council in 2020 was 80.9%, a slight reduction from the previous year (81.6%). Over one in ten tenants (13.2%) are dissatisfied with the services overall. While there has been a very slight decline overall levels of satisfaction have remained broadly stable and are comparable to the Scottish local authority average of 80.7%.⁵

Figure 2.1 Tenant Satisfaction with Fife Council Landlord Services



The most recent survey shows that overall, most tenants (79.6%) are satisfied with the quality of their home, with 14.3% dissatisfied.

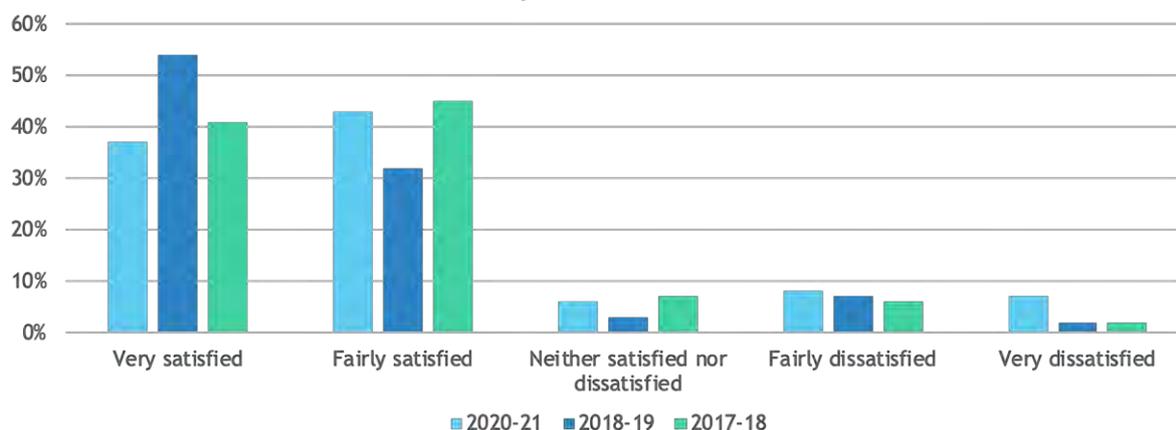
When asked why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the Council's overall housing service, Quality of Housing ranked fifth for reasons for dissatisfaction in 2020-21 (13% off all tenants responding that they were dissatisfied), and fourth for reasons tenants were satisfied with the service (12%).

However, when looking at satisfaction with quality of the home specifically, data from the tenant satisfaction surveys 2018-19 to 2020-21 show satisfaction levels have declined markedly both in comparison with previous years, and relative to other local authorities in Scotland.

⁵ Based on a sample of 6,532 tenants surveyed by Knowledge Partnership across nine landlords during 2021.

Figure 2.2 Tenant Satisfaction with the Quality of Home

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?



This equates to a decline in satisfaction of 7% between 2017-18 and 2020-21.

Table 2.1 Satisfaction with Quality of Home 2017/18 to 2020/21⁶

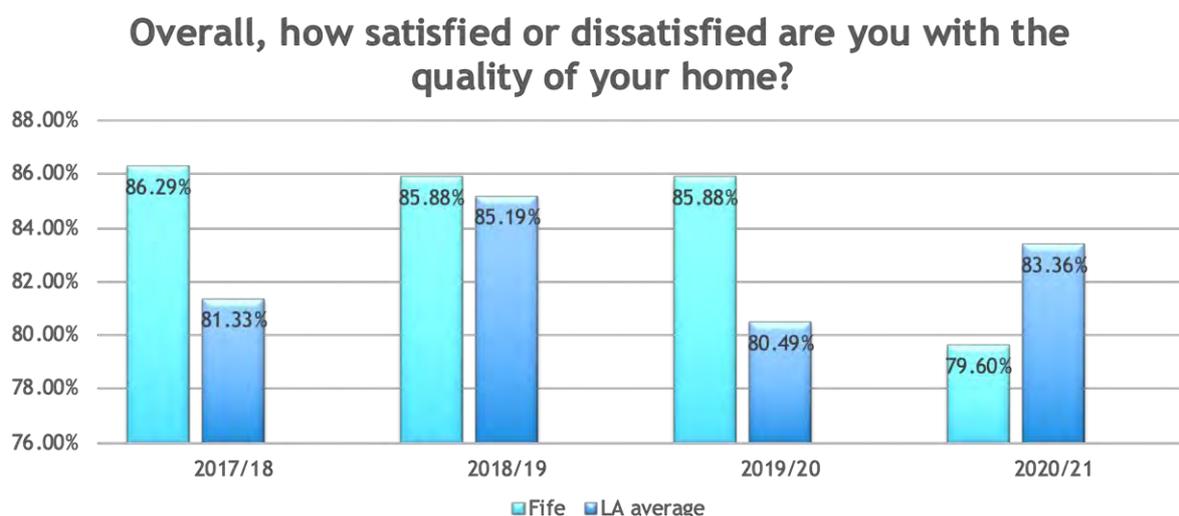
Year/ Satisfaction Level	Very or fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very or fairly dissatisfied
2020-21	79%	6%	14%
2018-19	86%	3%	11%
2017-18	86%	7%	8%

The group noted that the last satisfaction survey was undertaken under pandemic restriction, which meant that the survey methodology relied much more on online completion and telephone surveys, as face-to-face interactions were restricted. A sample of tenant surveys across nine local authority landlords since January 2021 has indicated that reported levels of satisfaction tend to be lower when collected through telephone or online surveys than for face-to-face surveys.

The group also noted that tenants would have been using their homes differently during this period, with most tenants having to stay at home, work from home and home-school children. However, they also noted that satisfaction levels with quality of the home have also fallen below average satisfaction levels for all local authorities in Scotland over the same period, indicating that the drop in satisfaction levels may not just be explained by the pandemic effect.

⁶ Data from Tenant Satisfaction Survey Reports 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Figure 2.3 Overall Satisfaction with Quality of Home



The group decided they would like to get more information about how the tenant satisfaction survey is organised, and the steps taken to ensure that tenants from different groups and areas are equally represented. The scrutiny panel prepared questions and reviewed the written answers they received from Fife Council housing staff and from the satisfaction survey research company. The questions asked by the panel are included at Appendix 1. Through these, the scrutiny panel established that market research consultants (currently the Knowledge Partnership) are commissioned to carry out the survey on the Council's behalf. They employ qualified researchers to conduct the surveys, which is normally done face-to-face (although the pandemic restrictions limited this to telephone surveys). This followed advice from the Scottish Housing Quality Network (SHQN) on the relative benefits of different survey methods.

To ensure a fair representation of all tenants by areas, age, and household type, the survey consultants randomly select a stratified sample from a database of all tenants. Industry guidelines indicate that a sample size of 400 will provide adequate representation with reasonable margin for error. However, to ensure better representation across all seven areas of Fife, a sample of 700 has been used by taking 100 surveys in each area, weighted to reflect relative population size.

The survey reports are distributed to the Head of Housing, Service Managers and Area Housing Managers for analysis and discussion with their teams to inform action plans, and policy and procedure reviews. Key results are reported to elected members in October each year in a Pathway to Improvement report, to help set improvement actions and performance targets for the year ahead. The outcomes are also benchmarked against other local authorities through an annual session facilitated by the Scottish Housing Quality Network, attended by managers and elected members.

Top-level results from the surveys are reported back to tenants through the Tenant Annual Report on the Charter, through the *Down Your Street* newsletter and via the Housing Performance page on the fife.gov.uk website. The survey is anonymous, and so individual tenant concerns are not routinely passed on for follow-up.

In the tenant satisfaction survey, tenants who received a repair in the last year were asked, thinking about the last time they had repairs carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the repair service. The overall responses are shown in Table 2.2 below. These show that levels of satisfaction have remained broadly stable over several years and below the overall local authority average (91.5% in 2019/20).

Table 2.2 Satisfaction with the Repair Service

Year/ Satisfaction Level	Very or fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very or fairly dissatisfied
2020-21	84%	2%	14%
2018-19	84%	5%	11%
2017-18	84%	5%	11%
2016-17	85%	4%	11%

Limited information was also available from previous surveys about tenant satisfaction with home at time of re-let, where a tenancy had started within 12 months of the survey. However, due to the impact of the pandemic on allocations, comparative information was not collected in the most recent (2020/21) satisfaction survey.

Table 2.3 Satisfaction with Standard of the Home when Moving In (last 12 months)

Year/ Satisfaction Level	Very or fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Very or fairly dissatisfied
2018-19	65%	4%	31%
2017-18	86%	7%	8%

Tenants who were least satisfied were those in upper flats and multi-storeys.

For the most recent available data, satisfaction levels were significantly below the Scottish local authority average satisfaction levels (90% in 2018/19). However, the satisfaction survey researchers have noted that the sample size is small and may therefore be subject to a large margin of error.

2.2 The Improvement Programme

In the satisfaction survey, tenants were asked what internal and external improvements would improve the quality of their home. The group noted that tenant priorities for internal improvements had remained very stable over the last three surveys as shown in Table 2.4 below

Table 2.4 Internal Improvement Tenant Priorities

Internal Priorities	1 st	2nd	3rd
2020/21	Better bathroom (19.4%)	Improved windows / doors (16.6%)	Improved kitchen (12.1%)
2019/20	Better bathroom (26%)	Improved windows / doors (22%)	Improved kitchen (14%)
2018/19	Better bathroom (18%)	Improved windows / doors (18%)	Improved boiler /heating system (11%)

Table 2.5 External Improvement Tenant Priorities

External Priorities	1 st	2nd	3rd
2020/21	Garden Fences (11.4%)	Gutters & External Pipework (10.8%)	Outside of buildings maintenance (paintwork, cladding etc) (9.5%)
2019/20	Garden fences (22%)	Gutters & external pipework (8%)	Outside of buildings maintenance (paintwork, cladding etc) (15%)
2018/19	Garden fences (13%)	Improve gardens (9%)	Gutters & external pipework (8%)

(Priorities for internal and external improvements are identified and reported separately from 2020/21 but prioritised collectively in earlier years). The panel members noted that internal and external improvement preferences can be extracted from the survey data and reported on in more detail by street or property type for local use, but that the sample size at this level is very small and therefore may not be representative.

To better understand whether and how tenant feedback influences the programme for improvement contracts, the scrutiny panel conducted a structured interview with a housing project officer (sustainability). They established that several factors influence the investment programme. The main source of information is from a rolling annual stock condition survey, which collects information on the age and condition of different elements of the home. The programme aims to update the condition of each property over a number of years. Not all properties can be inspected, and tenants may refuse access for inspections. In such cases information is cloned from a property of the same type nearby. The information collected is uploaded to the Promaster database, and reports from this are used

to identify priorities for contract works and to create address lists for contract programmes. (This is more sophisticated than the previous programme, which did not store all the information needed to generate the capital programme).

In addition to these targeted elements for replacement, priorities are also picked up through the Better Homes exhibition for tenants (on hold during the pandemic) and feedback from housing professionals who work directly with tenants. The next exhibition is planned for early 2023.

If elements fail before the anticipated lifespan for replacement, or if they become beyond economic repair, they may be replaced outwith the programme to make sure that the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) are met. If tenants refuse to have work done during a contract programme, the work may also need to be picked up later. In either scenario, work will be at a higher cost than through a planned contract.

Once a programmed contract has been set up, Building Services become responsible for liaising with tenants to let them know what work to expect and when. Building Services will also liaise with the patch housing management officer and area manager to maximise access within the contract window.

The panel established during interview that for external wall insulation contracts specifically, the team aim to provide tenants with six months' notice (subject to funding notifications), starting with a postcard and followed by two letters. The panel learned that tenants may refuse access for work to be carried out for several reasons: they may be happy with the existing installation, not want or be unable to cope with the disruption, or because of lifestyle issues. Fife council will help through the tenancy assistance service. It was noted that much also depends on relationships with the housing management officer and their knowledge of the individual needs of tenants on their patch.

The annual budget for improvements is £30.5million, and the target for 2022/23 is to improve 585 properties (around 2% of all stock) across all programmes. The current programme priorities are bathrooms (30%), kitchens (20%) and heating (15%). All housing officers have access to the contract programme details and will be able to tell tenants when a component such as a kitchen or bathroom is due for replacement. One scrutiny panel member tested this for their own home and found the information could be provided within a few days of request.

2.3 Energy Efficiency Programme and Advice

In the 2020-21 tenant satisfaction survey, most tenants (83%) reported that they can easily afford to heat their home and said that their home is energy efficient (85.7%).

Table 2.6 2020/21 Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results

Survey Question:	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither /nor	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?	36.8%	42.8%	6.1%	7.6%	6.7%
Home is energy efficient	41.1%	44.6%	4.1%	6.9%	3.3%
Can easily afford to heat home	39.4%	43.6%	8.3%	12.4%	11.6%

A cross-analysis of responses by Knowledge Partnership shows that satisfaction with housing quality is closely aligned with how easy or difficult it is to heat the home, and with perceptions of energy efficiency.

Where tenants find their home easy to heat, there is 83% satisfaction with quality of the home. This reduces to 67.7 % satisfaction with quality of the home where the tenant finds their home difficult to heat. The same correlation is evident for heating energy efficiency. Where tenants feel their home is energy efficient, 85.7% are satisfied with housing quality. This reduces to 62% satisfaction rates with housing quality where the tenant does not believe their home to be energy efficient.

The panel noted that almost one fifth of tenants were not satisfied that their homes were energy efficient in the 2021 survey and anticipate that this proportion is likely to increase with the current energy cost crisis. They decided that they would therefore like more information about what help is being provided for tenants to make their homes easy to heat and to manage energy costs. A structured interview was held with a member of staff to learn more about Fife Council's progress to meeting the energy efficiency standards for social housing in Scotland (ESSH).

ESSH is the Energy Efficiency Standard for Scotland. It is a standard set by the Scottish Government for all social landlords to meet by 2020 where practical and economically possible. The standard is to bring all homes to an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C. The council takes a 'fabric first' approach to improve insulation and reduce heating need in all properties wherever possible.

All but a small proportion of Fife Council homes now meet the ESSH, with those left being the most challenging non-standard properties, or properties in mixed tenure blocks where Fife council is not the majority owner and other owners have not agreed to work proceeding. In such cases, alternatives such as internal wall insulation may be possible where tenants agree but are a lot more disruptive for the occupants. Heating system options are a particular challenge in flats as gas heating is no longer installed in flats, and air source heat pumps cannot be installed in upper flats. Tenants can find the EPC rating for

their home on a public website, or by contacting their housing management officer or local office. Panel members who tested this for their own homes had mixed experiences. One obtained the information easily from their area office, whilst one did not. Two members who attempted to use the public website found it difficult to navigate and were unable to extract the information they wanted.

Over the last 10 years, Fife Council has received between £1.5m and £2m per year (from a national fund of £60m) to fund energy improvement work in privately owned properties. Work to the council's own housing stock has been funded from the council's own funds, with external insulation costing an average of £7.5 per property. The council will co-ordinate work where possible to that the occupants of all tenures can benefit.

New standards (EESSH2) are due to be announced by the Scottish Government later in 2022. The details are not yet known, but it is anticipated that all 30,000 Fife Council homes will need to meet EPC Band B by 2032. The panel learned that there is a score of 10 points within each band, and a new heating system, for example, may only increase a score by a couple of points. It may therefore be a big step up and require considerable investment to reach a higher EPC band. Fife Council will use Home Analytics software provided by the Energy Savings Trust to run models to pinpoint what energy works are needed for different property types. This will help to identify how best to spend the capital budget available to meet new targets and will drive a 5-year programme.

The panel learned that a further challenge beyond insulating homes, is to also reduce carbon emissions. This may be through the installation of heat pumps, solar electricity panels or battery storage units, for example. Different technologies are also being piloted in several areas, such as the Glenrothes and Dunfermline through use of a district Heating Network, a district heating network, and the Levenmouth hydrogen network scheme. These initiatives aim to reduce carbon emissions and provide the benefits of lower fuel cost to tenants. New council homes are built to high energy efficiency standards with renewable technologies built in. New plans for and technologies for existing homes will be demonstrated to tenants at the next Better Homes exhibition.

While Fife Council do not have direct control over rising energy costs, they do fund Fuel Poverty Officers to work across all tenures, including council tenancies. The Officers work in partnership with Citizens and Rights Fife (CARF), Greener Kirkaldy and the St Andrews Energy Network. They provide help with fuel supplier switching, income maximisation and accessing financial support towards fuel bills for households that meet specified criteria.

2.4 Property Visits

The scrutiny panel recognised that ‘quality of the home’ can be a subjective concept, and that different factors will contribute to individual tenants’ sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Information from the tenant satisfaction surveys also shows that housing quality satisfaction is variable depending on the tenant circumstances.

Across all committee areas, satisfaction is highest amongst single person households (86.1%), and those households who do not have children living at home (85.2%). Conversely, satisfaction is lowest amongst households who have children living at home (60.0%), and younger tenants aged 16 to 34 (58.8%).

Levels of satisfaction across all committee areas also varies by property type. Housing quality satisfaction is highest for tenants living in sheltered properties (97.6%) and bungalows (88.1%). It is lowest for tenants living in upper flats (73.7%) and ground floor flats (68.2%). The survey consultants also observed that the property types where tenants are least satisfied with housing quality also have the highest reported incidence of anti-social behaviour.

Satisfaction levels were also compared across committee areas as shown in Table 2.7 below.

Table 2.7 Overall Tenant Satisfaction with the Quality of Their Home

Committee Area	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neither/ nor	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Methil Leven	– 40.2%	45.7%	4.3%	3.3%	6.5%
Glenrothes	36.7%	49.0%	4.1%	8.2%	2.0%
West Fife Villages	34.4%	49.0%	5.2%	10.4%	1.0%
East Fife	32.4%	48.1%	3.7%	10.2%	5.6%
Kirkcaldy	36.0%	44.0%	9.0%	4.0%	7.0%
Dunfermline	40.9%	35.5%	8.2%	9.1%	6.4%
Cowdenbeath	36.5%	32.3%	6.3%	11.5%	13.5%
All Types	36.8%	42.8%	6.1%	7.6%	6.7%

The panel decided that they would like to visit a cross-section of empty properties to inform their scrutiny, with a particular focus being on the areas and property types that scored lower levels of satisfaction in the last survey.

The sample of properties visited was restricted to those becoming available and safe to enter during the investigation timescale. Members of the panel viewed properties that were vacant and about to be let to new tenants.

The Scrutiny panel members visited six properties, listed at Table 2.8 below. At least two panel members visited each property and all panel members visited at least two properties. They were hosted by a combination of housing management and allocation officers. The properties included types (ground floor flats) and areas that had received lower levels of satisfaction on quality of the home.

Table 2.8 Location and Type of Properties Visited

Location	Property Type
Cowdenbeath, Sunnyside Court	2 bed ground floor flat (sheltered, adapted)
Cowdenbeath, Factory Road	2 bed upper flat (4-in-a-block)
Kirkaldy, Bennoch Road	1 bed ground floor flat (mixed tenure block)
Kirkaldy, Templehall Avenue	2 bed third floor flat
Buckhaven, Omar Crescent	2 bed ground floor flat (mixed tenure block)
Leven, Laburnam Bank	2 bed ground floor flat (adapted)

The following general observations were made:

- Housing management officers are very knowledgeable about the homes and tenancies around their patch. However, staff from several teams are involved in assessing repairs and selecting applicants for vacant homes. A maintenance professional will assess and organise repairs. Applicants (including homeless applicants) are matched to available properties by an allocation officer, who also does the accompanied viewing. The tenancy sign-up and subsequent tenant liaison are done by a housing management officer. The scrutiny panel members noted that communication and knowledge exchange between these different teams may vary depending on individual officer experience.
- The internal condition of the properties visited was generally considered to be reasonable or good. One property did not appear to have been recently checked, with large piles of post accumulating at the door. The group noted that decoration packs were generally available for new tenants where internal decoration was undamaged but required refreshing.
- However, the panel members noted that external areas around properties and external repairs had not always been picked up for attention before being offered to potential new tenants. One property on its third viewing still had a broken door entry system. Several others had debris strewn around the garden areas and /or unclean communal entry stairwells. The panel noted that flatted complexes do not have caretakers or service charges for cleaning services, with these being the responsibility of residents in the block. They noted that the poor external maintenance and cleanliness may also be the responsibility of owners in mixed tenure blocks.
- Fife Council no longer provide or maintain boundary fencing for gardens. Boundaries and the responsibility for open spaces around the flats visited were therefore not always immediately clear. At one property visited, the toys and play equipment from an owner-occupied maisonette were spread around the rented property garden space, for example. Some of the garden areas that are on a steep slope, or which

include large unkempt hedges for example, may also be difficult for a single person to maintain without adequate equipment and skills.

- Whilst the internal condition of properties was generally reasonable, at least one had very limited storage space, and that where meters are internal it was noted these can be difficult to access and/or housed in unattractive partitioning. Panel members also observed that some older properties only include a bath and no shower, and did not always have tiling or connections in place to allow a tenant to easily install an over-bath shower.
- The sheltered property visited has some adaptations for wheelchair user use. However, the panel members noted that internal corridors and turning space were very restricted for a tenant with limited mobility.
- The panel members also noted that even where tenants report lower levels of satisfaction in the tenant satisfaction survey with the quality of housing for certain property types or areas, the statistical basis is very low. The external environment can vary considerably within only a few streets in a community, for example. Amenities and environment also vary across localities. Tenants in properties located in central Cowdenbeath has easy access to shops and other facilities, for example, whereas those in outlying former mining areas could be much more isolated. The panel consider that the factors affecting a tenants' satisfaction with their home could therefore extend beyond the physical condition of the property and be very localised, depending on the external environment, location and immediate neighbourhood.

2.5 Performance Reporting

In their analysis of Annual Return on the Charter data for all landlords 2020/21, the Scottish Housing Regulator noted the following national trends relating to quality of homes:

- Existing tenants' satisfaction with quality of homes remained stable, at 83.4% for local authorities.
- The percentage of homes which meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard decreased to 85.2% for local authorities. The fall in compliance was likely to be due to a slowing or halting of investment programmes due to the public health restrictions imposed to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The percentage of homes compliant with the Scottish Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) increased to 86.4% for local authorities. Again, it was thought likely that the impact of the pandemic constrained landlords' capacity to fully implement some investment programmes.

The scrutiny panel reviewed the most recent Fife Council Pathway to Improvement and Performance Scorecard Committee reports presented to elected members to better understand how the satisfaction survey results are considered, and follow-up actions agreed. Data presented in the report is summarised in Table 2.9 below. (Each performance indicator is referenced to the relevant ARC indicator noted at paragraph 1.2 above). Comments noted by officers in the report on the 2020/21 outputs, and the Pathway for Improvement action points are also included in the table underneath the relevant indicator.

Table 2.9 Pathway to Improvement Scorecard

	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21
Tenant satisfaction with overall services provided by landlord	81.6%	80.9%	84%
Fife Council Note: Taken from a telephone survey of 701 tenants which provides poorer results than face-to-face. Relatively static position compared to previous years	Fife Council Action Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return to face-to-face survey methodology in 2022/23 should covid restrictions allow. - Continue to work with tenants through the Tenant Forum and local and resident associations to deliver high quality services. 		
7 – Tenant satisfaction with quality of home	85.8%	79.6%	87.9%
Fife Council Note: A reduction of 6.28% on the previous year, expected to have been impacted by the covid lockdown restrictions, and a change in survey methodology from face to face to telephone.	Action Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with partner services to improve the quality of repairs to homes. - Continue to monitor performance through the Repair Improvement Management Group. 		
14 – Refused offers	22.01%	23.7%	35.9%
Fife Council Note: Refusals continue to be low. A measured approach to allocations in line with covid restrictions, followed by a transfer led approach to recovery planning has meant that performance exceeds targets and remains in the top quartile.	FC Action Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No specific actions proposed. 		
	93.01	93.04	86.4%
Fife Council Note: Current compliance figures do not take into account work completed during 2019/20 or 2020/21. A large proportion of failings relate to lighting and secure common entrance in blocks where FC do not have majority ownership and cannot progress repairs. These are recorded against individual properties, not the common area.	FC Action Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with the system supplier to resolve issues that are not functioning properly. 		
EESH Compliant	79.03% (24,069)	84.7% (25,618)	89%
Fife Council Note: Based on full EPCs and comparisons to similar property	Contextual only.		

archetypes requiring additional surveys.			
C11.1 – EESSH Exempt	2,710	2,497	21,279
C13.1 – EESSH obtained p/a	1,092	1,463	
C13.2.4 – EESSH investment p/a	£19.9m	£18.1m	£7,344 (avge per home)
Fife Council Note: Covid restrictions reduced the overall capital out-turn compared to previous years. Contextual only.			
C12 – Valid EPCs obtained in year	964	465	
Fife Council Note: Covid restricted access to tenanted properties, EPCs obtained in void properties only. Contextual only.			

Elected members noted the report for November 2020 and did not identify specific areas for improvement beyond those identified by officers.⁷

2.6 Information to Tenants

The scrutiny panel reviewed performance information relevant to quality of the home that is provided to tenants in the Scottish Social Housing Charter Report 2017/18, and in the *Down Your Street* tenant newsletter (Winter 2018). These include extracts from the overall satisfaction survey responses and from annual performance data reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator for the same period (2017/18).

Both documents are sent to all tenants and are also freely available on the Fife Council website. They provide council-wide information on housing quality and maintenance in easy-to-read infographic format. The results are colour coded (red, amber or green) in comparison with national local authority average performance for the same period.

The section on ‘housing quality and maintenance’ includes the following data taken from the 2017/18 resident satisfaction survey:

- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the repairs service.
- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home.
- Percentage of tenants satisfied with the standard of their home when moving in.

Both documents also report on compliance with quality standards for 2017/18:

- Percentage of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard at year end.
- Percentage of properties meeting national home energy rating / standard assessment procedure ratings at the year end.
- Data is also provided relating to numbers of reactive repairs completed, average completion times by repair category, and performance for gas safety records.

⁷ Fife Council Minute of Housing and Community Services Sub-Committee meeting 29/10/21
https://www.fife.gov.uk/data/assets/word_doc/0027/294921/Minute-of-Community-and-Housing-Services-Sub-Committee-meeting-29-October-2021.docx

It was noted that performance data has not been presented in the *Down Your Street* tenants' newsletter since Winter 2018, and that the data above does not reflect the most recent trends. Fife Council's Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance Report for 2020/21 provides updated data. This is freely available on the Fife Council website for download with only a small number of paper copies available at local offices. It includes a section to outline the Pathway to Improvement programme, with the following next step identified to improve performance for housing quality and maintenance:

*"We are working to deliver the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing which will make homes warmer and help address fuel poverty. We are continuing to explore innovative technology, such as ground-source heat pumps and energy storage systems"*⁸

⁸ Fife Council, Scottish Social Housing Report 2020-21, p.14.
https://www.fife.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0022/137290/Fife_Housing_Charter_Performance_Report_2020.21.pdf

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The scrutiny panel noted that the satisfaction survey is carried out annually to provide up-to-date information on rolling trends, and that it meets market research standards for sample size and data stratification within reasonable margins of error. They note that during the pandemic, surveys were restricted to telephone surveys only.

- a) The panel support Fife Council's intention to return to face-to-face surveys as the default survey method as soon as circumstances allow.
- b) The panel recommend that the council also seeks advice from potential survey consultants and draws from their expertise of conducting surveys in other areas and for other landlords to explore the relative advantages, disadvantages and budget options of alternative survey methods. These might include larger survey samples, full area by area surveys, better targeting of hard-to-reach groups, and the additional option of online or text surveys. Existing and alternative survey options should be discussed with the Tenant Forum, to inform future survey contracts.
- c) To better understand whether properties are still appropriate for changing household needs, or whether satisfaction is only linked to the physical condition of properties, an additional question should be asked in the survey to directly ask why, when tenants have said they are not satisfied with the quality of their homes.
- d) To get a more in-depth understanding of tenant priorities for improvements to homes and neighbourhoods at a local level. The panel recommend that follow up surveys or consultation are carried out at area committee level on a rolling basis (of two to three areas each year).
- e) Opportunities should also be explored to use more local survey follow-ups to support tenant-led engagement, such as surgeries in rural areas.

3.2 The Lived Environment

The tenant satisfaction survey asks tenants to prioritise internal and external improvements that could be made. However, the scrutiny panel acknowledge that concepts of 'quality' can be subjective. Based in their visits to empty properties, they believe that dissatisfaction may not always be related to physical aspects of a home, and may also relate to individual lived experience and wider neighbourhood factors.

- a) In preparing properties for re-letting, external aspects of the property should also be considered. The approach to all properties, including communal entries, should be tidy, clean and welcoming. And whilst garden cuts may not be arranged until just before a letting in the summer months, open areas should be clear of all debris and rubbish before viewings are offered.

-
- b) Information should be provided to residents in flatted properties with shared garden spaces so that boundaries and responsibilities for upkeep are clear. This should be explained to all tenants at viewing and sign-up for a new tenancy but may also need to be periodically issued to all residents. This includes occupants of owned flats.
 - c) Reasons for refusals should be monitored to make sure that outstanding repairs and estate management issues are attended to promptly.
 - d) Induction processes, training and letting procedures should be reviewed to ensure that there is close liaison between staff from all teams involved in the repair, allocation and letting of empty properties. Fife council should ensure especially that newer members of staff are adequately trained and given supported to identify any specific property features, neighbourhood issues and applicant circumstances to make sure that applicants are matched to welcoming and safe properties that best meet their needs.
 - e) Where older design sheltered properties are no longer suitable for the needs of applicants with disabilities, Fife Council should continue to look at extending the eligibility criteria if necessary, providing that priority is given to building new homes that meet modern accessibility design standards.

3.3 Improvement Programme

The scrutiny panel noted that the stock condition survey is the main source of evidence to inform the improvement programme, with input from area-based staff to identify local issues. The tenant satisfaction survey supports the current programme priorities but does not appear to have a significant influence.

- a) Area committee level satisfaction survey results should be reported to and discussed with regional tenant forums to better understand tenant priorities and how these can be considered within the programme.
- b) Tenant priorities for improved bathrooms should be correlated with property and household type to better inform budget provision for adaptations if necessary. During their visits to empty properties, panel members observed that some older properties only include a bath and no shower. To better suit modern expectations, that therefore recommend that as bathrooms are renewed, tiling and plumbing connections should make it easy for tenants to install their own over-bath shower if these are not provided at upgrade.

The panel members noted the strong correlation between lower levels of satisfaction in areas where higher levels of anti-social behaviour are reported. They recognise that during the pandemic, tenants will have spent more time in their homes, including for home-working and home-schooling. It might be expected that some occupancy changes will be longer term as hybrid working from home has become a norm for more tenants.

3.4 Energy Efficiency

The scrutiny panel members noted the strong correlation between satisfaction with quality of the home, and whether tenants feel their home is energy efficient and easier to heat. They noted that significant investment has been made on a 'fabric-first' approach to improve the energy efficiency of Fife council housing stock. Compliance rates for SHQS are higher than the local authority average, and EESSH compliance slightly lower than local authority average, with most of the exceptions now being harder to treat non-traditional homes or properties in mixed tenure blocks where majority owners have not agreed to works. Information on the EPC rating for an individual property and for future investment programme work and timescales can be easily obtained, but tenants currently need to know they can ask for it.

- a) The panel recommends that the relevance of available EPC information and how it can be obtained needs to be clearly explained and promoted more widely to all tenants. This should be done through the newsletter and social media channels, and at the next Better Homes exhibition.
- b) The panel noted that Fife Council have invested significantly in works to improve the energy efficiency of their homes in recent years, with very high EESSH compliance. They recognise that failures and abeyances relate to a relatively small number of homes that are more difficult to treat, or in mixed tenure blocks where neighbouring owners have not agreed to work being carried out. The panel recommend that tenants in these homes are provided with updates and information at least annually on the energy efficiency investment implications and options being considered by the Council to bring their homes to the required standards.
- c) As not all tenants are able to attend in-person demonstrations such as at the Better Homes exhibition, the panel recommends that information to demonstrate and explain new technologies should also be made available visually (through photos and videos) on the Council's website and social media channels.

3.5 Information to Tenants

High level results from the satisfaction survey are included in performance reports presented to elected members and reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator. It is reported to tenants through the Annual Return on the Charter report. This is available online but is not routinely sent to all tenants. No performance information has been included in the tenants' newsletter since 2018.

- a) Fife council should include tenant input to the editorial panel for the *Down your Street* tenant newsletter. This editorial panel should review the type of information on performance and survey findings to be provided in the newsletter.
- b) The *Pathway to Improvement* committee report priorities should be included in the tenant newsletter annually. A summary of the tenant satisfaction survey should also be published with the full report available on request.

3.6 Scrutiny Process

The scrutiny panel members acknowledge the open and constructive input that they have received from Fife Council housing professionals who have provided information and answered questions by email or by attending their meetings.

However, they have found the report has taken longer than anticipated to complete due to delays in receiving responses to requests for information and to organise visits to empty properties. The panel have noted that remote working and recent turnover of staff within the department have resulted in what they perceive to be a general lack of awareness about the role of tenant scrutiny to test and improve landlord services.

- a) The panel recommends that an internal toolkit should be finalised and published to provide clarity on roles and expectations for staff and panel members.
- b) Awareness session on tenant scrutiny should be rolled out and the information leaflet on tenant scrutiny made available for all staff across the service area.
- c) Information about tenant scrutiny, including access to previous reports and the Council's response to them, should be available, ideally through a dedicated Tenant Scrutiny website linked through fife.gov.uk.

3.7 Recommendations Response Template

Table 2.10 Recommendation response Template

Number	Recommendation	Fife Council Response	Timescale
1	The panel support the council’s intention to return to face-to-face surveys as the default survey method as soon as circumstances allow.		
2	The panel recommend that the council also seeks advice from potential survey consultants and draws from their expertise of conducting surveys in other areas and for other landlords to explore the relative advantages, disadvantages and budget options of alternative survey methods. These might include larger survey samples, full area by area surveys, better targeting of hard-to-reach groups, and the additional option of online or text surveys. Existing and alternative survey options should be discussed with the Tenant Forum, to inform future survey contracts.		
3	To better understand whether properties are still appropriate for changing household needs, or whether satisfaction is only linked to the physical condition of properties, an additional question should be asked in the survey to directly ask why, when tenants have said they are not satisfied with the quality of their homes.		
4	To get a more in-depth understanding of tenant priorities for improvements to homes and neighbourhoods at a		

	<p>local level. The panel recommend that follow up surveys or consultation are carried out at area committee level on a rolling basis (of two to three areas each year). Opportunities should also be explored to use more local survey follow-ups to support tenant-led engagement, such as surgeries in rural areas.</p>
5	<p>In preparing properties for re-letting, external aspects of the property should also be considered. The approach to all properties, including communal entries, should be tidy, clean and welcoming. And whilst garden cuts may not be arranged until just before a letting in the summer months, open areas should be clear of all debris and rubbish before viewings are offered.</p>
6	<p>Information should be provided to residents in flatted properties with shared garden spaces so that boundaries and responsibilities for upkeep are clear. This should be explained to all tenants at viewing and sign-up for a new tenancy but may also need to be periodically issued to all residents. This includes occupants of owned flats.</p>
7	<p>Reasons for refusals of offers by housing applicants should be monitored to make sure that outstanding repairs and estate management issues are attended to promptly.</p>
8	<p>Induction processes, training and letting procedures</p>

should be reviewed to ensure that there is close liaison between staff from all teams involved in the repair, allocation and letting of empty properties. Fife council should ensure especially that newer members of staff are adequately trained and given supported to identify any specific property features, neighbourhood issues and applicant circumstances to make sure that applicants are matched to welcoming and safe properties that best meet their needs.

9 Where older design sheltered properties are no longer suitable for the needs of applicants with disabilities, Fife Council should continue to look at extending the eligibility criteria if necessary, providing that priority is given to building new homes that meet modern accessibility design standards.

10 Area committee level satisfaction survey results should be reported to and discussed with regional tenant forums to better understand tenant priorities and how these can be considered within the programme.

11 Tenant priorities for improved bathrooms should be correlated with property and household type to better inform budget provision for adaptations if necessary. During their visits to empty properties, panel members observed that some older properties only include a bath and no shower. To better suit modern expectations, that

	therefore recommend that as bathrooms are renewed, tiling and plumbing connections should make it easy for tenants to install their own over-bath shower if these are not provided at upgrade.
12	The panel recommends that the relevance of available EPC information and how it can be obtained needs to be clearly explained and promoted more widely to all tenants. This should be done through the newsletter and social media channels, and at the next Better Homes exhibition.
13	The panel recommend that tenants in homes that do not yet meet EESSH standards (because they are difficult to treat ot in mixed tenure blocks, for example) are provided with updates and information at least annually on the energy efficiency investment implications and options being considered by the Council to bring their homes to the required standards.
14	As not all tenants are able to attend in-person demonstrations such as at the Better Homes exhibition, the panel recommends that information to demonstrate and explain new technologies should also be made available visually (through photos and videos) on the Council’s website and social media channels.
15	Fife council should include tenant input to the editorial

panel for the *Down your Street* tenant newsletter. This editorial panel should review the type of information on performance and survey findings to be provided in the newsletter.

16 The *Pathway to Improvement* committee report priorities should be included in the tenant newsletter annually. A summary of the tenant satisfaction survey should also be published with the full report available on request.

17 An internal toolkit should be finalised and published to provide clarity on roles and expectations for staff and panel members.

18 Awareness session on tenant scrutiny should be rolled out and the information leaflet on tenant scrutiny made available for all staff across the service area.

19 Information about tenant scrutiny, including access to previous reports and the Council's response to them, should be available, ideally through a dedicated Tenant Scrutiny website linked through fife.gov.uk.

Appendix 1

Questions from the Scrutiny Panel about the Tenant Satisfaction Survey Process:

What is done with the information from the Satisfaction Survey? - is it acted on and how is it followed up?
What information do tenants get about the survey results? How / Are the key results and actions taken reported back?
How is the survey organised?
How are tenants selected to get fair representation by area, age, house types and what methods are used to get good levels of response?
(Follow-up to Knowledge Partnership – The panel would like further clarification on how the survey weightings make sure responses reflect the overall population bands by committee area).
When tenants provide comments or suggestions in the survey, can they provide contact details if they want someone from the council to follow up with them? If so, does the council make contact with these tenants, and how is any follow up done?

Questions from the Scrutiny Panel about the Improvement Programme and Energy Efficiency Programme for Fife Council Homes:

How are the priorities and programme for improvements decided? (i.e. how many kitchens, bathrooms etc, and where, when these should be installed?)
How are tenant views on improvement priorities taken into account
How are tenants kept informed about planned improvement programme/s in their area?
What is Fife Council doing to achieve energy efficiency in tenants' homes? i.e. does it have targets for the current Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH)? Are they being achieved across all areas and property types?
What is the council doing with the survey findings that almost 22% of tenants do not find their homes energy efficient?
What information can be provided to tenants about whether their homes are insulated, and about any future plans to make their homes more energy efficient?
What will Fife Council be doing to help tenants manage increasing energy bills?

8th June 2023

Agenda Item No. 8

Equality & Diversity Outcomes Progress 2021-2023

Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with an update on the Council's Equality and Diversity outcomes 2021-2023. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, the draft outcomes were published online at the end of April 2023.

Recommendation(s)

Committee members are asked to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications although some elements of the proposed action plan may require the allocation of staff resources and funding.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Council has complied with the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 and published online a draft progress report covering the two year period 2021-2023.

Impact Assessment

An EqlA is not required as the report does not propose a change to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

Council Services and Partner organisations were consulted and asked for progress in relation to the outcomes and actions.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public authorities to publish every four years, a revised set of equality outcomes and progress against the previous four years of outcomes and actions. In addition, progress against the outcomes and actions is required to be published online every two years (by April 2023).
- 1.2 Attached at Appendix 1 is progress covering the period 2021-2023.

2.0 Progress on the 2021-2023 Outcomes and Actions

- 2.1 The Equality and Diversity document 2021-2025 was approved in June 2021 and set the following five outcomes:
 - Outcome 1 - Fife's communities are provided with services and information accessible to them particularly those who face barriers through disability, language and digital exclusion
 - Outcome 2 - Women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it
 - Outcome 3 - Fife's communities (including people from the protected characteristics) have increased confidence to participate in decision making, their human rights respected and have an improved quality of life
 - Outcome 4 - The Council understands its workforce better and it reflects the diversity of the local population
 - Outcome 5 - Raising educational achievement and attainment particularly for those in their early years or in early learning and childcare
- 2.2 The achievements to date include the following:
 - Fife Council's Accessibility Statement and roadmap to compliance are now publicly available on fife.gov.uk and are reviewed regularly and progress updated. An external accessibility audit of all Fife Council online services was completed in 2022 and regular checks are now ongoing.
 - Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP) has adopted the [Equally Safe](#) strategy and the framework has been used to self-assess progress locally, identifying strengths and weaknesses and forms the basis of FVAWP Action Plan 2019-22.
 - Many of the 500 plus learners supported by ESOL annually are refugees including from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. ESOL continues to support a huge number of adults and while many have found employment, they are often under-employed so continue with English lessons, if and when they can, to enable them to get a better job.
 - The Fife Health & Social Care Partnership's Participation and Engagement Strategy's vision is to "Enable the people of Fife to live healthy independent lives by ensuring stake holder views, experiences and ideas are included in the design and delivery of health and social care services that meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Fife". In relation to equality and diversity, Fife HSCP is committed to the elimination of discrimination and promotion of Equality and Human Rights. This will be embedded into public engagement and participation activities.

- In relation to hate crime reporting, Fife has 16 centres signed up to Third Party Reporting. The majority of the centres are community based groups where they either already have a relationship with a person or the person feels that they could trust the staff because of their role. At present, Third Party Reporting is under review with the Scottish Government. All divisions in Police Scotland fed back areas of good work and areas for improvement and it has been highlighted there is a clear need for third party reporting and there is scope to make this service even better.
- The Council meets the specific duties in relation to the publishing of information about the workforce and pay practices within Equality in Employment Reports (available on fife.gov.uk). These reports provide employee information across all the protected characteristics including recruitment, training, and reasons for leaving the organisation. The reports also provides information about the gender pay gap and occupational segregation. The Council has moved to a new HR/payroll system since the last reporting period. The new system now links data recorded at recruitment with core HR data. Over time this will help improve disclosure rates as people are more likely to complete equality monitoring questions at the recruitment stage.
- In relation to Education & Children’s Services, professional learning regarding equalities has been undertaken by all Headteachers; a new equalities website will be launched in May 23 to support strategic planning and professional learning for all practitioners; a PowerBi report supports schools with anti-bullying data to mitigate any discrimination against learners with protected characteristics; equalities guidance has been devised for schools to support policy development.

3.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council developed a revised set of equality outcomes in 2021 and published a draft progress on the outcomes and actions in April 2023. This report has set out some of the achievements in relation to the five outcomes and actions covering the period 2021-2023.

List of Appendices

1. Equality & Diversity Outcomes – Progress 2021-2023

Report Contact:

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Equality & Diversity Outcomes – Progress 2021-2023

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	<i>Outcome 1:</i> Fife’s communities are provided with services and information accessible to them	
	<i>Outcome 2:</i> Women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse	
	<i>Outcome 3:</i> Fife’s communities have increased confidence to participate in decision making	
	<i>Outcome 4:</i> The Council understands its workforce better and it reflects the diversity of the local population	
	<i>Outcome 5:</i> Raising educational achievement and attainment	
4.	Mainstreaming Equalities	19
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neurodevelopment Pathway• Community engagement toolkit• Gaelic Language Plan	
5.	Fife Centre for Equalities	21

1. Introduction

Fife Council approved its [equality and diversity outcomes in 2021](#) following extensive consultation and engagement with protected characteristics led by Fife Centre for Equalities. Although there is much equality and diversity work that goes on in the Council, feedback from the engagement exercise ensured that the Council was taking forward outcomes and actions which would benefit as many people as possible.

The outcomes and actions approved covered a four year period – this report is a mid-term update on what has been achieved so far in relation to some of the actions.

Starting with a brief overview of the Public Section Equality Duty requirements, this document also sets (in Section 2) out some of the national legislative context since the original outcomes were published in 2021. Section 3 then outlines the achievements to date.

2. Public Sector Equality Duty & National Context

Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 came into force in April 2011, introducing a new Public Sector Equality Duty that became law across Scotland. The public sector equality duty has 3 parts which all public authorities need to comply with. The 3 parts are called the general duty and public authorities need to consider each of these:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristics and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origin, colour and nationality. This includes Gypsy Travellers
- Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The public sector equality duty under the Equality Act requires the Council to:

- **Mainstream** – How the duty is being integrated into other functions undertaken by the Council.
- **Set equality outcomes** – The results which the authority wishes to achieve. The outcomes must have been set with the engagement of protected characteristics and/or evidence relating to the protected characteristics.
- **Involve** all protected characteristics - and anyone else the local authority considers represents the interests of people with protected characteristics.
- Consider **relevant evidence** relating to people with protected characteristics.
- **Assess** and review policies and practices.
- **Gather** and use employment information.
- **Publish** a revised set of outcomes within a reasonable timescale.

National Context

Interpreting, Translation and Transcription Services Framework

Covering the period 2021-2025, the Scottish Government has circulated the above Framework which sets out the provision of interpreting, translation and transcription services. The Framework is available to the public sector including local authorities and third sector organisations. The scope of the Framework covers:

- Face-to-face, remote video and telephone interpreting
- Translation and transcription services
- Text to speech (audio)

Fife Council already has an agreement in place with DA Languages until February 2024 for translation and transcription services and will use the above Framework thereafter. Face to face interpreting is currently provided by Fife Community Interpreting Service.

Further information can be found via gov.scot: [Interpreting, translation and transcription services framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/frameworks/interpreting-translation-transcription-services/framework/html/index.html)

Hate Crime Strategy for Scotland 2023

The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 will modernise, consolidate and extend existing hate crime law in Scotland. Currently, the law currently recognises hate crime based on prejudice towards the following protected characteristics:

- disability
- race
- religion
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity

The Act will now:

- introduce new protections against offences aggravated by prejudice towards a person's age;
- provide new 'stirring up of hatred' offences covering all characteristics protected in the updated legislative framework;
- require information about police recorded hate crime and convictions data to be published annually, and with greater detail where known.

More details about the [Strategy](#) and commitments can be found here.

In Fife, Police Scotland chairs a Hate Crime Core Group working in partnership with NHS, Fife Council and Third Sector organisations to discuss incidents of hate crime. and identify where there may be patterns of incidents either geographically or

against particular protected characteristics. Fife Council separately has a Hate Incidents procedure and policy.

Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

The Bill simplifies the process by which a trans person can obtain a gender recognition certificate. Key provision in the Bill include:

- the Registrar General for Scotland would consider applications instead of the Gender Recognition Panel which is a UK tribunal;
- applicants would not need to submit a medical diagnosis and evidence to support the application (as current process needs)
- applicants would make a statutory declaration that they have lived in the acquired gender for at least three months before applying (rather than the current period of two years) and that they intend to live permanently in their acquired gender
- the application would then be determined by the Registrar General after a three month reflection period if the applicant confirms they want to proceed;
- applicants would either be the subject of an entry in a birth or adoption record kept by the Registrar General, or be ordinarily resident in Scotland
- the minimum age of applicants would be 16, rather than 18 at present.

The Scottish Government was keen to point out that the Bill would not make any changes to the reserved Equality Act 2010 and that the Government would continue to support the provision of single-sex services and the rights of women.

The Bill completed the final stage of the Scottish legislative process in December 2022. However, on 17 January 2023, the UK Government used section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998 to block the Bill from receiving royal assent. At the time of writing, there is no further update on the Bill receiving royal assent.

More information about the Bill and what is covered can be found at this [link](#).

A new Human Rights Bill for Scotland

The Scottish Human Rights Commission has worked for many years to support the incorporation of four United Nations Human Rights treaties into Scots Law, including legislation that enhances economic, social and cultural rights, and the human rights of women, disabled people and minority ethnic communities in Scotland. The Scottish Government has stated it will open a consultation on the Bill this year. The Scottish Human Rights Commission gathered views from people across Scotland on how the new law should work – read the [report](#) here.

3. Progress on Equality & Diversity Outcomes 2021-2023

The Council set five equality outcomes for the period 2021-2025. The Senior Equalities Group regularly receives updates on how the outcomes and actions are being implemented across the Council. This section provides an update on some of the work that has been achieved during the first two years of setting the outcomes.

Outcome 1: Fife's communities are provided with services and information accessible to them particularly those who face barriers through disability, language and digital exclusion.

Online Accessibility Update

Our Accessibility Statement and roadmap to compliance are now publicly available on fife.gov.uk and are reviewed regularly and progress updated.

An external accessibility audit of all Fife Council online services was completed in 2022 and regular checks are now ongoing using the Silktide platform. The Online Services Team is working towards improving scores for Content, Accessibility and User Experience which includes performance on a mobile.

Accessibility standards for online content are now being enforced by the Online Services Team. Any requests for new content or edits to content on the site are subject to accessibility checks. There has been a concerted effort to reduce the number of publications uploaded to the website. When publications are uploaded, the Online Services team work with services to ensure these are as accessible as they can be.

Training has been made available to all staff in an attempt to raise awareness and increase compliance with Word documents and PDFs. Tools such as Microsoft's Inclusivity kit have been added to the 'Making Files More Accessible' section in the IT Skills Hub.

Two online accessibility awareness webinars were held in August and September 2022 to raise awareness and encourage conversations about accessible communication throughout the council. These sessions were attended by almost 100 members of staff.

Making social media posts accessible is now covered as part of the mandatory Social Media Policy and Moderator Training which every new social media moderator must attend. Accessibility of social media posts is also picked up as part of regular spot checks carried out on Fife Council social media pages and accounts. Any issues are discussed with the moderators for those pages.

Going Forward

A cross council Accessibility Working Group is currently being set up with the first meeting of the group to be held within the next two months.

The Online Services team is committed to carrying out regular user testing of online content. An internal Testing Group will be set up initially to provide real user testing of the website, online forms and social media. This will progress to working with external customers.

One outstanding area on the accessibility roadmap is Committee Papers. These are an ongoing issue due to the way packs are compiled. Online Services is working closely with Committee Services to find a solution.

Outcome 2: Women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it

Equally Safe – Scotland’s strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls is the key national driver for Fife Violence Against Women Partnership. The Delivery Plan and local area Quality Standards work to the following four priorities that have been adopted by partners locally:

- *Equally Safe Priority 1:* Scottish society embraces equality and mutual respect and rejects all forms of violence against women and girls;
- *Equally Safe Priority 2:* Women and girls thrive as equal citizens: socially, culturally, economically, and politically;
- *Equally Safe Priority 3:* Interventions are early and effective, preventing violence and maximising the safety and wellbeing of women children and young people;
- *Equally Safe Priority 4:* Men desist from all forms of violence against women and girls and perpetrators of such violence receive a robust and effective response.

Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP) has adopted the [Equally Safe](#) strategy and the framework has been used to self-assess progress locally, identifying strengths and weaknesses and forms the basis of FVAWP Action Plan 2019-22.

Some of the progress made against each of the four priorities mentioned above is set out below.

Priority 1

There have been a series FVAWP public awareness campaigns linked to national campaigns. In addition, FVAWP has worked with the Community Safety Partnership to develop a women’s safety campaign and the University of St Andrews and Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre to show an art exhibition “*What were you wearing?*”. FVAWP is currently arranging for the exhibition to be seen at a range of venues across Fife.

These initiatives provided an opportunity to further promote local services. Additional initiatives to support prevention work in schools and other settings was more challenging but is increasing again.

Priority 2

FVAWP worked with the Senior Equalities Group highlighting the inequalities of outcome for women, children and young people with lived experience of VAW&G, including in terms of Covid. Fife Council has been accepted onto the Equally Safe Employer Accreditation Programme and is working towards gaining a bronze award, this is led by Human Resources. It is an eighteen-month programme which started in March 2022. Substantial preparatory work has been undertaken in terms of updating policies and guidance.

Priority 3

Covid presented major challenges, however services continued to be delivered in a range of ways, with good service user feedback and new initiatives developed including:

- Joint research with ADP undertaken by Scottish Drugs Forum to ask women with lived experience what the barriers are to accessing and staying engaged with services
- Join the Dots a new Fife Women's Aid Service for children and young people based on a model of additional and intensive support was launched providing opportunities to explore the impact of domestic abuse and support recovery.
- Training was delivered through a variety of platforms including e-learning, webinars and blended learning options. With the help of our partners, we adapted more courses to the webinar format. Evaluations have been exceptionally positive.

Priority 4

- Covid restrictions had a significant impact on the functioning of criminal justice system, particularly the Courts where there were significant backlogs. CJSW continued to manage cases with close monitoring.
- Perpetrator groups were suspended, including for domestic abuse and sex offenders to be replaced with one-to-one delivery. Groups were re-established in January 2022 as Covid restrictions eased.
- FVAWP promotes engaging with male perpetrators of domestic abuse to hold them accountable for their behaviours in terms of adult victims, children and third parties a new multi-agency seminar "Engaging Safely with Male Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse" was developed

FVAWP held a development session 9th September 2022 to refresh the action plan, in light of changing circumstances and additional guidance. Emerging themes included:

- Ensuring violence against women and girls and equalities are prioritised within Community Planning with disaggregated data informing decisions and strong Leadership.
- Cost of Living Crisis needs to focus specifically on the impact for women and girls not only families
- Policies need to more effectively gender tested with enhanced use of Equality Impact Assessments
- Ensuring policy drives practice
- Challenges in accessing services especially where there are a range of vulnerabilities

Read more about the work of the FVAWP including the latest [annual report](#).

Outcome 3: Fife's communities (including people from the protected characteristics) have increased confidence to participate in decision making, their human rights respected and have an improved quality of life

Fife Council ESOL Service

Fife Council ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) offers English classes to people living in Fife whose first language is not English. The Service helps learners to improve their English language skills so they can move to further learning, volunteering, a new or different job and to integrate into community life. This is of strategic importance as the Plan for Fife 2017-27 states, "**Opportunities for All** is about ensuring that no-one is left behind.

ESOL teaches English, but classes can also support people with; employability, the driving theory test, the CSCS test, Life in the UK test, access to college, etc and the softer outcomes, such as increased confidence, increased independence, progression to other community-based learning opportunities. Learning takes place in classrooms, online or at established community activities.

Many of the 500 or so learners supported by ESOL annually are refugees. Under VPRS (Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme) Fife welcomed 140 **Syrians** from 2015-2020 and then UKRS (UK Resettlement Scheme) replaced VPRS, and 7 additional individuals have been welcomed since 2020. Afghan families and individuals are being resettled throughout the UK, via Fife and ESOL offers language classes to those with no or little English. Since March 2022 Ukrainians have been able to come to Fife using one of Fife three different routes: (Family VISA, Homes for Ukraine, Scottish Govt Super Sponsorship scheme). There have been approximately 450 arrivals in Fife to date. ESOL has supported a huge number of adults and while many have found employment, they are often under-employed so continue with English lessons, if and when they can, to enable them to get a better job.

The community that ESOL works with faces many barriers. For example, there is no longer a dedicated ESOL Strategy and without a strategic commitment at Government level resulting in an increase in their vulnerability. The No-one Left Behind Strategy is delivered by third sector partners. Learners often fall out with the age-related eligibility, or their needs are misunderstood or overlooked. Under-employment is also an issue. Learners are unaware of progression opportunities or their qualifications are not formal or not recognised, and training opportunities are not available as many are working, though often on zero-hour contracts.

A Test of Change pilot involving staff from the Kirkcaldy Community Development Team, Housing and Social Work started in August 2021. The aim is to work collaboratively to reduce poverty by offering a person-centred approach to improving outcomes for those facing multiple disadvantage. By sharing resources, knowledge and approaches the team aims to intervene early and prevent people from spiralling to statutory services and further hardship. Inspired by the success of the Participatory City model developed in Barking and Dagenham, Fife Council were invited to explore participation in the project with 5

other Local Authorities in Scotland. 3 staff went down to Barking and Dagenham to further explore the concept. There has been a considerable delay due to the pandemic, but a feasibility study has now commenced in Kirkcaldy. From the initial 6 local authorities identified in Scotland, Fife and Renfrewshire are proceeding with the feasibility phase. The process is being led by The Corra Foundation and findings will be available in January 2022.

Health & Social Care Partnership Participation and Engagement Strategy for Fife 2022-2025

The Strategy's vision is to "Enable the people of Fife to live healthy independent lives by ensuring stake holder views, experiences and ideas are included in the design and delivery of health and social care services that meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Fife".

In relation to equality and diversity, Fife HSCP is committed to the elimination of discrimination and promotion of Equality and Human Rights. This will be embedded into public engagement and participation activities which include:

- Carrying out equality impact assessments;
- Planning engagement activities to ensure they are flexible, accessible, and inclusive;
- Ensuring engagement is appropriate, proportionate, and effective to the participation and engagement activity;
- Employing a variety of innovative methods along with tried and tested methods to ensure maximum participation;
- Working in collaboration with stakeholders to ensure the appropriate people, communities and organisations are involved.

Read more about the [Participation and Engagement Strategy](#) here.

Police Scotland

In Fife there are 16 centres signed up to Third Party Reporting. The majority of the centres are community based groups where they either already have a relationship with a person or the person feels that they could trust the staff because of their role. Examples of this are support services for asylum seekers or refugees, disability day centres, and LGBT support group. Importantly, some of these key partners also form part of the Hate Crime Core Group. On a separate level, the EDI Officer for Fife Division maintains contact with the various centres for any matters arising relating to third party reporting or general EDI enquiries. This is crucial to keep relationships strong and further forge new working relationships through networking.

At present, Third Party Reporting is under review with the Scottish Government. All divisions in Police Scotland fed back areas of good work and areas for improvement and it has been highlighted there is a clear need for third party reporting and there is scope to make this service even better. Due to the ongoing review and

recommendations, signing up new centres is not being overly encouraged at this time until there is better forms of publicising the service to ensure everyone can best support communities. The recommendations proposed to the Scottish Government have the potential to really grow Third Party Reporting and enable it to become a well utilised service throughout Scotland.

The Hate Crime Core group includes lead practitioners from key partners who can influence operational activity and procedures within their organisation; having the direct contact and relationship with those from protected characteristics. The purpose of this group is to address any emerging trends; allowing tactical level decisions to be made by the group on intervention, prevention and assess the wider impact on our communities. The ongoing commitment of the Hate Crime Core group is crucial to support communities with the ever evolving pace of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Outcome 4: The Council understands its workforce better and it reflects the diversity of the local population

Employee information

The Council meets the specific duties in relation to the publishing of information about the workforce and pay practices within Equality in Employment Reports (available on fife.gov.uk). These reports provide employee information across all the protected characteristics including recruitment, training, and reasons for leaving the organisation. The appendix of these reports also provides information about the gender pay gap and occupational segregation.

Key statistics - profile of the workforce as of 31st March 2022

Age

Employees aged 55 and over make up 29.4% of our total workforce. The percentage of our workforce aged 24 and under has slightly decreased from the last reporting period (5.3% in 2020 to 4.2% 2022). However, the age group 24-29 has increased in the same time period (7.4% in 2020 to 8.1% 2022) so this could be an indication we have been successful in retaining our employees who were recruited whilst aged 16-24 and have since aged out of that bracket.

Gender

The gender split has remained relatively static with females making up 72.9% of our workforce (72.2% in 2020).

Disability

The percentage of our workforce declaring a disability remains below 2%. In the move to a new HR/payroll system we had difficulties migrating data about employees' disability status as this is recorded differently from the previous HR/payroll system. Encouraging disclosure (including the option for "prefer not to say") is a priority action for 2021-25 and we hope to show progress in our next update.

Ethnicity

Just under 1% of our workforce have told us that they are from a non-white background. Ethnicity has a higher percentage of people choosing the option "prefer not to say" than all other protected characteristics (22.4%) so although we have only 5.6% "blanks"/non-disclosure of this question we are still unsure of how accurate our ethnicity demographic information is. We will make efforts to explore why our employees are choosing not to disclose their ethnicity and what we can do to allay any fears or misconceptions around providing us with this data.

Gender Pay Gap

	31/03/2021	31/03/2022
Women's avg hourly earning	£16.15	£16.37
Men's avg hourly earnings	£16.52	£16.63
Gender Pay Gap	2.24%	1.56%

The gender pay gap has decreased from 2021 to 2022. This is likely due to the Fife Council Living Wage (FCLW) grade being female-dominated and this grade received a proportionately higher pay increase during this time period than all other grades. The FCLW rate increased higher as a result of the Council being a living wage employer and as such pay more than the nationally agreed Scottish Local Government living wage (£10.90 as opposed to £10.85).

Employment-related equality outcome and workforce actions

The employment-related equality outcome for 2021-2025 is: *"The Council understands its workforce better and it reflects the diversity of the local population"*. We set key workforce actions to achieve this. This is our progress so far:

Work to improve the information we hold about employee's equality information.

We have moved to a new HR/payroll system since the last reporting period. The new system now links data recorded at recruitment with our core HR data. Over time this will help improve our disclosure rates as we know people are more likely to complete equality monitoring questions at the recruitment stage.

Unfortunately, however, during implementation of the new system we were unable to migrate all of our data and therefore some disclosure rates are temporarily lower than they were in previous reports. We are planning a comms campaign to encourage employees to check that their information has been recorded and if not to complete it once more.

We now ask for and record information on our employees' caring responsibilities.

Engage with local communities about our workplace practices in partnership with Fife Centre for Equalities.

We have been working with Fife Centre for Equalities (FCE) to undertake research into the public's perception of Fife Council as an employer and access to the job opportunities we offer. This piece of work was specifically targeted at minority ethnic communities within Fife as our data from the last reporting period showed we had a disproportionately low number of applications from these groups. FCE ran a survey from August to November 2022 with follow up focus groups and interviews. When the analysis of the project is finalised, we will use this information to create an action plan and will provide a further update in our next report.

Engage with young people in our workforce to identify and act on ways to attract and support other young people (aged 16 - 24) into training and employment opportunities with the Council.

“YEN”, our Young Employee Network, has re-launched. Senior managers have been attending the meetings to talk through their career paths with the group. We are looking at other ways to support engagement within the network including the use of Yammer.

The Kickstart Government scheme allowed us to offer 6-month work placements to young people aged 16-24 years old who were on universal credit. The placements included wrap around employability support and gave those young people, who were more likely to have been disproportionately hit by the pandemic, the opportunity to build their skills in the workplace and to gain experience to improve their chances of finding long term employment.

Within Fife Council 51 placements were recruited to across Services such as Waste Operations, Active Schools, Customer Service, Home Care, Housing, Communities and Supported Employment Service. Following conclusion of the programme, 23 of those who had placements gained employment with the Council.

Demonstrate our commitment to equality of opportunity for trans people throughout recruitment and employment, including supporting trans employees through a transitioning process.

Guidance pages on supporting transgender employees were created on our employee intranet in April 2022. Transgender Fife, the Senior Equalities Group and the Trade Unions provided feedback on the content before it was agreed and published.

Further our support to recruit and retain disabled employees.

The Workplace Adjustment passport launched in November 2021. This provides a systematic method of discussing, recording, and reviewing reasonable adjustments. Use of the passport is voluntary and it is up to each individual to decide if making use of the passport will help to support them at work, but we do encourage the use of it.

We renewed our disability confident employer status in December 2022.

Review employee training relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our Chief Executive Team agreed in June 2022 that equalities training should be mandatory. We reviewed the available eLearning modules and have been working with the Digital Skills and Learning team to create accompanying training resources and alternative formats so that the training can be delivered to all employee groups.

Develop new workstyles to provide support for more flexible and inclusive working across the Council.

We have a varied workforce, with day-to-day activities of council employees looking very different. We have mapped every job to one of six categories with a package of tools and support relevant to the job role. There is a project group in place who are developing our workstyles and exploring what’s possible and fair for everyone in terms of flexibility, choice, access to technology and wellbeing.

Following the pandemic, we have successfully rolled out our new “blended workstyle” (often referred to elsewhere as “hybrid”). A survey was issued in December 2022 to gather information from employees whose posts were identified as being eligible for blended working. This closed in January 2023 with 1120 responses (around 47% of those eligible for this workstyle). Only 4% of respondents had opted out of adopting the new workstyle and 84% felt the balance of home and office working is right.

We are continuing to work with Flexibility Works to progress thinking on flexibilities across all employee groups. The focus in 2023 will be on testing a range of good practice for increasing flexibility within our frontline roles. Corporately we are also reviewing our Flexible Working Policy.

Other equality-related projects

British Sign Language progress

Since the last reporting period we have made efforts to increase the provision of BSL translation as standard. The Council’s weekly employee news round-up is now translated each week and we are working with the Council’s Deaf Communication Service to translate other key HR information.

Equally Safe at Work

The Council is currently taking part in the [Equally Safe at Work](#) employer accreditation programme which is run by Close the Gap to support the Scottish Government’s Equally Safe strategy preventing violence against women and girls. This is an equality action under the outcome “Women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it”. A cross-departmental working group is in place and a detailed action plan has been developed and is progressing.

Community Wealth Building

The Council has committed to actions designed to advance Community Wealth Building to achieve access for individuals to local and fair employment opportunities, fairer wages, skills development opportunities and improved wellbeing for our employees. These include:

- Redesigned recruitment approaches to help applicants overcome digital and process barriers
- Targeted recruitment from priority groups who face inequalities and who are furthest from the labour market
- Establishment of a ‘life chances’ approach to a proportion of core Fife Council vacancies
- Employability programmes to be designed into recruitment processes for identified posts with guaranteed job outcomes for participants

Workforce Youth Investment

Our Workforce Youth Investment Programme continues, each year providing apprenticeships, traineeships and graduate roles to people aged 16-24 residing in Fife. Support and empowerment of young employees and the wider young people of Fife will continue to be a priority. We have signed up to the Young Person's Guarantee.

Outcome 5: Raising educational achievement and attainment particularly for those in their early years or in early learning and childcare

In relation to the outcome and actions for Education and Children's Services, the following update is available:

- Professional Learning regarding Equalities undertaken by all Headteachers via HTE days.
- New Equalities website ready for launch in May 23, this will support strategic planning and professional learning for all practitioners
- New PowerBi report supporting schools with anti-bullying data to mitigate any discrimination against learners with protected characteristics
- New Equalities guidance devised for schools to support policy development.
- Worked in partnership with Fife Centre for Equalities to devise a day of training for Senior Leaders focused on specific protected characteristics and devising a school equalities action plan (June 23)

4. Mainstreaming Equalities

Although the equality and diversity document sets out five specific equality outcomes, there is nevertheless some work being undertaken across the Council which has an equality focus and is worth noting. This section presents some of that work.

Neurodevelopment Pathway

A Multi-agency Strategic Oversight Group with a focus initially on Autism was established in 2021. Representation on the group included Education & Children's Services, Health and Social Care and NHS with links to other stakeholders. An Action Plan was developed on work related to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) which enabled a clear focus on key areas to be developed, discussed and improved. The action plan areas of good practice and common areas for development as well as gaps. The oversight group identified that when services communicate and work together, with a multi-agency response there are better outcomes for service users and that experiences are varied depending on the staff who interact with the children, young people, adults, or families.

Whilst this work was underway, the Scottish Government introduced the Neurodevelopment Pathways and Test of Change (ToC). Some of the aims of this particular ToC were to:

- Provide timely, proactive mental health support to autistic people and their families/carers;
- Enable autistic people to develop and implement strategies for self-management;
- Improve collaboration between mental health professionals and services and autism specific supports.

Read more about the test of change [neurodevelopment pathway](#) work here.

Community Engagement Toolkit

Community engagement is a priority for the Council and is vital in meeting the Plan for Fife outcomes. A [toolkit](#) has been developed to support services and organisations to deliver effective community engagement through following nine key stages when planning an engagement or consultation.

The principles of engagement were used in the Recovery and Renewal [Plan for Fife Update 2021-2024](#) which set out four recovery and renewal priorities following the pandemic – community wealth building; leading economic recovery; tackling poverty & preventing crisis; addressing the climate emergency. The following are some of the issues which will contribute to effective community engagement and inclusion are:

- Taking a community wealth building approach improves communities and their wellbeing as it puts communities at the heart of all decisions and prevents problems in the future.
- Helping people maximise income and remove cost barriers to participation.
- Improve community voice structures through the Community Learning & Development Plan.
- People consider services are more joined up.
- More people involved in local community planning and locality planning.
- More community-based models of social provision.

Gaelic Language Plan

Fife is increasingly proud of its Gaelic heritage and is working with communities using Gaelic as a tool for personal, social and economic growth, as well as just enjoying it for the craic!

The most recent [Gaelic-plan.pdf \(fife.gov.uk\)](#) promoted the Gaelic toolkit for tourism [Gaelic for Tourism - Fife Tourism Partnership](#) as part of Seachdain na Gàidhlig / World Gaelic Week in February, as well as launching the Youtube and Instagram platforms.

From February 2023, adult classes have been held in Levenmouth and Beath High Community Use, with a third class starting at Queen Margarets in the near future. Community based classes are also proposed in Glenrothes and Dunfermline. Bookbugs at Carnegie Library continue to be well attended and Gaelic and Scots inclusion at Lochgelly Library will start in May.

Ionnadan na Gàidhlig/ Gaelic hubs are being developed in Dunfermline, St Andrews and Cupar; these are places where there have been multiple points of Gaelic engagement working in partnership to increase Gaelic use in the community and use Gaelic as a tool for change.

The Gaelic walks with Fife Cultural Trust have reached an international audience and a University of Virginia trip to Scotland has specifically asked for a Gaelic walk and placenames input while in St Andrews.

5. Fife Centre for Equalities

Fife Centre for Equalities continues to provide support to officers, facilitation and linkage with community groups for engagement activity across all the Equality Outcomes. Some achievements in relation to the four equality outcomes are as follows:

Outcome 1

Over the past year, residents have been supported to provide feedback on the Local Transport Strategy (LTS), and more recently the Local Development Plan. The LTS process started engagement with early face-to-face discussions on the Council's vision which helped refine the online survey. The survey in turn was widely promoted via online forums, social media and networks and users were supported to respond where required, leading to a good take up (1335 total responses, of which 180 said they have a disability and 33 were from an ethnic minority background). Along with the online format, FCE facilitated an in-person equality impact assessment workshop, helping simplify and make more accessible the questions being asked, involving 20 participants from varied protected characteristics groups (including disability, people with socio-economic disadvantage, carers).

FCE is also providing support for the BSL Plan by hosting and promoting Deaf Support Service BSL videos for Fife Council Reception Staff through FCE's media website and YouTube channel.

Outcome 2

FCE promoted the 16 Days of Activism Campaign with community groups who were directly involved in the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership such as Fife Equalities Forum.

Outcome 3

FCE continues to support participation in consultations, using the approach taken in the LTS consultation and strategy, and is now focussing on involving disabled people in the Local Development Plan consultation.

Outcome 4

FCE carried out a survey and in-depth interviews with would-be employees and former staff from Fife Council. The report and analysis summarise the findings from 70 respondents and 5 interviewees. The report and findings will be analysed and HR will use this information to create an action plan and provide a further in the next progress report.

Outcome 5

FCE is providing equality diversity and inclusion training and workshops to the Education Extended Leadership team, which was disrupted due to strikes in 2022-2023, but resuming in the 2023-2024.

8 June, 2023

Agenda Item No. 9

People & Communities Scrutiny Committee Workplan

Report by: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report supports the Committee's consideration of the workplan for future meetings of the Committee.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Committee review the workplan and that members come forward with suggestions for areas of scrutiny.

Resource Implications

Committee should consider the resource implication for Council staff of any request for future reports.

Legal & Risk Implications

Committee should consider seeking inclusion of future items on the workplan by prioritising those which have the biggest impact and those which seek to deal with the highest level of risk.

Impact Assessment

None required for this paper.

Consultation

The purpose of the paper is to support the Committee's discussion and therefore no consultation is necessary.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Each Scrutiny Committee operates a workplan which contains items which fall under three broad headings: performance reporting, planning; and improvement work. These items will often lead to reactive rather than proactive scrutiny. Discussion on the workplan agenda item will afford members the opportunity to shape, as a committee, the agenda with future items of business it wishes to review in more detail.

2.0 Conclusions

- 2.1 The current workplan is included as Appendix one and should be reviewed by the committee to help inform scrutiny activity.

List of Appendices

1. Workplan

Background Papers

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

None

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People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 31 August 2023			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Community Justice, Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Report	Health and Social Care	Nicki Connor	
Annual Inspection Grades - FC Care Homes & Care Inspectorat Homes	Education and Children's Services	Christine Moir	
Children's Services Inspection Update	Education and Children's Services		
Children and Families Social Work Strategy - 6 monthly performance report	Education and Children's Services	Chris Moir	
Workforce Planning	Education and Children's Services	Shelagh McLean, Kevin Funnell-Ed	
Housing Performance 2022-25 Pathway to Improvement	Housing Services	Mhairi Mullen	
Community Social Work	Education and Children's Services	Karen Pedder	
Fife Council Duty of Candor Annual Report	Health and Social Care	Kathy Henwood	
Armed Forces Covenant Report	Legal & Democratic Services	Lindsay Thomson	
Child Protection Annual Report	Education and Children's Services	Chris Moir	
Day Care Provision	Health and Social Care		
Self Directed Care Packages	Health and Social Care	Nicki Connor	
Tackling Dampness and Mould in Council Houses	Housing Services	Mhairi Mullen, Helen Wilkie	

People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 29 February 2024			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Trusts Annual Reports	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Andy Maclellan, Tim Kendrick	

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Fife Corporate Parenting Board - 6 monthly update/analysis	Education and Children's Services	Fiona Balloch, Kathy Henwood, Scott McCallum	
Rockgelly	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Sarah Roxburgh, Paul Vaughan	
Update on the provision of sports facilities within Fife	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service		