

Cowdenbeath Area Committee

Due to Scottish Government guidance relating to Covid-19, this meeting will be held remotely



Wednesday, 8th December, 2021 - 2.00 p.m.

AGENDA

Page Nos.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTE** – Minute of Meeting of Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 6th October, 2021 3 – 6
4. **COMMON GOOD AND SETTLEMENT TRUST FUNDS ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021** – Report by the Executive Director - Finance & Corporate Services 7 – 17
5. **AREA HOUSING PLAN UPDATE** – Report by the Head of Housing Services 18 – 27
6. **COWDENBEATH AREA COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** 28 – 28
7. **PUBLIC QUESTIONS** – The following questions have been submitted by the public in terms of Standing Order No. 6.1, from Mr. Tom. Kinnaird, resident, Benarty.

Question 1

Following the change of boundary between Benarty and Lochgelly from the Loch Fitty Burn to the Farm Road north of Lochgelly High School, I note this has implications with regard to the Benarty settlement boundary. At present the settlement boundary stops at the southern edge of Clune Terrace, Glenraig.

Does the committee agree that as soon as the new planning legislation takes effect, which is coming into force from the Scottish Government, (Q3 2021), the settlement boundary for Glenraig should be examined and redrawn to include the homes and businesses in the south of Glenraig, the most southerly being Longview House and the Fife Cycle Park, and that the current road signs should be relocated to reflect the position of the new boundary line, and should the Lochgelly settlement boundary currently extending into the Lomond Hills Regional Park be moved south to reflect the actual settlement of Lochgelly, in line with the settlement boundaries around the other towns and villages of Fife?

Question 2./

Question 2

Shopkeepers in Benarty have watched with keen interest as the shops in Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly have had regeneration grant payments towards both internal and external works to improve their premises and give their shopfronts much needed facelifts.

Can the committee reveal what criteria had to be met in order to receive these payments and what formula is being used to determine the amount of grant each premises receives, and what is the total amount spent in both Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly to date?

Also, will the other towns and villages in the Cowdenbeath Area be offered this much needed assistance?

Members are reminded that should they have queries on the detail of a report they should, where possible, contact the report authors in advance of the meeting to seek clarification.

Lindsay Thomson
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Finance and Corporate Services

Fife House
North Street
Glenrothes
Fife, KY7 5LT

1st December, 2021

If telephoning, please ask for:
Michelle Hyslop, Committee Officer, Fife House
Telephone: 03451 555555, ext. 445279; email: Michelle.Hyslop@fife.gov.uk

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

THE FIFE COUNCIL - COWDENBEATH AREA COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING

6th October, 2021

2.00 p.m. – 3.20 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Linda Erskine (Convener), Alistair Bain, Alex Campbell, Gary Guichan, Rosemary Liewald, Mary Lockhart, Lea Mcllelland and Darren Watt.

ATTENDING: Sarah Roxburgh, Community Manager (Cowdenbeath Area), Gary Daniell, Team Manager (Community Development), Euan Connelly, Community Education Worker (Benarty), Margaret King, Community Education Worker (Bowhill and Cardenden) and Scott Meikle, Community Education Worker (Kelty), Communities and Neighbourhoods; Phil Clarke, Lead Consultant, Traffic Management (South Fife), AT&E Roads & Transportation Services; and Emma Whyte, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

Prior to the start of business, the Convener intimated the intention to vary the sequence of items from that on the agenda with Items 7, 8 and 9 being taken prior to Items 4, 5 and 6 due to unavoidable delays by officers attending other meetings.

246. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

247. MINUTE

The Committee considered the minute of the meeting of the Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 18th August, 2021.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

248. CLD SUMMER PROGRAMME AND ENHANCED SUMMER PROGRAMME 2021

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods which provided members with a summary of the CLD summer programme and enhanced summer (Active Fife) programme for 2021 within the Cowdenbeath Area.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) welcomed and noted the presentation provided by youths that had attended the summer programme and thanked them and officers for their contributions; and
- (2) noted the content of the report.

249./

249. PETITION - SCHOOL LANE

In terms of Standing Order No. 6.1 (2), the Committee considered a petition raised by representatives of Denend Primary School Parent Council containing 36 signatures, the terms of the petition being to close School Lane, Cardenden during peak times.

The Convener invited the appropriate Officer from Assets, Transportation and Environment to present their briefing report in response to the petition.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to support the implementation of a pilot School Streets Initiative in Cardenden;
- (2) that officers would explore options for adding an additional footway, any additional safety measures and the adoption of the road;
- (3) that should the School Streets Initiative not be enough to regulate the behaviour of the school parents, the Area Committee would consider implementation of resident barriers; and
- (4) that a report be brought back to a future ward meeting on the options.

250. OBJECTION TO SPEED CUSHIONS – C26 FORDELL AND COLEDGE

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment which asked members to consider an objection to proposed speed cushion on C26 Fordell and Coaledge.

Decision

The Committee agreed to set aside the objection, allowing officers to proceed with the construction of the traffic calming measures.

251. PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment advising members of action taken using the List of Officer Powers in relation to property transactions.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the report.

252. COWDENBEATH AREA COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

Decision

The Committee noted the draft Forward Work Programme for the Cowdenbeath Area Committee.

253./

253. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Questions were submitted (in terms of Standing Order No 6.1.) by Mr Paul McGowan, resident of Lochgelly.

Question 1

It is noted that in the minutes of the Cowdenbeath Area Committee, dated the 29th March 2017, that:

“ The Area Committee welcomes the decision by the administration to create an Active Leisure Fund of £500,000 for the Cowdenbeath Area, as agreed at the Executive Committee on 28th March, 2017 and agree that it be allocated as follows:--extract-

- *£150,000 Lochgelly Public Play Park”*

Can the area committee confirm if these monies were allocated to Lochgelly Public Park and what monies have been spent from this fund?

Response

Yes the monies were allocated to Lochgelly Public Play Park. No monies have been spent to date.

Can the area committee also confirm if this £150k is separate to the £120k allocated to the park from the Lomond Housing Section 75 agreement?

Response

Confirmed as separate. Not the same level of funding or specifically allocated to the park.

Finally, can the area committee confirm what improvements have taken place at Lochgelly Public Park (excluding the skatepark and fenced games area), since the funding became available?

Response

No improvements have been made.

Question 2

It is noted that in the minutes of the Cowdenbeath Area Committee, dated the 16th June 2021, that:

“227. SAFER COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE REPORT - The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services, providing an update on the operational activity of the Safer Communities Team within the Cowdenbeath Committee area during the 12 month period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Decision/

2021 CAC 120

Decision

The Committee:- (2) agreed that a workshop be arranged to allow members to input to the development of a plan to deal with recent anti-social issues arising in Lochgelly.”

Can the area committee confirm when the workshop will (or has been) arranged?

Response

The workshop regarding anti-social behaviour issues in Lochgelly Public Park took place on Thursday 16th September 2021.

Decision

The Committee noted the questions submitted by Mr Paul McGowan and the respective responses provided.

8 December 2021

Agenda Item No. 04

Common Good and Settlement Trust Funds Annual Report 2020-2021

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

Wards Affected: 7 and 8

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the current status of the Common Good and Settlement Trust funds in the area and relevant fund activities over the financial year 2020-2021.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- (1) note the information contained in the relevant appendices for the various Common Good funds and Settlement Trust Funds; and
- (2) offer comments as appropriate on the information provided.

Resource Implications

The additional work to produce these reports has been resourced from within Finance & Corporate Services Directorate.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no known legal or risk implications.

Impact Assessment

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

Consultation

Consultation has taken place with Asset, Transportation and Environment Services and Fife Cultural Trust.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Annual reporting is one of a suite of measures designed to ensure that Fife's Common Good & Settlement Trust Funds are managed and reported in a way that reflects best value for the organisation.
- 1.2 Historically, the fund has comprised both capital and revenue balances. The capital balance consists of fixed assets which are heritable property and investments. The revenue balance comprises current assets held in the Council's accounts on behalf of the relevant fund.

2.0 Common Good and Settlement Trust Fund - Key Elements

2.1 Revenue Account

2.1.1 Income

The cash income received during the financial year is mainly from rents, interest on investments and internal interest. Income from net gain on revaluation is a result of the revaluation of the fund's investments at the year end.

2.1.2 Expenditure

In line with the Council's agreed policy, the first call on the Common Good & Settlement trust Funds is maintenance of heritable property. Disbursements/donations and other expenses are also funded from the Funds.

The amount spent on property costs and disbursements/donations are detailed within the notes to the accounts for the individual Common Good Funds.

The net effect of the income and expenditure on a Common Good and Settlement Trusts accounts result in a surplus or deficit for the particular year. This amount is then transferred to balances.

3.0 Balance Sheet

3.1 Fixed Assets

3.1.1 Heritable Property

Heritable Property comprises land and buildings held on Common Good and Settlement Trust accounts, in the main this is municipal buildings and recreational land of various kinds.

The attached accounts reflect the assets held on the Common Good Balance sheet and the Settlement Trust Funds as at 31st March 2021. A complete list of all Common Good assets relative to this Area is also attached at Appendix 1(b).

3.1.2 Investments

In addition to heritable property, each Common Good and Settlement Trust Funds also has investments. These investments form part of the funds capital balances. Investments are made using the Council's standard investment strategy to maximise income to the fund.

The heritable property and investments represent the capital balances.

3.2 Current Assets

The Advance to Loans Fund comprises monies held in the Council's bank account which receive internal interest from Fife Council.

The advance to loans fund, plus debtors and less creditors, represents the revenue balances.

The revenue account and balance sheet form the financial accounts for the Common Good Fund and this is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

4.0 Moveable Property

4.1 Moveable property held as part of the Common Good comprises everything that is not land or buildings, e.g. Council Chains of Office, furniture, ceremonial robes and so on. The Local Services Network and Museums and Libraries can provide a list of this moveable property if required.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 This report and its appendices are intended to give Members greater information on the relevant Common Good and Settlement Trust Funds.

List of Appendices

1. Cowdenbeath Area Common Good fund Annual Reports 2020-21 (incorporating as Appendix 1(a) A & B the financial statements 2022-21 and as Appendix 1(b) the schedule of Common Good heritable property).
2. Appendix 2(a) Leslie Settlement Trust report
3. Appendix 2(b)– Financial Statement – Settlement Trusts – 2020/21
4. Appendix 2© – Settlement Trust Acceptable Uses

Background Papers

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

- Fife Council Annual Accounts 2020-21.

Report Contacts

Eleanor Hodgson
Accountant Common Good and Trusts
Fife House, North Street, Cowdenbeath, KY7 5LT
Telephone: 08451 55 55 55 443983
Email – Eleanor.Hodgson@fife.gov.uk

Sarah Roxburgh
Manager (Committee Services)
Brunton House, Cowdenbeath, KY4 9UQ
Telephone: 08451 55 55 55 4442016
Email – Sarah.Roxburgh@fife.gov.uk

**LOCHGELLY COMMON GOOD FUND
ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

1. Overall Position

The fund comprises capital and revenue balances. The capital balances comprise heritable property and investments totalling £47,042. The revenue balances comprise the Advance to Loans Fund plus debtors less creditors totalling £16,676. The total balances of Lochgelly Common Good are £63,718 as shown in Appendix 1(a)-A.

2. Key Issues in Financial Year 2020-21

2.1 Income

Total income for 2020-21 is £1,627.40 (2019-20 £2,223).

2.2 Expenditure

Total expenditure for 2020-21 is £0 (2019-20 £0).

3. Management of Assets

3.1 There are currently no leased sites in Lochgelly

4. Value of Fund

4.1 The total value of the fund has increased in 2020-21 by £9,524 as shown in Appendix 1(a)-A.

**LOCHGELLY SETTLEMENT TRUST FUND
ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

1. Overall Position

The fund comprises capital and revenue balances. The capital balances comprise investments totalling £8,851. The revenue balances comprise the Advance to Loans Fund plus debtors less creditors totalling £11,771. The total balances of Lochgelly Settlement Trust are £20,622 as shown in Appendix 2(b).

2. Key Issues in Financial Year 2020-21

2.1 Income

Total income for 2020-21 is £311 (19-20 £475)

2.2 Expenditure

Total expenditure for 2020-21 is £0

3. Management of Assets

3.1 There are no leased sites

4. Value of Fund

4.1 The total value of the fund in 2020-21 has increased by £1,797 as shown in Appendix 2(b)

Appendix 2(b)

	Income & Expenditure Statement										
	Expenditure			Income			(Surplus)/ Deficit				
	Grants	Other	Total	Interest		Total	Income Less Expenditure	Investments	Debtors	Advances	
		Expenditure	Expenditure	Revenue	Investment					to Loans	Total
			Balances	Interest	Income				Fund		
A75000-DUNFERMLINE	1,488	0	1,488	(27)	(1,364)	(1,391)	97	39,631	350	48,159	88,140
A75001-BALLINGRY	0	0	0	(3)	(196)	(199)	(199)	5,684	50	5,672	11,405
A75002-LOCHGELLY	0	0	0	(6)	(305)	(311)	(311)	8,851	78	11,693	20,622
A75004-LESLIE	0	0	0	(0)	(66)	(66)	(66)	1,906	17	487	2,410
A75005-AUCHTERTOOL	0	0	0	(0)	(33)	(34)	(34)	968	9	893	1,870
A75006-BURNTISLAND	0	49	49	(10)	(181)	(191)	(142)	5,254	46	18,856	24,156
A75007-KINGHORN	600	0	600	(9)	(481)	(489)	111	13,964	123	15,093	29,181
A75008-KIRKCALDY	2,589	0	2,589	(53)	(3,825)	(3,878)	(1,289)	111,144	981	102,009	214,135
A75009-BUCKHAVEN AND METHIL	0	0	0	(4)	(19)	(23)	(23)	561	5	328	893
A75010-KENNOWAY	0	0	0	(0)	(19)	(20)	(20)	562	5	704	1,271
A75011-LEVEN	0	0	0	(3)	(174)	(177)	(177)	5,056	45	5,741	10,842
A75012-ANSTRUTHER & CELLARDYKE	5,957	0	5,957	(33)	(4,475)	(4,509)	1,448	130,028	1,148	64,404	195,580
A75013-AUCHTERMUCHTY	0	0	0	(6)	(232)	(238)	(238)	6,748	60	6,634	13,441
A75014-COLLESSIE	0	0	0	(1)	(41)	(42)	(42)	1,195	11	1,361	2,566
A75015-CRAIL	1,250	0	1,250	(28)	(1,842)	(1,871)	(621)	53,530	473	51,493	105,495
A75016-CUPAR	1,829	76	1,905	(15)	(1,389)	(1,404)	501	40,361	356	26,740	67,457
A75017-ELIE	0	0	0	(5)	(278)	(283)	(283)	8,082	71	8,654	16,807
A75018-FALKLAND	0	0	0	(1)	(61)	(62)	(62)	1,786	16	1,531	3,333
A75019-FREUCHIE AND AREA	114	0	114	(2)	(95)	(98)	16	2,771	24	4,288	7,083
A75020-KILCONQUHAR	167	0	167	(2)	(119)	(121)	46	3,454	30	3,096	6,580
A75021-KINGSKETTLE	43	0	43	(1)	(38)	(38)	5	1,096	10	1,150	2,256
A75022-LADYBANK	178	0	178	(2)	(166)	(169)	9	4,832	43	4,315	9,190
A75023-NEWBURGH	2,160	0	2,160	(14)	(1,967)	(1,982)	178	57,160	505	26,688	84,353
A75024-PITTENWEEM	0	0	0	(6)	(337)	(344)	(344)	9,798	86	11,883	21,768
A75025-ST ANDREWS	2,539	0	2,539	(46)	(2,571)	(2,617)	(78)	107,437	659	26,375	134,472
A75026-ST MONANS	1,219	0	1,219	(13)	(1,082)	(1,095)	124	31,439	278	23,077	54,794
A75027-TAYPORT	259	0	259	(4)	(169)	(173)	86	4,897	43	7,608	12,549
A75029-CULROSS	2,994	0	2,994	(2)	(125)	(127)	2,867	3,630	32	761	4,423
A75030-KINCARDINE	0	0	0	(8)	(546)	(554)	(554)	15,860	140	14,610	30,610
A75031-LIMEKILNS	200	0	200	1	(145)	(144)	56	4,221	37	717	4,975
Settlement Trusts Total	23,586	125	23,711	(304)	(22,343)	(22,647)	1,064	681,904	5,730	495,023	1,182,657

Appendix 2(c)

These are the charitable purposes recognised in section 7(2) of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005.

- a) The prevention or relief of poverty.
- b) The advancement of education.
- c) The advancement of religion.
- d) The advancement of health.
- e) The saving of lives.
- f) The advancement of citizenship or community development (including rural or urban regeneration).
- g) The advancement of the arts, heritage, culture or science.
- h) The advancement of public participation in sport.
- i) The provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended.
- j) The advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation.
- k) The promotion of religious or racial harmony.
- l) The promotion of equality and diversity.
- m) The advancement of environmental protection or improvement.
- n) The relief of those in need by reason of age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.
- o) The advancement of animal welfare.
- p) Any other purpose that may reasonably be regarded as analogous to any of the preceding purposes.

COMMON GOOD FUNDS - LOCHGELLY COMMON GOOD

Appendix 1(a)

Revenue Account Year Ended 31st March 2021

2019/20		2020/21
	Income:	
0.00	Rents	0.00
85.83	Interest on Revenue Balances	8.31
2,137.09	External Interest	1,619.09
0.00	Other Income	0.00
<u>2,222.92</u>	Total Income	<u>1,627.40</u>
	Expenditure:	
0.00	Property Costs	0.00
0.00	Donations	0.00
0.00	Other Expenditure	0.00
0.00	Depreciation & Impairment	0.00
<u>0.00</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>0.00</u>
2,222.92	Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	1,627.40
0.00	Add Funding from Reval Reserve	0.00
<u>2,222.92</u>	Amended Surplus (Deficit) for year	<u>1,627.40</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

	Fixed Assets:	
0.00	Heritable Property	0.00
39,145.70	Investments	47,042.04
	Current Assets:	
14,548.92	Advance to Loans Fund	16,260.49
499.42	Sundry Debtors	415.25
	Less Current Liabilities:	
0.00	Creditors	0.00
15,048.34	Net Current Assets	16,675.74
<u>54,194.04</u>	Net Assets	<u>63,717.78</u>
	Financed By:-	
-54,194.04	Useable Reserves	-63,717.78
0.00	Unusable Reserves	0.00
<u>-54,194.04</u>		<u>-63,717.78</u>

COMMON GOOD FUNDS - COWDENBEATH COMMON GOOD

Appendix 1(b)

Revenue Account Year Ended 31st March 2021

2019/20		2020/21
	Income:	
0.00	Rents	0.00
0.00	Interest on Revenue Balances	0.00
0.00	External Interest	0.00
0.00	Other Income	0.00
<u>0.00</u>	Total Income	<u>0.00</u>
	Expenditure:	
0.00	Property Costs	0.00
0.00	Donations	0.00
0.00	Other Expenditure	0.00
0.00	Depreciation & Impairment	0.00
<u>0.00</u>	Total Expenditure	<u>0.00</u>
0.00	Surplus / (Deficit) for Year	0.00
0.00	Add Funding from Reval Reserve	0.00
<u>0.00</u>	Amended Surplus (Deficit) for year	<u>0.00</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

	Fixed Assets:	
1.00	Heritable Property	1.00
0.00	Investments	0.00
	Current Assets:	
0.00	Advance to Loans Fund	0.00
0.00	Sundry Debtors	0.00
	Less Current Liabilities:	
0.00	Creditors	0.00
0.00	Net Current Assets	0.00
<u>1.00</u>	Net Assets	<u>1.00</u>
	Financed By:-	
0.00	Useable Reserves	0.00
-1.00	Unusable Reserves	-1.00
<u>-1.00</u>		<u>-1.00</u>

Lochgelly Common Good Asset List as 31/03/21

SRN	Asset Name	Address	Town	Extent
000535	Lochgelly Town Hall	69 - 71 Bank Street	Lochgelly	Whole asset
000778	Lochgelly Public Park	Hall Street/Johnston Crescent	Lochgelly	2/3rds of asset
101005	West End Park	Paul Street	Lochgelly	Most of asset

Cowdenbeath Common Good Asset List as 31/03/21

SRN	Asset Name	Address	Town	Extent
006177	Cowdenbeath Town House	High Street	Cowdenbeath	Whole asset
100842	Cowdenbeath War Memorial	Foulford Road	Cowdenbeath	Most of asset

8 December 2021

Agenda Item No. 05

Area Housing Plan Update

Report by: John Mills, Head of Housing Services

Wards Affected: 7 & 8

Purpose

Members approved the Cowdenbeath Area Housing Services Plan 2017/19 in December 2017. A revised Plan for 2022/24 will be presented to Committee once there has been the opportunity to consult on future priorities for the Cowdenbeath Area.

This report provides an update on progress in delivering service priorities and performance information for Qtrs 1 -2 of financial year 2021/22 where figures are available at an Area level.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Scrutinise and comment on the work progressed through the previous Area Housing Plan for Qtrs 1 -2 of financial year 2021/22.
- Comment on Cowdenbeath area performance for Qtrs 1 -2 of financial year 2021-22 outlined in Appendix 1
- Note the Expenditure for the HRA Locality Managed Budget for Qtrs 1 -2 of financial year 2021-22 outlined in Appendix 2.

Resource Implications

Work is taking place within agreed HRA local and capital budgets.

Legal & Risk Implications

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

Impact Assessment

An EqIA Checklist is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

Local tenants were involved in the development of the Area Housing Plan through local groups and events. Local members undertook walkabouts with staff and relevant services. We have also used feedback from the annual tenant survey to develop the plan. A new online consultation approach will be taken for the development of the Cowdenbeath Area Housing Services Plan for 2022/24.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Members approved a report in December 2017 which outlined the 2017/19 Cowdenbeath Area Housing Plan and set out how we intended to:
 - Understand and address housing needs in the area
 - Deliver effective housing management
- 1.2 The Council has a vision to create a fairer Fife where all residents live good lives, make informed choices and have a sense of control so that they can reach their full potential and where all children are safe, happy and healthy. At the heart of the Plan for Fife is the aim to reduce inequalities and to promote fairness in everything that we do. It is recognised that having a fairer Fife will benefit everyone. Housing Services as the largest landlord in Fife can improve the lives and opportunities of its tenants through effective neighbourhood management and community led improvement initiatives. We have a key role to work in partnership with others to reduce poverty in Fife and to ensure that we are acting 'one step sooner'.
- 1.3 This report includes measures to outline how well we are performing and addressing housing need in Cowdenbeath. Performance figures for Qtrs 1 -2 of financial year 2021-22 are provided where this is available at an Area level. It also outlines how staff have adapted to deliver services during COVID restrictions. Housing Officers are now able to be more visible in local communities as we work our way through the Recovery Plan.
- 1.4 It is proposed that a revised Cowdenbeath Area Housing Plan be produced for 2022-24. This will outline future priorities that are informed through discussions at Ward Meetings and reflect the views of our local communities.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 This report will focus on the following Plan for Fife headings-
 - Opportunities for all
 - Thriving places
 - Community led services
- 2.2 Attached to the report are two appendices –
 - Appendix 1 is a summary of Cowdenbeath Area performance information for Qtrs 1 -2 of 2021-22

- Appendix 2 provides information for Qtrs 1 -2 of expenditure of the 2021-22 locally managed budget allocation.

2.3 Opportunities for all

- 2.3.1 As we moved out of lockdown restrictions Housing Services adapted to change and new ways of working. We adopted a blended approach with staff predominantly working from home with access to office space as and when required. The focus was on continuing to deliver critical services while improving the condition of our estates and addressing the welfare needs of our tenants.
- 2.3.2 Housing Allocations continue to promote transfers to meet housing needs, however, there continues to be a focus on statutory homelessness particularly to assist those at risk of homelessness, care leavers, people fleeing domestic abuse, and those in poor housing conditions. The demand for temporary accommodation is extremely high and steps have been taken to increase the temporary accommodation stock to ensure that Housing Services meets its statutory duties.
- 2.3.3 There is a renewed focus on preventing homelessness by providing high quality Housing advice. To enhance this and improve the customers journey a managing change exercise was undertaken and a new Housing Options Officers role was developed. This brought together our Housing Access Officers and Homeless Persons Officer's. While continuing to deliver essential services eight Officers are undertaking training for this new role in the Cowdenbeath area and will have responsibility for:
- housing allocations, housing list management and voids management.
 - preventing homelessness by delivering enhanced housing options advice and initiating early intervention actions.
 - assessing needs and making statutory decisions in relation to potentially homeless customers in line with legislation and working with applicants to secure rapid (permanent) rehousing, which meets their requirements.
 - Working in partnership with a wide range of Services and agencies to ensure a person centred responses and sustainable housing outcomes.
 - representing the Housing Service at statutory Public Protection Meetings in Child Protection and Adult Protection. The post will take a lead in responding to Public Protection issues within the
- 2.3.4 Our new build site in Woodbine, Cardenden has unfortunately been met with some difficulties. After successfully handing over 18 new properties to tenants in phase 1 and 2, our contractor through unforeseen circumstances requested to be removed from the contract. This has delayed the completion of phase 3 and 19 properties are currently awaiting completion. Our Building Services have taken over the contract and we have a proposed completion date of February 2022 for the conclusion of the site.
- 2.3.5 Appendix 1 provides a summary of key performance information for Qtrs 1 -2 2020/21. The following areas are highlighted:

- Our percentage of rent loss due to empty houses figure has decreased slightly at 1.10% and sits below the Fife average of 1.31 %. This performance has improved following a slight increase in void rent loss during 20-21. We continue to have a focus on reducing delays for new tenants setting up home and minimising rent loss over the period.
- Void properties were turned around and reallocated in Qtrs 1 -2 2021-22 within 54 days compared to the Fife average of 44 days. We are working hard with our Building Services to improve this performance. In mitigation there has been issues with sourcing materials and periods of staff shortages due to isolation rules.
- Allocations to each housing list category:
 - 45.53 to homeless,
 - 32.77 % to transfer,
 - 21.7 % to the housing list
- Allocations to Homeless applicants have been maintained over the period in line with Council policy to move families faster out of temporary accommodation into secure tenancies.
- Due to the pandemic, we have been limited in opportunities to facilitate moves where tenants are under occupying larger family sized properties. However, with the easing of restrictions, in Qtrs 1 -2 The Tenant Incentive Scheme (TIS) was used to assist 4 tenants with the costs associated with moving home. Practical help can be provided with the things that can sometimes be a barrier for people wishing to downsize and this includes removal costs, decoration, new carpets, furnishings and white goods.
- We had offers accepted for 2 large family homes in accordance with our Property Acquisition Policy. These properties will be used to provide permanent housing for homeless families. We continue to actively look at opportunities to return larger former council properties back to stock to meet the housing needs of families in the Cowdenbeath area and where transfer chains can be created.
- The number of abandoned properties shows a decreasing trend with 7 in Qtrs 1 - 2 2021-22. To improve tenancy sustainment the Housing Management Officers, offer a Tenancy Assistance service to tenants to help tenants to sustain their tenancies. Home support visits have been re-started following a telephone only service during lockdown restrictions. We continue to make referrals for longer term and specialist housing support through our partner agencies.
- The average timescale for completing a routine repair in Qtr1- Qtr2 was 5.5 days which is a similar performance to the previous year. For emergency repairs the average timescale was 3.51 hours. This is a slight increase on the previous year's performance on 2.27 hours.
- The table on Appendix One shows the recorded breaches of Tenancy actions for anti-social behaviour. Most complaints are of a low level and involve estate management or environmental type issues that are quickly resolved.

The Community and Housing Services sub committee of 21st January 2021 approved a revised Housing Policy on tackling anti-social behaviour. Following a recruitment drive The Safer Communities Team have now increased their resources and following a period of new staff training the new dedicated Officers will respond to and case manage all antisocial behaviour complaints from January 2022. This dedicated resource will improve the customers experience when reporting anti-social behaviour where they will have a single point of contact.

2.4 The Housing team have been at the forefront of tackling poverty in the Cowdenbeath Area and assisting vulnerable tenants whose normal life has been disrupted due to the pandemic.

- Improving rent collection rates continues to be a challenge and for Cowdenbeath the Qtrs 1 -2 2021-22 collection rate was 95.03 % which is comparable to the Fife wide average of 96.14%. The percentage of tenants in arrears who have made arrangements with us to repay their debt was 13% by the end Qtr 2 which is just below the Fife wide average of 16%.
- The rent arrears in Cowdenbeath at the end Qtr 2 were £ 1,101,411 which is comparable to Qtr 2 last year £1,101,710. This reflected the efforts made by staff to increase contacts with tenants with a view to resolving their difficulties.
- It has been a priority for staff to work with tenants in debt within their patches and to liaise closely with Revenues Officers. A preventative approach is taken to support new tenants and promote early intervention. New UC claimants receive a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) of 2 weeks rent and are offered an incentive of a further 2 weeks DHP if they pay their rent when they receive the first UC housing costs payment and sign up for their subsequent housing costs to be paid direct to Fife Council. Up to Qtr 2 a total of 252 rent allowances were awarded to tenants in the Cowdenbeath area and this amounted to over £48k. At the accompanied viewing for new tenant's staff discuss affordability with new tenants, the Welfare Fund and other options for sourcing household items. Through the Locality Managed Budget household items and other practical help can be provided to new tenants in need who are struggling to set up their home.
- There were no evictions in the Cowdenbeath area up to Qtr 2 due to the introduction of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act which prevents the eviction of tenants for rent arrears until the 31st March 2021. Fife Council extended this approach beyond March. Discussions are ongoing with Fife Council's Co-Leaders on the approach to evictions and we are awaiting further instruction.
- It was recognised that we needed to continue to assist tenants facing financial pressures during the pandemic and we continued to reach out to tenants who were experiencing a disruption to their employment. Advice and assistance were offered to those who were self-employed, faced redundancy or part of the governments furlough scheme. Up to Qtr 2 a total of 91 rent allowances were awarded to tenants in the Cowdenbeath area and this amounted to over £13K.

2.5 Community Led Services

- 2.5.1 Tenant engagement is critical for the Housing Service to receive feedback and to deliver community led and relevant services. Tenants indicated to us that they wished to be more involved in improving their local areas and this will be reflected in the new Area Housing Plan going forward. A new online consultation method has recently been developed and has been used in North East Fife. Learning will be used from this pilot before rolling out this approach to the other Area Teams.
- 2.5.2 We re-commenced our area walkabouts with members and other key services in late Summer and have identified projects and improvements to progress. As restrictions eased our staff walked their estates to identify improvements and react to any estate management issues as a result of limited services and opportunities for residents.
- 2.5.3 Participation in Tenants & Residents meetings were affected by the pandemic. We will look to pick up on more regular attendance as restrictions are eased.
- 2.5.4 The weekly “The Well” at the Clearing on Cowdenbeath High Street, a Health & Social Care Partnership initiative aimed at promoting health and wellbeing was cancelled due to the pandemic. This has now developed into a virtual Well with Housing staff available once a week to assist with requests for service.
- 2.5.5 Following lessons learned from a multi-disciplinary approach to the most vulnerable in our communities during the pandemic, Housing Services along with other key services have been key in developing a People and Place Leadership local delivery model. The People and Place Leadership Teams work collaboratively to understand our places and the people who live there. The Teams provide support and services which are responsive to the needs of individuals, families and local communities delivered by a range of partners working as “one organisation”. Both groups focus delivery on the following key areas; tackling poverty and crisis prevention, leading economic recovery, sustaining services through new ways of working. In Cowdenbeath the Groups meet on a 4-weekly basis.

2.6 Thriving Places

Up to Qtr 2 we committed £290.217 of our Housing Initiatives budget across the Cowdenbeath Area to support a wide range of different projects. Highlights include:

- Ballingry Road, Ballingry- new fencing project
- Balbeddie Avenue, Lochore - rebuild retaining wall due to H&S issue
- White Threshes Road, Cowdenbeath - sort back garden draining issues
- Provost Mill Way, Kelty - Sort drainage and re- slab
- Shank Brae, Ballingry- clear area and re-plant
- 2 & 3 Sunnyside Court, Cowdenbeath- convert 2 x bedsits to a 2-bed property
- Woodbine, Cardenden- lay slabs
- Cullaloe View, Cowdenbeath Lock up site demolition
- All areas- small scale fencing work, garden maintenance, garden improvements, tree management, environmental clean-up works, landscape improvements

In addition, ££27,322 of the budget has been used to support vulnerable tenants who required help to sustain their tenancy, and tenants who are engaging with Housing Officers through our Tenancy Assistance service.

Area teams are offered the opportunity to make a bid for funding from Housing's Opportunities Fund. Submissions must include projects that have been identified using the Place Standard Tool. Cowdenbeath Area team were awarded funding to deliver 2 projects as follows:

- Blackburn Drive, Cowdenbeath- Renew wall, upgrade steps – award £134,832- work scheduled for January 2022
- Greenmount. Cowdenbeath- repair retaining walls, front boundary walls, steps and railings- award £95,000- work complete August 2021

2.7 Information on how the Housing Service Locality Managed budget has been allocated for Qtr1- Qtr2 2021-22 is contained in Appendix 2.

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 Our aim is to be a top performing social landlord in Scotland. Through the new Area Housing Plan, we will identify local issues and plan to address these. This is intended to encourage member scrutiny of our work to address those concerns and demonstrate improved outcomes. The plans can be updated to reflect where member scrutiny shows a need to quicken the pace of improvement.

Background Papers

No papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973:

Report Contact

Russel Gray
Area Housing Manager
Brunton House, Cowdenbeath
Telephone: 08451 55 55 55 Ext No 446105
Email: russell.gray@fife.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Qtr 1-2, 2021-22 Performance

Indicator	Cowdenbeath Qtr 1-2	Fife Qtr 1-2
Average days to turnaround an empty property	54	44
% of the rent lost due to empty houses	1.10%	1.31%
Rent collection rates	95.03%	96.10%
% of agreements	13%	16%
% allocations to homeless households	45.53%	-
% allocations to transfer	32.77%	-
Average timescale for routine repairs	5.5 days	-
Average timescale for emergency repairs	3.51 hours	-
Number of abandoned tenancies	7	57
Number of evictions	0	0
Number of reported breach of tenancies	121	-

Breach of tenancy details	Category	Description of behaviours
Amount 45 Responded in timescale 45	Cat B Serious Anti-Social Behaviour	Verbal abuse; frequent/ongoing serious disturbances - i.e. loud music, parties, shouting & swearing; drug dealing.
Amount 62 2 referrals to Safer Communities due to repeat offending	Cat C Nuisance/Minor Anti-Social Behaviour.	Occasional noise; family disputes affecting neighbours; behaviour of children; household noise; first complaints or infrequent disturbances; smell of drugs.

<p>Amount 14</p> <p>All cases were responded to within the 2 working day timescale.</p>	<p>Cat D Extreme Behaviour -</p>	<p>Physical violence/assault/unprovoked attack; Threats of violence; Aggressive behaviour causing fear; drug charges/cultivation; hate incidents; immediate threats; Serious anti-social behaviour where Court action is being sought.</p>
<p>173 cases</p>	<p>Estate management complaints</p>	<p>Reports of untidy gardens, dumping of rubbish and stairwells in poor state.</p>

Appendix 2

Housing Service Locality Managed Budget Qtrs 1 -2 2021/22 Cowdenbeath Area

The Locality Managed budget is used for three priorities which are:

- Estate Management
- Tenancy Sustainment
- Improvement Projects

Estates Management

The budget is used to deal with estate management related issues and is mainly reactive. Examples of this type of work would include managing open space areas on housing land, tree maintenance, fencing, removal of fly tipping and looking after garage sites.

Tenancy Sustainment

This involves supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies and ensuring balanced communities. Due to the impact of welfare reform we are having to take a more proactive role in this area. We can offer practical help to vulnerable tenants through tenancy assistance. The budget can be used in certain circumstances for clearing properties and providing help to source essential household items. The focus of this type of intervention is to work closely with other partner services to meet any gaps in provision.

Improvement Projects

The projects are identified through estates walkabouts, consulting with our tenants, and through working with Tenants and Residents Associations. These are usually proactive works to improve the local environment for our tenants. Examples would be lighting, parking provision, improvements to bin store areas, lock ups and communal areas and environmental improvements.

Expenditure to date

The budget for 2021/22 is £362K and in Qtrs 1 -2 we committed £290,217. The table below shows how the expenditure was proportioned.

Estate Management & projects	80%
Tenancy Sustainment	7%
Remaining for 2021-22	13%

Monitoring

Project work will be considered through discussions with elected members and issues identified at walkabouts. If the allocation of funds needs adjusted in line with the reactive nature of the budget, then this can be highlighted through further update reports.

Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 9 February 2022			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Phase 2 Budget Report	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Gary Daniell, Sarah Roxburgh	
Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)	Education and Children's Services	Sarah Else	
Area Roads Programme 2022	Assets, Transportation and Environment	Neil Watson	

Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 30 March 2022			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Pupilwise and Parentwise Surveys 2018-2019		Deborah Davidson	Figures not available at present due to Covid-19, to await until figures available. Move to 2022 when figures are available.

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Local Community Plan Annual Update and Budget Outturn 2020/21	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Sarah Roxburgh	
Update on School Meals from Core Group, L/G & C/B High Schools		Neil Finnie	
Parks Street and Open Spaces Annual Review 2021			Structure review, next report tbc.