

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 1 FROM COUNCILLOR GAVIN ELLIS

Council notes that in the Scottish National party manifesto in 2021 they made a commitment to renew every play park in Scotland so that all children have access to quality play in their own community and this was to be backed by £60 million pounds. Can council confirm how much funding Fife council has received for this programme and what play parks have been upgraded with the funds, also has any of the funding been used for staff costs to deliver any upgrades?

Answer

Fife council has received 2 tranches of funding to date. The 1st tranche of £344,000 was received in 2021 and the 2nd tranche of £342,000 was received in 2022. With the 1st tranche, one of the main priorities is to replace equipment that has been removed or immobilised for Health & Safety (H&S) reasons and to support projects with a small funding shortfall. With the 2nd tranche of funding one of the main priorities will be to progress play area projects that have community support and have been identified to be retained in the Play Space Strategy. The funding is not used to pay for community & neighbourhoods staff time as the staff resource is already in place working on play park projects.

Many of the identified projects are at different stages either it be projects at design development stage, community consultation, securing match funding, tender stage, contracts awarded or works due to start. Progress to date includes;

Tranche 1 - Project progress.

Swing Replacement Programme/H&S (7 sites), works have been tendered, contract awarded and expected on site early October 22.

Funding shortfall (5 sites), Crossgates is on site, West Wemyss and Ravenscraig Park will be tendered imminently, and 2 others are undergoing detailed design.

Tranche 2 - Project progress.

8 projects overall, one contract awarded and awaiting start date (Pitlessie), one going to tender shortly (Haugh, East Wemyss), 3 at detailed design (Prestonfield, Camdean, Hillend), 3 site visits planned with Property Services.

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 2 FROM COUNCILLOR SARAH NEAL

What actions has Fife Council taken to ensure it is complying with the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021?

Answer

See elected member briefing note.

Supplementary

When will Fife Council be fully compliant with full provision?

Answer

Fife Council is already fully compliant and have been since 2018. We will continue with the communication plan to promote this and improve where we can.

Briefing Note

From: Mike Enston, Executive Director – Communities
Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director – Education & Children’s Services

To: Fife Council

Subject: **Fife Council compliance with the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021**

Date: Monday 26 September 2022

Author: Lauren Bennett, Policy Officer - Communities
Rona Weir, Education Manager - Education

Background

1. The Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 (the “Act”) places a duty on local authorities to allow people to obtain period products free of charge.
2. The Act requires local authorities to consult with individuals on the arrangements that should be put in place to fulfil the duties prescribed in the Act. The consultation must directly influence a document called a Statement on Exercise of Functions, which must explain how we have met particular requirements; how we have regarded guidance from the Scottish Government; it must summarise the arrangements in place in Fife; and summarise the plans for making information available to individuals on how and where they can get products.
3. There are three sections of the Act, two of which place a duty on Fife Council as a local authority and education provider:
 - Section 1 – Local authorities to make products obtainable free of charge for those who need them while in Scotland
 - Section 2 – Education providers to make products obtainable free of charge for pupils and students during term time
4. The Act requires local authorities to undertake a **public consultation** prior to the development and publication of a **Statement on Exercise of Functions**, which sets out the vision and the intent for Fife’s implementation to ensure people can access the products they need.
5. Fife Council has received a funding allocation from Scottish Government since 2018/19 to make period products freely available to those living in,

working in and visiting Fife. This has been part of a national approach, which has since been superseded by the introduction of the Act. Fife Council has provided products to the public through community-based provision and schools since 2018/19.

6. Period products must be reasonably easy to obtain and provided in a way that respects the dignity of those obtaining the products. There must also be reasonable choice with different products being made available in a wide range of settings. Provision is universal; however, it is recognised that some communities may need access to provision more than others, particularly those on low incomes, and that provision should be available for anyone who menstruates.

Community-based Provision

1. The Act requires local authorities to undertake a consultation to seek the community's views on how to make free period products easily obtainable. The consultation consisted of an online survey during January 2022. The survey asked for feedback on current provision provided by Fife, particularly the online ordering service we have set up with our supplier, Hey Girls, as well as seeking views on:
 - What products should be made available in communities
 - What locations should products be obtainable from
 - Where in these locations would people be happy to find free period products
 - What the barriers are that would stop people from accessing products in physical locations.
2. The findings and recommendations from the consultation are presented in the [Statement on Exercise of Functions](#) for community-based provision, which has been published on Fife Council's website.
3. The Statement has been influenced by the findings and recommendations of the consultation and sets out:
 - The provision of products – type of products being made available
 - Methods of obtaining products – physical locations and online ordering
 - Working with other organisations to make product obtainable
 - Communications - promoting the provision and providing information that will be useful for those accessing the offering
 - Reporting and evaluating – reporting requirements for Scottish Government and monitoring/evaluating provision to ensure it is meeting the community's needs.

4. Current community-based provision is outlined in the Statement, but an Action Plan has been developed to expand provision and make products available in more places. A communications plan will also be developed to raise awareness of the provision as well as addressing some of the key issues around menstruation, such as taboo, stigma, period poverty, inequalities and sustainability (single-use plastics).
5. The Statement on Exercise of Functions will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Provision will be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis and will be based on the continuation of Scottish Government funding and any fluctuation in demand for products.
6. More information on current provision is available at <https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/welfare,-benefits-and-money-advice/period-poverty>

Education Provision

When first introduced in August 2018 this initiative was initially centred upon provisions in each of Fife's Secondary schools.

In August 2019 the schools' model was widened to include provision available through Primary and Early Education centres. These establishments are directed to liaise with their local secondary schools to collect products to offer to children, staff and visitors to their establishments.

Each Secondary school and Special School is annually allocated a pro rata share of the Education funding calculated from school rolls.

Schools are briefed to work in partnership with young people to plan for the effective deployment and use of this funding to support the universal availability of free sanitary products within their building, working to achieve the following key principles:

- Protecting students' dignity, avoiding anxiety, embarrassment and stigma
- Making a range of products and different qualities available, giving students choice about the products they want to use;
- An efficient and dignified approach which demonstrates value for money;
- An offer for all eligible students throughout the year regardless of whether it is term time or holidays
- Ensuring sanitary products are easily accessible to meet individual needs;
- Enabling individuals to have sufficient products to meet their needs;
- Attending to gender equality, ensuring anyone who menstruates can access products, including transgender men/non-binary individuals, and that language used is appropriately gender neutral.

Learning from the development of Fife's Community Provision is shared across the identified leads on this initiative in each Secondary School to enable continued reflection by schools on potential aspects for improvement within their settings.

Responsible Officer(s)/Contact Details for further information

Community-based provision:

- Lauren Bennett, Policy Officer Lauren.Bennett@fife.gov.uk

Education provision:

- Rona Weir, Education Manager Rona.Weir@fife.gov.uk

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 3 FROM COUNCILLOR ANDY JACKSON

50% of under 22's in Scotland currently have applied for and received their free bus pass.

What is the proportion of Fifers who have applied for and received their free bus pass?

Answer

Figures from Transport Scotland, as of the beginning of September, show the uptake of the U22's concessionary travel passes in Fife is 62%. As a comparison the national uptake take up is 52%.

Background table with actual numbers for reference.

	Fife	National
Journeys undertaken	1,704,845	21,723,100
Uptake	62.1%	52.0%
Estimated eligible population	66,367	c.930,000

Supplementary

Given the cost of living crisis what plans to Fife Council have to promote the scheme?

Answer

Promoting the scheme through all channels but bus provision issues could impact on take up.

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 4 FROM COUNCILLOR ROSEMARY LIEWALD

What is the average time taken to turnaround void properties in the 7 Areas of Fife in the 12 months to September 1st?

Answer

The average void time for the period in question is 48.8 days. There are variables across Fife with some areas turning around more quickly than others. The report also includes properties where components are being replaced in the void period where before these may have been re-coded in line with the Scottish Housing Regulator Guidance. There is a general improving trend over the last few months and commitment to get back to pre-Covid performance of 21-23 days in the near future.

The main reasons for delay are the legacy of Covid working practices, material and labour supply issues, significant utility and utility servicing issues and some housing management delays.

Supplementary

Have further resources been committed to reduce these turnaround times.

Answer

Turnaround times depend on what repairs or modernisation is needed on a property and significant resources have been committed to reducing the turnaround time.

QUESTION 10 FROM COUNCILLOR AUXI BARRERA

How many void or empty properties does the Housing Service currently have?

Answer

The following table shows the number of properties currently progressing through the Change of Tenancy / Void process to be made available for housing transfer allocations, allocation to priority needs groups or diversion to temporary accommodation to replace properties that were converted to secure tenancies by the Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court Judgement. The breakdown does not include properties that have been

approved, or in the process of being approved, for large scale regeneration work or demolition - this includes specialist housing such as retirement housing.

Voids	Current Mainstream & Temporary with Voids Team
SWF	16
Dunfermline	16
Cowdenbeath	37
Kirkcaldy	52
Glenrothes	36
Levenmouth	40
North East Fife	13
Fife	210

Supplementary

What additional resources are being put towards getting the empty properties back into use?

Answer

See answer above.

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 5 FROM COUNCILLOR LYNN MOWATT

How many requests have there been to Housing Services for new/replacement fences or repairs to fences in the past year?

Answer

The total fencing repairs and renewal requests that were actioned during 2021/22 were 917 at a cost of £157,549. The number of requests approved are based on current Management Guidance which restricts the circumstances where requests are approved.

Further information on the total number of requested will be provided once available.

Supplementary

How long does it take to repair and what additional resources have been committed?

Answer

Time to repair depends on the type of repair required. New policy being worked on at present.

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 6 FROM COUNCILLOR LYNN MOWATT

How many reports have there been to the Council of trees that are potentially dangerous and/or of concern to members of the public in the last year?

Answer

There is no Council system that accurately captures reports of potentially dangerous trees from the public. Reports come in through various access points to the Tree Team and more often than not the trees are falsely described as dangerous because they present some other form of nuisance to the complainant. The Tree Team attend to an average of two genuinely dangerous trees per week across Fife.

Supplementary

Is there a backlog of trees needing to be dealt with?

Answer

Not aware of any backlog but there are trees due to be felled in the winter programme.

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 7 FROM COUNCILLOR KATHLEEN LESLIE

Since the start of the school term in August how many children who were not yet five years old at the school start date and whose birthday is between the school start date and December 31st have had P1 deferred this year and how many of that same group who are not yet 5 years old have started school in August?

ANSWER

There are 211 children who were/are 5 between the 17 August 2022 and 31 December 2022 still in nursery opting for a deferred year.

1194 is the number of P1 children who are/were 5 between 17 August 2022 and 31 December 2022 and have started school in P1 this year.

Supplementary

Can we continue to ensure that parents are made aware of the options to defer?

Answer

Yes happy to look at this.

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 8 FROM COUNCILLOR KATHLEEN LESLIE

An election pledge by the party who now make up the Scottish Government was that all pupils in primary school would receive free school meals by August 2022. Are all pupils in Fife primary schools now receiving free school meals as per this pledge?

ANSWER

In the Scottish Government budget announcement for 2022/23, it was stated that the SG will provide over £40million of funding to deliver free school lunches to all children in Primary 4 and 5 and in special schools and £30 million capital allocation for initial investment in school kitchens ahead of roll-out of free lunches to all primary school children later in the Parliamentary term.

The Scottish Government has currently paused the implementation of Free School Meals for Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils.

In Fife Council we currently provide Free School Meals in primary schools to all Primary 1 to Primary 5 pupils, and to those entitled per the Free School Meal criteria for Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils and all special school pupils.

FIFE COUNCIL

29TH SEPTEMBER 2022

ITEM 7 – QUESTION TIME

QUESTION 9 FROM COUNCILLOR JOHN BEARE

What engagement has the Coalition had with the Post Office since May 19th, in relation to the retention and provision of Post Office Services in Fife?

Answer

There is no Coalition however I will allow you to rephrase your question and ask it as a supplementary.

Supplementary

Officers have engaged with Post Office Ltd, who are responsible for the provision of the core Post Office Network since the announcement of closures of six Post Office counters in Thornton, East Wemyss, Newport, Balmullo, St. Andrews and Ladybank in 2021.

East Wemyss continues to be served by a mobile service, with outreach services provided in North East Fife. Post Office Ltd. Is continuing to promote opportunities to re-establish services, with a closing date of 24th September for companies in Newport to deliver this service. If no prospective franchise is found, officers are exploring the use of community facilities for provision.

Burntisland Post Office is scheduled to close in February 2023, and the opportunity for this delivery is being advertised by Post Office Ltd. Officers will work with PO Ltd in the approach to this closure.

Thornton Post Office closed in August 2021. Officers have continued to engage with PO Ltd on this provision, with engagement in August 2022, and is advised that PO Ltd. has been working with a potential franchisee, but this has not materialised. PO Ltd is exploring an outreach service for Thornton whilst a permanent solution is found.

PO Ltd has also recently advised that community organisations may apply to run a franchise, with the previous requirement being a named individual to act as Sub Post Master. This has been raised through the Fife Partnership Recovery and Renewal Community Wealth Building Support Group, linked to the access to finance workstream.

Officers will continue to engage with Post Office Ltd on all opportunities for permanent re-provision.