



MEETING OF FIFE COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 20TH MAY, 2021

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 - QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 1 FROM COUNCILLOR DAVE DEMPSEY

It is accepted that there should be no educational attainment gap based on deprivation/poverty. Are there any acceptable bases for a gap in educational attainment and, if so, what are they?

Answer

It is accepted in most developed societies that there is a poverty-related attainment gap for children, evident from an early age.

It is generally accepted that society should try to balance the scales in favour of children who are disadvantaged by societal factors such as poverty, and/or the circumstances they find themselves in, with the intention of reducing the educational gap they can experience.

There are the beginnings of evidence to show that there can be a narrowing of the attainment gap, but as yet there is no identified single intervention which would remove this gap at a population level. Even narrowing it seems to be proving difficult to sustain as poverty increases due to public policy decisions and economic conditions.

However there is evidence that intervening during a child's early years, through multi-agency partnership (including education) working alongside families, is more likely to have a positive impact than interventions which come later in life. In addition, ongoing evaluation of initiatives specifically designed to address this issue, with effective data gathering, and scaling up and dissemination of successful initiatives, is a template for improvement.

An attainment gap is generally identified when comparing children of the same age who are expected to perform within an expected range.

Most people would accept that an attainment gap will exist when a child is impacted intellectually by a medical condition (delayed language, communication difficulties, Learning Disability, brain injury for example).

We would also expect a gap for those with significant reduction in exposure to school teaching - for example those with low levels of school attendance for a range of reasons – this may include illness, being part of the Gypsy and Traveller Community, Care Experienced young people who have experienced multiple care and/or education placement disruptions, Asylum Seekers etc.

Rather than accepting that these are inevitable, instead it is helpful to identify that some groups (including those mentioned above) are more vulnerable to poor educational outcomes; and that is why schools are focused on building early relationships with families through transition and beyond, monitoring attainment and engagement, identifying any groups of pupils who are at risk, assessing what they need in order to support their learning, and evaluating the impact.

Supplementary

Can we do more in Fife i.e. establish a working group to address growing issues.

Answer

This can be considered by the strategic sub-committee.

QUESTION 2 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

What are current best estimate projections on electric vehicle ownership in Fife to 2032 (when the sale of new petrol and diesel vans and cars will be banned in Scotland)?

Answer

Provost, I do not have statistics for electric vehicles, but I can provide some information in respect of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, which are any vehicle that uses low carbon technology or emits less than 75g of CO₂/km and includes all electric vehicles, fuel cell electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids and extended range vehicles.

I am also unable to estimate what will be the ownership of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in Fife in 2032, but I can say at the end of the third quarter in 2020, there were 1,093 Ultra Low Emission Vehicles registered in Fife and that there has been a steady growth in numbers from the 336 that were registered in 2016.

I can also say that the future uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles is dependent on a range of factors, most notably, the cost compared with internal combustion engine vehicles. Meantime, as an indicator, the Energy saving Trust projects that the potential share of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles sales will increase from 18% in 2025 to 100% by 2035.

QUESTION 3 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

How many vehicles can be supported (charged) by the current EVCP capacity in Fife?

Answer

In Fife, there are 92 public charging points, which are hosted by the Council and 67 hosted by the private sector, so the simple answer is that the network can support 159 vehicles being charged simultaneously. Given, that at times of peak demand, only 30 (32%) of the points, which are hosted by the Council, are in use at any one time, there is currently significant capacity to accommodate any increased demand.

Provost, I think that it is also important to say that the Council's charging network has, to date, been developed as a 'top-up' network and that it was anticipated that the primary charging location would be at the home of the vehicle owner, which seems to be borne out by the fact that only 32% of the charging points are in use at times of peak demand.

QUESTION 4 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

What options are we considering to enable households that do not have off-street parking to charge their vehicles on the street at home?

Answer

Given the restricted road widths in many towns and villages in Scotland, not to mention the current pressures on the road network in housing areas due to parked vehicles, this is an issue that will exercise all Scottish local authorities.

Two Scottish Local Authorities are piloting on-street charging facilities, mostly in urban centres and the Council will review the outcome of these trials in consideration of a forward strategy. The Council is also looking to work with Transport Scotland as soon as national guidelines are developed for Electric Vehicle charging facilities.

Supplementary Question

Can a Working Group be formed to look at the problem?

Answer

That is something that the Environment and Protective Services Committee could look at.

QUESTION 5 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

Recent feedback from the online road fault reporting form indicates that road fault reports are often repeat reports. Some local authorities publish reported road faults (and other reported problems) with pictures (and have done so for a number of years) along with an officer response. This saves officer time and helps to inform the public and elected members. When does the administration plan to provide this basic level of service?

Answer

As Cllrs are aware, the Council's online strategy is based around the Lagan platform and this has been successfully developed over many years.

The system that Cllr Tepp mentions is a private 3rd party service titled FixMyStreet and it is not used by any other Scottish Local Authority. Further since it is a mapping-based system it does not link with Lagan and public reports via the FixMyStreet app need to be manually input into the Lagan system breaking the objective of achieving a digital system process end to end for public road faults and repairs. Further developments with Lagan and the roads repair process are ongoing and are integral within the Council's new web platform 111.fife.gov.uk.

Supplementary

Is it an aspiration in Fife and are we targeting towards better reporting tools?

Answer

We are trying to be transparent and use the time to fix potholes. Happy to discuss further.

QUESTION 6 FROM COUNCILLOR DAVE DEMPSEY

What interaction has the Council had to date and what interaction does it anticipate having with the UK Community Renewal Fund?

Answer

Briefing circulated to members earlier this week.

The Community Renewal Fund is to be delivered through Lead Authorities across the UK. Each local authority in Scotland has been designated as a Lead Authority. In this role, Fife Council is required to engage with local partners and invite applications from a range of local applicants. The Council is also eligible to submit its own application(s), but these must go through a shortlisting process along with those from other organisations. Eligible projects should aim to test out new approaches to delivery or to support feasibility studies in the priority themes listed in the Community Renewal Fund prospectus.

The Lead Authority has responsibility to shortlist the project applications from their area – up to a maximum value of £3 million – and submit it to the UK Government's Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) by noon on Friday 18 June 2021. If successful, Fife Council will then have responsibility for implementing the approved programme of shortlisted proposals and for undertaking monitoring and assurance activity.

To meet the requirements set out above, an invitation to apply has been developed and placed on the Council's website. Social media has been used to promote the link to the webpage. To promote the Community Renewal Fund as widely as possible information relating to the fund has been included in the Community Investment Team monthly funding bulletin at the end of April and on Fife Voluntary Action's weekly e-mail bulletin. More targeted e-mails have also been sent to potential applicants and internally, presentations have been made to Community Managers and Business & Employability teams to highlight the funding opportunities.

Given that the prospectus has specific priority themes, a more targeted engagement programme has taken place with partners including the Third Sector Employability Forum, Fife Cultural Trust, Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Fife College and St Andrews University. This has included discussion on a range of project ideas and follow-up questions on eligibility for the funds which have been discussed further with UK Government representatives.

To allow time for technical assessment, appraisal and shortlisting, a deadline of Sunday 23rd May has been set for applications to be submitted to Fife Council. Officers in the Community Investment Team will then carry out a technical assessment to ensure eligibility for the fund and support the work of an Appraisal Panel to complete the shortlisting exercise.

QUESTION 7 FROM COUNCILLOR DAVE DEMPSEY

What is the Council's response to reports that the new Council care homes will cost will cost £275,000 per bed excluding land costs and the contrast this makes with current independent sector equivalent costs of £115-120,000?

Answer

The original article (suggesting that the cost per bed was £275k) took the overall Cupar and Anstruther budgets and divided by the number of care home beds. At Cupar, the building will also provide Health & Social Care Partnership Day Services as well as Adult Services; whilst at Anstruther - Day Services and cafe & community facilities.

The article also suggested that Fife Council costs were high as the work was being carried out by FC Building Services and the following response was provided:

"There was an extensive open tendering exercise carried out through Public Contracts Scotland for the Methil Care Village, and the vast majority of the works on site are being carried out by private sector companies. It should not come as a surprise that we have inflationary increases built into our cost models for the next sites, but again actual costs will not be known until the works are publicly tendered."

Supplementary

Is it possible to provide a number that is directly comparable?

Answer

I don't have that information today but happy to discuss further.

QUESTION 8 FROM COUNCILLOR DAVE DEMPSEY

Does the Council agree with the proposition that a care home solely charging the rates agreed between COSLA and Scottish Care would not be economically viable?

Answer

We cannot comment on behalf of private providers.

QUESTION 9 FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY HEER

Has there been any change in the number of road faults reported online since the requirement to register a mygov.scot account was introduced and if so, by how much?

Answer

The new online account for road faults was introduced on April 1st 2021. To give a fair comparison I have used figures from 2019 as the same period in 2020 was impacted by the pandemic.

April 1st - May 12th 2019; total reported 1352 with 1081 online

April 1st - May 12th 2021; total reported 1552 with 1080 online

QUESTION 10 FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY HEER

Did the Council consult with National Farmers Union, Scotland before publishing a post on the Fife Council Facebook page exhorting the public to reduce their consumption of meat and dairy products?

Answer

The Council did not consult with the NFU before posting. The post was part of series of posts aiming to inform people in Fife about some of the options they have to reduce their carbon footprint, including the benefits of buying from local suppliers. However, we recognise the wording of the post was over-simplistic and understand it raised valid concerns from our farming community. As such we have removed the post and reviewing future communications, including setting up a meeting with representatives of the NFU to discuss the best way to work with them on future messaging.

QUESTION 11 FROM COUNCILLOR HELEN LAW

Despite a decision by Fife Council to retain the Creche Service, creches remain closed. As all other children's services have reopened can you confirm the date the existing creches will reopen.

When will staff be informed of the up-to-date position regarding the reopening of the creches?

What work stream has been established to look at the expansion of the Creche Service?

Answer

Fife Council agreed the recommendation from the Education and Children's Services and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee to:

Defer implementation of the new approach to Childcare Services and Play Practice and request further reports to the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee detailing:

1. the impact of these proposals on children and families and on disadvantaged communities;
2. options for maintaining or expanding these services to better meet needs and where possible increase income;
3. a full business plan for the future provision of childcare and play practice development.

It is anticipated that a report incorporating the full business plan will be presented to the Education & Children's Services Sub-Committee at its next meeting in September 2021.

In the meantime, services provided have remained as they were at the point of this decision. This means that creche services are not being provided at this time, as they had not been reinstated in support of the wider restrictions and subsequent mitigations in place to ensure our statutory services could be provided.

Supplementary

Staff are not being kept updated. Will the implementation of the new approach be deferred?

Answer

The creche facilities won't be reopening as a decision has not been taken to reinstate the service. Report on the review of the service will be taken to the appropriate sub-committee in September.

QUESTION 12 FROM COUNCILLOR RYAN SMART

What response have Co-Leaders Cllr Ross and Alexander received from the Director of Health and Social Care and the Integrated Joint Board regarding this Council's request (Motion 3 from Fife Council Meeting – 10/9/2020) asking them to reconsider the decision around the closure of the Wellesley Unit at Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital, which in particular reduced the provision of palliative care in this part of Fife? Can this response be shared with all elected members?

Answer

Response received circulated to members earlier this week.

Supplementary

Can I ask the Co-Leaders to support the local community and elected members to ensure there is consultation on the long term viability of the hospital and unit.

Answer

The hospital is currently being used as a Covid vaccine centre and the letter from Nicky Connor advised that work is being undertaken to develop a community hospital strategy for Randolph Wemyss Hospital.

QUESTION 13 FROM COUNCILLOR BILL PORTEOUS

Following widespread concerns across the United Kingdom about the Mental Health of our children during the COVID Pandemic what plans do the Education and Social Work service have

> to provide sufficient resources to both identify and address and resolve those mental health issues?

> A recent NHS published report indicates that as many as one in six of our children could require this advice and support.

Answer

The impacts of the Co-vid Pandemic have resulted in a diverse mental health picture for young people. Some young people's mental health has been more adversely affected by the Covid constraints than others. Besides that, we know that the type of supports young people want and need differs according to the young people's circumstances and personal characteristics.

For these reasons, our optimum strategic approach has been to develop a broad menu of supports for young people, which can be developed as early interventions wherever possible and as targeted provisions wherever needed. Our approaches have centred upon early

intervention/preventative measures, enhancement of targeted, additional supports and the extension of intensive, CAMHS resources and activity.

It is important to recognise that the Covid context is still delivering its impacts. And also, the recovery processes (for example the schools' return and recovery from lockdown) are still working to mitigate these impacts. The context is dynamic, it will change and so the responses/supports we create in our system need to be dynamic too. For these reasons our approaches include the continued development of our practices for gathering and carefully analysing information about young people's needs.

Further information can be found – <https://fish-fifecloud.msapproxy.net/fish/uploadfiles/Publications/ECS%20Sub%20Agenda%20Pack%202021-05-11.pdf> Item 5 of the agenda, pages 10-63.

Supplementary

Could we have more detail on the support available?

Answer

Yes, available in the report to the Education and Children's Services Sub-Committee referred to previously.

QUESTION 14 FROM COUNCILLOR JANE ANN LISTON

What have the savings been in Councillor's travelling expenses since the start of the pandemic through having virtual meetings?

Answer

Figures for the financial year 20/21 are currently being finalised but the indications are that the costs have reduced by around £40k compared with the previous financial year. Finalised figures will be published in due course.

Supplementary

Will we also be advised of savings made from officer expenses?

Answer

Yes this information can be made available.

QUESTION 15 FROM COUNCILLOR DONALD LOTHIAN

What percentage of the Councils budget to date has been allocated through Participatory Budgeting ? Do we expect to achieve the 1% target by the end of this financial year and how will that be achieved?

Answer

During 2020/21, despite the disruption from Covid-19, Fife Council was able to continue to progress participatory budgeting activity. In Guardbridge, a £20,000 small grants process, delayed from March 2020, took place online and through key locations in the village through a newsletter and voting form in October and November.

In 2019, £22 million Passenger Transport budget was identified as the first large scale ambition to test mainstream participatory budgeting, and extensive public engagement was undertaken between September 2019 and March 2020. The process was paused for six months as a result of the pandemic, but this was then picked up again through a deliberative process with elected members around Passenger Transport Reform and Recovery Planning. This resulted in the creation of an Action Plan for Passenger Transport Reform which was approved by Policy and Coordination Committee in April 2021. Ultimately, £9.6m of the passenger transport budget will be allocated through participatory budgeting in 2021/22.

2020/21 also marked the start of a new way of commissioning local employability services. User involvement was at the heart of the 'No One Left Behind' commissioning process, starting with a series of collaborative conversations that had to move quickly online in the first lockdown. A total of £1.9 million was available for commissioning new employability services in Fife from April 2021. The Scottish Government are expected to release further employability funding for 2022/23, that will build on learning from this year's commissioning process.

Over £23.920m has been reviewed with a view to applying participatory budgeting in Fife and £1.920m has been allocated in 2020/21 and £9.6m is planned to be allocated in 2021/22. This is more than the 1% target for an authority the size of Fife.

In addition, participatory approaches have taken place for capital expenditure, for example, in relation to the new community facilities at Abbeyview and Templehall which have had significant community participation at various stages.

QUESTION 16 FROM COUNCILLOR TIM BRETT

What are the "3 Asks" that have been made by our Looked After Children to the Corporate Parenting Board. What has been the response?

Answer

The '3 Asks' originated from a young person who works with Who Cares? Scotland and was discussed during a training session for elected members in February 2021.

Ask 1: *Corona virus has impacted everyone, but for young people that have been in care it's been twice as hard, not being able to see pals who are like their family and feeling disconnected from everyone and everything. People's mental health has really suffered. Money has been really tight, there is not a lot of information about what emergency funds are available. Can we ensure that all Corporate Parents who deal with young people have a list of services who might be able to help.*

Response: Recognising that care experienced children, young people and their families were likely to be disproportionately affected by corona virus restrictions, services across Fife Council were proactive in providing funding and resources where required. The young person who asked this question identifies just some of the support being provided in question 3:

“During the pandemic, I have had a lot of support. With lots of different things, Universal credit, housing issues, emergency funding, a bike, this has helped a lot.”

A survey undertaken by the Children and families social work services in June 2020, heard the views of 345 children and young people (13% of the total number being supported by the service). This survey noted that not being able to see friends was indeed the biggest issue for people with positives noted to be spending more time with their family and not having to attend school. Three quarters of children and young people surveyed did not need any further support (50%) or responded that they didn't know what support they may need (24%). Among parents and carers, 98 of 104 people who responded to the survey felt they had had enough contact with social services, with 50 identifying that they had been helped with financial or food packages (seven did not feel that the financial/ food packages had helped). Education staff have worked to ensure that children have electronic devices to maintain their schooling and also links with friends and families; this support has also been in place for care leavers with laptops and MIFI (Dongles) devices also being provided.

Maintenance payments provided by our Young People's Team have been increased by £20 to help ease financial pressures on care leavers.

As part of the review of the corporate parenting board we are looking to set up CEYP panels that can give us a more representative voice of children and young people/families and a more direct link to talk about their experience of services and supports and how they would wish for things to be done differently or more developed. Consideration is being given to a dedicated support line, a more interactive website and a defined branding of CECYP in Fife, to promote a more positive identity. This latter ask was an ambition of ch/yp that we haven't delivered on and is now being progressed.

Ask 2: *We wanted to ask, within your own Corporate Parent roles, how can you provide support for young people who are care experienced but are kinship and not technically seen as care experienced.*

There has been a recurring ask from CECYP and their families that the role of the corporate parent is more visible in the development and delivery of services and supports and in the review of how effective services are in supporting CECYP. They want to be visible in the wider reporting of services and systems and hold a positive and credible space /active voice within Fife. They want to feel they are connected to us as their corporate parents and that we take this role seriously. When children and young people are disconnected from birth family or have fragmented relationships and care experiences, it is incumbent on us all to ensure that we have our corporate parenting responsibilities at the forefront of all we do and be curious about any impact on CECYP across our community planning, service delivery and service reviews and critically challenge impact, informed by CECYPs experience. We have been developing the wider understanding of the corporate parenting role across Fife, so everyone can understand the role and expectation of it. This work is ongoing as part of the wider corporate parenting board review and we hope this narrative, promoting care towards our CECYO will become more pronounced and CECYP will both see and feel this change. Through this work we are about to sign off a letter to all CECYP setting out what they can expect of us as corporate parents. These letters are well established in other local authority areas, and seen as best practice in setting a clear ambition for CECYP

In terms of specific support to children and young people in informal kinship care, the answer to ASK 3 offers some response.

Alongside this there are a range of measures in place that organisations can access to support kinship families, through PEF monies, Section 22 (voluntary support in social work) community mental health and summer play monies etc, The critical point is that we challenge the distinction between formal and informal care, to ensure children and young people have the right supports at the right time.

Ask 3: *During the pandemic, I have had a lot of support. With lots of different things, Universal credit, housing issues, emergency funding, a bike, this has helped a lot. My friend was in informal kinship. He is not seen as care experienced by the council even though he experienced a lot of the same trauma as me. He is not entitled to continuing care . He has had a totally different experience with the level of support during this time in comparison to me.*

Response: Although children and young people may experience alternative care within their families they continue to have the right to family life (Article 16 of the UNCRC). Within informal kinship care arrangements (where family members take a decision independently), unless wellbeing concerns are identified, social services would have no right to involve themselves with the family.

Where concerns exist about children and young people's welfare and alternative care is required, family members are always considered ahead of foster or residential care, helping families remain together and children and young people stay in their local communities. Where children are placed by social services or are subject to a supervision order identifying an extended family member as their primary carer, this can be considered to be a formal arrangement. In these circumstances social services can provide practical and financial support and at present we are providing this support to 243 families across Fife.

Where young people have been formally 'looked after' away from home, we provide ongoing support beyond the age of 18 and actively encourage young people to access Continuing care, whereby they have the right to remain in their placement up until they are 21 years old. In addition to remaining where they are living, young people are offered support through our Young People's Team, access to a care leaver's grant and a range of practical supports and links to other services and secure support until the age of 26 years.

We are continually reviewing our offer to CECYP and recognise that whilst practical and financial support can be key, social support and the feeling of being connected to a support system can be central to a young person managing life's challenges and reaching their full potential, giving a sense of being 'cared for'. We are looking through the Corporate Parenting Board at how we can extend the offer to CECYP , by building a more positive CECYP community that is not affected by negative stereotypes or assumptions. Some of this will require access to support and services at the time the time child/young person or family feel they are needed, without need to go through a referral and assessment process in the initial stages of seeking support. Access will be virtue of being care experienced and all the challenges/loss and associated ACEs that is inherent in having this experience.

This does mean we have to extend our thinking of care experience away from the legislative framework, to accommodate those children and young people in informal kinship care. There will be resource issues, but as set out in The Promise there will also be longer term savings, diverting away from the need for more high cost resources once a child of young person has a critical need for support

Supplementary

How can we engage better as elected members as corporate parents?

Answer

Workshops take place with limited attendance from elected members. Encourage better attendance at these events.

QUESTION 17 FROM COUNCILLOR JAMES CALDER

How many of our teachers are currently on temporary contracts in our Primary and Secondary schools . How many new permanent teacher contracts do we expect to need for the new school term starting in August?

Answer

The number of teaching staff engaged in temporary contracts varies on a day-to-day basis, as there are a variety of reasons for these engagements.

In addition, to support the response to and recovery from Covid alone, the equivalent of 115FTE temporary teacher posts have been created. The number of teachers in a temporary contract, however, will be greater as posts might be offered on a part-time basis.

The Education Service is in the middle of the workforce planning exercise for appointments to schools for August 2021. To date, 48 permanent contracts have been offered in the Secondary sector. In Primary we have a number of postholders who have permanent contracts, although they are currently appointed to a temporary post within a school. These colleagues will be matched to permanent vacancies prior to any new appointment offers, in line with our existing policies, and until this is complete the number of permanent vacancies cannot be confirmed.

Supplementary

How confident are we that the permanent vacancies will be filled by August?

Answer

Very confident.

QUESTION 18 FROM COUNCILLOR MARGARET KENNEDY

Are we using and following the COSLA guidance on Human Trafficking and Exploitation. How many cases have been identified in Fife over the last 2 years?

Answer

Yes we're using COSLA guidance on human trafficking and the issue has been discussed at the Fife Violence against Women Partnership as well as its likely to affect more women and girls. As to numbers Police will have those but we don't know the numbers involved.

Supplementary

Can all services be made aware of red flags to these issues?

Answer

Yes all services are aware and have protocols in place.

QUESTION 19 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

There are many types of road signs in Fife. What road signs are the responsibility of Fife Council? How many are there estimated to be and is there any planned maintenance of road signs in Fife? How many signs are needing repair or maintenance at the present time?

Answer

Fife Council is responsible for all permanent Road Traffic signs plus street name plates on the adopted road network.

There are approximately 45,000 road signs on the network and 24,000 street name plates. Repair orders for 73 signs have been issued so far this financial year and one street nameplate scheme has been identified which will replace 15 signs.

Additionally a programme of planned sign maintenance/cleaning is currently being planned.

Supplementary

Do you agree road signage is a neglected part of our estate?

Answer

No

QUESTION 20 FROM COUNCILLOR DAVE DEMPSEY

To what extent are assessments being taken by pupils in Fife to provide evidence to the SQA exams by another name?

Answer

Due to the cancellation of the exams for 2021. The Alternative to Certification Model (ACM) for this session is based on demonstrated attainment with schools gathering evidence from learners to support the submission of Provisional Results to SQA by 25th June.

Schools across Fife are reviewing and gathering a range of evidence to support the ACM. This includes carrying out assessments in line with guidance from the SQA and Fife guidance developed with staff over many months.

SQA have provided subject specific guidance in relation to what evidence needs to be gathered and schools are using this guidance to determine what evidence will need to be

generated in May and June for each subject. The types of assessments differs across subjects based on SQA requirements. It also differs across schools based on what evidence the school may already hold from assessments or other evidence completed earlier in the session from learners. In most schools these assessments are taking place during class time and last 50-70 minutes. Class tests are a regular aspect of what students experience at Secondary schools with end of unit assessments and schools are limiting the amount of these for learners complete each day.

We have taken the decision in Fife to extend the timetable until the end of term in all Secondary schools, to allow as much time as possible for learners to complete assessments, re-do assessments if required, gather as much evidence as possible and give of their best to demonstrate the best grade they can achieve.

In Fife we have worked extensively with practitioners at all levels to develop guidance for schools which includes 3 quality assurance returns to senior local authority officers to ensure the process is robust and fair. Our guidance was recently evaluated by Education Scotland as very comprehensive.

There has been communication from the Head of Service directly to both parents and learners in all Secondary schools, in both 9 Dec 2020 and 18 March 2021. Each school is also communicating directly with their parents and learners as the SQA advice is that learners should be kept informed of their progress using appropriate, on-going learner conversations. Each school is responding individually to any issues being raised by parents/carers or pupils.

QUESTION 21 FROM COUNCILLOR KATHLEEN LESLIE

What is Fife Council policy in respect of provision of recycling bins in residential communal bin areas?

Answer

Because the Council is a signatory to the Household Waste Recycling Charter, the Council's policy, relative to multi occupied properties, meets the agreed national standards for waste collection. This means, wherever possible, that the Council provides individual kerbside collections for every domestic property. Where that is not possible – usually because of unsuitable access or lack of space – communal facilities are provided, once again, in accordance with the agreed national standards.

In every case, each communal location is assessed in terms of the number of dwellings in the property and the total capacity the waste containers, which are provided for each waste stream, is at least equal to the sum of the capacity that each dwelling would have had were it a kerbside collection. If there is insufficient space to accommodate the total capacity, then the frequency of collection is increased accordingly.

Provost, I think that it is also important to say that the Council's Officers work with the developers with a view to ensuring that new builds are provided with sufficient waste storage space.

Supplementary Question

The Recycling Bins were removed from the Recycling Point at Mill Street, Kirkcaldy. Did the Council consult with locally before removing them and will the number of Recycling Bins at the next nearest Recycling Point be increased?

Answer

I would hope that the Council always consults before removing any local service. I have no details about the specific location, to which Councillor Leslie refers, but I will find out and will advise her accordingly.

QUESTION 22 FROM COUNCILLOR JANE ANN LISTON

When will members of the public again be able to report a road defect without having to open a Fife Council account?

Answer

This will be available from w/c 24th May.

QUESTION 23 FROM COUNCILLOR JONNY TEPP

Will the administration look into the recent motion passed by Glasgow City Council and question asked at a recent Stirling Council meeting requesting that their respective Pension Funds immediately look at the question of divestment from fossil fuels?

<https://greens.scot/news/glasgow-city-council-votes-overwhelmingly-to-end-fossil-fuel-investments>

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/local-news/stirling-council-back-managed-divestment-24036964>

Answer

Advice has already been provided on the Glasgow announcement and I have been in contact with Strathclyde pension fund who have a clear policy around climate change and their report (in March 2020) concluded that "divestment from fossil fuels is not a realistic, effective or satisfactory solution to climate change"

In essence, the motion passed in Glasgow City Council was that the Council would write to the Pension Fund asking them to commit to divestment. There is no reason why Fife Council couldn't consider a motion in similar terms but clearly there is no compulsion on the part of the Fife Pension Fund to act on this. The letter to the press, at the end of your email chain, is correct in saying that the Council can't tell the Pension Fund what to do and the Fund Trustees would need to balance the views of the Council against any expert investment advice they receive in order to ascertain where their fiduciary duty lies.

The views of the Council in relation to investment beliefs should not be seen to influence the decision making of the Pension Fund Committee at all. The Pension Fund Committee should be making decisions purely for the benefit of the pension fund, it's members and it's employers irrespective of the views of the Council, taking into account specialist advice.

Supplementary

Do Fife Council have an expressed view?

Answer

A motion will be submitted to the Pensions Committee in due course.