

Fife Council Annual Assurance Statement 2026

The People & Communities Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on the 29th October 2026, sought assurance that Fife Council's Housing Service complies with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulatory Framework, the relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter and applicable legislative duties. This assurance is supported with regular performance reporting and on-going engagement with the Tenant Forum.

On review of the evidence provided, it is acknowledged the Council is materially non-compliant in the following standards and outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and other service users. These areas have been identified as priorities for improvement during 2026-27.

Areas of Non-Compliance:

Homelessness

During 2025-26, new homelessness presentations remained relatively static, however, live homeless cases recorded an increase. Pressure on temporary accommodation remains significant and despite improvements, breaches of temporary accommodation statutory duties were still evident. A further reduction in the use of hotels and B&B accommodation was recorded, and a Temporary & Support Accommodation Strategy was developed to further support this area of work. The number of children in temporary accommodation increased to the highest recorded since 2022-23. The Service continues to focus on homelessness pressures and meeting statutory duties, as part of a core strand of the Housing Emergency response. The improvement actions currently under implementation are to:

- Boost rapid rehousing and minimise customer transitions by increasing the flipping of temporary to permanent accommodation from 200 to at least 300 households in year, with a focus on families.
- Enhance the number of property acquisitions to meet the needs of homeless households and those from resettlement / humanitarian schemes.
- Review frontline services and develop the Whole Systems Approach homelessness prevention focus linking to Fife Council No Wrong Door transformational change programme.
- Proactively redevelop the housing advice, options and prevention framework to promote informed housing choices and pathways as part of a new Housing Allocations Policy and systems framework in 2027.
- Implement the Voids Service Improvement Plan to reduce relet times to 25 days and reduce void rent loss while promoting a transfer led approach to housing allocations.
- Develop a best use of stock approach through Fife Housing Register Partnership to promote a simplified, partnership focus on housing need and homelessness prevention through managed pathways.

Resources permitting, additional actions which are being considered for 2026/27 (some of which link to the Housing Emergency response) are:

- Enhance community-based temporary accommodation through the Private Sector Leasing Scheme and other private sector interventions to support statutory duty compliance.
- Implement objectives in the Temporary and Supported Accommodation Strategy to enable plans to decommission or re-provision unsuitable accommodation.
- Seek cross organisational support to upscale Housing First tenancies from 115 to 200 and continue to diversify the programme.
- Build on learning from Health & Social Care Partnership tests of change to redevelop commissioned services, focusing on housing and accommodation-based support.

Gas Safety

The Council recognise non-compliance in eight cases where gas safety checks were not carried out within timescale, thus breaching a statutory duty. Six failures were linked to procedural failures in long-term void properties with capped gas. Two failures were due to circumstances beyond Fife Council control. To rectify this and prevent any future failures, the improvement actions in place for 2026-27 are to:

- Reissue procedural guidance to staff and liaise closely with area team colleagues to ensure a second gas safety check is conducted prior to keys being handed over to new tenants.

- Continue close monitoring of properties, processes and procedures through the gas governance group.

Electrical Safety

As of 31st March 2026, 1,024 properties did not have a valid electrical safety certificate. This is the outcome of denied access by tenants, resulting in a backlog of properties without a valid certificate. To ensure compliance moving forward, the improvement actions identified for 2026-27 are to:

- Conduct face-to-face communication with tenants denying access to explain the importance of electrical safety inspections and the benefits for both tenants and properties.
- Continue to deliver an enforced access procedure where access is denied on two previous occasions. This mirrors the process for no access gas safety cases.

Fire Safety

As of 31st March 2026, 1,180 properties recorded non-compliance with fire and smoke alarm requirements. This is the result of denied property access preventing the installation of interlinked smoke alarms and the checking of anniversary dates. Duplication is recorded between the non-compliant fire safety properties and non-compliant EICR properties impacted by denied access. To ensure compliance moving forward, the improvement actions identified for 2026-27 are to:

- Continue to deliver an enforced access procedure where access is denied on two previous occasions. This mirrors the process for no access gas safety cases.
- Implement a new Housing Asset Management System to allow closer monitoring of component replacement programmes and improved accuracy of recording and reporting.

As a result of the Scottish Government response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase 2, a series of actions to further enhance fire safety in high-rise and medium-rise flats, sheltered housing and homeless hostels will be delivered over a 5-10-year period. A four-stage improvement programme will address any identified risk, strengthen resident safety and minimise fire safety concerns with funding incorporated in a costed work programme, through the HRA Capital Plan.

To date, a programme of Single Building Assessments, Fire Risk Assessments, and a Retrospective Fire Strategy have been commissioned across the housing stock through established framework arrangements. A fire-stopping improvement project within a homeless accommodation complex has been completed, bringing the building into full compliance with current fire safety standards and a significant programme of improvement works is currently underway in high-rise blocks across Fife. The investment includes comprehensive fire safety surveys and a range of internal fire safety enhancements.

Damp & Mould

Fife Council recognise the legal, health and reputational risks of failing to effectively tackle damp and mould in Council housing. The revised process for reporting damp and mould only commenced in October 2025 to comply with Scottish Housing Regulator requirements. From October 2025, 3,844 referrals were resolved with an average time taken of 28.95 days. 17.27% of cases were re-opened and 230 open cases were recorded at year end. Fife Council were unable to differentiate between condensation and structural cases for reporting purposes. The improvement actions identified for 2026-27 are to:

- Report to the Council's Cabinet Committee by September 2026 detailing the Council's policy and approach to assisting council tenants with damp and mould issues in their home.
- Work with Business Technology Systems (BTS) to ensure reporting covers the full financial year and develop reporting processes to certify cases can be split by condensation and structural.
- Deliver specialist advice, support and mitigation work through a dedicated team of three damp and condensation technical officers, together with a Housing Professional.
- Provide fuel poverty support and advice where this is identified as a contributing factor.
- Develop and implement a reporting structure for damp & mould to ensure compliance with Scottish Housing Regulator requirements for Awaab's Law.

Additional Information:

Data on Homes

Fife Council maintains comprehensive and reliable information on the construction, components and condition of its housing stock to support effective asset management, investment planning, and regulatory compliance. The Council is further strengthening its approach through the development of an enhanced Asset Management Strategy and System and the implementation of a new cloud-based asset database, which will improve the quality, accessibility, and reporting of asset information, supporting more informed decision making and long-term asset planning.

Gypsy/Traveller Site Standards

Fife Council confirm that its Gypsy/Traveller sites comply with the Scottish Government's minimum site standards. Facilities are regularly monitored and maintained to ensure they continue to meet the required standards for safety, amenity, and quality, supporting residents to live in a secure and well managed environment. A capital improvement programme is being delivered across Fife Council owned sites to install chalet accommodation and enhance the energy efficiency of facilities. Site tenants are involved in the consultation process to ensure improvements meet needs and priorities. The pitch and accommodation upgrades are complete at Tarvit Mill, with additional external improvement works progressing at present. Plans are in place to deliver similar enhancements across the remaining two sites, through a phased approach during 2026-28.

Equalities and Human Rights

Fife Council recognises its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Despite the challenges of the housing emergency, it remains committed to promoting equality, preventing discrimination and supporting access to housing as a fundamental human right. Examples of this include:

- Collecting equality data from staff, tenants, homeless customers, Gypsy/Travellers and other service users to better understand needs and inform service delivery.
- Undertaking Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA) and consultation on new strategies, policies, changes and decisions to understand community impacts, prior to Committee approval.
- Safeguarding people with protected characteristics through the provision of Gypsy/Traveller sites, temporary accommodation, older persons and specific needs housing, and refuge provision.
- Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion through comprehensive staff training covering areas such as recruitment, mental health and gender equality.

Pressure Areas:

The Committee considered pressures for 2026-27 and the mitigation measures to support these.

Housing Emergency

Fife continues to operate within a housing emergency as declared in March 2024. While there is clear evidence of progress, significant challenges remain, particularly in relation to homelessness presentations, pressures on temporary accommodation and housing supply shortages. A Strategic Statement containing recommendations and actions to address systemic failure, was agreed by Cabinet Committee during 2025. Where relevant, actions are embedded within the LHS Outcome Plan for delivery through the existing LHS governance arrangements, with specific projects being developed around investment, homelessness and private sector environments. Engagement continues with the Scottish Government Housing Emergency Unit, peer local authorities and national bodies such as ALACHO, CoSLA, CIH Scotland and Shelter Scotland.

Resettlement

Fife delivers a partnership-led approach to Resettlement and Humanitarian Schemes, using a homelessness prevention and housing options model to support people to settle successfully and sustain housing. Through close collaboration with housing providers, health, education, employability, third sector organisations and community partners, support is provided from arrival through to long-term integration. Our approach aligns with Scotland's New Scots principles, focusing on early intervention, access to appropriate housing, community connection, independence and inclusion, ensuring people can rebuild their lives and thrive within Fife's communities. While these schemes have had limited impact on services in recent years, the following emerging challenges could place significant pressure on housing and homelessness services during 2026/27:

- Changes to entitlements for people from Ukraine, particularly those residing in host or sponsorship settings.
- Decisions by the Ministry of Defence to end Serviced Forced Accommodation leases in Leuchars and Rosyth.

- Potential increases in Asylum Dispersal which could create additional housing demand from successful claims and wider pressures relating to those with no recourse to public funds.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Plan Viability

Following a series of below inflation rent increases and cost of borrowing pressures on the financial viability of the HRA, the 30-year HRA Business Plan and Capital Plan is moving to a high-risk position. This restricts the Council's borrowing ability to fund affordable housing programmes, stock improvements, Social Housing Net Zero Standards and improved fire safety measures. To support future viability, a robust business planning review process has been established, and an asset management strategy and system is being developed to support accurate investment and forecasting. Additionally, a review of service efficiencies is underway including consideration of deferring service delivery in non-statutory areas where appropriate.

Housing Support Charges

Fife Council currently has around 100 tenants with Housing Support Charges applied through their rent accounts. These are creating a reporting issue following the rollout of Universal Credit (UC), as charges have not been covered by UC housing costs. Previously offset through internal arrangements with Health & Social Care, unrecovered charges are now recorded as rent arrears despite not being HRA debt. This risks artificially inflating rent arrears figures and impacts performance reporting. Discussions remain ongoing with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to resolve the matter and minimise any impacts.

People & Communities Scrutiny Committee Date: 29th October 2026

Councillor Judy Hamilton
Spokesperson Housing and Building Services

Cllr Gary Holt
Convenor People & Communities Scrutiny Committee

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