FIFE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2

EVIDENCE REPORT

June 2025

Fife Council
Planning Services

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PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

1 Introducing Fife's Evidence Report

About Fife's New Local Development Plan

1.1 Fife's new Local Development Plan will replace the current FIFEplan, adopted as part of the Development Plan in 2017. It will also replace the Supplementary Guidance on Affordable Housing, Low Carbon Fife, Making Fife's Places, and Minerals.

1.2 Together with the Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 4, the new Local Development Plan will form the statutory development plan for Fife. Applications for planning permission across Fife must be in accordance with the policies and proposals of the statutory development plan unless there are material considerations for diverging from the development plan.

1.3 National Planning Framework 4 contains 33 policies for use in determining planning applications. These do not need to be repeated in the new Local Development Plan so the new Plan will look very different to the current FIFEplan. It will have more emphasis on sites, design briefs, and masterplans, as well as a small number of place-specific policies meeting local needs and topic-based policies to complement NPF4 national policies.

1.4 The new Local Development Plan will plan for a period of 20 years post adoption, but statutorily must be reviewed within ten years of adoption. This means that the new Plan will cover the period 2028 to 2048 but must be replaced by 2038.

1.5 The LDP is often described as the spatial expression of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan – Plan4Fife (LOIP) but the link between the two sets of objectives has been diluted because of the transition from the Council Plan 2017 to the LOIP. This is an important lesson to apply to the new Local Development Plan which will be prepared at the same time as a refresh of the Plan4Fife.

- The alignment of the preparation of the new Local Development Plan and the refresh of the LOIP offers an opportunity to:
- Establish the LOIP as the overarching policy documents for other Fife-wide plans; and
- Develop measurable and monitored objectives so the LDP Delivery Programme can report on progress on the LDP's contribution to achieving these Council aims.

1.6 The aim would be for all key corporate plans to have the same view of the world and describe that from respective points of view. This aim was strongly supported by the outcomes of a Fife Council and Key Agency Group workshop which identified a shared vision, policy and strategy alignment, and mapping of priority needs, projects and activities as key to taking a place based approach in Fife.

1.7 Strategies evolve to take account of changing circumstances and policy priorities over time. The new LDP is the time to revisit the spatial strategy in FIFEplan and that will happen as part of its preparation.

What is the Evidence Report?

1.8 The Evidence Report is the first stage in preparing a new Local Development Plan and was introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

1.9 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 requires Planning authorities to prepare an Evidence Report that contains sufficient information to enable the planning authority to prepare a Local Development Plan. The legislative requirements, including engagement with specified groups of people, and the Council's views on matters specified in the Act have been met as stated in the Evidence Report Annex 1.

1.10 In simple terms this means that the Evidence Report has two main functions. The first is that it should set out the evidence that will be used to inform and prepare a new Local Development Plan. Its second function is for local authorities to say what they think the issues are that the evidence suggests need to be addressed by a new Local Development Plan (what to plan for), and for other interested parties to express what they think are the issues.

1.11 The Act requires that the Evidence Report must be approved by the full Council before it is submitted to the Scottish Ministers. The Evidence Report was approved by the full Fife Council at its meeting held on 21 March 2024 before being submitted to Gate Check last year. Following consultation with the Council's Legal Services, it has been agreed that the resubmission need not go through the same full Council approval process because the LDP remains at the Gate Check stage and the Chief Planner has delegated authority to amend and resubmit the Evidence Report.

1.12 The report has been prepared by reviewing the adopted Local Development Plan (FIFEplan), canvassing opinions and ideas from stakeholders, reviewing related plans and strategies including community feedback, identifying national and regional policy themes and priorities, and researching land use issues.

1.13 Engagement and participation has involved community planning partners, key agencies, communities, and interest groups specified by legislation – section 2 provides more information on this.

1.14 Lessons and implications for the next local development plan are highlighted throughout the Evidence Report and prefixed with the heading "**Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan**".

1.15 Evidence sources do not form part of the Evidence Report but are linked to websites which open in new windows on digital versions of this document. These are shown in Links and sources information boxes throughout the Evidence Report. Annex 2 lists the data sources and links for tables and figures in the Evidence Report.

1.16 There are specific matters that the Evidence Report must cover; these are set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and listed in this Evidence

Report's Annex 3. The Act also sets out specific groups that Fife Council must engage with in preparing the Evidence Report.

1.17 More information on Fife's new Local Development Plan, what the Evidence Report covers, and how to use it can be found on the following pages.

Links/Resources

- Annex 1 – Meeting legislative requirements
- Annex 2 – List of data sources used in the Evidence Report
- Annex 3 – Matters required to be included in Evidence Report

Evidence Report Structure and How To Read It

1.18 The Evidence Report is in four main parts illustrated on the next page. This section is part one.

1.19 **Part two** covers evidence and topics which is not specific to a particular area of Fife. Data for topics such as housing and carbon emissions does not exist at a smaller scale than Fife-wide so it is presented for the whole of Fife.

1.20 **Part three** looks at evidence and topics for each of Fife's seven localities. This report uses the seven 'localities' (which are groupings of council wards) to present the data. Read both the Fife-wide and Locality parts of the Evidence Report to see the picture of issues and evidence for any given area of Fife. Details of which topics are covered in which part of the Evidence Report are shown on the following pages and in the introduction to each Area. **Links to full studies, or a more detailed explanation of the evidence are provided throughout the Evidence Report.**

1.21 **Part four** summarises the issues that need to be addressed (the implications for the Local Development Plan) and sets out the criteria that will be used to assess potential development sites in Fife. These criteria take into account the issues identified in the Evidence Report.

1.22 The **annexes** to this Evidence Report provide a more detailed explanation of the evidence for some topics. The annexes can be accessed via links on the pages for individual topics. All annexes form part of this Evidence Report. Topics contained in annexes include:

- Linking the content of the Evidence Report with legislative requirements (Annex 1).
- Listing all evidence sources (Annex 2).
- Matters to be included in the evidence report (Annex 3).
- Engagement on the Evidence Report (Annexes 4 and 5).
- Implementation of FIFEplan (Annex 6).
- Living Well Locally in Fife (Annex 7).
- More detailed information and evidence for specific issues in Fife:
- Housing (Annexes 8 and 9).
- Transport (Annex 10).
- Infrastructure (Annex 11).
- Waste management in Fife (Annex 12).
- NPF4 Policy Intent & Outcomes (Annex 13).

1.23 The full Annex list is in the table of contents at the start of the Evidence Report.

1.24 The diagram on the next page illustrates this structure and how to navigate the Evidence Report. The full structure can be found in the table of contents.

Schematic diagram to help navigate this Evidence Report

Part 1

INTRODUCTION

This part of the report sets the scene for the LDP review and Evidence Report.

It explains Fife's new LDP, and what the Evidence Report is and how to use it.

There is a description of the Council's approach to obtaining the views of stakeholders, the wider policy context in which the new LDP will be prepared, and a summary evaluation of the current LDP, *FIFEplan*.

Part 2

FIFE-WIDE EVIDENCE

This covers the topics of:

- Population, health, and wellbeing
- How Fife will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies
- How past development has shaped Fife now
- The housing issues to be addressed in the LDP
- The transport and infrastructure issues be addressed in the LDP
- The housing issues to be addressed in the LDP
- Fife's economic performance and future resilience

Part 3

FIFE'S SEVEN LOCALITIES

The topics in Part 2 are also covered in more detail for each of Fife's seven localities: City of Dunfermline; Cowdenbeath; Glenrothes; Kirkcaldy; Levenmouth; North East; and South & West.

Part 4

THE EVIDENCE AND THE NEW LDP

This part includes the site assessment methodology proposed to determine which development proposals will be included in the Proposed LDP.

Sites and policies are also assessed as part of a Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA) process. This part gives information on the SEA scoping report.

Finally, details of the next stages of preparing the new LDP for Fife are set out in this part of the Evidence Report

ANNEXES

The annexes provide more detailed information to supplement the Evidence Report.

1. Meeting legislative requirements
2. Information Sources
3. Matters required to be included in Evidence Report
4. Summary of participation and engagement
5. Engagement and participation overview
6. Review of FIFEplan
7. Local Living /20 Minute Neighbourhoods
8. Housing Need and Local Housing Land Requirement
9. Localised Housing Issues
10. Transport
11. Infrastructure First
12. Waste Management
13. NPF4 Policy Intent & Outcomes

Parts 1 to 4 include weblinks to evidence sources.

In Parts 2 to 4, each topic section includes a summary of the implications of the evidence for Fife's new Local Development Plan.

In parts 2 and 3, where relevant, there are summaries of stakeholders' agreement or areas of dispute.

2 Involving Others in the Evidence Report Preparation

2.1 The Council's approach to obtaining the views of relevant stakeholders has been to use existing and recent public engagement exercises undertaken by the Council to glean information which can inform the Evidence Report, and supplement that with additional engagement on specific matters including targeted engagement with key stakeholders. This approach was taken to avoid one arm of Fife Council (in this case Planning Services) asking the same communities a variation of questions as other arms of the Council such as those Services responsible for transport or community planning.

2.2 In taking this approach Fife Council has worked with the guidance contained in the Scottish Government's Local development planning guidance noting that:

- A significant proportion of the evidence required will already be produced and in most cases secondary data will suffice (guidance para 9).
- Planning authorities are expected to undertake early and proactive engagement with stakeholders, including key agencies, to ensure collaborative and transparent evidence gathering (guidance para. 96);
- The requirement to seek the views of, and have regard to, views expressed by the public at large, is broad and inclusive (guidance para. 98).
- Planning authorities must engage the particular groups prescribed in the legislation and may wish to have targeted sessions with these groups … Planning authorities may wish to engage with such groups by focussing on particular topics (e.g. housing/infrastructure/energy /environment) or places. (guidance para. 101).
- When seeking the views of or engaging with Gypsies and Travellers, it is important to consider whether planning authorities have engaged with all Travelling communities in their area, to help gain a perspective on their distinct planning needs (guidance para. 102).
- Qualitative evidence on the lived experience of those who live and work in a place is important and can be gained through meaningful engagement (guidance para. 103).
- Whilst there is a statutory requirement to seek particular views in preparing the Evidence Report, there is no requirement to consult on it. Close engagement with community groups, such as community councils, will be helpful (guidance para. 104).

2.3 Fife Council has worked and engaged with many people and organisations in preparing this Evidence Report, including:

- A general survey seeking views on what works well, what does not, and what issues need to be tackled in resident's communities across Fife and a similar survey aimed at Fife's business community (details of the findings can be found under each locality in Part 3 of this Evidence Report.
- Specific engagement with Fife's disabled residents, Fife's young people, and Fife's Gypsy and Traveller communities on the issues that they face living in

Fife (details of the findings can be found on the following pages of this Evidence Report).

- A more specific survey was carried out with some communities supporting work on three case studies on Living Well Locally in practice in different types of settlement in Fife. Workshops took place in six primary schools across Fife with children about what it means to Live Well Locally for them.
- Workshops with Key Agencies and internal stakeholders looking at both Fife and specific localities in Fife seeking to identify issues from the evidence (copies of the workshop reports can be found in the seven locality sections).
- Workshops with children and young people and related survey with those groups and carers to support preparation of Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment (details of the findings can be found on the following pages of this Evidence Report.

2.4 In 2021 Fife Council worked with the Key Agency Group of Scottish Government agencies and other organisations which play a role in supporting the development plan process. This was a pilot project using the Key Agency Group's Green Recovery Offer to collaborate In preparing LDPs, Architecture & Design Scotland led workshops to support the Council's desire for a place-based approach to preparing the new LDP. This involved looking at Fife as a whole with key agencies and cross-Council Service involvement at a senior level. The Chatham House Rule was applied to enable free and frank exchange of knowledge and insights and as such comments shared within the report are unattributable to individuals.

2.5 The workshop held in May 2021 was attended by a wide variety of Key Agencies and a range of senior representatives of Fife Council services with place-based functions.: the common issues, challenges, and opportunities; and looking at what kind of place Fife could be in 2050, using the responses to create a story of change.

2.6 Complementing the direct community survey and community council engagement undertaken is information on community need and opportunity captured through Fifes Local Strategic Assessments and the Our Place Fife Report. This work includes Place Standard Exercises carried out across Fife, undertaken with the Fife Peoples Panel.

2.7 Engagement has also taken place with community Councils and Fife Council's Area Committees on the issues that have been identified in preparing this Evidence Report. Copies of the documents circulated to the Community Councils are in Annex 4.

2.8 The feedback from this work is included in the relevant parts of this Evidence Report. The participation and engagement summary forms Annex 4.

2.9 Areas where there is known agreement and dispute identified through engagement are set out in Annex 5.

Links/Resources

- Annex 4: Summary of participation and engagement
- Annex 5: Engagement and participation overview
- Our Place Fife 2023
- Key Agency Group and Fife Council Local Development Plan workshop summary (May 21)
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary

Engaging Young People in the Preparation of the Evidence Report

2.10 Between June and September 2022, Fife Council worked with Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) to engage with over 200 young people (16-25 years old) to better understand their perception of Fife.

2.11 Young people identified a lack of well-maintained facilities for outdoor play, such as play parks, as well as insufficient provision for indoor recreation and entertainment. Sport and leisure clubs are much desired facilities, as are other active entertainment option such as bowling, mini-golf, arcades, and skate parks. Frequency and reliability of public transport services were a concern, as was the lack of direct linkage for commonly travelled routes.

2.12 Young people across Fife report that their places do not have the general amenity infrastructure to support the population. Education and health facilities are said to be overcrowded. Many stated that they were living in a home that did not suit the needs of their family size, while others indicated that the provision of student accommodation was inadequate. Several participants referenced feeling left out in the development of new housing. Finally, the perception of safety was identified as an underlying issue that prevents young people from actively enjoying places.

Figure 2.1: Extract of young people's satisfaction with their place

Source - PAS Local Development Plan Youth Engagement Report, 2022

Links/Resources

- Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) - Focus on Fife Report published (2022) Young Persons aged 16-25

Engaging Fife's Disabled Residents in the Preparation of the Evidence Report

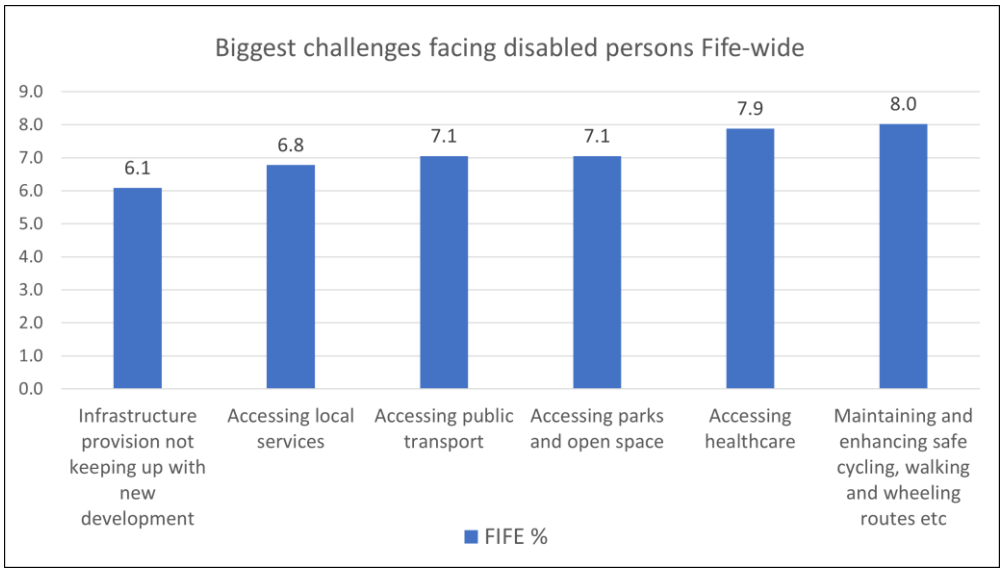
2.13 In collaboration with Fife Centre for Equalities and Fife Council Communities Services, Fife Council Planning Services held an online survey to engage with disabled persons about access and place (February-March 2023). The survey results have been uploaded to the Evidence Report data sources pages (links below).

2.14 Maintaining and enhancing safe cycling, walking and wheeling routes and accessing healthcare were the two biggest challenges facing disabled persons across Fife. Parked cars on pavements are a real issue for a lot of individuals, even with the provision of dropped kerbs and there is not enough enforcement to ensure that they are kept clear.

2.15 Lack of mobility options for those with issues getting around, e.g. giving people small electric scooters. There is a lack of lighting in some areas which can cause anxiety and make people feel unsafe. There is a lack of walkable community spaces within newer housing developments for people to make new connections within their communities. Play areas are good however, more accessible equipment is required.

2.16 Historical and listed sites, due to their status, have limited scope for change however it was suggested that minor adjustments should be permitted to improve accessibility. Community Centres are closing due to cuts/funding constraints. Cost of living is a huge barrier, people do not have the money to pay for memberships, one-off activities etc.

Figure 2.2: Biggest Challenges Facing Disabled Persons Fife-wide



Source: Fife Council Online Surveys

Links/Resources

- Online survey results – City of Dunfermline Locality
- Online survey results – Cowdenbeath Locality
- Online survey results – Glenrothes Locality
- Online survey results – Kirkcaldy Locality
- Online survey results – Levenmouth Locality
- Online survey results – North East Fife Locality
- Online survey results – South & West Fife Locality.

Inviting communities to prepare Local Place Plans

2.17 An invitation to develop Local Place Plans (LPPs) was issued in May 2022 through a range of channels including: contacting community councils; Planning Services' website; a news release; social media; Planning Services' e-newsletter, and; the e-newsletter of Fife Voluntary Action (an independent charity with links to community groups, voluntary organisations and social enterprises across Fife).

2.18 A deadline was set at January 2024 for submission of LPPs to guarantee that they would be in time to inform Local Development Plan preparation, but in November 2023 the submission deadline was extended until the end of June 2024 to allow communities time to finalise their LPP. As part of the invitation, an online form was created for interested groups and individuals to highlight their needs or information requirements. The feedback helped to create short advice notes to guide communities.

2.19 In September 2022 an information session offered groups the chance to talk through their issues and questions about LPPs. Using the presentation given at the session a video was created, which helps to explain what LPPs are and aims to help communities decide whether a LPP is right for their community.

2.20 From the start of 2023 with funding from the Fife Rural Development Fund (funded by the Scottish Government), the Council arranged for Planning Aid Scotland to run in-depth training comprising seminars, mentoring and a 'cohort group' bringing community groups together to share their experience. Mentoring has focussed on rural areas due to the nature of the funding but there have been opportunities for community groups in urban areas to benefit from the wider training programme (http://www.pas.org.uk/ruralfife/). This programme finished in early 2024 but Fife Council's Planning Service continued to run the 'cohort group until the end of June 2024. Support has also been available through the Climate Action Fife project to help develop climate informed LPPs in Fife.

2.21 The Local Place Plans received will be used to help prepare the Proposed Local Development Plan.

Links/Resources

- Invitation to create Local Place Plans | Fife Council
- www.pas.org.uk/ruralfife

3 Setting the Scene

Strategic Overview

3.1 Fife's new LDP is not being prepared in isolation. It supports and will help implement other national and local plans and strategies. Together these strategies seek to help Scotland and Fife move towards net zero carbon emissions, protect against the impacts of the climate emergency, ensuring no community is left behind, whilst tackling inequalities and improving outcomes for all.

3.2 The Evidence Report sets out, in areas that planning can influence, where Fife finds itself now on the route to realising these national, regional, and local strategic objectives. It also sets out the broad issues that the new LDP will need to address if these objectives are to be met.

3.3 The findings of this Evidence Report, together with national, regional and local strategies will help to inform the strategy of the new Local Development Plan. This will ensure that the new plan both addresses the issues that Fife faces, and works towards realising the collective goals of national, regional and local strategies.

Figure 3.1 - Examples of the plans and strategies informing Local Development Plan 2

National strategies	Regional strategies	Fife strategies
• National Planning Framework 4 • National Transport Strategy • National Strategy for Economic Transformation • Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-26	• Interim Edinburgh and SE Scotland Regional Spatial Strategy • Regional Prosperity Framework • SEStran Regional Transport Strategy • Tactrans Regional Transport Strategy • City Deal for Edinburgh and SE Scotland	• Plan4Fife Local Outcome Improvement Plan • CLIMATE Fife • Local Economic Strategy • Fife Local Transport Strategy • Local Heat and Energy Efficency Strategy • Fife Food Strategy

Source: Fife Council

4 Review of FIFEplan (2017)

4.1 Fife Council has evaluated whether the previous plan has delivered on its outcomes, and allocations, identify any lessons learned for the preparation of the new plan, and consider the appropriateness of the previous spatial strategy.

4.2 FIFEplan, Fife's current LDP, was adopted in 2017. It was prepared in the context of the Council Plan objectives and corporate goals at that time. These are reflected in the LDP where each policy includes a reference to the Council Plan 2017 links (Growing a Vibrant Economy, Increasing Opportunity and Reducing Poverty and Inequality, Improving Quality of Life in Local communities, and Promoting a Sustainable Society).

4.3 Council objectives changed during the life of FIFEplan and are now in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan – Plan4Fife 2017-27: Opportunities for All, Thriving Places, Inclusive Growth and Jobs, and Community Led Services.

4.4 These changes introduce some complexities in comparing the Council Plan 2017 objectives with those in the Plan4Fife but the two sets of corporate objectives have been mapped as a best fit.

4.5 A review of Plan4Fife in 2021 took account of how that plan was working combined with experience gained during the COVID-19 pandemic and recognised progress was not as fast as the Council would like. The review identified three key priorities for recovery and renewal, all supported by an overarching approach of community wealth building:

- leading economic recovery;
- tackling poverty and preventing crisis; and
- addressing the climate emergency.

4.6 These also map against the Council Plan objectives as shown in the figure below.

Figure 4.1 - Mapped Fife Council objectives 2017-21

Council Plan 2017	Plan4Fife 2017-27	Plan4Fife 2021-24 review
Growing a Vibrant Economy	Inclusive Growth and Jobs	Leading economic recovery
Increasing Opportunity and Reducing Poverty and Inequality	Opportunities for All	Tackling poverty and preventing crisis
Improving Quality of Life in Local communities	Community Led Services Thriving Places	Leading economic recovery Tackling poverty and preventing crisis Addressing the climate emergency
Promoting a Sustainable Society	Thriving Places	Addressing the climate emergency

Source: Fife Council

4.7 The extent to which these objectives have been met and to which FIFEplan policies and proposals contributed to meeting them cannot readily be established. It is reasonable to say that development proposals consistent with the plan have been part of delivering the plan and will have at least contributed to the 2017 objectives. Annex 6 is the full assessment in which the adopted FIFEplan policies have been assessed against their intended outcomes.

4.8 The spatial strategy items have been assessed to describe the status of proposals at the time of writing the evidence report under the headings of infrastructure, environment, place (including the strategic development areas), and movement.

4.9 The assessment finds the adopted FIFEplan is meeting its objectives. The long-term nature of the plan means delivery is ongoing and the strategy is steering decisions through the development management process and in informing corporate decisions. The strategic development proposals in FIFEplan have often taken many years to gain traction, including periods pre-dating the plan, but steady progress has been made in most of these areas as described in this annex and the plan has supported investment decisions and funding applications such as the City Deals funding for the Dunfermline Northern Link Road.

4.10 The FIFEplan Action Programme has been updated as a Delivery Programme to meet new legislation. It provides information on:

- the status of each FIFEplan proposal (20% of proposals are complete, 15% in progress and 65% not started but including proposals with planning permission still to start).
- Employment land – 7.4% of LDP allocated employment land has been developed (total allocated employment land in FIFEplan (Employment Allocated Sites plus SDA/SLA employment land allocations amounts to 1,476.8 ha of which 109.1ha has been developed as proposed, and 96 ha has been developed for non-employment land uses).
- A commentary on house building from the latest agreed Housing Land Audit

4.11 Looking forward to the new Local Development Plan and the delivery of infrastructure through planning obligations there will be greater scrutiny on their use in the light of the UK Supreme Court decision (Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Planning Authority (Appellant) v Elsick Development Company Limited (Respondent) (opens in new page)). The decision has informed subsequent appeals and will be taken into account in the next iteration of planning obligations guidance and the new Local Development Plan.

4.12 The financial requirements within obligations policy or guidance will be considered ahead of the new Local Development Plan given pressures on public and private finances. This will include a further review of the assumptions underpinning the policy guidance, the scope of matters to be covered by planning obligations, the expectations for contributions to be made and the methodology that will be followed to establish this.

4.13 In addition to the review of planning obligations, the role of the housing land audit will be repurposed as a housing delivery audit to monitor the housing delivery pipeline for the new Local Development Plan.

Links/Resources

- Annex 6 – Review of FIFEplan (2017)

PART 2 – FIFE WIDE EVIDENCE

5 Fife wide evidence and issues

Introducing the Fife-wide part of the Evidence Report

5.1 This part of the Evidence Report covers the topics listed below. Each section includes a summary of the implications of the evidence for Fife's new Local Development Plan:

- Fife's demographic and health profile:
- The characteristics of Fife's population, and health and wellbeing profile
- How Fife will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies:
- Climate change and carbon emissions in Fife.
- Biodiversity and the natural environment in Fife.
- How past development has shaped how Fife is today:
- Living well locally in Fife, open spaces and sports facilities.
- Data on past development, Fife's historic environment, brownfield land and green belts.
- The housing issues that need to be addressed across Fife within the lifetime of the Plan:
- Housing need and demand in Fife.
- Need for specialist housing including gypsy and traveller accommodation.
- Projected housing delivery as of 2023.
- The transport and infrastructure issues that need to be addressed across Fife within the lifetime of the Plan:
- Transport network capacity and trends.
- Transport investment priorities and cross-boundary considerations.
- Electricity and gas infrastructure.
- Energy related to climate adaptation (heating and cooling).
- Water and sewerage.
- Education provision.
- Health provision.
- Waste management.
- Digital connectivity.
- Cemetery provision.
- How Fife's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future:
- Overview of Fife's economy.
- Community Wealth Building.
- City/town centres, commercial centres and retail.
- Tourism.
- Minerals in Fife.

Population, health, and wellbeing

Fife's population

5.2 Scotland's Census 2022 shows Fife's population is estimated to be 370,400. This is an increase of around 1% since 2011. Compared to mid-year estimates, the actual population has been overestimated by around 4,300 people. Projections to 2028 show that the population is expected to decline and Fife's age structure continues to change with fewer children and working age people than in 2011, and significant increases in its older population.

5.3 The number of Fife households has reached 169,600 and has increased at a faster rate than its population. This continues the trend for smaller numbers of people in each household.

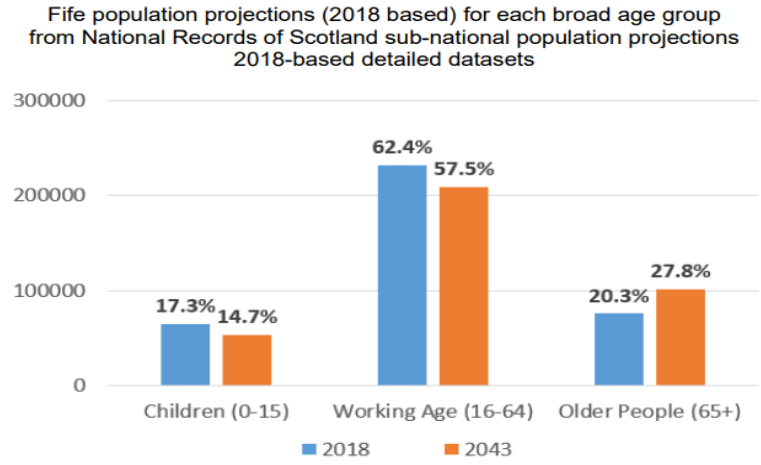
5.4 Birth rates have been falling steadily for several years. Fewer children were born in Fife in 2020 than any other year since records began in 1855.There are more deaths than births each year. More people are projected to move to Scotland than leave each year, but beyond 2028 this will no longer offset the gap between births and deaths

5.5 The more rural areas of North East Fife and South & West Fife will see a slight increase and decrease, respectively. There are no rural areas in Fife where population decline is expected to be a significant issue.

5.6 The City of Dunfermline locality has seen its population grow for several decades, however, unlike other localities in Fife, its population is estimated to continue to increase.

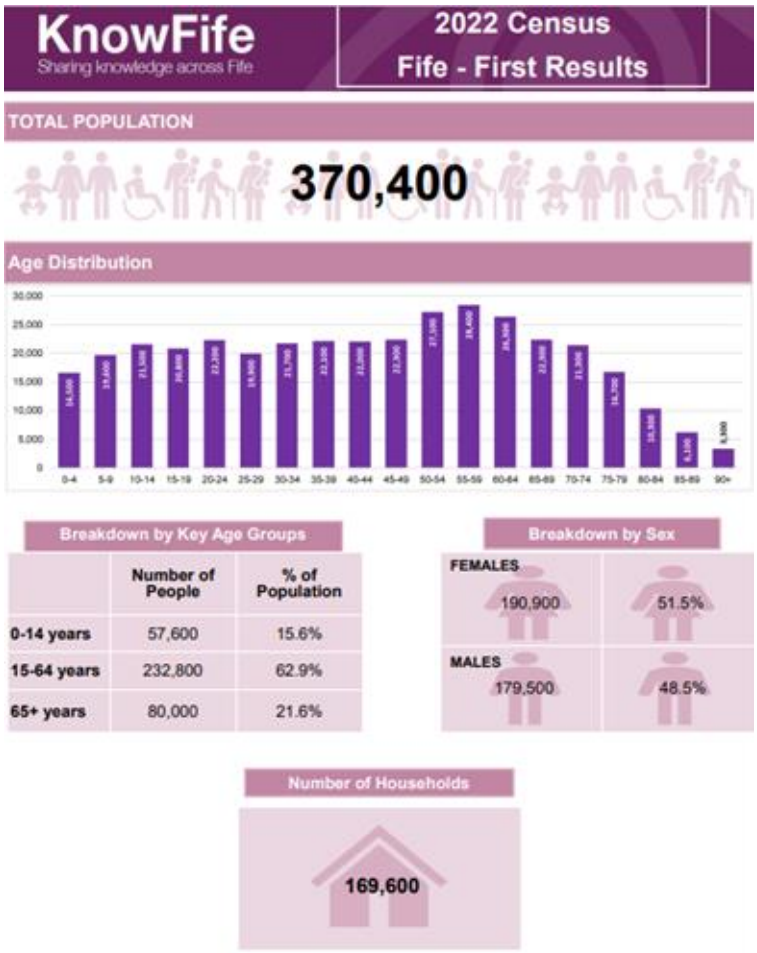
5.7 The Glenrothes locality's population is expected to reduce the most in future years.

Figure 5.1 Fife population projections 2018-43



Source: National Records of Scotland

Figure 5.2 - Summary of Fife's population statistics



Source: Fife Council

Links to Evidence

- Small area population estimates: mid-2022 - National Records of Scotland (NRS)
- Fife-Census-2022-Infographic.pdf

Deprivation in Fife

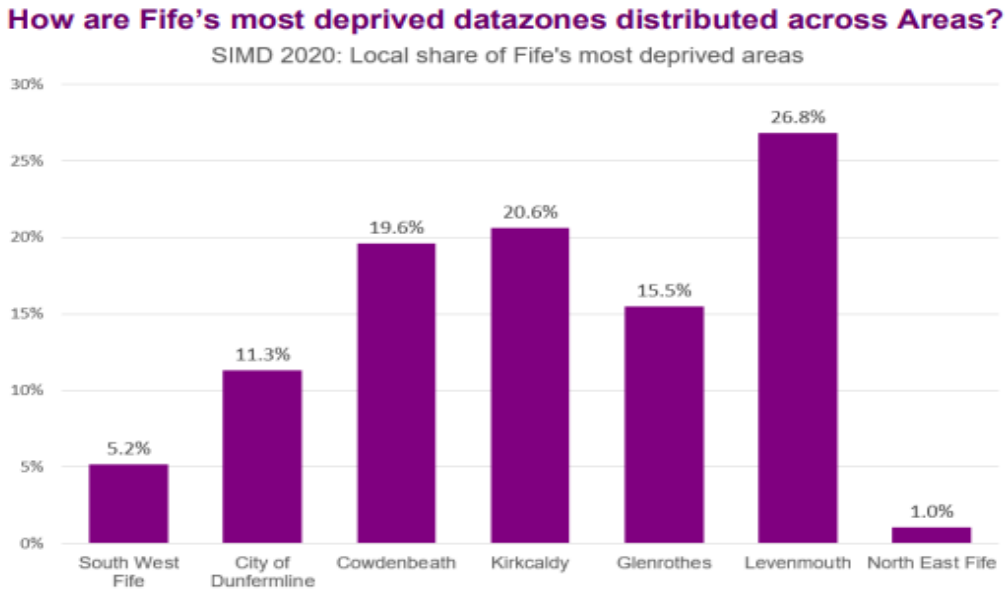
5.8 Fife has a varied socio-economic profile that mirrors that of Scotland under the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2020.

5.9 As with previous indices, Fife's most deprived areas continue to be concentrated in Mid-Fife, across the Levenmouth, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath, and Glenrothes localities. However, some areas are now showing as more deprived relative to other areas of Scotland compared to previous indices. It is also recognised that there are localised pockets of deprivation in even the most affluent areas of Fife, such as North East Fife.

5.10 23.2% of children in Fife (14,796 aged under 16) are living in relative poverty before housing costs; this is above the equivalent Scottish level of 20.8%. Relative poverty increased in Fife from 16.1% to 23.2% between 2015/16 and 2021/22.

5.11 Within Fife, child poverty remains highest in the Glenrothes, and Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath Constituencies, and lower in the North East Fife constituency.

Figure 5.3 - Deprivation across Fife's localities



Source: KnowFife SIMD Quick Brief, Fife Council

Table 5.1 - Change in distribution of 20% most deprived datazones in Fife 2016-20

Area	2020	2016	Change
South and West Fife	5	5	0
City of Dunfermline	11	8	+3
Cowdenbeath	19	19	0
Kirkcaldy	20	23	-3
Glenrothes	15	16	-1
Levenmouth	26	23	+3
North East Fife	1	1	0
FIFE	**97**	**95**	**+2**

Source: KnowFife SIMD Quick Brief, Fife Council

Table 5.2: How is SIMD Changing Over Time by Area?

Area	No of datazones in 20% most deprived		Change
	2020	2016	
South and West Fife	5	5	0
City of Dunfermline	11	8	+ 3
Cowdenbeath	19	19	0
Kirkcaldy	20	23	- 3
Glenrothes	15	16	- 1
Levenmouth	26	23	+ 3
North East Fife	1	1	0
Fife	**97**	**95**	**+ 2**

Source: KnowFife SIMD Quick Brief, Fife Council

Note: Area distribution of 20% most deprived datazones, showing change from 2016 to 2020

Links to Evidence

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020
- Interactive mapping of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Public health and wellbeing in Fife

Social determinants of health and Health in All Policies Approach (HiAP)

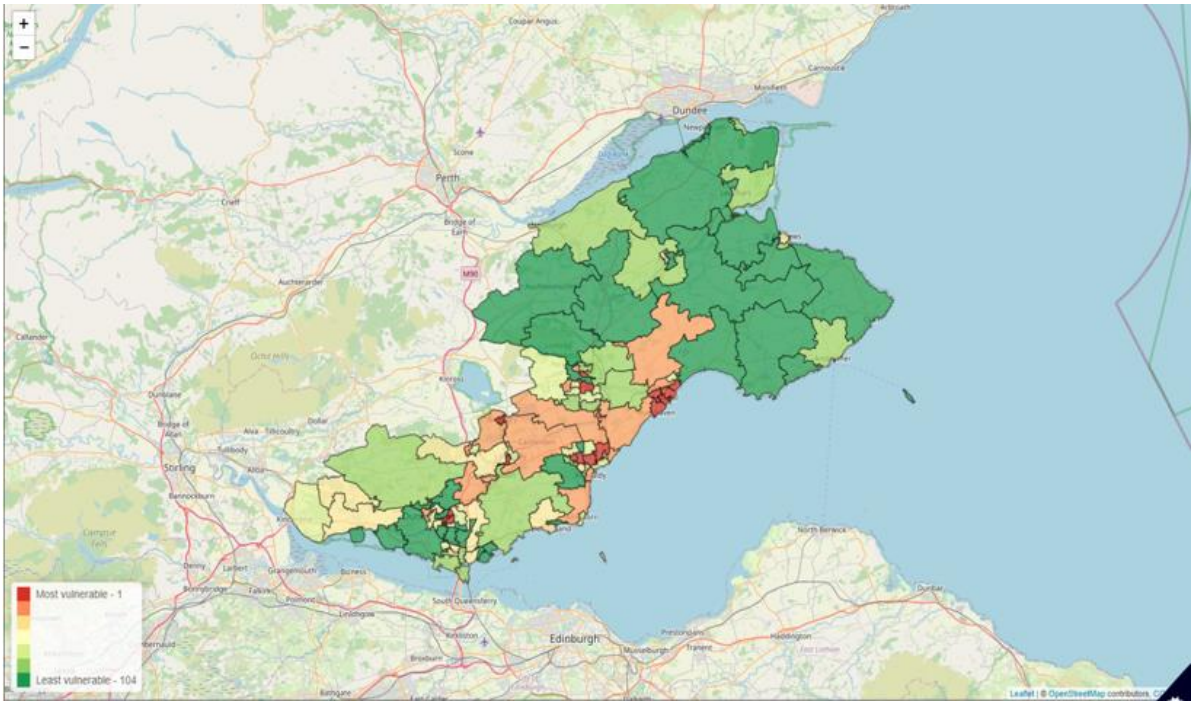
5.12 Public Health Scotland suggests that healthcare services are not the main contributor to a population's health and recognises the intrinsic nature of health and identifies the need for decision making in all policy areas to consider and support good health. The Health in All Policies approach acknowledges that health challenges are linked to the social determinants of health and that to promote healthy communities and reduce health inequalities, it is necessary to address these. The social determinants of health are identified as:

- Childhood experiences
- Housing
- Education
- Social support
- Family income
- Employment
- Our communities
- Access to health services

5.13 While not everyone living in a deprived area will experience high levels of deprivation, there is a link between deprivation and poorer health outcomes. This means people who live in the most deprived communities are more likely to die before the age of 75 (premature mortality) compared to those living in the least deprived areas. People living in remote rural areas have the lowest premature mortality rates, with higher premature mortality in large urban areas.

5.14 There is increasing awareness of the relationship between place and health and wellbeing in areas such as greenspace, play, and physical activity. Land use planning can assist in creating environments which lend themselves to healthier, more resilient communities and, in doing so, improve individual wellbeing. The Director of Public Health Report 2024 highlights the potential for place-based approaches to planning and collaborative working to create healthy places and spaces. The ScotPHO profiling tool is the main source of health data at Fife area (locality) and Neighbourhood level (intermediate zone). It shows that in Fife, since about 2010, the health inequality gap in life expectancy has widened. Men in the most affluent areas of Fife will live on average 13.9 years longer (it was 10.7 years) than men in the most deprived areas, while for women the difference is 10 years (was 6.3 years). The Community Map of vulnerability identifies neighbourhoods with poorest outcomes where they might benefit from a neighbourhood action plan.

Figure 5.4 - Community Map of vulnerability



Source: Fife Council Community Planning Outcomes Profiling Tool

5.15 Fife has adopted the Scottish Government Public Health priorities which reflect the most pressing health and wellbeing concerns which we should focus on over the next decade to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. They focus on the upstream determinants of health which are shared 'risk factors' for many of the leading causes of poor health and wellbeing in Fife (Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2020-2021).

5.16 NPF4 Policy 23 on Health and Safety requires Local Development Plans spatial strategies to seek to tackle health inequalities particularly in places which are experiencing the most disadvantage. They should identify the health and social care services, and infrastructure needed in the area, including potential for co-location of complementary services, in partnership with Health Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships:

- LDPs should create healthier places for example through opportunities for exercise, healthier lifestyles, land for community food growing and allotments, and awareness of locations of concern for suicide.
- Spatial strategies should maintain appropriate distances between sites with hazardous substances and areas where the public are likely to be present and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.

5.17 The Scottish Place and Wellbeing Collaborative have developed a set of Place and Wellbeing Outcomes, underpinned by sustainability and equality. The Place and Wellbeing Outcomes provide a consistent and comprehensive focus for where place impacts on the wellbeing of people and planet. As a key feature for delivering Scotland's local living and 20-minute they are covered further in Annex 7.

5.18 Fife Council's Research and Insight Team working with the People's Panel produced the report *Our Place: Living in Fife 2023* published in February 2024. The work used the Place Standard Tool and the Place and Wellbeing Outcomes and provided some valuable indicators of how people in Fife feel about various aspects of their place, including access to health facilities. Health centre access/provision was raised as an issue universally across Fife with difficulties in being able to get appointments or registered at Doctors or Dental practices. Limited availability and opening times in more rural areas – and difficulties with travel to more central hubs, especially where public transport is relied on (Annex 10 says more about transport accessibility).

5.19 *The Food4Fife Strategy*, which supports the Council's Climate Fife Strategy and Action Plan 2024 'Big Community Move', was approved in May 2024. This aims to support community climate action as well as empower our communities to transform local food, waste and transport to create community wealth and wellbeing. The Strategy sets the direction and focus of food activities across the region for the next 5 years. By reducing reliance on imported foods, enhancing local food security, and fostering sustainable practices, the strategy combats food poverty and contributes to mitigating the climate crisis. The Strategy will be used to help inform the Proposed Local Plan, for example in identify sites for community food growing and allotments.

5.20 Opportunities for healthier, more active lifestyles are promoted through Fife Councils' Open Space Strategy and Green and Blue Networks (see Fife's open space and greenspaces). The Council's Play Sufficiency Assessment published in November 2023, has assessed the quantity, quality and accessibility to formal and informal play provision across Fife. Over 500 Council sites were mapped, visited, scored and rated. In-person play sessions and online surveys provided helped inform the process from a community perspective. Details of the assessment results are summarised within the seven locality sections.

5.21 Fife Council will continue to work closely with NHS Fife and other relevant stakeholders to promote the creation of healthy places, including but not limited to acknowledging locations of concern for suicide as stated in NPF4.

5.22 The Evidence Report provides Fife-wide information on healthcare provision as well as information on additional capacity or provision for each of the localities Fife.

5.23 Future links to wider organisational and national future priorities will be reflected as the Proposed Plan evolves. For example, the Scottish Government "Population Health Plan" which is due to be published in the Spring of 2025 and which will have a focus on Places, Healthy Living, Prevention and Equitable Health and Care over a 10-year period.

Environmental hazards

5.24 Public Health Scotland estimate that there are 1,800-2,700 deaths in Scotland per year which can be attributed to long term exposure to outdoor pollution. Air quality in Fife is generally good but there are areas with higher levels of pollution which mainly relate to areas of high traffic. Until recently there were two Air Quality Management Areas identified in Fife – one in Cupar and one in Dunfermline; these were revoked in 2023 due to improvements in air quality. Fife Council has also identified 14 smoke control areas to reduce air pollution caused by the burning of fuels. It is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney in these areas.

5.25 SEPA oversee the regulation of industrial activities which create emissions relating to Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012. PPC part A sites pose the highest risk of emissions to air, water and land, in Fife these sites include pig and poultry farms, landfill sites and paper mills. Emissions from these sites can cause unpleasant odours and other types of pollution which could affect human health.

5.26 The World Health Organisation has identified noise as a leading environmental nuisance which can causing short and long term health problems. Planning advice note 1/2011: Planning and Noise sets out that '*The planning system has a role in ensuring that new development does not result in increasing numbers of people exposed to adverse noise impacts.*' Scottish Government publish a noise map which gives an indication of noise levels in the areas around roads and railways. Information on noise from industry is not available in Fife. Unsurprisingly the areas which are most affected in Fife are adjacent to the M90 and A92 roads, noise from the railway is shown as high in Burntisland.

5.27 There is more detail on environmental hazards in the locality sections of the evidence report.

Links to Evidence

- KnowFife Briefing - Census 2022
- Small area population estimates: mid-2022 - National Records of Scotland (NRS)
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020
- Interactive mapping of Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- ScotPHO profiling tool
- Director of Public Health Report 2024 | NHS Fife
- Fife Health and Social Care Locality Profiles
- Know Fife Community Profiles
- Fife Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2023- 2026
- Place and Wellbeing Outcomes | Improvement Service
- Our Place: Living in Fife 2023
- Food 4 Fife Strategy 2024
- Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning Methodology
- SEPA – Pollution Prevention and Control
- Scotland's environment map
- Fife Council – Air Quality
- Fife Council – Fife Air Quality Annual Progress Report 2024
- Public Health Scotland – Outdoor pollution and health
- Fife Council – Smoke Control Zones
- World Health Organisation fact sheet - Noise
- Planning advice note 1/2011: Planning and Noise
- Scotland's Noise – interactive map
- Public Health Scotland - Health in All Policies
- World Health Organisation - What you need to know about Health in All Policies

Implications of demographic and health evidence for the Proposed LDP:

- Fife's ageing population and health concerns will have an impact of how health services are delivered. The LDP will include known land use needs of health authorities by safeguarding land or applying development requirements where health needs are justified by development proposals. The health authorities are represented on an operational group established to prepare the LDP and will be integral to creating the Plan.
- The LDP will need to provide for housing needs which will evolve to population changes (age and household sizes) and Housing Services will work with the planning team to align planning and housing policy. The Housing Annexes identify implications directly relating to housing evidence.
- The relationship between place and health and wellbeing in areas such as greenspace, play, and physical activity will be recognised in development requirements of briefs in the Proposed LDP by setting expectations or requirements to creating environments which support lend opportunities for exercise, healthier lifestyles, land for community food growing and allotments, and maintain appropriate distances between sites with hazardous substances and areas where the public are likely to be present and areas of particular natural sensitivity or interest.
- The location of health services and access to them will be part of the site assessment methodology will be applied through the site assessment methodology when preparing the Proposed LDP and its spatial strategy.

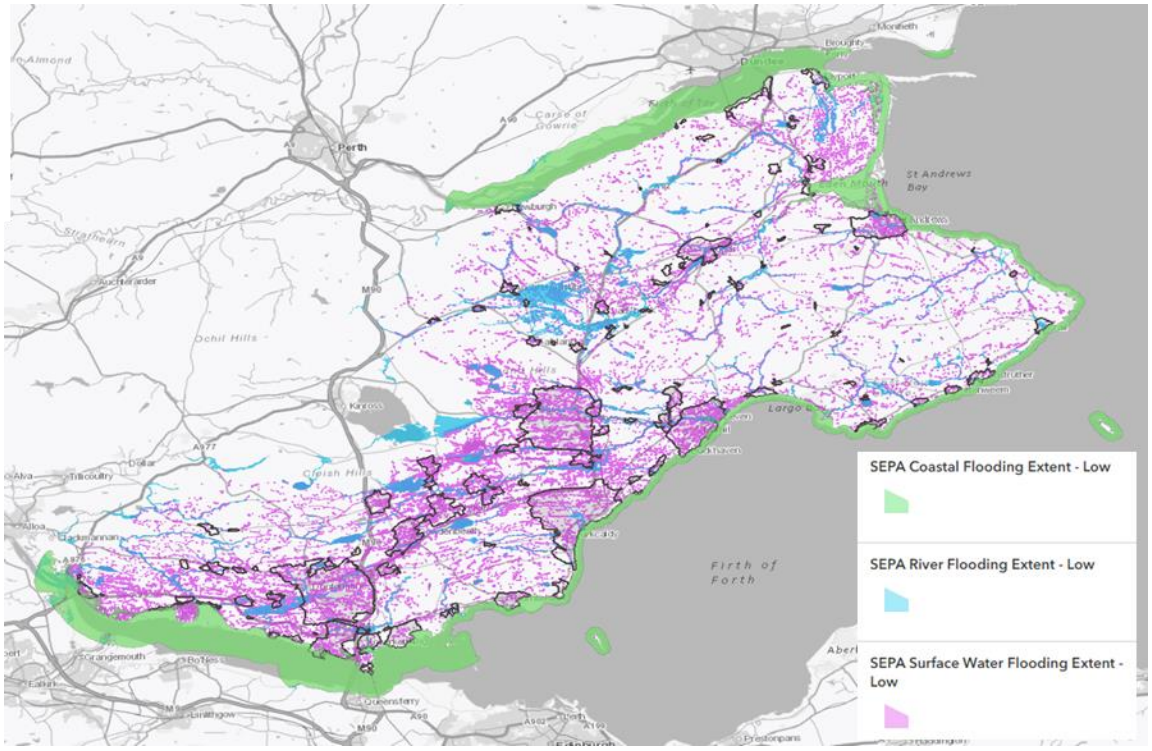
How Fife will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

5.28 Fife faces twin emergencies from climate change and biodiversity loss. Both raise significant issues that will need to be addressed in Fife's new Local Development Plan. The Climate Change Background Paper highlights some of the ways in which climate change is exacerbating pressures on habitats and species, and the role that nature-rich areas can themselves play in storing carbon.

5.29 Fife Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and, along with the rest of Scotland, is working to be carbon neutral by 2045, as well as assisting communities in becoming more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

5.30 As a result of climate change, Fife is predicted to experience warmer, wetter winters, drier summers, and more extreme weather. The effects of this are shown on an interactive map (see figure below) which shows how Fife will need to plan for a range of future climate change impacts, including rising sea levels, and increased risks of flooding, based on SEPA Flood maps and geomorphic risk buffer and Dynamic Coast 2 mapping of predicted coastal change.

Figure 5.5 - Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife



Source: SEPA flood maps, Dynamic Coast 2 and SEPA geomorphic risk buffer data

Note: Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

Caveat for use of Dynamic Coast maps. The Dynamic Coast maps should not be used to assess coastal risk to individual properties.

Links to Evidence

- Climate change challenges in Fife
- Climate change background paper
- SEPA flood maps
- Dynamic Coast 2 mapping
- SEPA Geomorphic Risk Buffer mapping
- SEPA water scarcity web-pages
- Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife
- Background paper on Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity
- BBC News article – Water scarcity: Fife farmers banned from using River Eden.

Biodiversity and the natural environment – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context

Policy 3 Biodiversity
LDPs should protect, conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity in line with the mitigation hierarchy and promote nature recovery and nature restoration across the development plan area, including by: facilitating the creation of nature networks and strengthening connections between them to support improved ecological connectivity; restoring degraded habitats or creating new habitats; and incorporating measures to increase biodiversity, including populations of priority species.

Policy 4 Natural Places
LDPs will identify and protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally important natural assets, on land and along coasts, and establish and grow nature networks to help protect and restore the biodiversity, ecosystems and natural processes in their area.

Policy 5 Soils
LDPs should protect locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils, including land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use.

Policy 6 Forestry, Woodland and Trees
LDPs should identify and protect existing woodland and the potential for its enhancement or expansion to avoid habitat fragmentation and improve ecological connectivity, helping to support and expand nature networks.

Policy 20 Blue and Green Infrastructure
LDPs should identify and protect blue and green infrastructure assets and networks; and enhance and expand existing provision including new blue and/or green infrastructure.

Policy 22 Flood Risk and Water Management
LDPs should identifying opportunities to implement improvements to the water environment through natural flood risk management and blue green infrastructure.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

Natural Places

5.31 Fife's natural heritage is extremely diverse, in part because of the influence of the coast and surrounding hills, as well as local geological features and landforms. These characteristics produce a richly varied tapestry of habitats, home to a wealth of species. NatureScot produced a detailed assessment of Fife's Landscape Character– Fife Landscape Evolution and Influences (2019) which highlights the wide range of different landscapes in the area. The assessment identifies the importance of views giving local landscapes a distinct sense of place and the strong sense of history and human influence on a natural environment that is still evident today.

5.32 There are 22 designated Local Landscape Areas in Fife identified through the Fife Local Landscape Designation Review (LUC 2009). These include areas of the coast, uplands such as the Cleish, Lomond and Cullaloe Hills and many of the islands around the Fife coast such as Inchcolm, Inchkeith and the Isle of May. There is more detail on the different character of Fife's local landscapes in the locality section of the evidence report.

5.33 The LDP has a role in protecting these important landscape assets and views from inappropriate development and visual impact by spatially mapping the designations and identifying places for future development in areas which would not have a negative impact on the protected landscape. Identifying key views which should be protected is also important.

5.34 The biggest impact on the Fife landscape in recent times has come from open-cast mining. Many former mines have been successfully re-landscaped or partially restored such as Muirdean near Crossgates, and St Ninians west of Kelty. Alternative uses are being promoted for many of the open cast sites such as Westfield near Benarty which has been partially developed for employment and renewable energy uses and Comrie Colliery north of Blairhall which has recent planning permission for a mixed-use development.

5.35 The LDP has a role in promoting the remediation and reuse of these large open cast sites and other areas of brownfield land in the countryside left over from industrial activities.

Biodiversity

5.36 Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth and is essential for sustaining ecosystems which provide us with positive benefits such as supporting food production through pollination and fisheries, purifying water and preventing flooding, enhancing carbon storage, improving human wellbeing and contributing towards climate change mitigation. These benefits are discussed in more detail in the ecosystem services and nature based solutions section of this evidence report. NatureScot has developed a template for demonstrating the delivery of positive effects of biodiversity for larger and more significant development proposals (Annex C of the Developing with Nature guidance).

5.37 The LDP has a role in ensuring that there are positive effects for biodiversity resulting from development proposals.

5.38 Land cover maps of Fife show that most of the land cover is classed as grasslands/cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats (shaded pale green on the map) with areas of wooded land especially prevalent in the south west and north of Fife.

5.39 Most of the Fife coastline is covered by national and international sites designated for nature. Fife has several European designated sites: two Special Areas for Conservation (SAC), and four Special Protection Areas (SPA). The Firth of Forth and Firth of Tay and Eden estuaries are particularly valuable for wintering wildfowl and wading birds, and breeding and migratory seabirds; and the shallow seas at St Andrews and Largo Bays provide some of the richest feeding grounds for fish and seabirds in Scotland. In addition, Fife has 54 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, two National Nature Reserves, a Regional Park, seven Local Nature reserves, and three country parks.

5.40 Fife also has nearly a hundred designated Local Nature Conservation Sites (formerly called Local Wildlife Sites). Although these are non-statutory, they are locally important for nature and landscapes and can help form part of Nature Networks. NatureScot have produced guidance on the identification, monitoring and review of Local Nature Conservation Sites. Fife is currently developing a local approach to the monitoring and review of these sites.

5.41 Fife also has 24 Geological Conservation Review sites (GCR) which include many coastal areas, Inchkeith Island and the Lomond Hills. Geological review sites contain geological and geomorphological features of national and international importance.

5.42 The LDP has a role in protecting these designated sites from inappropriate development which could degrade their status as nature rich places.

5.43 The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 sets out a nature positive vision for Scotland – promoting the need to take urgent action to regenerate biodiversity, build resilience to climate change; and make people and communities central to a nature positive future. The strategy aligns with

policies in NPF4 on biodiversity and natural places and the promotion of nature-based solutions.

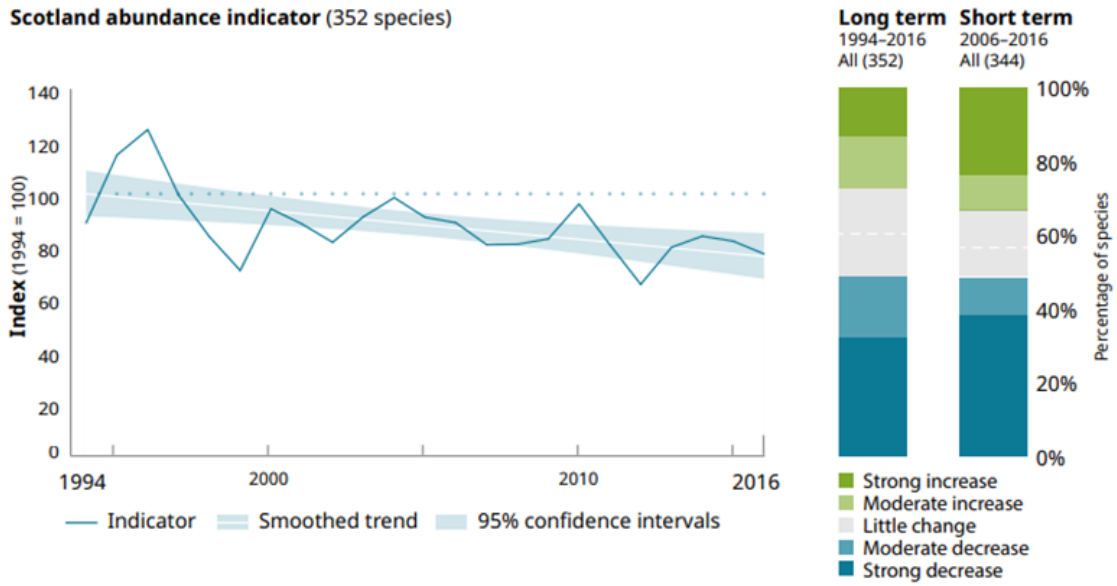
5.44 At a local level the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan will help to implement the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The fourth edition of Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018 is now some years out of date, however work is underway on the fifth edition which will be published in 2025 and will respond to the vision set out in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan will set out local priorities and include actions and projects key to achieving the national vision in Fife. The Fife LDP has a role to complement and support the priorities and projects in the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

5.45 There will be five yearly updates to the projects and partner priorities in the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan and all partners of the Fife Biodiversity Partnership will be involved in the development of the plan; giving the revised Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan wide representation from right across public, private and tertiary sectors in Fife.

5.46 The current Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018 identifies that Fife supports 26 species of European importance and over a hundred nationally protected species. These include the otter, great crested newt, six types of bat, and many types of whales, dolphins and porpoises.

5.47 Climate change, loss of land to urbanisation, industrialisation, and agriculture, invasive non-native species and pollution have resulted in a significant loss of biodiversity across Scotland and by implication in Fife. Evidence of this loss of biodiversity and the impact of climate change is set out in the 2019 State of Nature – Scotland Report. The figure below is taken from the report and shows a steady decline in the abundance of 352 species in Scotland over a 22 year period. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy includes a terrestrial and marine species indicator which also indicates the decline in species in Scotland over the last 30 years and sets a key milestone to halt biodiversity loss in Scotland by 2030.

Figure 5.6 - Abundance of species in Scotland (1994-16)



Source: [State of Nature report 2019 – State of Nature Partnership]

5.48 There are no comprehensive records to illustrate the existence (or absence) of particular species in Fife; however, loss of biodiversity in the area can be illustrated by absence and presence records for water voles, which show how the number of recorded sightings have fallen. Since 2020 there have been only two records showing the presence of water voles in Fife compared with over 32 recordings pre-2000. The water vole survey absence records show absences particularly in north and central Fife.

5.49 The fourth Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan aims to: protect and enhance biodiversity for its intrinsic value as well as for the health, wellbeing and enjoyment of the people of Fife. They look to achieve this by: maintaining and improving the condition of habitats, reducing the pressures on nature, creating new habitat and improving its connectivity, and involving people in the enjoyment and conservation of their environment.

5.50 Local action is required to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance biodiversity, habitats and ecosystems in Fife in order to respond to the biodiversity emergency. This is primarily the remit of the Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan but also has clear implications for the Fife Local Development Plan: to ensure that new development is located in areas where biodiversity loss will be minimised; ensuring that habitats are not fragmented; and identifying opportunities for biodiversity enhancements and the use of nature-based solutions.

5.51 Climate change is a key driver of change in habitats and species. The Scottish National Adaptation Plan says that 'climate change is the biggest threat to Scotland's wildlife and habitats. Changing rainfall patterns, water scarcity, flooding, ocean warming and acidification, extreme heat and wildfire are all impacting the rate and extent of terrestrial, freshwater and marine species losses across Scotland'.

5.52 Climate change and extreme weather events have already impacted on many aspects of the natural environment. Some habitats, such as coastal habitats, have been directly affected through the acceleration in the rise of sea levels and larger storm-surges causing erosion of beaches and dunes. Climate change will also alter ecological balances in some areas. Many species are adapted to specific climatic conditions, this means that the impacts of climate change are projected to have significant impacts on biodiversity in particular species which are unable to move or find suitable alternative habitats.

5.53 Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) and the spread of diseases may also benefit from changing climatic conditions. The State of Nature Scotland 2023 report sets out that the problem of INNS is intensifying and the threat is likely to increase with climate change. Invasive species such as japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, himalayan balsam, rhododendron and grey squirrels are present throughout Fife; and American mink has been recorded in the Glenrothes and Levenmouth areas. These impact on local ecosystems. There are various programmes across Fife which are treating areas of invasive non native species. Such as a local led programme to remove giant hogweed along the Dreel Burn near Anstruther. There is more information on INNS in Fife and local projects in the locality sections.

5.54 Nature can act as a climate adaptation tool. A strong natural environment will create more resilient ecosystems and help communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change such as flooding, drought, heatwaves and sea level rise. The Scotland National Adaptation Plan has 'nature connects' as one its five outcomes and includes the protection, enhancement and connection of nature based solutions as one of its objectives. Another objective directly relates to development planning and expects Local Development Plans to take current and future climate risks into account and be a key lever in enabling places to adapt and highlights that NPF4 promotes the integration of nature based solutions. There is more information on nature based solutions and ecosystems services in Fife in the ecosystem services and nature based solutions section.

Nature networks

5.55 The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (2023) sets out that nature networks will underpin the resilience and health of species and habitats and NPF4 expects Local Development Plans to facilitate the creation of nature networks and strengthen connections between them. NatureScot explains that nature networks connect nature-rich sites, restoration areas, and other environmental projects through a series of areas of suitable habitat, habitat corridors and stepping-stones - connectivity is a fundamental aspect of nature networks. As well as supporting regional and national approaches to protect and restore nature, they provide local benefits to wildlife and people. The NatureScot Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland sets the following vision for nature networks to 2030:

5.56 By 2030 Scotland will have evolving, flexible and resilient Nature Networks connecting nature-rich areas allowing wildlife and natural processes to move and adapt to land use and climate change pressures. The networks will help build people's connection to nature, providing biodiversity-rich spaces that deliver local benefits, and meet the priorities of local communities for nature.

Gaps in Evidence

Nature networks have not yet been mapped in Fife, but Fife Council has started work with the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust to develop a methodology for the mapping which will inform both the Local Development Plan and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The Fife Biodiversity Partnership will be consulted on the approach to be taken. It is intended that the nature network mapping will be available towards the end of 2025. In the interim, Fife has the outcome of a pilot project carried out for Scottish Government and NatureScot which maps strategic corridors for nature in the area. These strategic corridors are very high level and there are a few gaps in the information such as corridors along the coast and rivers. Therefore, more work is required to refine this information. The Fife nature networks mapping work will review and build on these strategic corridors using habitat network data, local knowledge and ground truthing to identify opportunities for enhancement of the network. NatureScot have recently published a Practitioners Guide to Nature Networks which sets out that in Scotland nature networks have two main strands:

- Connecting all sites contributing towards 30 by 30.
- Connecting biodiversity across and between rural, urban, and the peri-urban area.

5.57 The Fife Local Development Plan has a role to show nature networks spatially and to ensure that development delivers on opportunities to enhance and preserve and does not lead to fragmentation of existing networks.

Forestry woodland and trees

5.58 The Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 sets a vision that by 2070 Scotland will have more forests and woodlands, sustainably managed and better integrated with other land uses. These will provide a more resilient, adaptable resource, with greater natural capital value, that supports a strong economy, a thriving environment, and healthy and flourishing communities. It sets three objectives for forestry to:

- Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a healthy and high quality environment.
- Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances.

5.59 Scottish Forestry's document Economic Impact of Forest Based Activity in Scotland (Feb 2024) identifies that the forestry sector is estimated to contribute around £1.1 billion to Scotland's economy each year. Forestry and logging make a relatively small 0.06% Gross Value Added (GVA) contribution to the overall Fife GVA – around £5 million (source: Oxford Economic Forecasts 2024). As may be expected given the extensive use of land for agriculture in Fife this percentage contribution is lower than in many other areas of Scotland.

5.60 The protection and expansion of forestry, woodlands and trees also help to improve ecological connectivity and support nature networks, there is a clear role for the LDP to provide this protection and support expansion.

Gap in evidence

5.61 The current Fife Forestry and Woodland Strategy (2013-2018) is out of date and requires updated to increase the emphasis on climate change and the biodiversity emergency and respond to the objectives set out in the Scottish Forestry Strategy and policies in NPF4. The vision and aims of the current strategy will be updated and the emphasis amended to reflect changing local and national priorities. Work is underway to update the Fife strategy and should be completed by summer 2025. The scope for the revised strategy was developed in consultation with Scottish Forestry and the Fife Environmental Partnership and the partnership, along with other key stakeholders and interest groups, will be consulted further on the approach, vision and aims as the strategy develops in mid-2025. The draft strategy was published for consultation in May 2025.

5.62 The Fife Forestry and Woodland Strategy 2013-2018 includes maps of areas which have potential for different types of woodland creation in Fife (see the carbon storage and sequestration layers in the green and blue network interactive map to view these). The new strategy will consider areas which have the potential for carbon sequestration; look at the resilience of

woodlands in Fife to the impacts of climate change and the potential benefits of woodlands to help with adaptation. It will identify existing areas of woodland and areas with potential for woodland expansion taking into account habitat connectivity and ecological connectivity, aiding the implementation of NPF4 Policy 6: Forestry Woodland and Trees. There is also other mapping work underway as part of the Fife Climate Forest programme which will inform the strategy: Stirling University are mapping the urban tree canopy and Forest Research are mapping woodland connectivity in Fife. The Fife Climate Forest programme will act as a delivery mechanism to deliver key aspects of the revised strategy.

5.63 The Fife Local Development Plan will need to protect existing woodlands which are under pressure due to development and help to balance competing uses for the land in Fife including woodland creation. Protecting and enhancing woodland habitats, the urban canopy and promoting connectivity will be key priorities of the new Fife Forest and Woodland Strategy and the Fife Local Development Plan will have a role in helping to deliver the aims of the strategy.

Green and blue infrastructure

5.64 Fife Council has undertaken a detailed audit of green and blue infrastructure across Fife to provide an overview of green and blue networks in the area. The Fife green and blue network considers the functions of green and blue infrastructure which go beyond connectivity and habitats for wildlife and includes greenspace, active travel connections, drainage networks, landscape setting and features which provide resilience to the impacts of climate change. Green and blue networks have an important role in helping to deliver nature restoration, biodiversity enhancements, nature networks, flood prevention, water management and climate mitigation objectives; and Fife has identified many opportunities relating to these which are discussed in more detail below and in the localities sections.

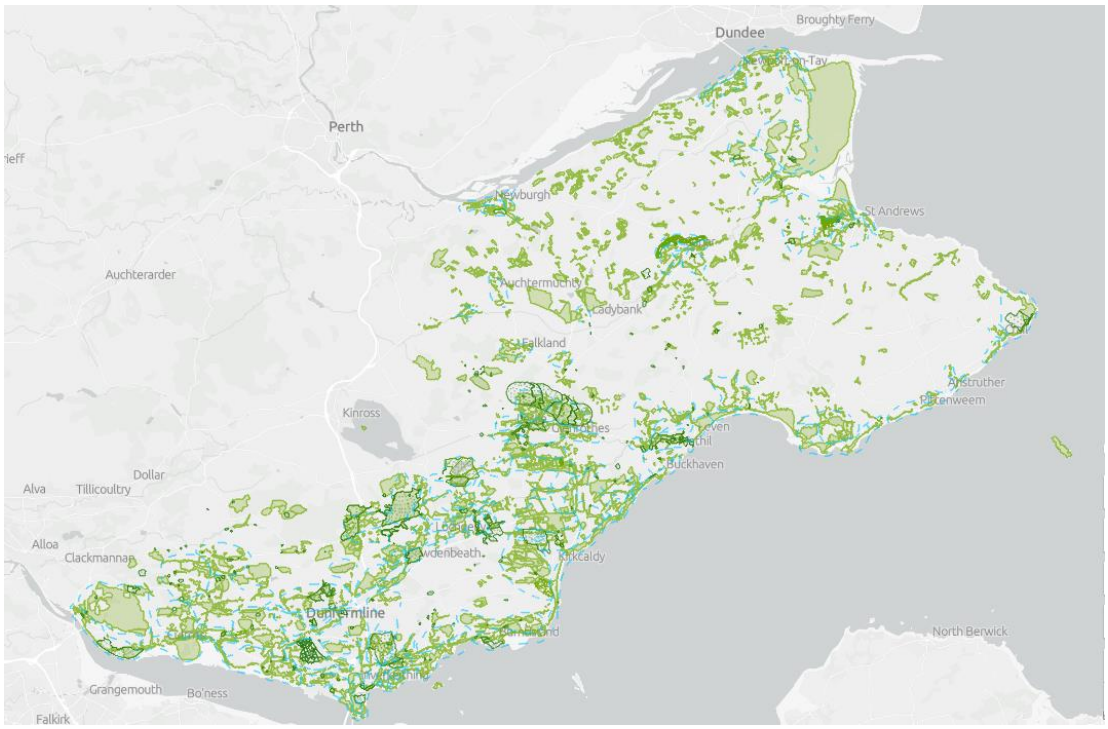
5.65 The Fife green and blue network has three core principles; it should be integrated; multi-functional and climate conscious. These principles and the approach taken to the identification of assets and opportunities was discussed with key agencies and other stakeholders in March 2022; it was based on an approach developed in 2013 for FIFEplan in partnership with NatureScot (then Scottish Natural Heritage). This engagement identified the following priorities for the Fife Green and Blue Network:

1. Providing resilience to the impacts of climate change and incorporating adaptation and mitigation measures.
2. Connecting ecologically sensitive areas and creating nature networks for wildlife.
3. Providing useable greenspace and access to natural spaces for communities
4. Connecting people and places through active travel networks.
5. Using nature-based solutions to alleviate flooding, reduce air and noise pollution, store carbon, and provide temperature regulation in urban areas.

6. Providing landscape setting and improving the quality of places, supporting lifelong health and wellbeing.

5.66 The Fife Green and blue network includes existing assets and identifies opportunities to restore, enhance and regenerate green and blue networks improving connectivity across Fife. The methodology for the updated green and blue network audit is described in a storymap which explains how the key assets and opportunities were identified. The audit information on assets and opportunities is presented in an interactive map. The figure below is an extract from the interactive map illustrating the green and blue network assets and opportunity information across Fife.

Figure 5.7 - Example image from the 2023 Green and Blue network audit interactive map



Source: 2023 Green and Blue network audit interactive map

5.67 Green and blue networks include sites designated for nature as mentioned in the biodiversity section along with other key green and blue network assets in Fife including:

- The Fife Coast and the River Leven, Eden and Ore corridors.
- The Fife Coastal Path, Fife Pilgrims Way, West Fife Way and four national cycle network routes.
- The Lomond Hills Regional Park; and Lochore, Townhill, and Craigtoun Country Parks.
- Large urban parks: Beveridge Park, Ravenscraig Park and Dunnikier Park in Kirkcaldy, Pittencrieff Park, Public Park and Duloch Park in Dunfermline and Riverside Park in Glenrothes.
- Landscaped former estate woodlands across Fife, woodland assets in Glenrothes, and the Tentsmuir, Devilla and Blairadam Forests.
- The Lyne burn in Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy Dens, and various golf courses.

5.68 Key opportunities in the area include enhancement and extension of the network as part of development proposals such as the Strategic Development Areas; greenspace, active travel, habitat and river restoration proposals along the River Leven; enhancing biodiversity and creating parks, gardens and areas for food production on the Fife NHS estate; and the restoration of former mines and quarries.

5.69 As part of the audit information there are a series of green and blue network settlement reports which provide detail on networks in different areas of Fife. More detail on green and blue infrastructure across Fife and links to the settlement reports are in the locality sections of this evidence report.

5.70 South and central Fife are within the area covered by the Central Scotland Green Network which is a national project identified in NPF4. The vision for the Central Scotland Green Network is that: By 2050, Central Scotland has been transformed into a place where the environment adds value to the economy and where people's lives are enriched by its quality. The LDP has a role in co-ordinating the different functions of green and blue infrastructure and capturing and promoting opportunities for its enhancement to help develop an enhanced and expanded multifunctional green and blue network across Fife. This will contribute to delivering the Central Scotland Green Network vision in the area. The approach has also been extended so that it covers the whole of Fife not just the area within the Central Scotland Green Network.

5.71 NatureScot have mapped some key habitats and identified opportunities for their enhancement in the Central Green Scotland Network programme area; these opportunities have been included in the green and blue networks opportunities identified in the audit.

Ecosystem services and nature-based solutions

5.72 NatureScot defines ecosystem services as: the direct and indirect contributions ecosystems (known as natural capital) which provide for human wellbeing and quality of life. This can be in a practical sense, providing food and water and regulating the climate, as well as cultural aspects such as reducing stress and anxiety.

5.73 In addition, NatureScot define nature based solutions as the use of nature and natural environments to help tackle socio-environmental challenges, providing benefits to people and nature. In particular, these solutions can help us mitigate and adapt to climate change.

5.74 It is generally understood that nature-rich areas can provide multiple benefits such as securing carbon, benefiting species and providing vital ecosystem services, while habitat degradation will often result in stored carbon being lost to the atmosphere and missed opportunities for natural systems to help address issues such as flooding, overheating, coastal erosion and pollution.

5.75 The green and blue network storymap and interactive mapping provide information on some of the ecosystem services provided by nature in Fife and identify potential areas where nature based solutions, such as natural flood management and coastal edge protection may be useful.

5.76 Examples of nature-based solutions being implemented or proposed in Fife are river restoration projects along the Back Burn north of Glenrothes and River Leven. These will remove fish barriers and create a more natural channel to the watercourses, slowing the flow of water to reduce flood risk downstream and enhancing biodiversity. The West Sands Dune Management project in St Andrews is another project developed to mitigate the risk of coastal erosion and coastal flooding. Areas such as peatlands and blanket bog play a crucial role in carbon storage, flood alleviation and water quality, while delivering significant biodiversity benefits. Fife does not have many areas of peatland so it is important to protect the areas of this habitat which do remain such as the recently restored raised bog at Bankhead Moss SSSI.

5.77 The Local Development Plan has a role to protect both nature networks and green and blue networks ensuring that the networks are not further fragmented; and identifying opportunities for their enhancement, so these are not lost through development and making the most of the ecosystem services that they provide. The LDP can aid the identification and co-ordination of nature-based solutions to address key issues and can help to enhance the green and blue network.

The Water Environment

5.78 The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027 describes the water environment as an important national asset which contributes to health and wellbeing, supports a rich diversity of wildlife and supports the sustainable growth of Scotland's economy.

5.79 The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027 protects and improves Scotland's water environment for the benefit of people, wildlife and the economy. The plan highlights that the circular economy principles of designing out waste; keeping resources in use; and restoring the natural environment; also apply to water. It suggests that incorporating these principles into a more systematic approach to water management will provide new solutions to protecting and improving the water environment while providing wider public benefits.

5.80 SEPA is the lead agency delivering the river basin management plans and their objectives in Scotland. SEPA also monitors the water environment by assessing water quality and quantity of surface and ground water and bathing waters. The condition of the water environment is influenced by many different factors, such as modifications to the bed, banks and shores of water bodies, barriers to fish migration, water flows and levels, legacy pollution from mining and quarrying and diffuse pollution from agriculture. All of these impact on the condition of water bodies in Fife. SEPA has published information on the condition of waterbodies in Scotland and the pressures impacting on them in the Water Environment Hub and Water Classification Hub.

5.81 Two watercourses in Fife are classified by SEPA as bad quality – Tentsmuir Sands Burn/Drain which has been modified by forestry operations and is impacted by diffuse pollution from rural sources; and the River Leven between Markinch and Leven which has barriers to fish migration, modifications to its channel from urban development and low water flows due to water abstraction from agricultural irrigation, business water use and hydroelectricity generation. In addition, the invasive North American signal crayfish has been identified as a pressure in three watercourses, the River Eden and Fernie Burn in North East Fife and the Tiel Burn in the Kirkcaldy area.

5.82 More detail on the condition of the water environment across different parts of Fife is provided in the locality sections of the evidence report and in the background paper on Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity. The River Leven restoration programme has already carried out works to naturalise the river channel at Methil and remove weirs and structures that created barriers to fish migration, and further works to improve the condition of the River Leven are planned in the next few years.

5.83 The LDP has a role to support restoration projects identified in the Third River Basin Management Plan; identify and promote opportunities to improve the condition of water bodies through development and other

programmes of works and on the green and blue infrastructure opportunities information.

Soils

5.84 There is information on soils in Scotland across a number of themes on the Scotland's Soils interactive mapping tool. The majority of Fife to the south and east, is covered by mineral gley soils. These soils tend to retain water but if the land is drained they can be used as arable land or grassland for cattle. There are also large areas of brown soils in Fife particularly along the Tay Coast and the Howe of Fife. These are among the most fertile soils in Scotland and are used extensively for agriculture.

5.85 The James Hutton Land Capability maps classify land for its capability for agriculture with the most productive land (classes 1- 3.1) being classified as prime agricultural land. Fife has extensive areas which are classed as prime agricultural land or class 3.2 which is also capable of high yields of barley oats and grass. This is an important national resource for long term food security the importance of which is highlighted in Scotland's local food strategy (Jan 2024). Crops and animal production provide a 1.57% Gross Value Added (GVA) contribution to the overall Fife GVA – around £121 million (source: Oxford Economic Forecasts 2024). This percentage contribution is higher than in many other areas of Scotland.

5.86 The use of large areas of land in Fife for agriculture has an impact on the condition of water bodies and groundwater as highlighted above. North East Fife is within one of five designated Nitrate Vulnerable Zones designated by Scottish Government. Nitrate Vulnerable Zones are areas which contain surface water or groundwater that is susceptible to nitrate pollution from agricultural activities.

5.87 The importance of peatlands for the storage of carbon is mentioned in the green and blue infrastructure section and NPF4 Policy 5 aims to protect carbon-rich soils from development. The Carbon and Peatland 2016 Map classifies soils in Scotland with classes 1-3 being the most carbon rich soils. Fife only has a few small areas of carbon rich soil, but some of these are classed as nationally important 'carbon rich, deep peat and priority peatland habitat' such as Star Moss, Mossmorran and Lockshaw Moss.

5.88 More detail on the land capability and extent of carbon rich soils in different parts of Fife is covered in the locality sections of the evidence report.

5.89 NPF4 Policy 5 soils only supports development on prime agricultural land or land of lesser quality that is culturally or locally important for primary use from development in certain circumstances. The LDP has a role in protecting locally, regionally, nationally and internationally valued soils such as carbon rich soils and prime agricultural land and identifying land which is culturally or locally important for its primary use.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Local Landscape Designation Review (LUC 2009)
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Assessment – Fife Landscape Evolution and Influences (2019).
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045 Tackling the Nature Emergency in Scotland
- NatureScot – Developing with Nature
- NatureScot - Scotland Land Cover Map 2022 - EUNIS Level 1
- NatureScot – Special Areas of Conservation map
- NatureScot – Special Protection Areas map
- Naturscot Guidance on Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS)
- NatureScot – Geological Conservation Review sites
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018
- Scottish Government – Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029
- Dreel Burn – invasive non-native species management: Giant hogweed
- NatureScot - Draft Framework for Nature Networks in Scotland
- NatureScot Practitioners Guide to Nature Networks
- NatureScot - Marine and Terrestrial Species indicator
- State of Nature report 2019 – State of Nature Partnership
- State of Nature 2023 report – State of Nature Partnership
- Water Vole Presence records – Fife Nature
- Water Vole survey absence records – Fife Nature
- Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019-2019
- Scottish Forestry - Economic Impact of Forest Based Activity in Scotland (Feb 2024)
- Fife Forest and Woodland Strategy 2013-2018
- The draft Fife Forestry and Woodland Strategy Storymap
- Fife Climate Forest
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystems services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap
- NHS Fife 2030 Greenspace Strategy (May 2023)
- Central Scotland Green Network – The Vision
- NatureScot - Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) - 2021 Habitat Connectivity Map
- NatureScot – Ecosystem services – nature's benefits
- NatureScot – Nature based solutions
- The Leven Programme – River restoration
- West Sands Dune Management
- NatureScot Peatland action Case Study Bankhead Moss Nature Reserve
- The River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-2027
- SEPA Water Classification Hub
- SEPA Water Environment Hub
- Background paper on Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity.
- Scotland's Soils interactive mapping tool
- James Hutton Land Capability for agriculture interactive map
- Scottish Government - Local Food for Everyone Jan 2024
- Scottish Government - Nitrate Vulnerable Zones
- Carbon and Peatland 2016 interactive map

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on biodiversity and the natural environment for Fife's Proposed LDP:

- The LDP will take account of priority habitats in assessing sites for inclusion in the Proposed LDP, and identify opportunities to create networks for nature to combat biodiversity loss, support priority species and promote nature recovery.
- The LDP has a role in protecting locally, regionally, nationally and internationally sites designated as important for nature, (both statutory and non-statutory), from inappropriate development which could degrade their status as nature rich places.
- The LDP has a role in ensuring that there are positive effects for biodiversity resulting from development proposals.
- The LDP will complement and support the priorities and projects in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan through development requirements, where appropriate.
- The LDP has a role to show both nature networks and green and blue networks spatially and to protect these to ensure that the networks are not further fragmented. The LDP will identify opportunities for the enhancement and preservation of nature networks and green and blue networks, so these are not lost through development and make the most of the ecosystem services that they provide. This will support the planning and delivery of sustainable places in Fife. The LDP can aid the identification and co-ordination of nature-based solutions.
- The LDP has a role in co-ordinating the different functions of green and blue infrastructure and capturing and promoting opportunities for its enhancement to develop an enhanced and expanded multifunctional green and blue network across Fife. This will contribute to the delivery of the Central Scotland Green Network vision in the area.
- The LDP has a role to protect existing woodlands which are under pressure due to development and to help balance competing uses for land in Fife including woodland creation. Protecting and enhancing woodland habitats, the urban canopy and promoting connectivity will be key priorities of the new Fife Forest and Woodland Strategy and the Fife Local Development Plan will have a role in helping to deliver the aims of the strategy.
- The LDP has a role in protecting important landscape assets and views from inappropriate development and visual impact by identifying places for future development in areas which would not have an overall detrimental impact on protected landscapes. This may involve protecting important views from public places by means of development requirements of policies to assist the development management process.
- The LDP has a role in promoting the remediation and reuse of brownfield land, large opencast sites, and other areas of in the countryside left over from industrial activities. This will be a priority in the spatial strategy.
- The LDP will support restoration projects identified in the Third River Basin Management Plan and identify and promote opportunities to improve the condition of water bodies through development and other programmes of works. This may take the form of development requirements, policies to address matters not included in NPF4, or by setting development principles which can support.

- The LDP has a role in protecting locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally valued soils such as carbon rich soils and prime agricultural land and identifying land which is culturally or locally important for its primary use.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/Dispute:

- The key agency group (which included NatureScot and SEPA) were engaged in several workshops throughout the development of the evidence report. These meetings discussed the scope of the report and looked in detail at issues in the different Fife localities. The discussions at these workshops informed the development and content of the evidence report. There has also been ongoing engagement with both NatureScot and SEPA throughout the development of the Fife evidence report.

<u>NatureScot</u>

- NatureScot provided an initial response to the Evidence Report (see document '20240315 NatureScot Response 1') and raised a number of areas where they felt additional information was required in the Fife Evidence Report. Fife Council met with NatureScot to discuss these comments, and the commentary below provides an update to the Reporter on recent discussion.
- The comments received from NatureScot were based on a draft version of the Fife Evidence Report which, at that stage, did not include interactive mapping and information on green and blue networks and ecosystem services (as that work was still being finalised). This additional information was later incorporated into the final Evidence Report and NatureScot reviewed it.
- NatureScot's updated response (see document '20240503 NatureScot Response 2') confirms they are happy with the agreed positions outlined below and that their comments have been addressed as part of the preparation of the Evidence Report, or where more appropriate, will be as part of the preparation of the Proposed Plan. In particular, they welcomed the Green and Blue Networks and Ecosystem Services Storymap that had been developed. Feedback on the first evidence report submission in March and May 2024, and their comments and the documents they referenced have been addressed and reflected in the revised text.
- NatureScot has agreed Fife Council's actions which address the points raised in the initial NatureScot response:
- Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies – NatureScot would like nature-based solutions to be more explicitly mentioned in relation to addressing the climate and biodiversity crises.
- Agreed action: The storymap discusses in detail various benefits of nature (eco-system services) including nature-based solutions to help adapt to flooding, coastal erosion, provide temperature regulation, help improve water quality along with other services. The interactive mapping includes

datasets which will help Fife Council to identify local opportunities to provide nature-based solutions in LDP2.

- In this version of the Evidence Report, nature-based solutions have been more explicitly mentioned and examples given.
- Biodiversity – NatureScot mention the need to enhance biodiversity and deliver positive effects for biodiversity in LDP2; and how invasive non-native species will be addressed in LDP2.
- Agreed position: These issues will be considered in the Proposed LDP.
- This version of the Evidence Report highlights the role of the LDP to deliver positive effects for biodiversity and help address invasive non-native species and disease.
- Infrastructure First Approach – NatureScot want to see the preservation and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure to address gaps in connectivity incorporated at locality level.
- Agreed position: Information on locality level green and blue networks is provided in the mapping and reports of the green and blue network audit. These identify opportunities for improving the connectivity of the network; nature-based solutions where known; and potential for enhancing the network. These opportunities will be picked up through the preparation of the Proposed Plan.
- Locality Specific comments - NatureScot highlight a number of opportunities for specific localities and some additional general comments.
- Agreed position: Specific opportunities for localities can be picked up in the audit mapping and reports which will continue to be updated until the publication of the Proposed Plan. The green and blue network audit will be used to inform and help prepare the Proposed Plan.
- NatureScot mentions using data from the Fife Nature Records Centre as a source of evidence.
- Agreed position: Planning Services work closely with the Records Centre and have included data in the Evidence Report which was provided by Fife Nature Records. There are links to the data from the relevant locality pages of the Evidence Report.

- In January 2025 Naturescot was sent a draft copy of the revised biodiversity and nature section of the Evidence Report alongside an extract of the coastal erosion, green and blue networks, biodiversity, natural heritage and landscape character and soils sections for North-East Fife as an example of the text for the localities.
- Naturescot welcomed the breakdown of topics within their remit in the Fife wide section. They mentioned the possibility of a separate section on climate change and biodiversity loss and the need for them to be tackled together. They also suggested including a reference to the Scottish National Adaptation Plan and the need for Coastal adaption plans. We did not create a separate section on climate change but did expand the biodiversity section to incorporate more discussion of the impacts of climate change, and the climate emergency section references the risks to biodiversity and cross references to the biodiversity section. There are references to the Scottish National Adaption Plan in the biodiversity section and the climate emergency section which goes into detail on the role of development planning set out in the plan. The need for coastal adaption

plans is discussed in the climate emergency section of the Evidence report.

- Naturescot suggested that international, national and locally designated sites for nature and geological conservation were referenced in the biodiversity section with an indication of how many sites Fife has. This information has been added into the text. They also suggested that reference to positive effects for biodiversity be added to this section to reflect Policy 3 of NPF4. Paragraph 5.37 includes this reference.
- Naturescot indicated that they would like the Forestry Woodland and trees section to mention how the protection and expansion of forestry, woodland and trees can help to improve ecological connectivity and support nature networks, and that these would be relevant implications for the new Fife Local Development Plan. Text to reflect this has been included in paragraph 5.60.
- Naturescot suggested that the importance for nature restoration and biodiversity enhancement should be made stronger in the green and blue infrastructure section to better reflect NPF4 policy 20; it should include the priorities for the Fife Green and Blue Network; and amending the wording 'networks for nature' in the first paragraph to avoid confusion with nature networks. The text in the green and blue infrastructure section has been changed to reflect these comments.
- Naturescot highlighted some evidence that they felt was missing from the Links to evidence section:
    - Land cover evidence;
    - Protected areas
    - Geological conservation sites
    - Naturescot Developing with nature guidance
    - Evidence for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Links to all these documents have been added to the text in the biodiversity and natural places section.
- Naturescot recommended that ensuring positive effects for biodiversity is included in the implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of Fife-wide evidence on biodiversity and the natural environment, and that this terminology be used in the summary of stakeholder engagement section. These changes have been made to the relevant sections.
- Naturescot suggested that the structure of the locality sections of the evidence report could be changed to reflect the structure of the Fife wide Biodiversity and Natural places section. However, Fife Council decided not to substantially change the structure of the localities sections for the resubmission document.

- In June 2025 Naturescot was sent a final copy of the resubmission document. Naturescot agreed with the content of the document and made no further comment.

<u>SEPA</u>

- SEPA has been informally engaged throughout the development of the evidence report. They provided formal feedback on the Fife evidence

report in March 2024 and expressed that they were content that the relevant evidence regarding the water environment had been included in the evidence report. They also noted that Fife Council had provided assurance that relevant water environment evidence sources would be incorporated into the nature network mapping.

- In June 2025, SEPA was sent a final copy of the resubmission document for comment. SEPA replied stating that given the need to focus their time where they can add most value, they don't provide extra input at the evidence report stage (beyond the provision of advice included in their Evidence Sources Glossary - A glossary of relevant evidence sources for local development plans presented by issue) for areas such as waste management/zero waste, soils or air quality. Therefore, no comments were received from SEPA in relation to soils.

<u>Fife Forestry and Woodland Strategy</u>

- The scope of the update to the Fife Forest and Woodland Strategy was developed following a workshop with Fife Environmental Partnership members and in consultation with the Fife Council inter-service tree group. The Fife Environmental Partnership includes Scottish Forestry, NatureScot, SEPA, rural groups, Greenspace Scotland, Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, public sector landowners and third sector and elected members. Scottish Forestry were happy with the scope developed for the FFWS and suggested adding references to Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029 and the UK Forestry Standard.
- A workshop was held with key stakeholders on the approach, vision and aims of the revised strategy in January 2025. Invitees included Scottish Forestry, SEPA, NatureScot, local nature conservation groups and other organisations with an interest in woodland and forestry issues. The draft Forestry and Woodland Strategy was published for consultation in May 2025.

<u>Green and Blue network audit</u>

- The core principles and priorities of the green and blue network audit were revised through a workshop discussion with key stakeholders including NatureScot, SEPA, Scottish Water, Green Action Trust, and Fife Coast and Countryside Trust.
- The green and blue network audit update was carried out through extensive engagement with officers across Fife Council (including greenspace, flooding and coast, active travel, allotment, estates management officers and area managers), and other stakeholders (such as Fife Coast and Countryside Trust and SEPA) to update the opportunities identified. Area Action Plans, community led plans, development frameworks and masterplans were consulted to identify any green and blue network aspirations and projects so they could be included as opportunities on the mapping. There will be further engagements on the Green and blue network assets and opportunities through the Local Development Plan process.

Climate emergency – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy context

Policy 1 Tackling the climate and nature crises
LDPs must address the global climate emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the spatial strategy will reduce emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration in the area.

Policy 2 Climate mitigation and adaptation
The LDP spatial strategy should be designed to reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The six spatial principles should form the basis of the spatial strategy, helping to guide development to, and create, sustainable locations. The strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of the proposals on greenhouse gas emissions. LDPs should support adaptation to the current and future impacts of climate change by taking into account climate risks, guiding development away from vulnerable areas, and enabling places to adapt to those risks.

Policy 10 Coastal development
LDPs should consider how to adapt coastlines to the impacts of climate change and reflect opportunities to use nature based solutions to improve the resilience of coastal communities and assets.

Policy 22 Flood risk and water management
LDPs should strengthen community resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change, by avoiding development in areas at flood risk as a first principle. Resilience should also be supported by managing the need to bring previously used sites in built up areas into positive use; planning for adaptation measures; and identifying opportunities to implement improvements to the water environment through natural flood risk management and blue green infrastructure. Plans should take into account the probability of flooding from all sources and make use of relevant flood risk and river basin management plans for the area. A precautionary approach should be taken, regarding the calculated probability of flooding as a best estimate, not a precise forecast. For areas where climate change is likely to result in increased flood exposure that becomes unmanageable, consideration should be given to alternative sustainable land use.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.90 The climate in Fife and globally is already changing. Further climatic changes are inevitable and there will be a need to manage the growing risks from unavoidable climate change. NPF4 sets a strategy that Scotland's future places will be net zero, nature-positive places that are designed to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, whilst protecting, recovering and restoring our environment.

5.91 NPF4 seeks to encourage low and zero carbon design and energy efficiency, development that is accessible by sustainable travel, and expansion of renewable energy generation. It highlights the need to build resilience to the future impacts of climate change including water resources and assets and development on our coasts, and the need for places to evolve to help us cope with changing temperatures. The strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of the proposals on greenhouse gas emissions.

5.92 Fife Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. The Council agreed to work to deliver the goal of being carbon neutral by 2045 through all relevant plans and strategies and assist communities to become more resilient to the impacts of climate warming and climate change.

5.93 In September 2024 the Scottish Government published *Climate change: Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029*. The Adaptation Plan sets out the actions the Scottish Government will take to make public services, communities, natural environment and the economy more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The plan includes an objective (NC3) that development planning (including Local Development Plans) takes current and future climate risks into account and is a key lever in enabling places to adapt. It also highlights the importance of understanding the implications and opportunities of climate change to help underpin LDP spatial strategy. This should be achieved through an infrastructure-first approach to blue and green infrastructure, designed to deliver multiple functions such as flood prevention, water management, nature restoration, protecting soil functionality, and bringing vacant and derelict land back into positive use for people and communities.

5.94 In February 2020 Fife Council approved 'Climate Fife' a Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan. The Fife vision is to be: Climate Friendly; Climate Ready; and, Climate Just. There are three core areas of climate action:

- Cutting emissions / decarbonisation - this is called climate change mitigation.
- Adapting to the physical changes of climate change - climate change adaptation.
- Actively removing greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere (such as by tree-planting or direct capture of flue gases) – carbon sequestration.

5.95 In January 2024 Fife Council approved an updated Climate Fife strategy outlining committed actions over the next 4 years. It sets three priorities:

- The Big Energy Move – transforming the energy system in Fife to low carbon;

- The Big Resilience Move – protecting Fife from the unavoidable impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, including through nature-based solutions.
- The Big Community Move – supporting community climate action, empowering our communities to transform local food, waste, transport, and energy generation systems to create community wealth and wellbeing.

Likelihood and Severity of Climate Risks

5.96 The Climate Change background paper outlines evidence on forecasted changes to the climate, referencing the reports and information produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Met Office, and Adaptation Scotland. These projections indicate that Fife will face warmer, wetter winters, and warmer, drier summers but with heavier extreme downpours.

5.97 The background paper highlights climate change related hazards that have been identified by Planning Service's Climate Change and Zero Waste team. The hazards identified include:

- Flooding and Coastal impact.
- Increased precipitation and storm events.
- Drought with drier summers increasing the likelihood of water scarcity events (already an issue in parts of Fife).
- An increase in the number of days where high temperatures may impact on health and infrastructure.
- Geo-hazards (including landslides, avalanche, rockfall, subsidence and erosion linked to the combination of drier spells with more extreme rainfall events).
- Wildfires (rising temperatures combined with periods of drought may increase future risk).
- Biological hazards (with a changing climate creating conditions that allow pests and disease to spread and new threats to become established in Scotland).

5.98 Many of the risks above are general and not tied to specific locations. The risks associated with flooding, coastal impacts and storm events are covered in the Flooding and Coastal Erosion sections below.

5.99 Climate projections indicate an increase in the number of days where high temperatures may impact on health and infrastructure. Higher temperatures on hot days are likely to be exacerbated within urban areas as buildings, roads etc. can increase absorption of the sun's heat, while waste heat from buildings and vehicles can impact on the surroundings. The extent of these impacts can be mitigated through the design of buildings and natural solutions such as trees, which can have a natural cooling effect and provide shading.

5.100 Water scarcity has been an issue in Fife, as recorded by SEPA's water scarcity reports. The north of Fife is most affected, and this is largely due to lower levels of rainfall, lower river flows, arable land requiring irrigation

during the warmer months, and many of the properties affected being connected to private water supplies. In August 2022 the water in the River Eden catchment reached significant scarcity and river and groundwater levels became 'critical'. As a result, SEPA suspended most water abstraction licences in the River Eden catchment to protect the sustainability of local water environments. Additional detail on water scarcity in Fife can be found in the Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity Background Paper.

5.101 Climate change is a key driver of change in habitats and species, and there are close links between the climate and nature crises. These are explored in the Biodiversity and Natural Environment section of this Evidence Report above.

5.102 Historic Environment Scotland have highlighted ('Pointing the way to the future' and 'Green Recovery Statement') the role that well maintained and retrofitted traditional buildings can play in reducing carbon emissions and helping to deliver net zero targets.

5.103 There are also significant challenges arising from climate change for the historic environment in Fife, as a result of the physical impact of increased rainfall, more frequent extreme weather events, increasing temperatures, rising seas and shifting coasts. These are highlighted in Historic Environment Scotland's 'A Guide to Climate Change Impacts'. While the measures to implement adaptation and enhance resilience within the guide are mainly targeted at more of a project level, there may be scope for the concepts to inform proposals and any policy guidance within the Proposed Plan. These issues are considered further under 'Fife's Historic Environment' in the 'How past development has shaped how Fife is today' section of the Evidence Report.

5.104 The site assessment process will play an important role in assessing the likely impacts and risks arising from climate change for potential development sites. The site assessment process will address both new and existing proposals, to ensure that future development in Fife is able to adapt to a changing climate. Further information on the site assessment process is contained within 'Part 4 – What the Evidence Report means for Fife's new Local Development Plan'.

Greenhouse gas emissions

5.105 The Climate Change background paper includes data provided by the UK government which shows progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Fife. However, much of this has been through changes such as decarbonising the electricity grid. Much more needs to be done to meet the net zero 2045 target.

5.106 As noted above, NPF4 encourages low and zero carbon design and energy efficiency, development that is accessible by sustainable travel, and

expansion of renewable energy generation. The Local Development Plan will provide a strategy that helps to support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

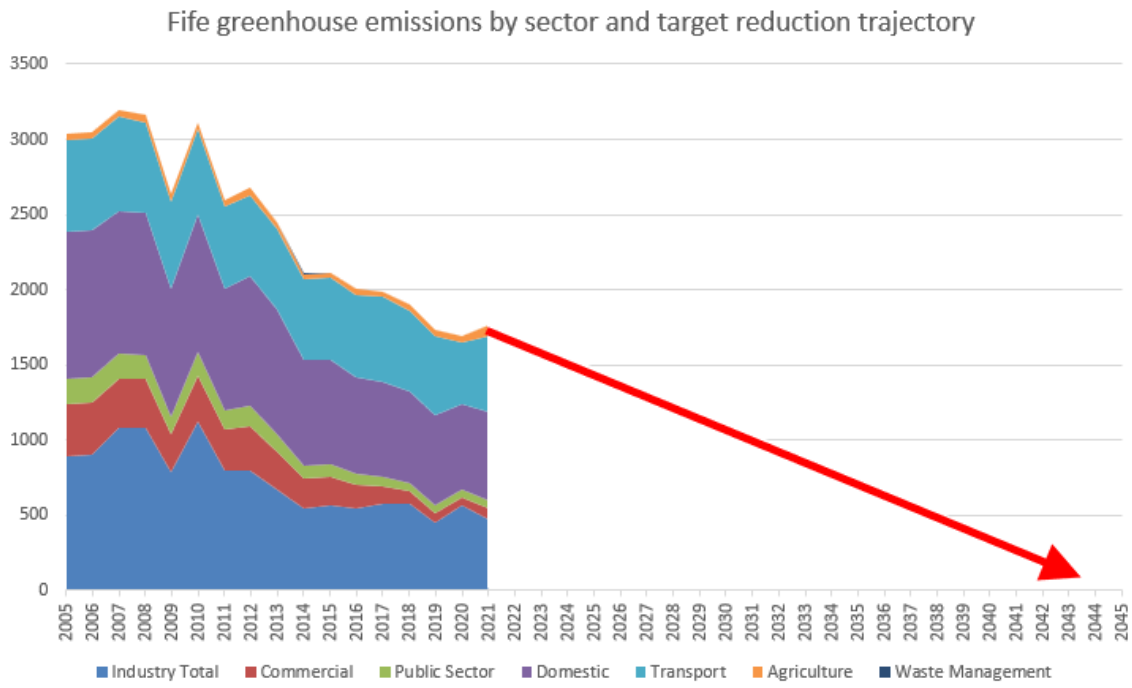
5.107 There are three significant areas of existing emissions – industrial, domestic, and transport – which provide a challenge for the Local Development Plan to address. While the industry and domestic sectors have been showing signs of a clear decrease in carbon dioxide emissions since 2005, the transport sector has only shown a marginal decrease and has risen to become the second most emitting sector in 2021. There is currently a high dependence on private transport in Fife.

5.108 The Local Development Plan can help to reduce emissions from transport through the NPF4 spatial principles of local living and compact urban growth, through prioritising locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes, and ensuring that development of those sites prioritises walking and other sustainable modes of travel.

5.109 Evidence relating to how the Local Development Plan can incorporate local living principles is contained within the 'Local Living' section within 'How past development has shaped how Fife is today'.

5.110 Further evidence relating to the decarbonisation of transport, energy, heating and cooling are contained within the transport and infrastructure section of the Evidence Report. Waste management also needs further change as part of the move to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and this is picked up in the managing waste section of this Evidence Report.

Figure 5.8 - Local Authority territorial carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions estimates within the scope of influence of Local Authorities (Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics, 2005-21



Source: UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 2005-2021

Carbon Sequestration

5.111 Natural systems actively remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by photosynthesis, converting it into organic carbon. This organic carbon can be stored in vegetation, soils, and sediments.

5.112 Data shows that in 2021 forest land in Fife was sequestering 82.2 kt CO2e of greenhouse gas emissions and grassland 84.6 kt CO2e. These, however, were more than cancelled out by the 436.3 kt CO2e of emissions estimated to have been released by cropland.

5.113 The forthcoming update to the Fife Forestry and Woodland Strategy will consider areas which have the potential for carbon sequestration (see Biodiversity and the natural environment section of the Evidence Report for further details), and the Local Development Plan will have an important role in protecting and enhancing trees and woodland across Fife.

5.114 Peatland is an excellent carbon store. Fife contains several areas of peatland and carbon-rich soils, including larger areas around Cowdenbeath, and to the north of Star of Markinch. These can be viewed on Carbon and peatland 2016 mapping. National Planning Framework 4 strengthens protections on peatland and carbon-rich soils and highlights the need for Local Development Plans to protect valued soils.

5.115 More detail on the land capability and extent of carbon rich soils in different parts of Fife is covered in the locality sections of the evidence report, and

there is further detail on the importance of soils within the 'Soils' section under 'Biodiversity and the natural environment'.

5.116 Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is a set of technologies designed to reduce CO2 emissions from industry, transport, and heat and power generation. CCS is generally seen as being most important in relation to reductions from carbon-intensive process industries.

5.117 Scottish Carbon Capture & Storage is a research partnership engaged in research and projects to support the development of CCS as a climate mitigation technology. The SCCS website includes a map that shows the status of CCS projects.

5.118 There is scope for the LDP to explore options for creating more sequestration of greenhouse gas emissions in Fife through land use change and forest/woodland creation. It will be important to ensure longevity of forest or undisturbed land to enable natural systems to sequester carbon, while balancing competing demands on land use in Fife.

5.119 New development needs to avoid adding to existing emissions, and support changes to help the existing places decarbonise such as through new energy infrastructure.

5.120 The need to think about whole-life greenhouse gas emissions will impact both on design and location of development. A reduction in greenhouse gas emissions can also be achieved through maximising potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources. This can be achieved by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development and through consideration of the potential of heat networks. These issues are considered in the Infrastructure section of the Evidence Report.

5.121 Locally specific issues including flood risk are set out in the sections of the Evidence Report on each of Fife's seven localities.

Flooding

5.122 Flooding is a natural process and can happen at any time in a wide variety of locations. It constitutes a temporary covering of land not normally covered by water and presents a risk when human or environmental assets are present in the area that floods. Assets at risk from flooding can include housing, transport, and public service infrastructure (including vulnerable services such as hospitals and schools), commercial and industrial enterprises, agricultural land, and environmental and cultural heritage. With climate change, the frequency, pattern, and severity of flooding are expected to change and become more damaging.

5.123 In response to feedback received from SEPA following their review of Fife Council's first Evidence Report, an interactive GIS map of all flooding data has been created to inform this revised Evidence Report and support the Local Development Plan process: Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

5.124 To inform this Evidence Report, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was commissioned for Fife. This Stage 1 SFRA is a high-level, map-based and strategic-level assessment used to inform the broad direction of the Spatial Strategy. The following is a brief summary of the evidence base informing the strategic assessment of the risk of flooding to Fife.

Flood studies, strategies and plans

5.125 SEPA is responsible for the development of Flood Risk Management Plans which are Scotland's route map for reducing the effects of flooding on local communities. These Flood Risk Management Plans identify potentially vulnerable areas within the local plan district and set out the extent of risk in these areas.

5.126 In terms of Local Flood Risk Management Plans, Fife is located within the Forth Estuary and Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Plan Districts.

5.127 Across the Forth Estuary Local Plan District, there are areas at risk of river, surface water and coastal flood risk. Notable flood events include heavy rainfall in the summer of 2019 contributing to surface water flooding, and a significant rainfall event in August 2020, flooding a number of properties in Kirkcaldy. It is currently estimated that there are around 115,000 people and 65,000 homes and businesses at risk of flooding, which is anticipated to increase as a result of climate change. Potentially Vulnerable Areas within Fife in the Forth Estuary Local Plan District are detailed in the table below from the Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Table 5.3: Potentially vulnerable flood areas - Forth Estuary Local Plan District

Potentially Vulnerable Areas	Main source of flood risk	Number of people / properties at risk from flooding (present day)	Number of people / properties at risk from flooding (2080s climate change)
Crail	River (Crail Burn)	320 people 200 homes and businesses	350 people 210 homes and businesses
Leven	Surface water	1,400 people 820 homes and businesses	1,700 people 1,000 homes and businesses
Lower Largo and Lundin Links	River and coastal	140 people 90 homes and businesses	160 people 100 homes and businesses
Glenrothes, Markinch and Kinglassie	Surface water and river (Lochty Burn in Kinglassie)	1,900 people 1,200 homes and businesses	2,600 people 1,700 homes and businesses
Kirkcaldy	Surface water, river and coastal	1,900 people 1,310 homes and businesses	3,200 people 2,000 homes and businesses
Cardenden	River (River Ore and small watercourses)	290 people 160 homes and businesses	310 people 170 homes and businesses
Cowdenbeath	Surface water and river	560 people 360 homes and businesses	700 people 450 homes and businesses
Inverkeithing	River, coastal and surface water	80 people 90 homes and businesses	90 people 110 homes and businesses
Rosyth	Surface water, river and coastal	610 people 380 homes and businesses	800 people 500 homes and businesses
City of Dunfermline	River and surface water	2,500 people 1,400 homes and businesses	3,100 people 1,700 homes and businesses
Cairneyhill	River and surface water	520 people 270 homes and businesses	620 people 320 homes and businesses
Kincardine	Coastal and river flooding	540 people 280 homes and businesses	900 people 480 homes and businesses
Culross	Coastal and surface water	250 people 150 homes and businesses	330 people 190 homes and businesses

Source: River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-27

5.128 Throughout the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Plan District, there is flood risk from rivers, surface water and the coast. Historic flood events include Storms Frank and Desmond in December 2015, which caused river

flooding across the area, with damages exacerbated by the storms in January 2016. It is estimated that there are approximately 21,000 people and 14,000 homes and businesses at risk from flooding, which may increase to 29,000 people and 19,000 homes and businesses by the 2080s due to climate change. Potentially Vulnerable Areas within Fife in the Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Plan District are detailed in the table below from the Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Table 5.4: Potentially vulnerable flood areas - Tay Estuary & Montrose Basin District

Potentially Vulnerable Areas	Main source of flood risk	Number of people / properties at risk from flooding (present day)	Number of people / properties at risk from flooding (2080s climate change)
Newburgh	Coastal	310 people 150 homes and businesses	380 people 190 homes and businesses
St Andrews	Surface water, river and coastal	1,200 people 700 homes and businesses	1,500 people 860 homes and businesses
Pitscottie and Kemback	River	110 people 70 homes and businesses	120 people 80 homes and businesses
Ceres	River (Ceres Burn, Craigrothie Burn and the Latch Burn)	20 people 10 homes and businesses	30 people 15 homes and businesses
Cupar	River and surface water	1,000 people 680 homes and businesses	1,300 people 830 homes and businesses
Springfield	Surface water	80 people 40 homes and businesses	No increase expected
Kingskettle and Kettlebridge	River (Kettle Burn)	80 people 40 homes and businesses	100 people 50 homes and businesses
Dunshalt	River	80 people 60 homes and businesses	110 people 80 homes and businesses
Auchtermuchty	River (existing flood protection scheme offers some protection)	260 people 160 homes and businesses	270 people 170 homes and businesses

Source: River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-27

River Basin Management Plan for Scotland 2021-27

5.129 The River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Scotland sets out a framework for protecting and improving the benefits provided by the water environment in Scotland. It provides a set of actions to ensure that Scotland's rivers, lochs, estuaries, coastal areas, and groundwater bodies can continue to supply drinking water, support fisheries, offer an essential resource for businesses and agriculture and serve as a source of recreation. The RBMP is discussed in greater detail in *The Water Environment* section of this Evidence Report.

Fife Shoreline Management Plan, 2011

5.130 The Fife Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2), which covers an area of shoreline between Kincardine and Newburgh, provides an assessment of the risks associated with shoreline evolution, coastal flooding and erosion. It presents a framework for policy to address risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment for a sustainable future. SMP2 identifies sites and options for continuing to maintain defences to provide long-term benefits to a wide community. It also identifies further work and research at sites where the type and timing of change is currently unknown, where change in the management of the defences is likely or will be necessary.

5.131 The table below lists each coastal zone within Fife and a corresponding preferred policy approach to manage the coastal zone in the short, medium and long term. Additional detail (including a summary of the rationale behind the policy option decisions) can be found in the Fife Shoreline Management Plan (2011).

Table 5.5: Preferred policy option for managing each coastal zone within Fife

No.	Name	Epoch		
		2030	2060	2110
01	Alloa Tower, Kincardine to Preston Island	HTL	HTL	HTL
02	Preston Island	HTL	HTL	MR
03	Preston Island to Torryburn	HTL	HTL	HTL
04	Torryburn to Crombie Pier	NAI	NAI	NAI
05	Crombie Pier to Charlestown	HTL	HTL	HTL
06	Charlestown	NAI	NAI	MR
07	Charlestown to Limekilns	HTL	HTL	HTL
08	Limekilns to Rosyth	NAI	NAI	NAI
09	Rosyth to North Queensferry	HTL	HTL	HTL
10	North Queesnferry	HTL	HTL	HTL
11	Inner Bay	HTL	HTL	HTL
12	Inverkeithing to St Davids Bay	NAI	NAI	NAI
13	St David's Bay to Braefoot Point	HTL	HTL	HTL
14	Braefoot Point	NAI	NAI	NAI
15	Braefoot Point to Aberdour	NAI	NAI	NAi
16	Aberdour	NAI	NAI	NAI
17	Aberdour to Silversands	NAI	NAI	NAI
18	Silversands to Burntisland	HTL	HTL	HTL
19	Burntisland to Ross Point	HTL	HTL	HTL
20	Ross Point to Pettycur Bay	HTL	HTL	HTL
21	Pettycur Bay to Kinghorn Beach	NAI	NAI	NAI
22	Kinghorn Beach to Seafield (Kirkcaldy)	NAI	NAI	NAI
23	Craigfoot Walk to Kirkcaldy Harbour	HTL	HTL	HTL
24	Pathhead Sands to Dysart Harbour	NAI	NAI	NAI
25	Dysart	HTL	HTL	HTL
26	Dysart to West Wemyss Harbour	MR	MR	MR
27	West Wemyss	HTL	HTL	HTL
28	West Wemyss to East Wemyss	NAI	NAI	NAI

No.	Name	Epoch		
		2030	2060	2110
29	East Wemyss	HTL	HTL	HTL
30	East Wemyss to Buckhaven	NAI	NAI	NAI
31	Buckhaven	HTL	HTL	HTL
32	Fife Energy Park	HTL	HTL	HTL
33	Methil	HTL	HTL	HTL
34	Leven	HTL	HTL	HTL
35	Leven to Lundin Links	NAI	NAI	NAI
36	Lower Largo	HTL	HTL	HTL
37	Lower Largo to Chapel Ness	NAI	NAI	NAI
38	Earlsferry to Elie	HTL	HTL	HTL
39	Elie to St Monans	NAI	NAI	NAI
40	St Monans	HTL	HTL	HTL
41	St Monans to Pittenweem	NAI	NAI	NAI
42	Pittenweem	HTL	HTL	HTL
43	East of Pittenweem to Anstruther Wester	NAI	NAI	NAI
44	Anstruther	HTL	HTL	HTL
45	Anstruther Easter to Crail	NAI	NAI	NAI
46	Crail	HTL	HTL	HTL
47	Crail to St Andrews	NAI	NAI	NAI
48	St Andrews	HTL	HTL	HTL
49	St Andrews to St Andrews Golf Links	HTL	HTL	HTL
50	St Andrews Golf Links to Guardbridge	MR	HTL	HTL
51	Guardbridge to Eden Mouth	HTL	HTL	HTL
52	Tentsmuir	NAI	NAI	NAI
53	Shanwell Farm to Tayport	MR	HTL	HTL
54	Tayport	HTL	HTL	HTL
55	Tayport to Newport -on -Tay	NAI	NAI	NAI
56	Newport-on-Tay to Wormit Bay	HTL	HTL	HTL
57	Wormit Bay to Newburgh East	NAI	NAI	NAI
58	Newburgh	MR	HTL	HTL

Source: Fife Shoreline Management Plan (2011)

Definitions:
Hold The Line (HTL): maintain the existing defence line
Advance The Line (ATL): build new defences seaward of the existing defence line
Managed Realignment (MR): allow the shoreline to change with management to control or limit movement
No Active Intervention (NAI): a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defence

5.132 However, SMP2 emphasises that flood and erosion defences only aim to reduce risk to the assets they protect and do not remove the risk completely. Decisions on the land use within flood and erosion risk areas should fully consider the risk and be adaptable to change.

Gap in evidence

5.133 SMP2 was published in 2011 and is now considerably out of date. This gap will be addressed through a revised plan (now referred to as Coastal Change Adaptation Plans) which will incorporate the Dynamic Coast mapping. A consultant has commenced work on this, and it is estimated the revised plan will be ready for publication in 2027/28. Nevertheless, the Local Development Plan 2 process should consider the risks identified in this plan and avoid approving development in areas at risk of flooding and erosion. This is consistent with NPF4 which states that development proposals will only be supported where proposals do not "*increase the risk to people of coastal flooding or coastal erosion*".

Formal Flood Protection Schemes

5.134 The Scottish Flood Defence Asset Database (SFDAD) provides flood risk management practitioners with access to information on Flood Protection Schemes and their associated defence assets within Scotland. SFDAD provides a record of where flood protection schemes exist, the level of protection provided and the general areas benefitting from these defences.

5.135 There are nine formal flood protection schemes in Fife which are protected by legislation as outlined in the table below. These were built to a provide a standard of protection. However, the level of protection provided by these schemes has reduced over time and there is no contemporary assessment of the level of protection currently being provided by Fife's flood protection measures, (the last time the level of protection was formally assessed was in 2007). What can be assumed is that they are not protecting as much land or as many properties as before.

Table 5.6 - List of Flood Protection Schemes in Fife

	Flood Protection Scheme	Scheme year	Type of flooding	Water course
1	Cairneyhill	1989	Fluvial	Torry Burn
2	Kincardine on Forth	1991	Tidal/fluvial	Peffermill Burn
3	Parkneuk	1987	Fluvial	Baldridge Burn
4	Dunfermline	2010	Fluvial	Tower Burn Lyne Burn
5	Auchtermuchty	1996	Fluvial	Auchtermuchty Burn
6	Dunshalt Village	1996	Pluvial	Surface run-off
7	Millfield of Cupar	1994	Pluvial	Surface run-off
8	Ceres Village	1994	Fluvial	Ceres Burn Craigrothie Burn Latch Burn
9	Pitscottie Village	1994	Fluvial	Ceres Burn Kininmonth Burn Blebo Burn

Source: Scottish Flood Defence Asset Database

Water resilient places

5.136 Scottish Government published a Policy Framework for Water Resilient Places in February 2021 having identified the need to improve how we manage surface water in Scotland. Urban areas in particular face mounting challenges with surface water drainage and related flooding; and despite considerable capital investment, the continued densification of our towns and cities is adding to the pressure on drainage systems that are already at capacity.

5.137 Scottish Water has been particularly active in looking for opportunities to remove surface water from the combined sewer network (this is discussed in more detail in the *Water supply and wastewater processing in Fife* section of this Evidence Report). However, this will require a concerted effort across all sectors to ensure that new development is appropriately sited and designed and that existing buildings can transition to managing rainwater through blue green infrastructure instead of sewers reducing the pressure on our drainage systems.

5.138 Scottish Water is involved in partnership working on several projects including the Levenmouth Connectivity programme.

Marine Planning

5.139 Marine Planning is a relatively new way of managing the activities which happen in and on our coasts and seas. The purpose of the marine planning system is to provide a framework for the sustainable development of the Scottish marine area, setting economic, social and marine ecosystem objectives and providing a framework for decision making. This supports a Blue Economy approach which promotes a framework for managing the co-existence of different marine interests in the same shared space, enabling a transition from a mind-set of 'environment vs economic growth' to a mind-set of shared stewardship of the marine environment that puts environmental and societal issues on a more equal footing with economic interests.

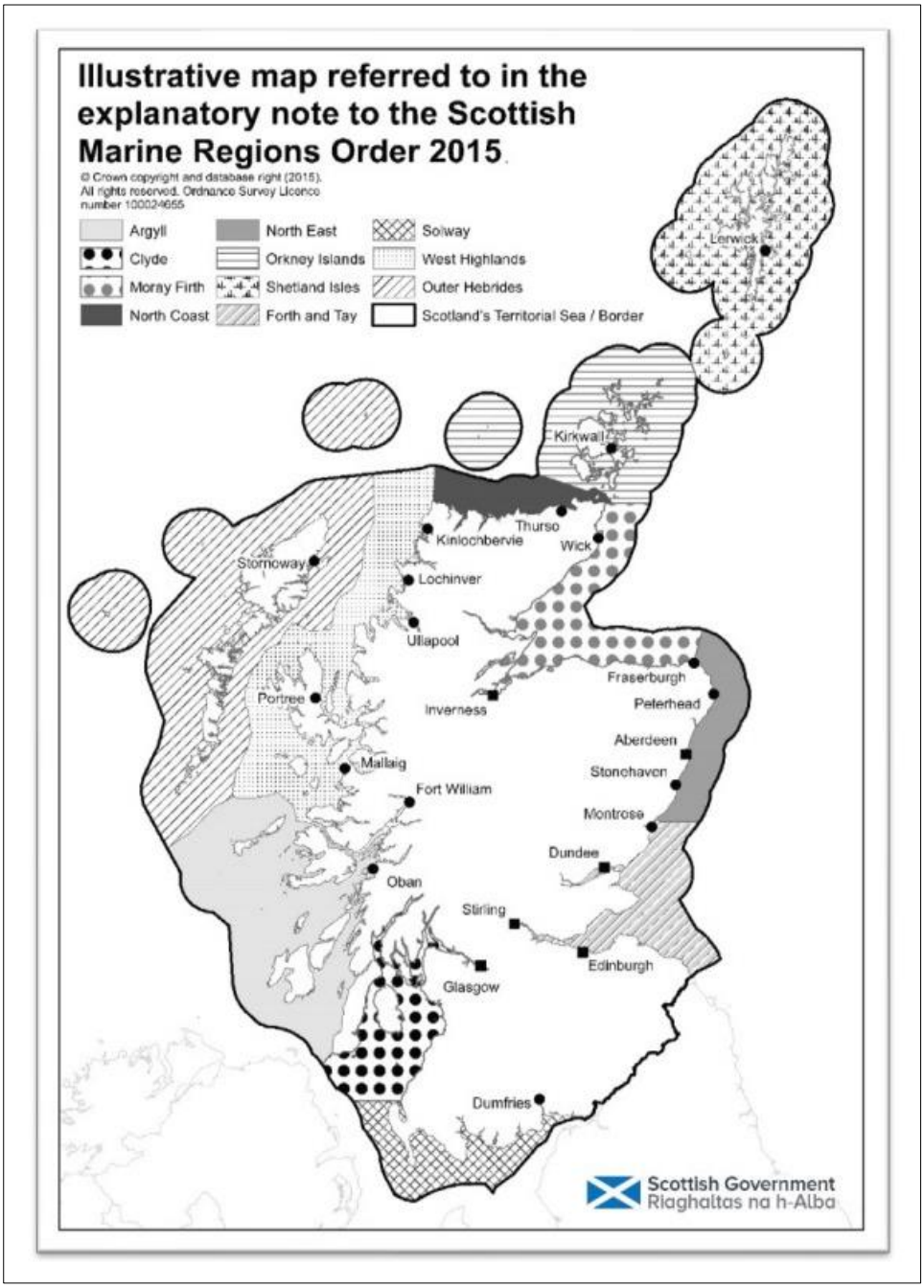
5.140 As outlined in Scotland's National Marine Plan, one of the core aims of marine planning is to manage human impact on the marine environment. Marine ecosystems provide a wide range of essential goods and services. Marine planning seeks to ensure that human impact on the marine environment is managed to ensure that marine ecosystems continue to provide these services.

5.141 Scotland's National Marine Plan was published in 2015; albeit the plan has been reviewed on a 3-yearly basis in line with statutory requirements. The second review, published in 2021, suggested that the urgent need to tackle the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss had become core drivers for a new plan. The development of a new National Marine Plan (NMP2) is underway and is anticipated to be ready for adoption in Summer 2027. It is intended this will address the global climate and nature crises, by carefully managing increased competition for space and resources in the marine environment.

5.142 With Fife's 180km of varied coastline, many communities across Fife have had a close relationship with the sea for centuries. Many activities, such as fishing, tourism, and recreation depend on the good health of the sea and coast. Fife's coastal habitats include sand dunes, islands, maritime cliffs, and intertidal communities such as saltmarsh and mudflats. These habitats support a wealth of wildlife (more detail on this can be found in the *Biodiversity* section of this Evidence Report above).

5.143 Fife lies within the Forth and Tay marine region (see the figure below showing the 11 marine regions). The area is bounded by the Firth of Tay to the north and the Firth of Forth to the south. These maritime landscapes feature some offshore islands; the largest and most prominent of which is the Isle of May.

Figure 5.9 - Scottish Marine Regions



Source: Marine Directorate, Scottish Government (previously Marine Scotland)

5.144 Fife's Shoreline Management Plan was published in 2011, which pre-dates Scotland's National Marine Plan published in 2015. Notwithstanding this, Fife's Shoreline Management Plan includes confirmation that the marine planning system that was introduced through the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 was applied throughout its development. A revised Shoreline Management Plan for Fife (now referred to as Coastal Change Adaptation Plans) will be prepared in full accordance with the National Marine Plan. As identified above, a consultant has commenced work on this, and it is estimated the

revised plan will be ready for publication in 2027/28, too late for the Proposed LDP.

Coastal Erosion

5.145 Fife's coastline has a rich diversity in its physical form, human usage, and natural environment including cliffs of both habitat and geological interest, low-lying plains fronted by dunes and beaches, towns, and villages along the coastal fringe and areas of agricultural land. This combination of assets creates a coastline of great value. However, rising sea levels and coastal erosion because of climate change present significant risks to Fife. Much of Fife's infrastructure was designed for different weather patterns and for a lower sea level. Changes in these will have a significant impact on infrastructure such as homes, buildings, roads, tourist locations, farmland soil and the quality of the local environment.

5.146 FIFEplan policy 12 (Flooding and the Water Environment) outlined a requirement for development proposals to demonstrate that they will not be at risk from coastal erosion, nor significantly alter the existing coastal processes, either erosive or accretive. This policy was superseded by NPF4 Policy 10 (Coastal development) which states that development proposals will only be supported where proposals do not increase the risk to people of coastal flooding or coastal erosion.

5.147 The areas in Fife predicted to be at most risk from coastal erosion in the Dynamic Coast 2 mapping include:

- Land to the north and south of Tentsmuir Forest.
- West and East Sands, St Andrews.
- The East Neuk coast.
- The Wemyss coast.
- Pathhead Sands and Seafield in Kirkcaldy;
- The coast between Kirkcaldy and Inverkeithing.
- Rosyth to Limekilns coast.

Engagement with NatureScot highlighted the presence of natural coastal protection schemes in Fife (such as the West Sands Dune Management project in St Andrews) and opportunities to use nature-based solutions to address coastal erosion and flooding. Furthermore, assets and opportunities are identified in the green and blue network mapping. Nature-based solutions are also discussed in greater detail in the *Ecosystem services and nature-based solutions* section of this Evidence Report.

5.148 The Fife Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) provides an assessment of the risks associated with shoreline evolution, coastal flooding and erosion and presents a framework for policy to address risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environment for a sustainable future. SMP2 was published in 2011 and is now considerably out of date. As identified

above, this gap will be addressed through a revised Shoreline Management Plan for Fife (now referred to as Coastal Change Adaptation Plans). Although the Adaptation Plan will not be ready before 2027/28, the LDP preparation process should consider the risks identified in this plan and avoid approving development in areas at risk of flooding and erosion. This is consistent with NPF4 which states that development proposals will only be supported where proposals do not "*increase the risk to people of coastal flooding or coastal erosion*".

Links to Evidence

- Climate Change Background Paper
- Climate Fife Strategy
- UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics: 2005-2021
- Background paper on Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity.
- Harbours and piers – Fife Council, 2024
- Landscape Character Assessment: Fife - Landscape Evolution and Influences – NatureScot, 2019
- Fife Shoreline Management Plan – Fife Council, 2011
- Addressing the impacts of climate change – OurFife, 2024
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action plan – Fife Council, 2013
- Stakeholder Engagement Strategy and Statement of Public Participation – Scotland's National Marine Plan 2, 2024
- Strategic Context and Outcomes - Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030, 2020
- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife
- Water-Resilient Places (A Policy Framework for Surface Water Management and Blue-Green Infrastructure) - Scottish Government, 2021

Implications of climate emergency evidence for the Proposed LDP:

- The Proposed LDP will respond to the challenges in adapting to climate change and cutting carbon emissions by incorporating spatial planning actions from Fife's Sustainable energy and Climate Action Plan and incorporating climate and carbon assessments as part of the site assessment methodology. The spatial strategy will also have regard to climate change and risk in identifying where development should or should not take place.
- The Local Development Plan has an important role to play in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through incorporating the spatial principles of local living and compact urban growth, prioritising locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes and requiring the development of those sites prioritises walking and other sustainable modes of travel.
- The Local Development Plan will encourage low and zero carbon design and energy efficiency in new development and consider the potential for nature-based solutions in mitigating and adapting to climate change, and in sequestering carbon.
- The Local Development Plan will promote blue and green infrastructure in developments where it can help to deliver multiple functions such as flood prevention, water management, nature restoration, protecting soil functionality, and bringing vacant and derelict land back into positive use for people and communities.
- The Local Development Plan site assessment and principles will promote the role that well maintained and retrofitted traditional buildings can play in reducing carbon emissions and helping to deliver net zero targets, as well as the significant challenges arising from climate change for the historic environment in Fife.
- The Local Development Plan process needs to consider how the forthcoming Local Development Plan can enable existing buildings to transition to managing rainwater through blue green infrastructure, instead of sewers, to reduce pressure on our drainage systems.
- The development of a new National Marine Plan (NMP2) is currently underway and is anticipated to be ready for adoption Summer 2027. The implications for the Local Development Plan are unknown at this stage.
- The development of a Coastal Change Adaptation Plan for Fife is currently underway, and it is estimated the revised plan will be published in 2027/28. The implications for the Local Development Plan are unknown at this stage. Once risks are identified, the LDP should consider these and avoid proposing development in areas at risk of flooding and erosion.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/Dispute:

NatureScot

- As mentioned in the Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/Dispute in the Biodiversity and the Natural Environment section above, NatureScot's initial response to the Evidence Report would have liked nature-based solutions to be more explicitly mentioned in relation to addressing the climate and biodiversity crises.
- NatureScot welcome the review of the Shoreline Management Plan 2 so that it reflects guidance on creating Coastal Change Adaptation Plans, welcome the recognition that engineering solutions to protect areas at risk of coastal erosion are no longer appropriate, and highlight the presence of natural coastal protection systems within areas of Fife, and that there are further opportunities to use nature based solutions to address future coastal erosion and flooding issues.
- The Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/Dispute in the Biodiversity and the Natural Environment section highlights the agreed position between NatureScot and Fife Council in relation to the inclusion of nature-based solutions to issues relating to the climate crisis such as adapting to flooding, coastal erosion, provide temperature regulation.
- In the resubmitted evidence report, nature-based solutions have been more explicitly mentioned and examples given.

Historic Environment Scotland

- Historic Environment Scotland's response to the previous version of the Evidence Report highlighted several documents produced by Historic Environment Scotland that recognise the role of the historic environment as part of a just transition to net-zero, as well as the risks and hazards facing Scotland's historic environment because of climate change, and routes to implement adaptation measures and enhance resilience.

Marine Directorate, Scottish Government (previously Marine Scotland)

- Fife Council met with the Marine Directorate in November 2022 to discuss marine planning and implications for Fife's next Local Development Plan. This meeting confirmed that there was no Regional Marine Plan proposed for East Scotland and no partnership was proposed.
- During further consultation (October 2024), the Marine Directorate confirmed the status of regional marine planning is as discussed in 2022 – there is currently no marine planning partnership or regional marine plan for the Forth and Tay marine region. However, with the Marine Directorate confirmed that the National Marine Plan is still a relevant consideration for the development of the Local Development Plan. No areas of dispute have been identified.
- The text in this section of the Evidence Report (specifically sections *Marine Planning* and *Aquaculture*) was circulated to the Marine Directorate (April 2025) for comment. The Marine Directorate confirmed they are content with Fife Council's approach and the text as amended. There are no areas of dispute.

SEPA

- Fife Council has informally engaged SEPA throughout the evidence gathering process for the Evidence Report. This approach involved collaborative working through various initiatives (including the Key Agency Group Green Recovery offer, Collaborative Local Development Plan Pilot, and Key Agency Group Blue Evidence Sources Pilot) resulting in knowledge sharing, regular meetings and occasional workshops. SEPA confirmed (March 2024 – see Annex 4) the engagement with Fife Council through these initiatives had been very positive.
- The above notwithstanding, SEPA confirmed they were not in a position to provide a statement of agreement on the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) accompanying the Evidence Report before it included: (1) information on past flood events/recorded historic flood events in Fife, (2) reference to the use of SEPA Future Flood Maps to determine the potential impact of climate change, and (3) an interactive GIS map of all flooding data (excluding data too sensitive to be published). This is in line with SEPA guidance (*Guidance for planning authorities on Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*, October 2023), and each are key sources of available flood risk information. To address this, Fife Council committed to and instructed an addendum to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- More recently (November 2024), Fife Council met with SEPA to discuss their position following the Gate Check. SEPA advised that their position had remained unchanged, there were no areas of dispute.
- Additional information has been rehearsed from a number of sources (including the *Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity*, *Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* etc) in the main body of the Evidence Report. However, given these resources accompanied the first Evidence Plan submission, it is unlikely that these changes will be considered significant.

- In June 2025 SEPA was sent a final copy of the resubmission document. SEPA provided the following comments:

- SEPA published our Surface Water and Small Watercourses Flood Hazard Map in February 2025. As a web-based map is now available as part of the SFRA, it will hopefully be straight-forward to incorporate this data.
  The latest version of our flood hazard map data can always be viewed on the SEPA website (https://beta.sepa.scot/flooding/flood-maps/), or downloaded and incorporated directly into your GIS systems from the following link, where all future updates to our flood map data will also be published:
  https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/environmental-data/
- Fife Council Response - The SFRA web-based map was produced prior to SEPA's latest mapping being available. However, Fife Council will incorporate the latest mapping into an updated SFRA as the Proposed Plan is prepared.

- Water Environment
  In March 2024 we responded to consultation on the draft Evidence Report and stated we were content with that relevant evidence relating to the water environment had been provided. We also stated we were content that the relevant water environment evidence sources would be incorporated in nature

network mapping. Our position remains the same and we are happy to offer a statement of agreement.

- Fife Council Response – Noted.

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
  In April 2024 we highlighted areas of the SFRA that would need to be updated / addressed prior to the spatial strategy / site assessment being carried out. Through further discussion with Fife Council, we were content that the further / updated information would be provided in an addendum to the SFRA and through an interactive webmap and issued a statement of agreement on that basis.
- An addendum to the SFRA and interactive webmap have been produced which cover all aspects we previously highlighted and we therefore we again submit a statement of agreement.
- Fife Council Response – Noted.

- Other aspects of the evidence report
  We offer advice at the evidence gathering stage on topic papers (or equivalent) relating to the following areas:

  1. Flood risk and SFRA
  2. Water management
  3. Biodiversity and nature networks
  4. Blue and Green Infrastructure; and
  5. Climate change

  Given the need to focus our time where we can add most value, we don't provide extra input at the evidence report stage (beyond the provision of advice included in our Evidence Sources Glossary - A glossary of relevant evidence sources for local development plans presented by issue) for areas such as waste management/zero waste, soils or air quality.
- Fife Council Response – Noted.

How past development has shaped how Fife is today

Local Living – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

Policy 15 Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods
LDPs should support local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place.

Policy 21 Play recreation and sport
LDPs should identify sites for sports, play and outdoor recreation for people of all ages based on an understanding of the needs and demand in the community and informed by the planning authority's Play Sufficiency Assessment and Open Space Strategy.

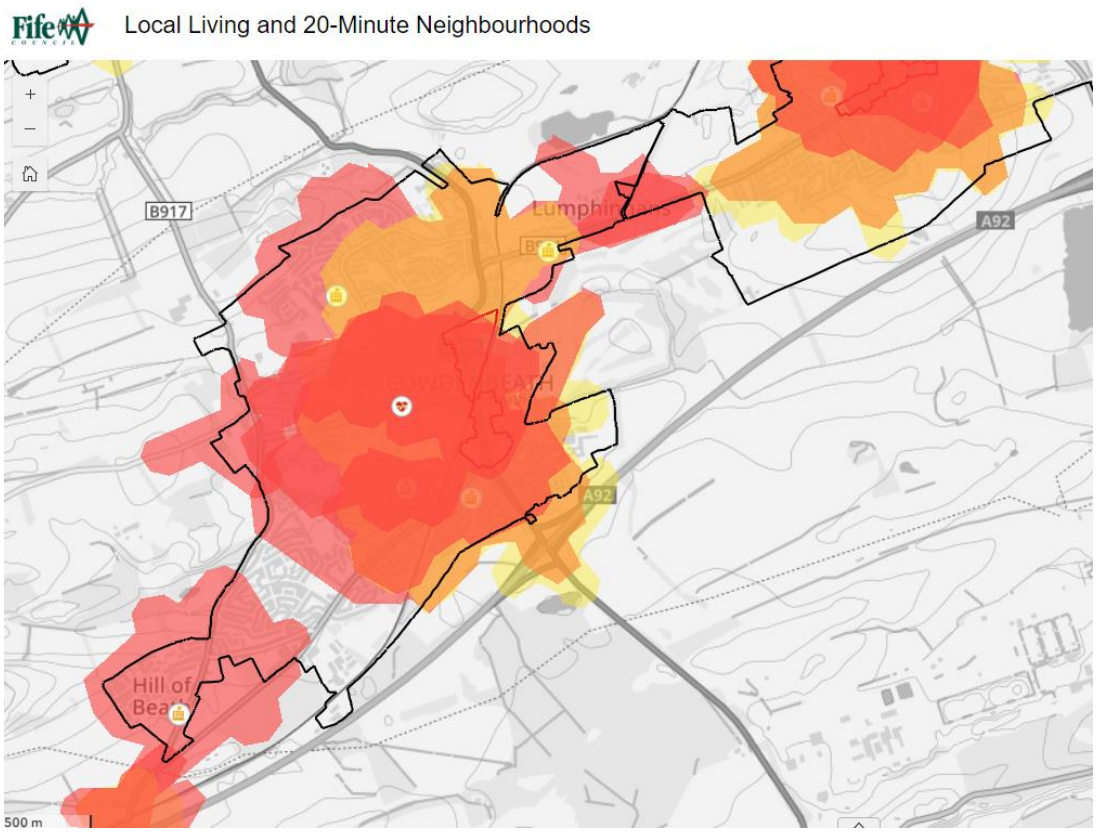
See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.149 Fife faces the challenge of reducing carbon emissions to achieve net zero emissions by 2045 and still meeting need for new development (which intrinsically produces more carbon emissions). In NPF4 the Scottish Government advocates taking a local living approach, including 20-minute neighbourhoods within settlements to help address this. The concept is to provide people with the opportunity to meet most of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home, either on-foot/wheelchair, or by bike. This reduces the need to travel which in turn cuts down on private car usage and the consequent need for more road infrastructure. In Fife, this approach has been called *Living Well Locally.*

5.150 In an area like Fife with a mixture of larger and small towns, and more rural areas with smaller settlements, there are challenges in rolling out Living Well Locally as a single approach. The diverse nature of the area means that the approach taken in the LDP will need to be flexible to suit different circumstances. NPF4 Policy 15 allows for flexible approaches to be taken.

5.151 We have developed quantitative high-level interactive mapping for local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods showing the locations of key services and facilities across Fife and plotting related walking/cycling distances. This data allows us to identify areas which appear to be well served or less well served by services and facilities. There is detail on this in the locality sections of the evidence report.

Figure 5.10: Extract from the Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhood interactive map showing Cowdenbeath



Source: Fife Council

The areas with the densest colour shading have the best access to services and facilities. It can be seen that an area between Hill of Beath and south west of Cowdenbeath has poor or no access to services within easy walking distance.

5.152 In addition, three qualitative case studies have been carried out to look in detail at the access to services in facilities in three locations in Fife. We looked at an urban area (Cowdenbeath), a rural cluster (West Howe) and a more remote rural area (Saline and Steelend).

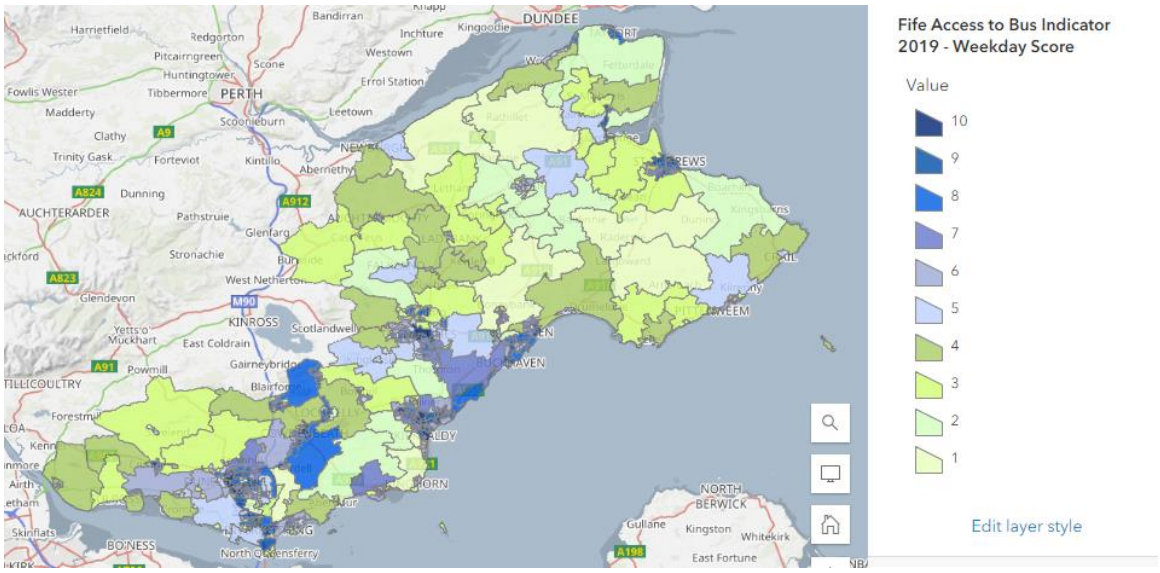
5.153 The low density of housing typically built on the edges of settlements in Fife impacts on the viability of providing new services to these areas. In addition, the layout of suburban areas, for example the prevalence of culs-de-sac, often results in a lack of permeability in the layout of the housing which increases walking, wheeling, and cycling travel distances. Less frequent bus services to these areas exacerbates the issue.

5.154 Closures of public services and their consolidation in fewer locations has reduced local provision of services in some areas.

5.155 Most rural areas in Fife have poor access to public transport, (see figure below) and limited access to services and facilities. In some areas clusters of villages share services between them (such as in the west Howe of Fife). It is not possible to provide easy walking and cycling distances to all everyday services and facilities in rural areas so there will be some reliance on private vehicles. However, providing safe and attractive active travel routes from

more rural settlements to larger neighbours would make walking and cycling slightly longer distances more attractive.

Figure 5.11: Map showing the weekday accessibility to buses in Fife



Source: Scottish Government Bus Accessibility 2019

5.156 The viability of providing additional services and facilities in rural areas is challenging and locating services strategically to serve a group of settlements would be important.

5.157 The living well locally research, case studies and the interactive mapping carried out by Fife Council have identified some key challenges to the delivery of local living and 20-minute neighbourhoods in Fife, including:

- The centralisation of key services.
- Infrequent, slow and expensive public transport.
- The size of settlements and distance between them in some very rural areas.
- Lack of good quality, safe and direct active travel links between key destinations.
- The LDP has a role in supporting and promoting this approach to service provision.

5.158 In the most recent Scottish Government urban/rural classification 2022 Fife is mostly shown as accessible rural with no remote rural areas apart from some of the islands off the coast. Annex 7 explains the research carried out by Fife Council on how the 20-minute neighbourhoods and local living approach is being applied both in Scotland and abroad, and describes the methodology that has been developed in Fife.

5.159 The LDP has a role to allocate development sites in areas which can support local living principles or are part of existing areas where there is good access to services and facilities and promote the local living approach as part of placemaking considerations.

Fife's open and green spaces

5.160 The many benefits of open spaces are set out in Scottish Governments Green Infrastructure Design and Placemaking guidance. Public Health Scotland highlights the importance of open space on our health and wellbeing, having benefits in terms of physical activity, community development, and mental health and wellbeing. Open spaces also have a role in helping to tackle the impacts of climate change, making more resilient places and supporting biodiversity.

5.161 In terms of placemaking, open spaces help making places more attractive and give character and local distinctiveness. These elements can also have economic benefits by improving the image of a place and making it more attractive to inward investors.

5.162 Greenspace is one element of open space. Open space covers any outdoor space in a settlement whilst greenspace is the vegetated land. Fife has a wealth of great greenspaces, from award winning beaches such as Aberdour Silver Sands and Leven East Beach, to historic town parks, such as Beveridge Park, Kirkcaldy and Pittencrieff Park, Dunfermline. Many of the greenspaces reflect the history of the area such as Lochore Meadows Country Park, a park reclaimed from coal workings, and Riverside Park, zoned as part of Glenrothes new town. Many reflect the rich culture of the Kingdom such as Bow Butts, Ceres – a greenspace used for an annual fair since the battle of Bannockburn. Fife's beaches contribute millions of pounds to the local economy. However, there are also many poor quality greenspaces in Fife which do not contribute as much as they could and are in need of improvement.

Gaps in evidence

The Fife greenspace audit measures publicly usable greenspace which includes parks, play parks, woods, grass areas, and spaces that are used by people. The Fife Greenspace Strategy and audit are some years out of date but Fife Council has completed revised quality and quantity audits of greenspace and an access audit is underway. This work includes visiting all publicly accessible open spaces of 0.4 Ha and over which are within or on the edge of settlements (just under 500 sites) to assess their quality against a range of criteria. Once the audit work is complete, the open space strategy will be developed and will be consulted on along with the audit findings in summer 2025. The Finalised Open Space Strategy is programmed to be approved in Autumn 2025 and will inform the Proposed Plan.

5.163 The 2024 greenspace quality audit has found that there has been a general decline in the quality of open spaces in Fife since 2009.

5.164 Many of the open spaces which showed a marked improvement in quality had community involvement in the redevelopment of the space. The majority

of these were in North East Fife and South and West Fife localities. Of the spaces which showed a marked deterioration since the 2009 audit many felt intimidating, lacked surveillance, were uninteresting and were poorly maintained. The majority of these spaces were in the Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy localities. The lowest scoring greenspaces were generally amenity residential sites and were predominantly located in the Levenmouth area.

5.165 The Lyne Burn corridor in Dunfermline is a good example of where the 2009 greenspace quality audit highlighted a need to improve the greenspace; that led to a major programme of works which have had benefits to flood resilience, biodiversity, active travel, community wealth building and anti-poverty and community pride. Comparisons between the 2009 the 2024 quality audits for the Lyne Burn Corridor demonstrated the improvement in the quality of the spaces from reasonable to good quality.

5.166 The LDP has a role to protect existing open space, promote the delivery of new open space to serve developments and encourage the improvement of open spaces making them safe, attractive, and usable multifunctional spaces.

5.167 Open spaces are an important part of the blue and green infrastructure of our places. They have a key role to play in making places more resilient to the effects of climate change, providing storage and reducing the impacts of high intensity rainfall events; reducing the impacts of high temperatures in urban areas and providing space for biodiversity.

5.168 The LDP should ensure that the potential of open spaces as part of making Fife's places more resilient to climate change is maximised.

Sports Facilities in Fife

5.169 Statistics published by sportscotland show that people tend to get less active as we grow older and that people in the most deprived areas are much less likely to be active and more likely to be inactive (doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week). Statistics in the Active Fife: Physical Activity and Sport Strategy reflect this trend with fewer people in Fife's 20% most deprived areas engaging in fewer sporting activities than the 20% least deprived areas.

5.170 In 2018 Scottish Government published 'A more active Scotland' which sets out a vision for people in Scotland to be more active more often. The document includes an Active Scotland Outcome Framework which includes the following outcomes:

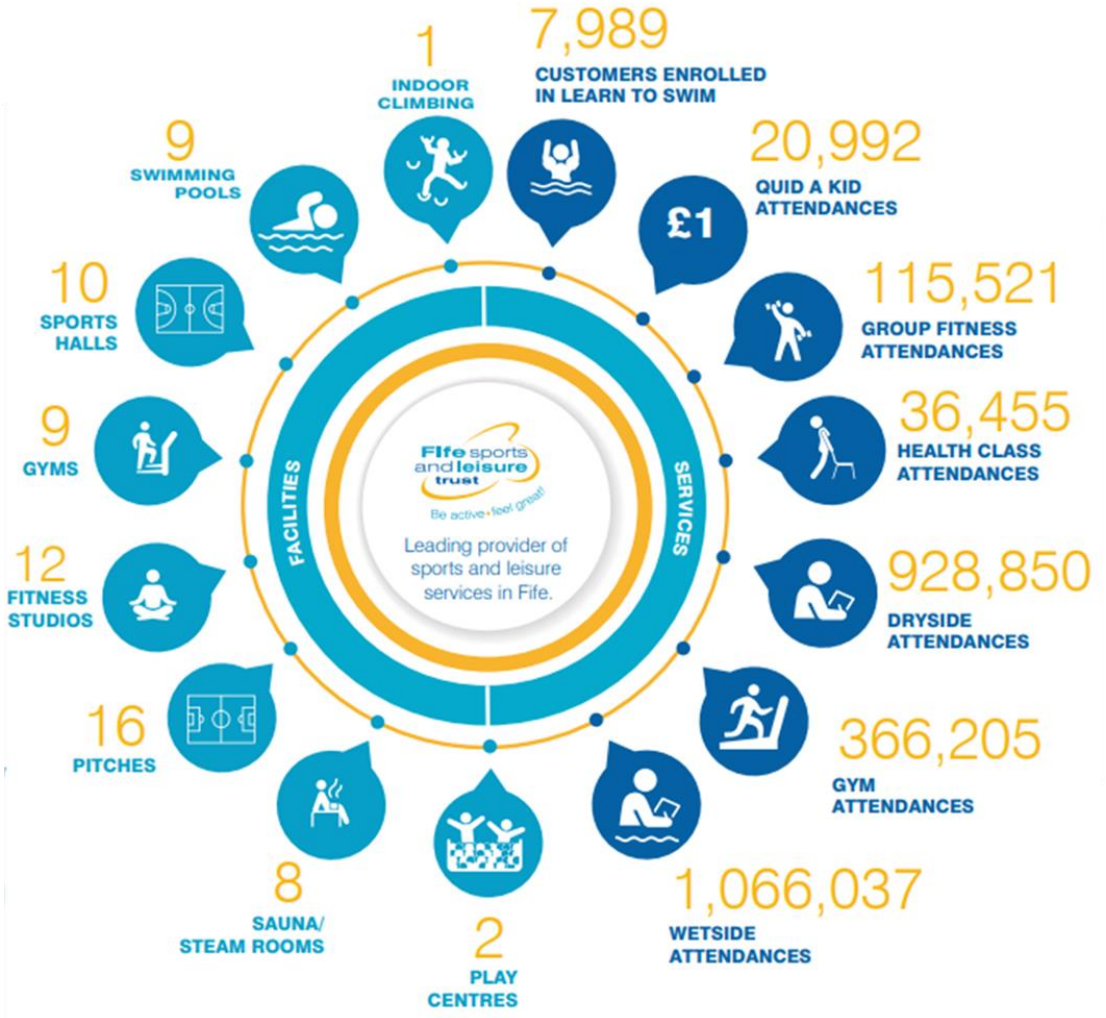
- Improving our active infrastructure (people and places).
- Encouraging and enabling the inactive to become active and the active to remain active throughout life.
- Supporting the wellbeing and resilience of communities through physical activity and sport.

5.171 Sportscotland has highlighted that the availability of a network of places, of the right quality and capacity to meet the needs of sport, is crucial to delivering these national outcomes.

5.172 The LDP has a role in helping deliver the Active Scotland Outcomes by protecting sport and active infrastructure, identifying sites and opportunities for new active infrastructure (such as active travel), and ensuring that the design of new development encourages and enables more active lifestyles.

5.173 Former council run sports facilities in Fife are now managed by the Fife Sports and Leisure Trust (see figure below) and Fife Golf Trust and include golf courses, swimming pools, leisure centres, gyms, fitness studios and outside pitches. The Fife Coast and Countryside Trust manage Lochore Meadows Country Park which offers outdoor adventure activities and classes including watersports, cycling routes golf and fishing.

Figure 5.12: Diagram showing the range of sports facilities managed by Fife Sports and Leisure Trust



Source: [Fife Sports and Leisure Trust Performance Review 2022/2023]

5.174 Skate parks, multi-use games areas (MUGA) and cycle parks are provided by Fife Council in several settlements and some sports facilities are within

community use schools such as Balwearie High School in Kirkcaldy which has a Games Hall, Gym Hall, Dance Studio and 11-a-side astro pitch available for public use and classes outwith school times. There are also privately run sports facilities (such as football, tennis, golf, bowls, fishing) which are often associated with clubs and private gyms. More information on sports facilities and local need is covered in the localities sections of the evidence report.

5.175 Sportscotland has provided an extract from their facility planning model for Fife which tests demand for sports halls (3 courts and larger), swimming pools and full-size synthetic grass pitches. The Facility Planning Model is a model which predicts likely patterns of demand, it does not predict actual usage. Decisions about any changes to sports facility provision should be taken based on more detailed analysis and local engagement. The outputs from the facility planning model for Fife were:

- Fife's Sport halls are slightly older than the Scottish average.
- Fife's swimming pools are newer than the Scottish average but the amount of waterspace provided is lower than the national average.
- The amount of full-sized sports pitches per head of population is lower than the national average.
- Nearly all of Fife is within a 20 minute drive of a 3 court hall, a swimming pool and a synthetic grass pitch. Not everyone could walk to these facilities but generally walking accessibility is better in the more deprived parts of Fife.
- Most of the demand for these facilities is expected to be met in Fife.
- Deprived areas in Fife are expected to have more demand for synthetic pitches but less demand for swimming pools and sports halls.
- It is predicted that there is a very low level use of Fife Facilities from people who live outwith the area.
- There is a higher number of sports facilities in both the Bridgehead areas (both in and outwith Fife) but overall it is predicted that Fife is a net exporter of visits to sports facilities with people from Fife travelling outwith the area to access some facilities.

5.176 The most recent strategy for physical activity in Fife was developed by the Fife Partnership (including Fife Council, Fife Sports & Leisure Trust, NHS Fife, and sportscotland). The strategy highlights the need for maintenance and upgrading of the existing sports and leisure facilities to ensure they stay open but no need for additional facilities was identified. Some actions from the strategy which are relevant to the LDP are:

- Fife to become the 'Daily Mile Kingdom' where people walk, run, jog, cycle a mile or more per day, from their own door and within their own communities.
- Deliver a new play space strategy and invest in restoring key playparks.
- Deliver £55m ten-year programme of investment in community facilities and greenspace that promotes community wellbeing, physical activity and sport.

5.177 The Fife Physical Activity and Sport strategy is to be reviewed by the end of 2025.

5.178 The LDP has a role in ensuring new places are designed so that people can walk, jog or cycle from their front door, and supporting programmes for the improvement of community facilities, greenspaces and play spaces.

Links to Evidence

- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhood interactive map
- Living Well locally case study - Cowdenbeath
- Living Well Locally case study – West Howe Area
- Living Well Locally case study – Saline and Steelend
- Supporting documents - Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2022 - gov.scot
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- Scottish Government – Green Infrastructure Design and Placemaking
- Fife Greenspace Strategy 2011-2016
- Public Health Scotland – Open space and the environment
- Fife Coast usage and impact study
- Fife Greenpace Audit 2024 – quality audit scoring guidelines
- Draft Fife Greenspace Audit 2024 – key changes since 2009
- Greenspace Scotland – developing the role of greenspace in climate change and adaption
- Sportscotland – equality, diversity and inclusion: toolbox
- Scottish Government – A More Active Scotland
- Fife Sports and Leisure Trust Performance Review 2022/2023
- Active Fife: A strategy for Physical activity and Sport 2021-2024
- Sportscotland – Fife Local Development Plan Evidence Report Sport in the LDP.
- sportScotland – Facility Planning Model Fife Council 2023

Implications of the evidence on the evolution of Fife's places for the Proposed LDP:

- The LDP will need to be flexible in the application of the local living/20-minute neighbourhood approach to suit different circumstances.
- The LDP has a role to allocate development sites in areas which can support local living or are part of existing areas where there is good access to services and facilities and promote the local living approach as part of placemaking considerations.
- The LDP will consider the site allocations implications for the provision of services in locations which serve wider populations, particularly in rural areas.
- The LDP has a role to protect existing open space, promote the delivery of new open space to serve developments and encourage the improvement of open spaces making them safe, attractive, and usable multifunctional spaces which benefit people and wildlife.
- The LDP will take account of the potential of open spaces as part of making Fife's places more resilient to climate change is maximised though the site selection methodology, and development requirements and guidance.
- Fife Culture & Leisure Trust and Sportscotland will be involved as part of the community planning input to the spatial strategy and Proposed Plan.
- The LDP has a role in helping deliver the Active Scotland Outcomes by protecting sport and active infrastructure, identifying sites and opportunities for new active infrastructure (such as active travel), and ensuring that the design of new development encourages and enables more active lifestyles and that people can walk, jog, or cycle from their front door.
- The LDP will support programmes for the improvement of community facilities, greenspaces, and play spaces.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/Dispute:

Sportscotland

- Sportscotland provided feedback on the first version of the evidence report in late April 2024. Their comments are summarised below with a response from Fife Council.
- Sportscotland refer to Scottish Government's ambitions for sport and physical activity set out in their Active Scotland Outcomes Framework. They flag up that the availability of a network of places of the right quality and capacity is crucial to meet these outcomes and that the evidence report should consider what the needs of the local community are in relation to sport and physical activity.
- Fife Council response: We have included a reference to the More Active Scotland plan and outcomes in the Fife Wide text. Information on the local provision and need for sporting facilities is provided in the localities sections of the evidence report.
- Sportscotland commented that knowing what you have and where is a useful evidence base to inform spatial policy development. They reference guidance on carrying out sports facility strategies and set out that consultation with local communities is a vital part of that work. They also provide information on community sports hubs in Fife and overall trends in sport and physical activity.
- Fife Council response: We have spatial data on the location of different types of sports facilities which originates from sportscotland. More detail on local facilities including community sports hubs is provided in the localities sections of the evidence report. A review of the Fife sports facility strategy is to be undertaken in 2025/26. Information on relevant trends in sport and physical activity are included in the Fife Wide section of the evidence report.
- Sportscotland reference a summary they have provided for Fife from their Facilities Planning Model.
- Fife Council response: The findings from the sportscotland Facilities Planning Model for sports halls, swimming pools and synthetic pitches is welcomed and has been referenced in the Fife Wide ((local living) and locality sections of the evidence report.

- In January 2025 Sportscotland was sent a draft copy of a new section on sports facilities, alongside an extract of text on sports facilities from the Open space, play spaces and sports facilities in the City of Dunfermline locality as an example of the text for the localities.
- Sportscotland raised some concerns regarding the misinterpretation of the Facility Planning Model they provided and provided some caveats for the use of this information which have been included in the report. They also requested the removal of the following statement in the Fife wide text - "The sportscotland modelling did not conclude that additional facilities were needed."
- Fife Council response: These matters have been addressed in the resubmission version.

- In June 2025 Sportscotland was sent a final copy of the resubmission document. Sportscotland agreed with the content of the document and made no further comment.

Quality of Fife's places – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

Policy 7 Historic Assets and Places
LDPs should support the sustainable management of the historic environment. They should identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places.

Policy 8 Green Belts
LDPs should consider using green belts, to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities.

Policy 9 Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings
LDPs should set out opportunities for the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and empty buildings.

Policy 12(b) Zero waste
Development proposals will be supported where they:
i. reuse existing buildings and infrastructure;
ii. minimise demolition and salvage materials for reuse

Policy 14 Design Quality and Place
LDPs should be place-based and created in line with the Place Principle. The spatial strategy should be underpinned by the six qualities of successful places. LDPs should provide clear expectations for design, quality and place taking account of the local context, characteristics and connectivity of the area. They should also identify where more detailed design guidance is expected, for example, by way of design frameworks, briefs, masterplans and design codes.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.179 Fife Council Officers carried out a place quality assessment of all the town centres and key local centres in Fife in summer 2023 (called Stories of Fife Place Assessment). This looked at elements such as first impressions, quality of the approaches, landscape setting, maintenance, quality of public spaces, routes and street furniture, and evidence of community involvement. The assessment found that some centres such as Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy have been significantly impacted by large road infrastructure which cut through the historic street patterns, creating a barrier to pedestrian movement and often resulting in buildings and structures which do not present active or attractive frontages to main transport arteries.

5.180 The 1950s 'New Town' of Glenrothes has similar issues for different reasons. The centre was designed around an internal shopping street with access by car given priority; as a result, pedestrian access is often circuitous, and the active streets are hidden and privately owned. It is, nevertheless, considered to be to be one of Scotland's most resilient town centres.

5.181 The overall quality of place in many settlements has been reduced by poor long-term maintenance and lack of investment over the years as economic pressures have impacted in investment and spending decisions. Most of the centres assessed retain their historic centres and traditional buildings; however, in some towns, such as Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly, many of these buildings have been significantly altered impacting on the appearance of the historic core (see figure below). In the last few years Fife Council has made economic interventions in both towns – Cowdenbeath being shortlisted for a high street award and Lochgelly winning the most improved town award.

Figure 5.13: Cowdenbeath High Street – showing the impact on place quality of unsympathetic changes to traditional buildings

Source: Fife Council

5.182 St Andrews, Burntisland, Dunfermline, and Anstruther were found to have the highest quality of place in the assessment with good quality, well maintained public spaces, greenspace and buildings in their centres,

attractive landscape settings and approaches, a good mix of commercial activities and relatively fewer vacant premises.

5.183 There is more detail on the findings of the Stories of Fife Place Assessment in the locality's sections of the evidence report and there are summaries of the notes from the site visits, the assessment data for each place and a comparative commercial value assessment.

5.184 The LDP has a role to promote quality placemaking for new and existing places, through the location of development, protecting key historic, cultural and natural assets, and setting principles for places and new development which focus on connectivity and the creation of high-quality places.

Fife's Historic Environment

5.185 Fife has extensive historic environment assets with nearly 5,000 listed buildings (including 181 category A buildings) (almost 10% of Scotland's total number), and 48 conservation areas (more than 7% of the conservation areas in Scotland). There are also 29 designated Gardens and Designed Landscapes, a historic battlefield site (Battle of Inverkeithing II), the Forth Bridge world heritage site and a historic marine protected area associated with a vessel 'the Campania' located just off the coast by Burntisland.

5.186 Fife has a rich variety of archaeological remains and the Fife Sites and Monuments Record contains details of approximately 11,000 archaeological sites in Fife ranging from the Mesolithic period to the 20th century. 240 sites and monuments in Fife have been designated as being of national importance and are protected as Scheduled Monuments. These include castle and abbey ruins; hill forts, coastal defences, earthworks and crop markings.

5.187 The Local Development Plan has a role to protect built heritage assets and their settings (for instance important views to and from the historic cores of Dunfermline and St Andrews are protected through the Dunfermline and St Andrews green belt designations). In their Local Development Plan evidence report for Fife Council, Historic Environment Scotland suggest that the council consider if additional policy or guidance for the protection of the Battle of Inverkeithing II site and/or heritage assets at risk from coastal erosion may be appropriate.

5.188 Fife's designated historic environment assets can be viewed on the Historic Environment Scotland interactive map or PASTMAP.

5.189 The benefits of the historic environment are set out in Our Past Our Future - The Strategy for Scotland's Historic Environment. The strategy describes the historic environment as a national asset which creates jobs, provides character to our landscapes, strengthens and enhances our local communities, and helps to forge a sense of place and tell Scotland's story to the world. There are 14 Historic Environment Scotland Properties in Care sites in Fife which are open to the public and are significant tourist

attractions in the area. These include Dunfermline Abbey and Palace, Aberdour Castle, St Andrews Castle and Cathedral and Ravenscraig Castle which directly employ 32 staff between them.

5.190 The Our Past Our Future strategy and Historic Environment Scotland's position statement on the climate and nature crises - Pointing the Way to the Future and Historic environment Scotland's Green Recovery Statement all highlight the important contribution that the maintenance and adaption of historic buildings can make to reducing both waste and carbon emissions; helping Scotland to achieve net zero aims. NPF4 Policy 7: Historic assets and places and policy 12 Zero Waste both promote the reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure to support the transition to net zero and minimise waste. The local development plan has a role to identify where built heritage assets can be reused for alternative uses.

5.191 The Historic Environment Scotland Green Recovery Statement also highlights the economic benefits of skilled jobs in the heritage construction sector; the potential community wealth building and local empowerment which can result from historic environment regeneration; and the potential for historic sites and landscapes to contribute towards climate adaptation and enhanced biodiversity goals.

5.192 There is more detailed information on the historic assets and archaeology across Fife in the locality sections of this Evidence Report.

5.193 The impacts of climate change such as flooding, coastal erosion and sea level rise present a direct risk to the future protection of historic environment assets. Storms in 2023 caused damage to listed structures on the coast in the East Neuk including the A listed St Andrews Harbour. There is a more detailed breakdown of the historic environment assets which are potentially at risk of loss or damage from flooding and coastal erosion in the locality sections of the evidence report. Historic Environment Scotland have produced A guide to climate change impacts on Scotland's Historic Environment (2019) which looks at the potential impact of climate change on historic environment assets and identifies possible adaptation methods which could be put in place. However, this is generally more detail than would be required for the LDP but may be helpful for particular sites.

5.194 There is also the risk to historic assets from lack of investment and maintenance. There are currently 193 buildings in Fife which are identified on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland. It should be noted that on September 3rd 2024 Historic Environment Scotland published a Review of the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR). The review focused on assessing the impact of the BARR in bringing buildings back in to use in order to make evidenced-based recommendations for its long-term future. Having considered the main findings, conclusions and options of the review HES has taken the decision to pause the BARR in order to consider long-term options for its future.

5.195 Information of Historic Environment Scotland's grant giving and funding was provided in their Evidence for Fife - Historic Environment Scotland which set out that*: since 2019 we [HES] have received approximately 141 Expressions of Interest from projects within Fife. These have included repair projects to churches, drinking fountains, thatched cottages and protection measures for ancient caves, as well as Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS), funding to the Fife City Heritage Trust, support for local museums and coastal heritage projects. Between 2014 and 2023, 26 projects totalling £3,512,329 were completed. There are currently 4 live projects, totalling £1,944,900.*

5.196 The locality sections of the evidence report include information on over £43 million of investment in Fife's historic environment in recent times and identify some potential projects which are in development. A Heritage framework has been developed for the Leven Programme which aims to promote access and understanding of the heritage of the area, develop heritage based skills and enterprises and make heritage a key part of the communities social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing. Historic Environment Scotland have suggested that this approach could be used in other parts of Fife.

Brownfield and Vacant and Derelict land in Fife

5.197 As a legacy of its industrial and mining history there are many sites which are classed as brownfield land (previously developed land) in Fife. This includes some very large sites such as Westfield near Ballingry (once the site of one of Europe's largest open cast mines), Longannet (Scotland's last coal fired power station), and Crail Airfield. Around 203 of these sites are recorded in the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2023 for the Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey totalling 713.3Ha of land.

5.198 Research by the Scottish Land Commission found that derelict sites can affect a community's health, environment, economy, and social cohesion, and that more affluent communities have greater resilience to cope with the impacts of vacant and derelict land including sourcing funding and other resources.

5.199 The Fife audit identifies that around 30% of Fife's population live within 500m of a vacant or derelict site with around 13% of people living close to a long-term derelict site (over 15 years derelict). However, contrary to what has been found in some parts of Scotland, only 13.6% of people who live in the most deprived decile live within 500m of derelict land.

5.200 The Fife Local Development Plan has a role to promote the redevelopment of brownfield, derelict and vacant land and empty buildings through policy and site allocation.

5.201 Over the last few years Fife has been one of five local authorities who have received money from the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund which is used

towards the remediation or preparation of sites on the audit. Fife has received almost £13 million since 2015. Projects to bring vacant and derelict land back into use are often complex and take a long time to deliver (timescales of 5-10 years are not unusual) and Fife has tended to focus the Vacant and Derelict Land funding on small and deliverable sites. More details on vacant and derelict sites and projects supported by the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund are in the locality sections of this report and in the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2023 report.

Fife's Green Belts

5.202 Fife has two areas designated as green belts in the adopted FIFEplan (2017); Dunfermline and St. Andrews. The requirement for these green belts came from the Fife Structure Plan 2006-2026 and they were designated through subsequent local plans.

5.203 Planning applications within the green belt areas have been analysed to assess how well the green belts and current development plan policies have been working. From analysing both approved and refused applications in relation to the green belts of St Andrews and Dunfermline in conjunction with Policy 9 (Green Belts) of FIFEplan, it can be concluded that Policy 9 is functioning effectively and has done so since the LDP's adoption in 2017. It is managing the long term planned growth for both towns and takes account of the need to protect the towns' characters, landscape settings, and identities as well as providing opportunities for access to open space and the countryside. To date, there have not been significant calls for changes to the existing boundaries of the two Fife green belts, and the green belts continue to provide sufficient land for the long-term growth of both St Andrews and Dunfermline. For this reason changes to the current green belt boundaries are not envisaged.

St Andrews Green Belt

5.204 The argument for the designation of a green belt for St Andrews was originally made in a Landscape Assessment Study of St Andrews, David Tyldesley and Associates in 1996. The boundary for the green belt is identified in FIFEplan and was tested through the examination of the plan.

5.205 The St Andrews green belt designation manages long term planned growth for the town and takes account of the need to protect the town's character, landscape setting and identity as well as providing opportunities for access to open space and the countryside. The green belt was originally designated in the St Andrews & East Fife Local plan (adopted 2012). The designation and related evidence have been reviewed as part of this Evidence Report.

5.206 Since the adoption of FIFEplan in 2017, the St Andrews green belt has been subject to 48 planning applications (excluding householder applications) for various proposed uses. Some of these applications relate to locations within

the St Andrews green belt where Policy 9 of the LDP specifies green belt policy exemptions. Six applications were refused including proposals for the formation of a new holiday resort, the erection of new dwellinghouses, a warehouse and an agricultural building.

5.207 There has been some pressure for tourism development, notably for caravan and lodge proposals. While NPF4 Policy 8 provides some support for tourism uses within green belts, there is potential for such developments to impact on views and landscape setting. This indicates the importance of maintaining the green belt to protect the St Andrews' landscape. Consideration may need to be given to further policy guidance within the LDP or to identify specific locations or uses within the green belt that may be appropriate for development. The Strategic Development Area at St Andrews West continues to provide sufficient land for the long-term growth of the town, and on that basis, it is considered that an amendment to the green belt boundary is not required at this time.

Dunfermline Green Belt

5.208 A study of options for the Dunfermline green belt was carried out by LUC Consulting in July 2009 and included a proposed boundary which took account of early thinking on the Strategic Development Area to the west of Dunfermline. The boundary which is allocated in the adopted FIFEplan was tested and amended slightly through the examination into the plan.

5.209 The identification of a green belt to the south-west and west of Dunfermline prevents the coalescence of Dunfermline with the neighbouring village of Crossford. It recognises that the town's landscape setting requires careful management. It provides a long-term edge to the city and protects views to and from its historic core. The green belt boundary is set for at least 20 years from the adoption date of the Dunfermline & West Fife Local Development Plan (2012). This boundary continues to provide scope for the long-term growth of the city to the west of Dunfermline.

5.210 Since the adoption of FIFEplan in 2017 the Dunfermline green belt has been subject to 3 minor applications for various proposed uses from storage to stables; and one larger application for the erection of 8 dwellinghouses in the village of Pattiesmuir, (a designated conservation area). These applications were all permitted. It was decided that the Pattiesmuir proposal took account of the need to protect the city's character, landscape setting and identity, used brownfield land and did not adversely affect an area important to the historic built environment of West Fife.

Links to Evidence

- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report summer 2023
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets summer 2023
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries summer 2023
- Fife Council website for built heritage
- Historic Environment Scotland interactive designations map
- Our-Past-Our-Future-2023 Historic Environment Scotland
- Pointing the Way to the Future 2023 Historic Environment Scotland
- A guide to climate change impacts on Scotland's Historic Environment (2019) Historic Environment Scotland
- Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland
- Historic Environment Scotland: Local Development Plan evidence - Fife Council
- PASTMAP
- Together Future Flows: Leven Programme Heritage Framework 2022-2032
- Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey
- Scottish Land Commission: Vacant and Derelict Land in Scotland - Assessing the Impact of Vacant and Derelict Land on Communities (2019)
- Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2023 report
- Fife Structure Plan 2006-2026
- Analysis of planning applications in the Fife green belts since 2017
- St Andrews Strategic Landscape Assessment Study – David Tyldesley and Associates (1996)
- Dunfermline Green Belt Study – LUC consultants (July 2009).

Implications of the evidence on the quality of Fife's places for the Proposed LDP:

- The LDP has a role to promote quality placemaking for new and existing places, through the location of development, protecting key historic, cultural and natural assets. It will set principles for places and new development which focus on connectivity and the creation of high-quality places in development frameworks, briefs masterplans and design codes.
- The LDP may need to include additional locally specific policies to promote the protection and reuse of historic buildings and historic environment assets for their cultural importance, economic, and placemaking value, and potential to support the transition to net zero. This includes protection of views for the Forth Bridge World Heritage Site.
- The LDP may be able to identify where built heritage assets can be reused for alternative uses.
- The appropriateness of additional policy or guidance for the protection of the Battle of Inverkeithing II site and/or heritage assets at risk from coastal erosion within the LDP should be considered.
- Support for the historic environment whether through direct policy or supplementary guidance will be considered. The development of local heritage frameworks (similar to the Leven Programme Heritage Framework) and their status should be explored.
- The LDP will promote the redevelopment of brownfield, derelict, and vacant land and empty buildings through policy and site allocation.
- The LDP has a role to identify the boundaries of green belts. Reviews of the St Andrews and Dunfermline green belts have concluded that amendments to the boundaries are not required at this time. However, the Proposed Plan will consider the need for further policy guidance on Fife's green belts and scope to identify specific locations or uses within the green belts that may be appropriate for development.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement /Dispute:

Historic Environment Scotland

- Historic Environment Scotland was engaged in several workshops throughout the development of the evidence report as part of a key agency group. These meetings discussed the scope of the report and looked in detail at issues in the different Fife localities relating to the different agencies' areas of focus (including the historic environment). The discussions at these workshops informed the development and content of the evidence report.
- Historic Environment Scotland provided feedback on the first evidence report submission in May 2024. Their comments are summarised below with Fife Council's responses.

- HES flagged up that a general overview of historic assets and places was included under a heading of cultural venues, they stressed that it is important for the evidence report to reflect the significant contribution of our historic environment across a wide range of policy areas.
- Fife Council Response: In the revised evidence report the historic environment evidence has been expanded into its own section and relocated into the 'How Past Development has shaped how Fife is today' chapter. This makes the topic more prominent in the evidence report reflecting its importance.

- HES referred to Scotland's strategy for the historic environment Our Past Our Future (April 2023) and their climate and nature crisis statement *Pointing the Way to the Future*, and the priority areas of action they focus on, in particular the contribution that historic environment can make to preventing waste and reducing carbon emissions. HES encouraged Fife Council to take a holistic approach which recognises and optimises the role that the historic environment plays in delivering multiple benefits across numerous policy areas.
- Fife Council response: The revised evidence report references the Our Past Our Future Strategy document and the Pointing the Way to the Future statement and acknowledges the contribution of the historic environment across many policy areas including helping meet net zero and waste targets and placemaking.

- HES welcomed the fine-grained approach to understanding the historic assets and places within the 7 localities in Fife and the recognition of the role of the historic environment as a significant economic driver through tourism in several of the localities.
- HES welcome that the heritage framework which has been developed as part of the Leven Programme has been referenced in the evidence report and suggested that this could be used as a model for the other 6 localities in Fife.

- Fife Council Response: An additional reference to the framework has been added into the Fife wide section highlighting the possibility of that model being used in other areas.

- HES highlighted that no mention was made in the evidence report of the Inventory Battlefield of Inverkeithing II and Forth Bridge World Heritage site. They highlighted that they would expect LDPs to provide specific protection of the world heritage site to supplement NPF4 Policy and suggested that a bespoke policy for the battlefield site to support development management consideration affecting the site may be appropriate.
- Fife Council Response: References to the Inventory Battlefield of Inverkeithing II site and the Forth Bridge World Heritage site have been included in the revised evidence report. Bespoke policies for the world heritage site and the battlefield site will be considered as part of the development of the proposed plan.

- HES mentioned that they were preparing a Fife specific report for use in the Plan development process.
- Fife Council response: The HES Local Plan Evidence for Fife Council was not available to inform the previous version of the evidence report. This report has been used to inform the contents of the revised evidence report.

- In January 2025 Historic Environment Scotland was sent a draft copy of a new section in the Quality of Fife's Places section which covers Fife's Historic Environment of the Evidence Report. HES provided a track changed document with some amendments to the text including information on the status of the Buildings at Risk register.
- Fife Council response: These matters have been addressed in the resubmission version.

- In June 2025 Historic Environment Scotland was sent a final copy of the resubmission document. HES provided comment on the general overview of the historic environment in Fife.
- Fife Council response: These matters have been addressed in the resubmission version.

The housing issues that need to be addressed across Fife within the lifetime of the Plan

Introduction to Housing in Fife - Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

Policy 16: Quality homes

LDPs are expected to identify a Local Housing Land Requirement for the area they cover. This is to meet the duty for a housing target and to represent how much land is required. To promote an ambitious and plan-led approach, the Local Housing Land Requirement is expected to exceed the 10-year Minimum All- Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) set out in Annex E (of NPF4).

Deliverable land should be allocated to meet the 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement in locations that create quality places for people to live. Areas that may be suitable for new homes beyond 10 years are also to be identified. The location of where new homes are allocated should be consistent with local living including, where relevant, 20-minute neighbourhoods and an infrastructure first approach.

Diverse needs and delivery models should be taken into account across all areas, as well as allocating land to ensure provision of accommodation for Gypsy/Travellers and Travelling Showpeople where need is identified.

Policy 17: Rural homes

LDPs should be informed by an understanding of population change over time, locally specific needs and market circumstances in rural and island areas.

LDPs should set out tailored approaches to rural housing and where relevant include proposals for future population growth – including provision for small-scale housing and the appropriate resettlement of previously inhabited areas. Plans should reflect locally appropriate delivery approaches. Previously inhabited areas that are suitable for resettlement should be identified in the spatial strategy.

Policy 27: City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres

LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in city and town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential developments.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

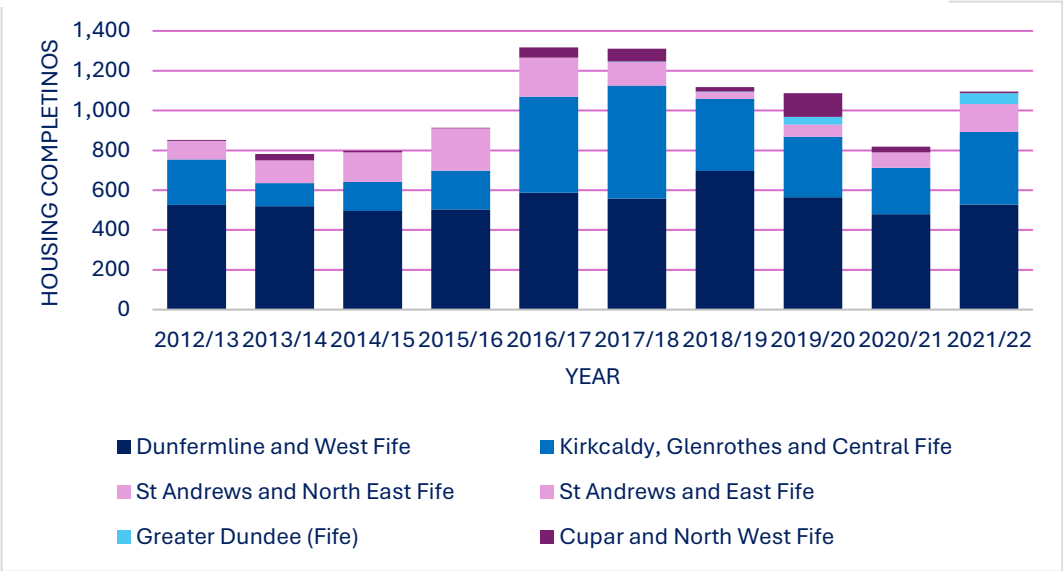
5.211 From FIFEplan's adoption in 2017 to 2021/22, 7,857 homes were built across Fife with the Dunfermline and West Fife Housing Market Area (HMA) consistently delivering the highest level of completions. That HMA is a strong market given the services and facilities of Scotland's newest city. Its proximity and good transport connections to Edinburgh, and the offer of more affordable family housing north of the Forth, are additional key attractors to those settling in Dunfermline.

5.212 Some marketability challenges lie in the adjacent Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Central Fife HMA. These relate to pockets of deprivation which result in some areas being less attractive to the private sector housing building industry. In addition, the mining legacy of these areas can increase build costs due to greater land stabilisation. However, as the data illustrates, in recent years, the level of house completions, compared to other areas of Fife, has been increasing.

5.213 The HMAs of North East Fife (the remaining HMAs) continue to be a very popular location to live. However, due to its rural nature and many small settlements which have traditionally grown around fishing and agriculture, fewer opportunities for house building (especially at scale) exist. This is reflected in the existing LDP allocations and housing completions data. The popularity of North East Fife as a place to live, coupled with the fewer development opportunities, create affordability challenges.

5.214 Fife Council have been in discussion with Homes for Scotland over marketability of settlements within the region; identifying those areas which are most marketable and those areas where there is no or limited market for large scale housing development. Although certain settlements may not currently attract builders due to market conditions, with increased investment and development, these areas may have the potential to become more appealing and marketable in the future. This market intelligence will help to inform the spatial strategy and site assessment process for the Proposed Plan.

Figure 5.14: Completions on sites of capacity greater than 4 units



Source: Completions Surveys and BSS data (Fife Housing Land Audit 2022)

Notes:

Completions from 2017 onwards (adoption of LDP1) reflect the requirement to deliver an element of Edinburgh's housing growth in Fife as prescribed by SESplan.

Completions on sites of capacity greater than 4 units. Small sites of fewer than 5 units are not included within these completion figures.

5.215 As the topic of housing is a wide-ranging subject, it has been broken down into two sections, each with a supporting Annex:

- Housing Need & Local Housing Land Requirement (including existing and future general need, specialist housing needs; and setting Fife's Indicative Local Housing Land Requirement); and
- Localised Housing Issues (including empty homes, second homes, short term lets and houses in multiple occupation).

5.216 The following pages provide high-level evidence and the analysis of housing data for Fife. Further detail can be found in the links to the appendices on this and future pages.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Housing Land Audit 2022
- Annex 8: Housing Need & Local Housing Land Requirement
- Annex 9: Localised Housing Issues

Implications of the housing evidence for the Proposed Plan:

- The site assessment methodology used to allocate development proposals will take account of factors that will affect marketing or viability such as: environmental considerations and physical constraints. The impact of growth on biodiversity, nature networks, soils, and agricultural land will also to be taken into account.
- Topography around some settlement edges makes it more difficult to absorb development and flood risk will also be an issue in some areas. The area's mining and industrial history, especially in Mid Fife, means that adverse ground conditions are a major consideration which may increase development costs and impact on deliverability. All these issues will be considered through the site assessment methodology, in creating a delivery pipeline, and will be monitored in the Delivery Programme.
- The LDP will identify and promote sites and locations to show how they can contribute to meeting Fife's housing needs and contributing to addressing the housing emergency (discussed later in this section) some of which may be currently less favoured by the commercial house builders for large scale building.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/Dispute:

- Fife Council Housing Services has been consulted on the Housing annexes and agree with the content.

<u>Homes for Scotland</u>

- Homes for Scotland received both housing annexes for comment. Whilst comments were received, no comments were received concerning this section. Comments focussed on the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement and are discussed within that section of the Evidence Report.

Housing Need in Fife – Summary of Evidence

5.217 The combined Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) for Fife indicate 2,392 households are in existing housing need and require social rented housing to meet that need.

Table 5.7: Households in need by Housing Market Area

Households	Fife (West & Central)	Fife (North)	Fife Total
Homeless/ housing insecurity	1,246	485	1,731
Both overcrowded and concealed	171	157	328
Requiring specialist housing	263	70	333
Total existing need	**1,680**	**712**	**2,392**

Source: Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027

5.218 This existing need figure informed a range of HNDA scenarios from 'strong growth' through to 'no growth' in income, house prices and rents. The preferred scenario for Fife was agreed as 'steady growth' where 470 new homes are required per annum over a 20-year period. This comprises of 253 (54%) affordable homes and 217 (46%) market homes.

Table 5.8: 20 Year HNDA Housing Estimates for Steady Growth Scenario in Fife

Steady Growth Scenario	2021 - 2025	2026 - 2030	2031 - 2035	2036 - 2040	20 Year Total	20 Year p.a.
Social rent	489	153	58	48	3,738	187
Below market	102	58	56	47	1,316	66
Private rent	140	68	59	43	1,551	78
Owner occupied	213	123	122	102	2,796	140
Total p.a.	944	402	295	239	9,401	470
Affordable p.a.	592	211	114	95	5,054	253
Market p.a.	352	191	181	145	4,347	217

Source: Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027

5.219 For housing supply purposes in Fife, the estimates are examined over a 10-year period from 2021-30 as it is anticipated existing need will be cleared during this timeframe (7 years clearance in South East Scotland, 5 years clearance in Tayside). Between 2021-2030, it is estimated that 673 new homes will be required on an annual basis in accordance with the HNDA steady growth scenario. This comprises of 401 (60%) affordable homes and 272 (40%) market homes.

Table 5.9: 10 Year HNDA Housing Estimates by Steady Growth Scenario and Housing Market Area

Housing Market Area	St Andrews and North East Fife	Cupar and North-West Fife	Dunfermline and West Fife	Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes & Central Fife	Fife Total & % tenure split
Affordable p.a 2021-30	55	42	135	170	401 (60%)
Market p.a 2021-30	27	23	110	111	272 (40%)
Total p.a. 2021-30	82	66	245	280	673

Source: Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027

5.220 Further details on housing need and associated issues can be found in Annexes 8 and 9. This housing need is fed into the Local Housing Land Requirement calculation.

Links to Evidence

- Annex 8: Housing Need & Local Housing Land Requirement
- Local Housing Strategy | Fife Council
- South East Scotland HNDA3
- Tayside HNDA3
- Fife SHIP 2023/24 - 2027/28
- Fife Wheelchair Specialist Housing Study
- PAS Gypsies & Travellers Engagement

Specialised Need

5.221 While the combined HNDAs provided the overall housing estimates for Fife and informed the Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR – see the NPF4 policy context box, above), a range of specialist housing requirements have also been identified in Fife. Whilst these specialist needs do not directly inform the Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR), they do inform how the LHLR is delivered; for example, tenure and housing type, and the need for potential localised policies.

5.222 The challenge for the new Local Development Plan is not simply allocating sufficient supply to meet the LHLR, but also addressing Fife-wide issues of affordability and meeting the housing needs of older people, the Gypsy/Traveller community and those in further/higher education. The table below provides a high-level summary of housing need. Further detail and analysis of specialist need can be found in Annex 8 - Housing Need & Local Housing Land Requirement.

Table 5.10: Need for specialist housing in Fife

Specialist Housing Type	Provision	Housing Need	Source
Accessible housing	22% of households say their home is accessible to a wheelchair user visiting the property	2,689 accessible homes required across private and social housing tenures	Wheelchair & Accessible Housing Study including household survey 2022. Carried out by Arneil Johnston consultants
Wheelchair housing	1% of homes are wheelchair adapted housing	612 wheelchair homes required across private and social housing tenures	Wheelchair & Accessible Housing Study including household survey 2022. Carried out by Arneil Johnston consultants
Adapted housing	18.5% of homes have adaptations / 35% of social housing	2% of homes require adaptations / 8% in social housing. Low level of adaptations in private housing	Scottish House Condition Survey 2017-19
Non-permanent housing	969 households in temporary accommodation Around 4,181 purpose-built student bedspaces in St Andrews for 10,360 students	2,502 households presenting as homeless Identified need for around 1,000 additional bed spaces in St Andrews	Fife Council April 2021-March 2022 University of St Andrews
Supported provision	1,106 sheltered 387 very sheltered 237 community alarm	1,093 households requiring sheltered housing (nil points excluded)	Scottish Housing Regulator 2020-21 Fife Housing Register February 2022
Care and support for independent living at home	5% of households have one or more members receiving care	Low provision of care services in private housing	Scottish House Condition Survey 2017-19
Gypsy Traveller Site Provision	50 pitches for Gypsy/ Travellers across 3 sites	Site improvements required / underway	Fife Council February 2022

Source: Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027

Affordable Housing

5.223 Fife Council has committed to building a further 1,250 Council houses in Fife over the next five years, as part of the Affordable Housing Programme. Since 2012, Fife has had one of the largest social house-building programmes in Scotland and the UK, delivering 7,400 houses. Fife's ability to keep building is at risk if Scottish Government funding cuts are applied to the Affordable Housing budget. Any change in programmed Scottish Government affordable housing funding for Fife will have serious implications for affordable housing delivery in Fife. This reduction would have a negative impact on the number of new affordable houses Fife Council and the Fife

Housing Association Alliance can provide to support homelessness needs and how quickly affordable housing need backlog can be addressed.

5.224 On the 21st of March 2024, Fife Council declared a housing emergency due to the unprecedented pressures on housing and homelessness services. This political decision was taken due to a range of systemic housing failures, although the main catalyst was a 24% reduction in Scottish Government Affordable Housing Subsidy. Other factors include reduced turnover in social housing following the COVID-19 pandemic, a significant increase in the demand for temporary accommodation which is resulting in a regular breach of statutory duties, an increased number of empty homes specifically in the private sector, as well as economic factors impacting affordability. Since the housing emergency was declared, Scottish Government affordable housing funding has been reinstated. However, this has only been reinstated for one year and so does not give longer term certainty of future funding. Fife Council is still awaiting details of future funding.

5.225 To respond to the housing emergency, a high-level Housing Emergency Action Plan (HEAP) was approved by the Cabinet Committee in June 2024. Early stakeholder engagement established the following three themes for the action plan.

Figure 5.15: Housing Emergency Action Plan Themes

Source: Fife Council Housing Services

Care Homes

5.226 Across Fife, there were 3,073 registered beds within care homes as at December 2023. Care homes tend to be clustered in the areas of greater population and therefore there is not a uniform provision across Fife. Whilst generally there is a good choice of care homes in Mid and North East Fife, within West Fife, provision has not kept up with demand in Dunfermline. There are also challenges within East Fife between Cupar and St Andrews.

Self-Build

5.227 An in-house register has recently been developed which holds key information on parties interested in self- or custom-build. The register, which reflects a low demand to date, records details of the applicant, property type, number of units, tenure, proposed use, capacity to deliver and preferred timescale for the project. A dedicated team maintain the register of applicants alongside the register of land available. The team will identify empty public sector land which will be the primary resource to meet demand, ensuring compliance with current legislation and net zero targets. The list of land will be available on the Council's website.

Links to Evidence

- Annex 8:Housing Need & Local Housing Land Requirement
- Local Housing Strategy | Fife Council
- South East Scotland HNDA3
- Tayside HNDA3
- Fife SHIP 2023/24 - 2027/28
- Fife Wheelchair Specialist Housing Study
- PAS Gypsies & Travellers Engagement

Implications of the Fife-wide evidence on specialist housing in Fife for the Proposed LDP:

Specialised Housing Targets

- The identification of targets and/or requirements for specific provision through local policy will be considered In the preparation of the Proposed Plan. Specific site allocations will also be considered where appropriate. The LDP implications to help meet specific local housing needs in Fife are listed below.
- The outlined need and targets for wheelchair housing will need to be reviewed and developed further alongside the development of phase 4 of the Affordable Housing Programme and Local Housing Strategy. Working with key partners, Fife Council will look at how policy can be shaped to meet emerging needs. The type of houses delivered by housing providers will also become more important as demographic changes continue. Not only do homes need to be delivered in the right locations alongside sustainable modes of travel but they need to be built to accessible standards, of the right size, and meet the needs identified in the relevant HNDA.
- Fife Council-commissioned research concluded there is no clear need for additional land to be assigned for public Gypsy/Travellers sites. However, the existing sites could benefit from improved facilities and maintenance. This work has already commenced to upgrade the existing facilities. This will reduce the number of pitches, due to less demand/vacant pitches which is allowing remaining pitches to be enlarged. Therefore, additional land is not expected to be required for public sites in the Plan period.
- Student housing for Further and Higher Education requires to be considered in the context of the constrained housing market in St Andrews and the pressures from local housing need, student accommodation and tourism. This is especially the case in terms of HMO properties, resulting in available accommodation being at a premium in St Andrews. The LDP requires to address all housing needs for St Andrews and strike a balance between these competing needs. As the Proposed Plan is prepared, further work will be undertaken to determine the most appropriate approach to balancing these issues and needs and the role of development plan policy and specific allocations. It is noted that the University of St Andrews suggest a bespoke policy position for student accommodation in St Andrews is required and that given the lifespan of the LDP, flexibility requires to be built in to respond to changing needs. These issues will be considered in the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

Affordable Housing

- The overall affordable need has been defined through the HNDAs down to HMA level. Through the preparation of the Proposed Plan, the Planning and Housing Services will assess whether there is a continued justification for local affordable housing percentages in Fife which go to the sub-HMA level. It is expected that this review, using local data, will continue to evidence a lower need for some areas of Fife than that identified in NPF4 (25%). The review shall also consider whether the percentage for St Andrews HMA, currently set at 30%, remains justified.

- Fife Council has committed to building a further 1,250 Council houses in Fife over the next five years, as part of the Affordable Housing Programme. Fife's ability to keep building, satisfy affordable need and deliver LDP2 proposals is at risk if Scottish Government funding cuts are applied to the Affordable Housing budget. Any change in programmed Scottish Government affordable housing funding for Fife will have serious implications for affordable housing delivery in Fife. A reduction would have a negative impact on the number of new affordable houses Fife Council and the Fife Housing Association Alliance can provide to support homelessness needs and how quickly affordable housing need backlog can be addressed.
- It is evident that the delivery of new affordable housing has a pivotal role to play in responding to the housing emergency, however, funding restrictions place limitations on the pace and scale of delivery. Alternative funding options and delivery models for affordable housing will be explored as part of the detailed Housing Emergency Action Plan development. Additionally, the development plan process will assess housing requirements and local need. LDP2 will be required to ensure a generous supply of land for housing in areas where the need is greatest to satisfy local need and address issues of affordability.

Care Homes

- There is no identified Fife-wide need for additional care homes but additional provision is required in Dunfermline and potentially between Cupar and St Andrews. Any future provision will be predominantly market led. Fife Council and the Fife Health & Social Care Partnership will continue to assess the existing and future need for care homes. Depending on the timing of any new proposals, these can be assessed during the preparation of the Proposed Plan as part of the assessment of proposals or, if after the Plan is adopted, will be assessed against the spatial strategy and policies of NPF4 and the LDP.

Self-Build

- Through the preparation of the Proposed Plan, the self-build register and the register of available land shall be reviewed to consider demand and available land (predominantly surplus public sector land). This process will inform the spatial strategy and potentially allocations of the Plan.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

Fife Council Housing Services has been consulted on the Housing annexes and agree with the content.

Homes for Scotland

- Homes for Scotland received both housing annexes for comment. Comments were received, but none concerning this section. Comments focussed on the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement and are discussed within that section of the Evidence Report.

Local Housing Land Requirement – Summary of Evidence

5.228 Based on the methodology detailed in Annex 8, it has been estimated that an indicative Local Housing Land Requirement (LHLR) for Fife of 9,000 units be set over the 10-year lifetime of the LDP (1,980 Fife (North) and 7,020 Fife (Central & South)).

5.229 As Annex 8 illustrates, the indicative LHLR is ambitious, and evidence based. The evidence used to calculate the LHLR builds upon Fife's two Housing Need and Demand Assessments (HNDAs) and the two Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement (MATHLR) figures for Fife defined by National Planning Framework 4. In addition, the Local Housing Strategy's Housing Supply Targets 2022-27 have been examined.

5.230 In calculating the LHLR, Fife's two HNDAs and the MATHLRs were taken as the starting point. Fife's two HNDAs were signed off as robust and credible in 2022 and 2023 and use current data. Additionally, the data inputs for the existing need for both HNDAs were uprated from the HNDA tool defaults at the time the HNDAs were prepared. This was achieved using local data, to more accurately reflect existing need. Therefore, there was little evidence of any additional need and demand not already considered within the HNDAs and MATHLR to inform the calculation of the LHLR. Any local need beyond the HNDA tool defaults had already been taken into account and the national data inputs for the HNDAs had not significantly changed.

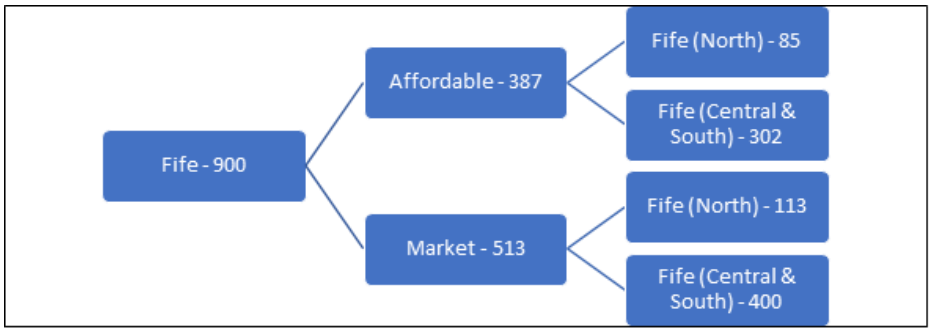
5.231 This LHLR will meet the Council's ambitions through the Council's reform and recovery agenda particularly through the revised Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP). It will ensure delivery of those strategic development areas that are currently being implemented or progressed, whilst maintaining the ambition to address mid Fife's needs and growth founded on the Levenmouth rail link.

5.232 The LHLR has been assessed against other data sources to ensure it is appropriate and deliverable. This has been undertaken by examining past trends, committed and future land availability whilst also considering the housing need requirement reflected in the HNDAs.

5.233 To determine the Fife North and Fife West & Central split, in line with the Local Housing Strategy Housing Supply Target (LHS HST) the portion of need in each area from the HNDA3 steady growth scenario 2021-30 has been applied (22% North, 78% Central & South) which equates to 198 units per annum in North Fife and 702 units per annum in Central & South Fife.

5.234 Using the LHS 43% target for affordable housing and 57% target for market housing, the affordable and market LHLR can be split as illustrated below. The geographical LHLR split will inform the spatial strategy of the Proposed Plan. Further details on the Local Housing Land Requirement can be found in Annex 8.

Figure 5.16: Local Housing Land Requirement per annum by tenure and area

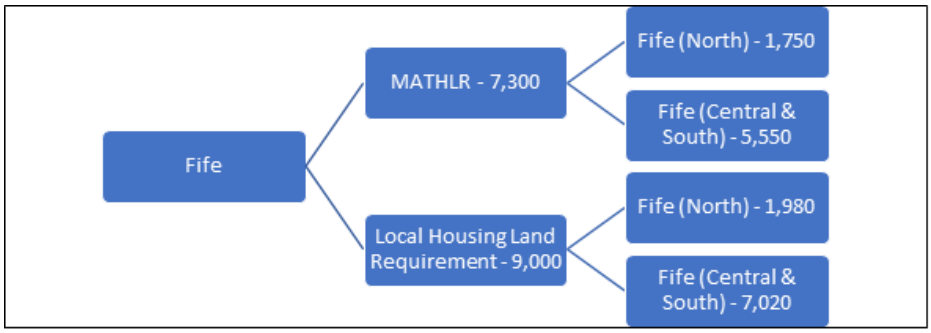


Source: Fife Council

5.235 Across the 10-year lifetime of the new LDP, 9,000 homes need to be built in Fife.

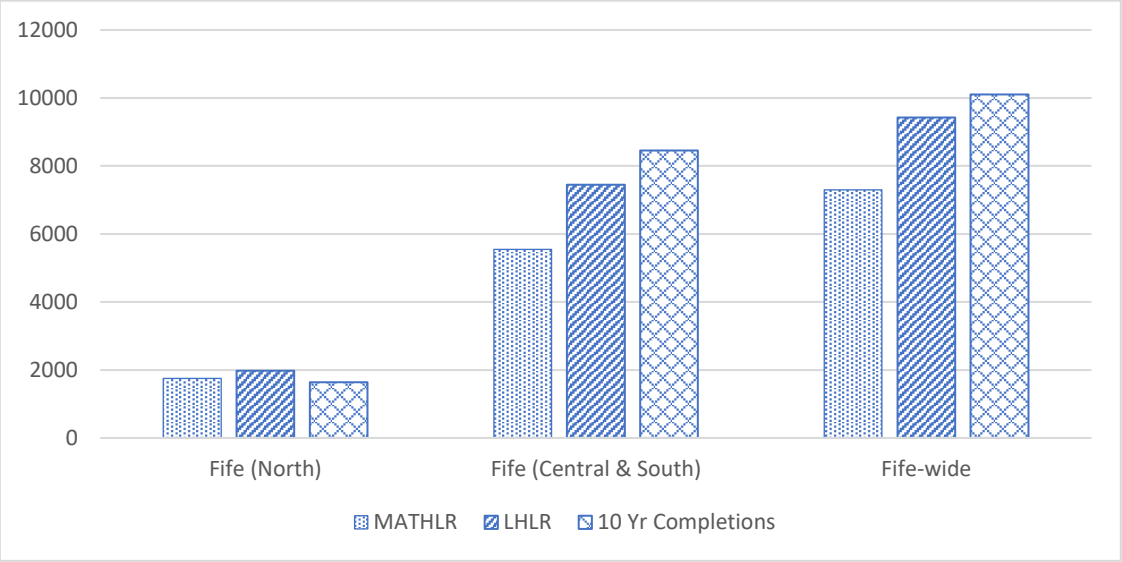
5.236 The indicative 10-year Local Housing Land Requirement meets the Scottish Government's expectation by exceeding NPF4's 10-year Fife Minimum All Tenure Housing Land Requirement by 1,700 additional units: 230 Fife (North) and 1,470 Fife (Central & South). This represents an approximate 23% increase over the Fife-wide MATHLR.

Figure 5.17: 10 Year MATHLR vs 10 Year Local Housing Land Requirement



Source: Fife Council

Figure 5.18 Ten Year Local Housing Land Requirement in Context of 10 Year MATHLR and Last 10 Years' Completions



Sources: National Planning Framework 4; and Fife Housing Land Audit 2022

Notes: Completions for Fife (Central & South) and Fife-wide are higher than the proposed indicative LHLR. This reflects the requirement in LDP1 to deliver an element of Edinburgh's housing growth in Fife as prescribed by SESplan. This is discussed in more detail below and in Annex 8.

5.237 However, the new LDP is not starting with a blank canvas. Homes are already planned and being delivered under the existing LDP (FIFEplan). The established land supply as of 1st April 2022 for Fife was 33,936 units. The sites which make up the established land supply are detailed in Schedules 1 and 2 of the Fife Housing Land Audit 2022 and are summarised below.

Table 5.11: Established Land Supply by Housing Market Area 2022

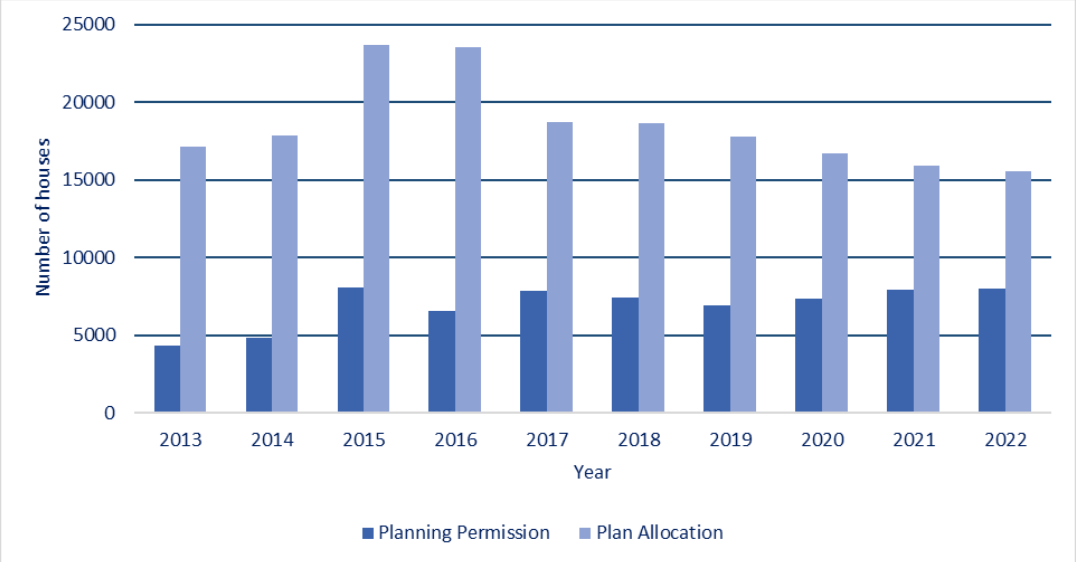
Housing Market Area	Established land supply	Unconstrained land supply*	Non-effective (constrained) land supply
Dunfermline and West Fife	15,968	11,135	4,833
Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Central Fife	12,557	8,068	4,489
St Andrews and East Fife	2,562	1,942	620
Greater Dundee (Fife)	419	226	193
Cupar and North West Fife	2,430	2,232	198
Fife	**33,936**	**23,603**	**10,333**

Source: Schedules 1 and 2, Fife Housing Land Audit 2022

Note: The established land supply is the sum of the unconstrained and the non-effective land supply.

** These figures represent the total unconstrained supply and are not limited to the 5-year period identified on a site-by-site basis in Schedule 1.*

Figure 5.19: Composition of the Unconstrained Housing Supply 2012/2013– 2021/2022



Source: Fife Council Housing Land Audits

5.238 The 2022 HLA/LDP1 sites for Fife (Central & South) reflect the housing land requirement previously set by SESplan[1], whereby Fife was expected to meet an element of Edinburgh City's growth in addition to Fife's growth. This resulted in a housing supply (identified through LDP1) that was larger than that required to meet Fife's own housing land requirement. The existing supply will require to be reviewed through the preparation of LDP2. The sites contained within LDP1, which are not complete or currently under construction, will not automatically be rolled forward to LDP2. As with proposed new sites, they will be reassessed under the site assessment criteria set out for the Proposed Plan with a focus on deliverability.

Links to Evidence

- Annex 8: Housing Need & Local Housing Land Requirement
- Local Housing Strategy | Fife Council
- South East Scotland HNDA3
- Tayside HNDA3
- Fife Housing Land Audit 2022

[1] The former Edinburgh & South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan.

Implications of the Fife-wide evidence on local housing land requirement for the Proposed LDP:

- The LHLR sets out the requirement both by MATHLR/HNDA geography and by tenure and will inform and guide the LDP strategy. The Proposed Plan will require to allocate housing sites, through both new and existing LDP allocations, to satisfy these requirements whilst balancing development with infrastructure requirements (including considering any existing infrastructure capacity in Fife). It will require to focus on placemaking whilst also being aware of the carbon impacts of individual and cumulative allocations. Deliverability will be key, testing sites using the site assessment criteria, to establish a deliverable housing land pipeline to meet the LHLR. Annual discussions on the Housing Land Audit review with HfS will inform housing land supply and the housing delivery pipeline.
- Sites will require to be allocated over a range of geographies and settlements and include a range of site sizes and tenures. However, the Proposed Plan will not just be required to meet the overall LHLR. It will require to meet the specific local housing needs such as the need for wheelchair and amenity housing and affordable housing. This will be addressed through local policy within the Proposed Plan.
- The Council will continue to explore the effectiveness of all existing housing allocations included within LDP1, including looking at alternative approaches/models to unlock sites. Existing allocated sites will not be automatically rolled forward from LDP1 unless they are already consented and under construction. Undeveloped LDP1 sites will be re-assessed using the site assessment criteria outlined in the Evidence Report with a focus on deliverability.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- Fife Council Housing Services has been consulted on the housing annexes and agree with the content.
- Homes for Scotland received both housing annexes for comment. Comments received focussed on the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement and the weighting given to past completions. Homes for Scotland state that the LHLR should be set at a minimum of 12,000. Homes for Scotland's full comments, and a response to these, can be found in Annex 8 - Housing Need and Local Housing Land Requirement.

Localised Housing Issues – Summary of Evidence

5.239 The new Local Development Plan requires to address more localised issues caused by empty homes, short-term lets, second homes, and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) which can cause housing supply and affordability issues for specific communities. This is especially an issue in North East Fife. Further details on localised housing issues can be found in Annex 9.

Table 5.12 Fife Council data on localised housing issues (Assessors & Housing Services)

LHS AREA	All Tenure	Short-term Let (STL)	Non-Domestic Rates (Self-Catering)	Second Homes	Empty Homes	HMO	Fife Council Stock	Private Registered
Cowdenbeath	17,249	16	7	49	155	6	4,811	1,396
Cupar & Howe	10,654	98	40	85	148	6	1,379	1,188
Dunfermline	43,955	215	69	185	415	40	4,645	4,830
Glenrothes	22,856	31	6	66	221	19	4,562	2,487
Kirkcaldy	35,385	108	49	170	441	34	7,910	4,017
Largo & East Neuk	8,942	675	294	790	187	1	764	861
Levenmouth	17,483	19	6	88	236	10	4,357	1,893
St Andrews	12,287	594	160	214	234	1,043	1,078	3,163
Taycoast	6,429	47	17	72	120	0	608	680
West Villages	8,147	33	11	43	99	1	813	568
Grand Total	**183,387**	**1,836**	**659**	**1,762**	**2,256**	**1,160**	**30,927**	**21,083**

Source: Fife Council data (Assessors & Housing Services)

Table 5.13 Fife Council data on localised housing issues (Assessors & Housing Services)

LHS AREA	All Tenure	Short-term Let (STL)	Non-Domestic Rates (Self-Catering)	Second Homes	Empty Homes	HMO	Fife Council Stock	Private Registered
Cowdenbeath	17,249	0.09%	N/A	0.28%	0.90%	0.03%	27.89%	8.09%
Cupar & Howe	10,654	0.92%	N/A	0.80%	1.39%	0.06%	12.94%	11.15%
Dunfermline	43,955	0.49%	N/A	0.42%	0.94%	0.09%	10.57%	10.99%
Glenrothes	22,856	0.14%	N/A	0.29%	0.97%	0.08%	19.96%	10.88%
Kirkcaldy	35,385	0.31%	N/A	0.48%	1.25%	0.10%	22.35%	11.35%
Largo & East Neuk	8,942	7.55%	N/A	8.83%	2.09%	0.01%	8.54%	9.63%
Levenmouth	17,483	0.11%	N/A	0.50%	1.35%	0.06%	24.92%	10.83%
St Andrews	12,287	4.83%	N/A	1.74%	1.90%	8.49%	8.77%	25.74%
Taycoast	6,429	0.73%	N/A	1.12%	1.87%	0.00%	9.46%	10.58%
West Villages	8,147	0.41%	N/A	0.53%	1.22%	0.01%	9.98%	6.97%
Grand Total	**183,387**	**1.00%**	N/A	**0.96%**	**1.23%**	**0.63%**	**16.86%**	**11.50%**

Source: Fife Council data (Assessors & Housing Services)

Rural Homes

5.240 The rural areas in Fife are predominantly classified as accessible rural by the Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2022 and are relatively close to the main towns in the area. Population estimates show that the more rural areas of North East Fife and South & West Fife will see a slight increase and decrease in population, respectively. There are no rural areas in Fife which either have experienced or are projected to experience a substantial decline in population.

5.241 The provision of rural housing is a necessary and integral part of growing a successful and sustainable and rural economy. Rural living offers many benefits but also brings additional challenges to rural communities, especially in terms of access to quality, affordable housing and access to services. Evidence illustrates that access to housing is impacting on rural economic growth and job creation within Fife. This is discussed in more detail in Annex 9.

Homes in Multiple Occupancy

5.242 Homes in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) are a key element of the private rented sector, which itself plays a significant role in meeting housing needs. The demand for HMO accommodation is particularly high in St. Andrews compared to most other parts of Fife. This high demand is linked to the accommodation needs of St Andrews University Students. The number of HMOs in St Andrews LHS Area is 1,043, however within St Andrews Ward this number is 1,039 which is relevant in relation to the HMO Overprovision policy. Further details can be found in Part 3, section 10 of this document (North East Fife locality evidence and issues) and Annex 9.

Short-term lets and second homes

5.243 Fife Council has received 1,836 applications for the short-term lets licensing scheme. In addition, 1,762 homes within Fife are listed as second homes; this represents around 0.96% of the total housing stock. The largest concentration of second homes is in the Largo & East Neuk LHS area (8.8%). Some communities in Fife are becoming increasingly concerned that the increase in short-term lets and second homes over recent years is impacting on the availability and affordability of housing locally, and is having a secondary impact on jobs, services and business opportunity. However, they are also an important part of the visitor economy, encouraging spend locally. Further detail and spatial analysis of the distribution of short-term lets can be found in Part 3, section 10 of this document (North East Fife locality evidence and issues) and Annex 9.

Links to Evidence

- Annex 8: Housing Need & Local Housing Land Requirement
- Annex 9: Localised Housing Issues
- HMO Public Register | Fife Council
- Short-term Lets Licence | Fife Council

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on localised housing needs for the Proposed LDP:

Rural Homes

- There are some differences in approach between NPF4's Policy 17 on Rural Homes, and LDP1's policy on housing development in the countryside. LDP2 will have to consider this and determine whether clarification in the form of a locally tailored policy is justified. The Council recognises that updated information, such as more localised population and household projections, will emerge while preparing the Proposed Plan; this will be taken into account in finalising the LHLR.

Homes in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)

- Fife Council will review the impact of the HMO moratorium and update LDP policy to reflect the over-provision policy. This will take account of the £140m investment proposed by St Andrews University, for student accommodation.

Short-term lets and second homes

- The application of a control area policy framework will need to balance the positive contribution of STLs to the tourism sector and local economies, against the potential adverse impacts on the character and amenity of areas and the impact of further reducing the supply of permanent housing.
- Research has been undertaken into the various data the Council currently holds to ascertain the impacts that tourist accommodation is having on the available housing stock. The findings along with potential impacts and issues (including tourism and local economic impacts) will be explored further and will inform the potential need and location of any short term let control areas and/or localised policy.
- It is acknowledged there is a relatively high percentage of STLs in Elie & Earlsferry. To help address this and deliver housing to meet local needs, there requires to be a focus on the range of housing outcomes that will be set out within the emerging Housing Emergency Action Plan. In addition, the existing Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 linked with the development plan process will assess housing requirements. This will aim to provide a generous supply of land for local and affordable housing in areas where the need is greatest.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- Fife Council Housing Services have been consulted on the housing annexes and agree with the content.
- Homes for Scotland received both housing annexes for comment. Whilst comments were received, no comments were received concerning this section. Comments focussed on the indicative Local Housing Land Requirement and are discussed within that section of the Evidence Report.

The transport and infrastructure issues that need to be addressed across Fife within the lifetime of the Plan

Introduction to transport and infrastructure

5.244 Fife's infrastructure consists of transport, utility and waste treatment networks, education, health and digital connectivity. National planning policy sets out an infrastructure first approach to new development, so understanding capacity constraints on Fife's infrastructure is important. New infrastructure also has an inherent carbon cost associated with it.

5.245 This section looks at Fife-wide issues related to infrastructure for transport, utilities, waste, education, health, digital connectivity, and cemeteries. Annexes 10 and 11 provide more information on transport and utility infrastructure, respectively. Evidence on healthcare, education, leisure, and sports facilities (including open space), and local accessibility for each of Fife's seven localities of are set out in Part 3 of the Evidence Report.

5.246 At this stage of preparing the new LDP, without having an agreed local housing land requirement figure or employment land allocations, it is not possible to be clear on how much development Fife's infrastructure can accommodate. The utility providers have advised on their assessment of capacity issues for their respective networks, as described in Annex 11.

Fife wide transport issues that need to be addressed across Fife within the lifetime of the Plan – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

Policy 1: Tackling Climate and Nature crises

LDPs must address the global climate emergency and nature crisis by ensuring the spatial strategy will reduce emissions and adapt to current and future risks of climate change by promoting nature recovery and restoration in the area.

Policy 2: Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

The LDP spatial strategy should be designed to reduce, minimise or avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The six spatial principles should form the basis of the spatial strategy, helping to guide development to, and create, sustainable locations. The strategy should be informed by an understanding of the impacts of the proposals on greenhouse gas emissions.

LDPs should support adaptation to the current and future impacts of climate change by taking into account climate risks, guiding development away from vulnerable areas, and enabling places to adapt to those risks.

Policy 13: Sustainable Transport

LDPs should prioritise locations for future development that can be accessed by sustainable modes. The spatial strategy should reflect the sustainable travel hierarchy and sustainable investment hierarchy by making best use of existing infrastructure and services.

LDPs should promote a place-based approach to consider how to reduce car-dominance. This could include low traffic schemes, shared transport options, designing–in speed controls, bus/cycle priority, pedestrianisation and minimising space dedicated to car parking. Consideration should be given to the type, mix and use of development; local living and 20 minute neighbourhoods; car ownership levels; the accessibility of proposals and allocations by sustainable modes; and the accessibility for users of all abilities.

LDPs should be informed by an appropriate and effective transport appraisal undertaken in line with relevant transport appraisal guidance. Plans should be informed by evidence of the area's transport infrastructure capacity, and an appraisal of the spatial strategy on the transport network. This should identify any potential cumulative transport impacts and deliverable mitigation proposed to inform the plan's infrastructure first approach. Where there is likely to be an impact on the trunk road or rail network, early engagement with Transport Scotland is required.

Policy 15: Local Living and 20-minute neighbourhoods

- LDPs should support local living, including 20 minute neighbourhoods within settlements, through the spatial strategy, associated site briefs and masterplans. The approach should take into account the local context, consider the varying settlement patterns and reflect the particular characteristics and challenges faced by each place.

NPF4 Policy 18: Infrastructure First

LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

Plans should align with relevant national, regional, and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy.

Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

Transport – summary of evidence

5.247 Land use and transport are inextricably linked: all land-uses rely in some way on transportation; and transport is a product generated by land use-related movements. Annex 10 sets out the transport evidence relevant to preparing LDP2. In summary, it shows:

- Fife has a mature transport infrastructure network with important links to Edinburgh and Dundee, and beyond to the central belt, north, and south of Scotland;
- Fife Council will prioritise existing transport infrastructure to deliver objectives outlined in the Local Transport Strategy for Fife 2023-33, which requires a focus on development along existing corridors;
- Travel decreased in Fife during the COVID-19 pandemic, with bus travel as low as 10% and road traffic as low as 40% of 2019 levels. Public transport was particularly affected due to the requirement to socially distance, reductions in services and public health campaigns recommending users to avoid and travel by other means;
- At the end of 2024, many travel patterns were returning closer to pre-pandemic levels with bus travel in Fife currently at 70% of pre-pandemic rates but public transport services have also been affected by operators' decisions on whether services are viable to run. Road traffic is similar to pre-pandemic rates, while cycle volumes remain 30% higher;
- Fife's transport infrastructure has become road dominated and causes high levels of carbon emissions as well as issues with accessibility for people without vehicles. Simply replacing petrol and diesel vehicles with electric ones will not be enough to reduce carbon emissions to where they need to be because of the carbon emissions associated with road building and vehicle manufacturing. The move to electric vehicles will require charging infrastructure and the Council has agreed a strategy for that;
- Road capacities are being pushed the most at the Forth crossings at certain times, with forecasted capacity breaches along this route (without interventions) on both the road and public transport networks;
- Train capacity is breached within the Forth Rail Bridge area causing some rail capacity issues; there is a particular demand in the morning for journeys from Fife into Edinburgh. Most of the North Fife area is within capacity. The passenger rail link to Leven opened in 2024;
- With regard to buses, there are only a few routes where capacity is being breached. The Tay area experiences the highest capacity issues with breaches predicted to continue. Services across Fife, as with Scotland, continue to be affected, however, by service changes and reductions as service operators give up routes;
- Further transport modelling will be undertaken as part of preparing the Proposed LDP to ensure that all capacity issues are identified;
- SEStran analysis of connectivity to colleges, universities, employment, and hospitals for residents of the SEStran region show that there are variations across the region, but concentrations of relatively poor connectivity to some services in Levenmouth and North East Fife;
- Current investment priorities are contained in the national, regional, and local strategies and plans. Further investment is anticipated and will be determined by infrastructure needs arising from new land use allocations in LDP2, and a

Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan is currently in development with all eight SEStran authorities;

- Forth Green Freeport will generate additional land use and transport needs which will be included in the development of the LDP's spatial strategy and Proposed Plan;
- Projections indicate increasing uptake of electric vehicles in the 2020s and rapid uptake in the 2030s. Fife Council's Cabinet Committee meeting of 10 October 2024 approved the Fife Council Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy and agreed that further development be undertaken towards an On-Street Charging Strategy; and
- Transport modelling has been commissioned to inform future land use development as part of the Fife Council's LDP2 spatial strategy and site assessment work in 2025. A further proportionate transport appraisal will be undertaken after the Gate Check to inform the Proposed Plan spatial strategy in accordance with DPMTAG and because the LTS/LDP Modelling Option Development Report (2022) could not include development sites to be included in the new LDP.

5.248 Transport Scotland's Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPMTAG is expected to be updated and reissued in 2025. It is anticipated that the review will continue to give importance to using sound evidence as a basis for transport appraisal work which is expected to accompany the preparation of the Proposed Plan.

5.249 Fife Council appointed Stantec in 2022 to undertake strategic transport modelling and option development to support the development of its Local Transport Strategy (LTS) and Local Development Plan (LDP). The commission was split into two packages – Transport Modelling and Option Development and led to a LTS/LDP Modelling Option Development Report in 2022. The transport modelling package seeks to develop an understanding of the current and future transport baseline in Fife prior to any interventions. An overview of the findings are contained in Annex 10. The Council has also commissioned SYSTRA to prepare a land use model to inform the preparatory work for the Proposed Plan which is also explained in Annex 10.

5.250 SYSTRA's model will take account of the established land use proposals in FIFEplan 2017 and inform future land use development as part of the Fife Council's LDP2 spatial strategy and site assessment work in 2025. A further proportionate transport appraisal will be undertaken after the Gate Check to inform the Proposed Plan spatial strategy in accordance with DPMTAG and because the LTS/LDP Modelling Option Development Report (2022) and SYSTRA work could not include development sites yet to be included in the new LDP.

5.251 The information from Stantec's report and that expected from SYSTRA in 2025 are considered to be sufficient to prepare the LDP and prepare the spatial strategy by showing how existing infrastructure can be used to best effect and the implications of new land use proposals.

Policy context

5.252 An assessment of relevant national planning and transport policies indicate a general alignment with the policies and objectives in regional and local (Fife) transport strategies. Annex 10 provides more commentary on these. LDP2 will be prepared in the context of these transport policies and objectives and the Sustainable Travel Hierarchy and Sustainable Investment Hierarchy highlighted in the figure below are identified as important considerations in developing the LDP's spatial strategy and are built into LDP2's site assessment methodology.

Figure 5.20 - National Transport Strategy 2's sustainable travel and investment hierarchies

Source: NTS2

5.253 An assessment of the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) identifies the recommendations which the new LDP will have a role in supporting or facilitating. These generally relate to achieving connectivity at neighbourhood/town level through to longer distances, including active travel, and safeguarding land needed for transport infrastructure and enhancements. The LDP will also have a role in setting out development and design requirements for the development management process.

5.254 The regional transport policy context for the new LDP is predominantly set by the SEStran 2035 Regional Transport Strategy, although the Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy 2024-2034 notes connectivity matters in North Fife which will be taken into account in preparing the LDP's spatial strategy and assessing new land use proposals[2]. The SEStran RTS contains the regional transport spatial strategy for the Edinburgh and South

[2] These issues concern travel and connectivity for commuting, business including freight, and accessing services.

East Scotland area, including Fife, and Key corridors, some of which are in Fife, and shows the key transport infrastructure involved. The strategy recognises the importance of commuting to neighbouring cities/areas for SEStran area residents, including regional corridors:

- Fife West: Connecting the Dunfermline area with Kincardine/Alloa.
- Fife Central: Connecting East Fife, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes with Dunfermline/Queensferry;
- Fife East: Connecting East Fife to Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes;
- West Lothian South: A key travel corridor linking west central Scotland, West Lothian, East Central Scotland and Fife;
- Tay Bridges: Rail connection and road link between East Fife and Dundee;
- Queensferry: National north-south and east-west road and rail corridor linking Fife, Edinburgh and West Lothian; and
- Kincardine: Connecting West Fife and Clackmannanshire with Falkirk and motorway network.

5.255 Annex 10 provides commentary on the external links and includes a high level audit of SEStran transport corridors affecting Fife. The RTS recognises that bus service improvements will be required to enhance connectivity to essential services. This is reflected in community views expressed through various Fife Council consultations, including LDP2 consultation surveys in 2022 for the Evidence Report. SEStran's analysis of connectivity to colleges, universities, employment, and hospitals for residents of the SEStran region show that there are variations across the region, but concentrations of specific areas in Fife with relatively poor connectivity to tertiary education and healthcare and relatively low levels of educational attainment. Annex 10 illustrates connectivity across the region, including Fife.

5.256 Fife's Local Transport Strategy provides Fife's transport strategy context for LDP2 although, as the LDP progresses to adoption, the LTS will need to be reviewed to take account of the new spatial strategy and proposals. Annex 10 provides an assessment of the Fife LTS objective's, policies, and actions relevant to preparing LDP2 and shows the relationship between the LDP and LTS in terms of how transport planning objectives in the LTS can be met through the planning spatial strategy, applying the development site assessment and allocation methodology, and in development requirements to require transport interventions. The Council's Roads & Transportation Service has officers as members of the LDP2 Delivery Group which is responsible for overseeing the preparation of the LDP.

Other transport considerations

COVID-19 impact

5.257 The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted travel patterns in Fife, with bus travel and road traffic dropping to 10% and 40% of 2019 levels, respectively. By the end of 2024, travel patterns began returning to pre-pandemic levels, with bus travel aligning with Scottish trends. The Council

subsidises about 10% of the bus network, which saw an increase in passengers from 2.3 million in 2019 to 2.6 million in 2023/24. Road traffic has returned to pre-pandemic rates, while cycling volumes show some increase since before the pandemic.

Investment priorities

5.258 Looking to current and anticipated future transport investment priorities, Annex 10 brings together investment proposals from current transport plans and strategies. Future investment in Fife's infrastructure will depend on new land use allocations, capital spending reviews, and potential funding sources. Priorities and timelines for these investments are outlined in the Fife Local Transport Strategy (LTS), but funding and resources are not yet assigned, and business cases will be developed individually. The Fife LTS is based on reviews of the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2) and the SEStran 2035 Regional Transport Strategy. Fife Council will continue collaborating with partners on these plans.

5.259 A SEStran Regional Transport Strategy Delivery Plan (RTSDP) is being developed to prioritise regional transport projects over the next ten years, supporting economic and net-zero goals. This plan will inform local development plans and integrate with the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal (ESESCRD). Key projects include the Dunfermline Strategic Growth Transportation Infrastructure Programme, funded with £16.5 million to support large-scale development and housing. Priority projects include new roads, bridges, and cycleways, with completion dates ranging from 2026 to 2036. Future transport interventions will be based on need and available funding.

5.260 The Forth Green Freeport has submitted its Full Business Case to the Scottish and UK Governments, aiming to secure around £25 million in seed funding. This funding will help develop key underdeveloped sites and will influence land use and transport needs in the Local Development Plan's spatial strategy and Proposed LDP.

Cross-boundary issues

5.261 Fife's Local Transport Strategy (LTS) highlights that public transport is ideal for regional journeys, with strong links to Edinburgh and Dundee but longer travel times to the Forth Valley and Perth compared to car travel. Key cross-boundary considerations include the capacity of the Forth and Tay bridges, the Queensferry Crossing, and the Forth Rail Bridge. SEStran aims to improve public transport connectivity and reduce travel barriers. The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland Regional Prosperity Framework supports sustainable transport and mobility. Key interventions are listed in Annex 10 including public transport measures and rail corridor enhancements. Challenges include limited cross-boundary cycling routes

and the need for strong regional and national support for active travel routes. Future transport plans also consider commuter and commercial traffic between Fife and Dundee bearing in mind the Dundee Port-related freight traffic.

Capacity and emerging issues and trends

5.262 Fife Council commissioned Stantec in 2022 to support the development of the Fife Local Transport Strategy (LTS) 2023-33 and Local Development Plan (LDP). The report provides a baseline for transport evidence across several topics, including travel patterns, infrastructure capacity, transport carbon emissions, travel times, bus network, and connectivity to services. Key findings include:

- Travel patterns – car use is predominant for commuting within and beyond Fife, with significant movements to Edinburgh, Dundee, and Perth;
- Infrastructure capacity – the Forth crossings are expected to experience capacity breaches, affecting both road and public transport networks;
- Transport carbon emissions: Emissions have oscillated around 90% of 2005 levels, with road transport being the main source;
- Travel times – public transport journey times are much slower than car journeys for most shorter, internal trips; and
- Bus network – frequent bus services are available along main transport corridors, but residential and rural areas have less regular services.

5.263 Connectivity to services is listed in Part 3 of the Evidence Report for each of Fife's Localities.

Climate action

5.264 Transport accounts for 25% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, with cars contributing 40%. Transport Scotland aims to reduce car kilometres by 20% by 2030, but the target is under review. Fife Council supports this goal but faces challenges due to rising traffic levels post-pandemic. The Council emphasises the need for additional resources to improve public transport and promote behavioural changes.

5.265 Electric vehicle (EV) use is increasing, with projections of up to 100,000 EVs in Fife by 2030. Fife currently has 162 public EV charging points, but more infrastructure is needed to meet future demand. The Council is working with partners to expand the EV charging network and has approved an EV Strategy to access funding for further development. The LDP will have a role in supporting some actions to reduce carbon use, although some actions, incentives, and interventions will not rely on the LDP.

Gaps in Evidence

There are some matters such as the impact of new development on transport infrastructure capacity for which evidence will not be available until the LDP's spatial strategy is prepared and development proposals are finalised. In the meantime, the Council considers the information provided in this Evidence Report to be sufficient to prepare the LDP and prepare the spatial strategy by showing how existing infrastructure can be used to best effect and the implications of new land use proposals on transport infrastructure.

Links to Evidence

- The Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021-22 to 2025-26
- The National Transport Strategy (NTS2)
- The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)
- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)
- Transport Scotland's Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance (DPMTAG)
- The SEStran 2035 Regional Transport Strategy
- Tayside and Central Scotland Regional Transport Strategy 2024-2034
- Edinburgh & South East Scotland regional Prosperity Framework
- Fife Local Transport Strategy 2023-33
- LTS/LDP Modelling Option Development Report (2022)
- Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer and greener Scotland: A route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on transport infrastructure for the Proposed LDP:

- An understanding of transport network capacity is needed to inform the spatial strategy and site assessment work. Fife will prepare a new transport appraisal when preparing the Proposed Plan and is commissioning a land use model to undertake sensitivity tests specifically tailored to the LDP2 and to inform the preparatory work for the proposed plan.
- The Scottish Government target of a 20% reduction in car kilometres is challenging for a largely rural council area such as Fife.
- Site allocations and the LDP's spatial strategy will require the LTS strategy to be revisited to determine the extent to which it remains valid or needs to be revised.
- Opportunities to implement accessibility and active travel improvements may be specified in the LDP's development requirements.
- Communities have referred to the need for better accessibility to destinations such as town centres, colleges, and employment centres, the LDP has no power over transport operations but can include policy requirements to support transport infrastructure.

- The LDP and its spatial strategy will need to take account of proposals arising from the Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2), Regional Transport Strategies (RTS), and the Local Transport Strategy (LTS).
- Design bus priority into major infrastructure schemes as appropriate.
- New development proposals should align with policies outlined within the RTS.
- The LDP and its spatial strategy will need to take account of identified and programmed cross-boundary initiatives. This may include safeguarding sites and routes required to implement proposals.
- The ongoing work at a regional level to identify transport investment priorities will require close and continuous liaison with the transport authorities to ensure the LDP supports the delivery of projects once agreed. It should be recognised, however that the Proposed LDP may be prepared ahead of a final decision on transport investment.
- Include the Forth Green Port's additional land use and transport needs in and around Rosyth and Burntisland in the development of the LDP's spatial strategy and Proposed Plan.
- Support for appraisals or investigations for new transport infrastructure such as new or reopened railway stations, road improvements, and other transport related infrastructure at Newburgh and Wormit will require the LDP to safeguard land to deliver those.
- The LDP will consider the policy recommendations in Fife LTS 2023-33 Action 49 for new planning policies stating and relating to –
- New developments should be located where they minimise the need to travel, with higher density dwellings near existing sustainable transport links and the provision of local services (Transit-Oriented Development and 20-minute neighbourhood/local living principles);
- All new developments (with greater than five dwellings or employees) must include sustainable transport, including active travel and public transport.
- Funding from developers (developer contributions) should be used to fund sustainable transport interventions;
- Developers must subsidise public transport services in new developments until passenger numbers can support a commercial service; and
- Reduce maximum parking spaces allowed in some types of new development and support developments with no or low levels of parking.
- When preparing the LDP, consideration will be given to land use proposals that emerge from the programme of community-led local Area Transport Plans now underway.
- Take account of the likely traffic impact new development will have on the transport network when considering development proposals, and identify locations where best use can be made of existing capacity before requiring significant new transport infrastructure. The site assessment methodology allows for that assessment.
- Consider if there is a need for a LDP policy specific for Fife beyond NPF4 Policy 13 (Sustainable Transport)
- Close liaison will be essential across the Council's Planning and Roads & Transportation Services to identify if there are any specific development requirements that need addressed in the LDP.
- The accessibility issues, particularly using public transport creates issues with the concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood. This is the reason Fife has

adopted a living well locally approach to the issue of access to essential services and facilities.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- Transport Scotland, SEStran, Tactran, and Fife Council's Roads & Transportation Service have been consulted on the preparation of Annex 10 (Transport) which is the basis for the Fife-wide and locality transport evidence in this Evidence Report. Annex 10 provides statements of agreement or dispute. No areas of dispute have been identified.

Transport Scotland

- The agency sought clarification on how the SESplan Regional (traffic) Model was used in transport modelling undertaken in 2022, and required more detail given on the outputs.
- The Annex should explicitly detail the current baseline scenario information from the SRM work, setting out information on any capacity constraints, mode share, travel/journey times/data.
- There is no information provided on rail patronage data. The Annex details there are capacity issues at specific locations. This information would be useful to understand rail infrastructure capacity and usage in the area.
- Fife Council response: These matters have been addressed in Annex 10.

- Text was sought on STPR2 recommendations and references.
- Commentary was provided on listed transport proposals, and emerging issues and trends.
- Fife Council response: These matters have been addressed in the resubmission version.

- Reference should be made to the Route Map to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometre by 2030 and that this should be taken into cognisance developing the LDP.
- Fife Council response: An update is provided in Annex 10 relating to the 20% reduction routemap.

- Transport Scotland now considers the evidence to be sufficient.

Tactran

- Tactran commented on transport proposals, the 2022 transport modelling report, the Council's assessment of Fife's LTS, and suggested text edits to assist clarity.
- Support was noted for various parts of Annex 10.
- Fife Council response: The matters raised have been addressed in Annex 10.

SEStran

- Commentary on the national 20% reduction in car kilometre use Route Map being in flux and references to the SEStran RTS. No areas of dispute identified.
- Fife Council response: The matters raised have been addressed in Annex 10.

Energy, Heating and Cooling Infrastructure – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context

Policy 11 Energy
LDPs should seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development**.**

NPF4 Policy 18 - Infrastructure First
LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

Plans should align with relevant national, regional, and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy.

Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment.

Policy 19 Heat and cooling
LDPs should take into account the area's Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). The spatial strategy should take into account areas of heat network potential and any designated Heat Network Zones (HNZ).

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

Energy Transition to Net Zero

5.266 Energy use is changing due to a combination of technological, economic, environmental, and social factors including the decarbonisation of energy networks climate change. Presently in Scotland, only around 20% of energy supply is from electricity, with around the remaining majority (around 24% for transport and over 50% for heating) from carbon-based fuels. A significant proportion of transport and building heating will need to be electrified. Energy use is evolving rapidly to meet environmental goals, economic needs, and technological advancements. The shift toward renewables, electrification, and smart energy systems is reshaping how we produce, distribute, and consume energy—paving the way for a more sustainable and resilient future.

5.267 The move to zero-carbon energy generation increases the demand for renewable energy generation and energy storage. Electricity supply will need to expand at significantly faster rates than it has over the previous 100 years.

5.268 The Scottish Government wants gas networks to remain a vital and flexible component of Scotland's national infrastructure, delivering affordable energy for heating homes and businesses. To meet the ambitious net zero carbon emissions targets set by the UK and Scottish Governments, sectors like heating and transport must decarbonise: transitioning away from using fossil fuels like natural gas and diesel to zero-carbon alternatives like hydrogen.

Electricity and Gas

5.269 The measures required to meet net zero targets add pressure to the electricity grid which may affect the phasing of new development as extra grid capacity needs to be introduced to support both the transition for existing buildings and transport as well as new development. It is likely that alternative approaches to energy planning will be required to balance the needs of heating buildings, transport, business, and industry with other electrical demands.

5.270 Overall, as per Scotland Gas Networks SGN's confidential Investment Plans, the current gas infrastructure capacity in Fife is sufficient to meet the needs of projected development sites as allocated in the adopted Local Development Plan (FIFEplan 2017). All development has been factored into Scotland Gas Network's investment and coverage plans and continue to be monitored to ensure infrastructure is in place to meet the needs of Fife. There is a need to transition to energy supply that does not exacerbate climate change and recognition that continuing to expand the gas grid is counter to climate ambitions.

5.271 It is not yet possible to say definitely how capacity constraints may constrain development or result in a need for phasing as it depends on the use of a site and which sites in any given area are planned for development. However, early engagement with utility infrastructure providers and planning

between different future electricity demands is likely to be a way of reducing risks from constraints.

5.272 For more information on the electricity and gas infrastructure capacities and investment, see Annex 11 (Infrastructure First).

Renewable Energy, low carbon and zero emission energy

5.273 NPF4 Policy 11: Energy seeks to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development. LDPs should seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon, and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development.

5.274 The main existing sources of renewable energy across Fife include onshore wind turbines (concentrated in mid and south Fife), solar farms (throughout Fife), and biomass plants.

5.275 Substantial additional renewable generation will be required in Fife to support the transition to net zero. Potential future schemes in the pipeline appear to be predominantly for solar photovoltaics and battery storage.

5.276 Work on significant offshore wind generation has commenced off the eastern coast of Fife with more than 2.5GW of consented projects situated around the outer Forth and Tay estuaries within the Seagreen, Neart na Gaoithe, and Inch Cape wind farms, and additional existing consents for turbines offshore from the Levenmouth area. Potential connections from offshore generators direct to Fife may need to be considered to support the energy supply and transition.

5.277 The UK Government's Renewable Energy Planning Database and the Renewable energy map of Scotland produced by SPICe tracks the progress of renewable electricity related projects through the planning system. It highlights that in terms of operational installed capacity, onshore wind is the predominant technology in Fife. Battery storage projects are the predominant technology for projects currently going through the planning application process, under construction or awaiting construction.

Solar energy

5.278 A large proportion of recent growth in renewable energy generation across Fife has been in the form of solar energy. There has been some work to assess the potential for land across Fife for solar PV and solar thermal generation. This considered factors such as land gradients and flood risk. A map of solar potential has been created which can help to inform the new Local Development Plan.

5.279 Fife has good solar energy potential in comparison to the rest of Scotland, particularly in eastern parts of Fife such as the East Neuk.

Wind energy

5.280 Currently, demand in Fife for new windfarm development appears to have shifted from onshore to offshore locations. Low Carbon Supplementary Guidance linked to the current Local Development Plan includes a spatial framework and identifies landscape capacity for new onshore wind turbines across Fife. It identifies areas where cumulative impact of existing development had already reached capacity at the time it was produced. The Scottish Government Onshore wind: policy statement 2022 requires consideration of enabling additional wind generation as part of meeting the increased electricity demand.

Hydrogen

5.281 The Scottish Government's Hydrogen Policy Statement (2020) is a high-level document outlining the Scottish Government's support for the strategic growth of a strong hydrogen economy in Scotland.

5.282 A Hydrogen Action Plan (2022) sets out what the Scottish Government will do and how they will work with others to implement a strategic approach to supporting the development of the hydrogen economy in Scotland. While it does not set out any actions for Local Development Plans, the content of the plan may be relevant to development and land use in Fife.

5.283 The Action Plan proposes a regional approach, with Regional Hydrogen Energy Hubs (geographic locations where hydrogen producers are co-located with multiple users and potential exporters). Fife is identified as one of the potential locations for Regional Hydrogen Hubs.

5.284 The Action Plan recognises the H100 Fife hydrogen project, which will install hydrogen into around 300 homes to provide customers with renewable hydrogen for their heating needs, produced using electricity from an offshore wind turbine. Other Fife-based hydrogen projects referred to in the Action Plan include: Eden Mill distillery, Guardbridge; and, the Scottish Hydrogen Train project (linked to the hydrogen accelerator project at the University of St Andrews).

5.285 Officers at the Scottish Government have provided the following additional information about these projects: Eden Mill distillery (located within the University of St Andrews' Eden Campus in Guardbridge) were provided support by BEIS to investigate a range of innovative low carbon solutions for their new site. The Scottish Hydrogen Train project is a project led by Scottish Enterprise, Transport Scotland and the Hydrogen Accelerator at the University of St Andrews to deliver Scotland's first hydrogen-powered train. The project aims to create opportunities for the Scottish rail supply chain through skills development and the industrialisation of the technology.

5.286 Plans for a Green Hydrogen Accelerator facility (within the University of St Andrews' Eden Campus in Guardbridge) have since been submitted to Fife Council, which include an innovation hall, laboratory space, and compound

to house an electrolyser for green hydrogen production and carbon capture units.

5.287 The Action Plan projects highlight a focus on activity relating to hydrogen around Levenmouth and Guardbridge/St Andrews, suggesting that these areas might be best suited for any regional hydrogen hub located in Fife.

5.288 While details about the potential regional hydrogen hubs are not known at this stage, through the Proposed Local Development Plan it will be possible to consider any potential options for such a hub, as well as how to reflect and support current and proposed hydrogen projects in Fife from a land-use perspective. This may include promoting or safeguarding locations for further development and related infrastructure.

5.289 SGN used the East Neuk of Fife, with its abundance of onshore and offshore renewables resource and well-developed electricity and gas networks, as a test bed to investigate the use of surplus electricity generated by renewables to produce green hydrogen, which could then be used to heat homes and businesses carbon-free.

Geothermal opportunities

5.290 Fife commissioned the Coal Authority to provide a heat opportunity dataset as part of wider decarbonised heat work. The Improvement Service has made available a dataset that shows where there are opportunities for creating geothermal energy from water in abandoned flooded mines.

Energy Storage

5.291 As the move to a decarbonised system with renewable generation gathers pace, storage is likely to play a valuable role in balancing that generation and ensuring system stability. Significant growth in distribution connected storage capacity is expected through the 2020s and early 2030s. Beyond 2035, growth could be substantial in scenarios where there is more decentralised generation, in particular solar PV, that storage would help to manage.

5.292 SPEN confirms that a number of significant proposed developments such as battery storage proposals means that capacity is reserved for such proposals from the approval of a point of connection application. SPEN expects progress to be made in delivery of proposals otherwise such reserved capacity can be removed; understanding however that planning authorities do have power to refuse permissions where such proposals would impact on wider development within an area.

5.293 SPEN has outlined a proposal to roll out 140,000 monitors at sub stations over a 5-year period to enable energy demand profile to be monitored, including peak demand, which will allow better planning and investment

decision making. New grid supply points can take 5-10 years to come to become operational.

5.294 Several battery storage planning application proposals are in the process of being determined in Fife.

Heat and cooling

5.295 Heat is a critical part of the wider energy transition. NPF4 Policy 19: Heating and Cooling sets out to encourage, promote and facilitate development that supports decarbonised solutions to heat and cooling demand and ensure adaptation to more extreme temperatures. The policy states LDPs should take into account the area's Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). The spatial strategy should take into account areas of heat network potential and any designated Heat Network Zones (HNZ). NPF4 Policy 19a sets out that development proposals within or adjacent to a Heat Network Zone identified in a LDP will only be supported where they are designed and constructed to connect to the existing heat network.

5.296 The Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021 supports heat decarbonisation through the creation of heat networks and their management as a utility. The Council is required to review and designate Heat Network Zones to guide this process. Fife has three existing large district heat networks and numerous small community networks and communally heated buildings. This is expected to expand significantly and will require spatial planning.

5.297 Fife Council has developed a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy, high-level delivery plan and associated web-map which includes baseline information, strategic zones and potential heat network zones. A detailed delivery plan will be published in early 2025.

5.298 The vision for Fife's first LHEES is to provide a focus for Fife to improve the energy efficiency and decarbonise heat sources of buildings, including heat network opportunities, in a climate friendly, ready, and just manner to meet targets. The LHEES takes into account important considerations such as fuel poverty and community wealth building. It also considers the wider energy system in heat decarbonisation planning.

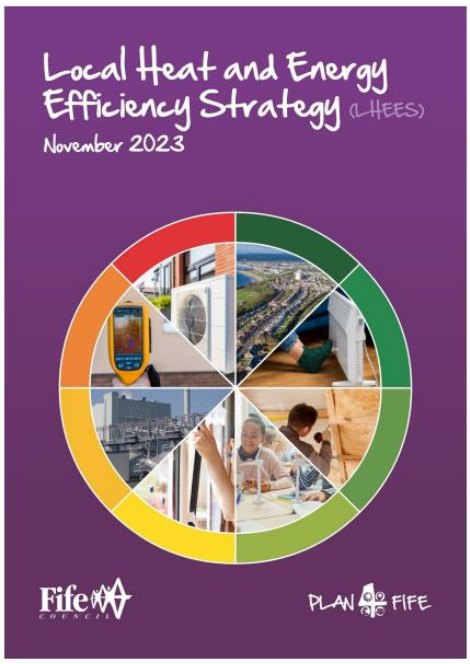
5.299 Work is ongoing to review and formally designate heat network zones in Fife. Recently updated mapping analysis identifies 153 potential heat network zones across Fife. These are shown to have more potential in Fife's larger settlements, but are distributed all across Fife's seven areas. Additional mapping of these can be viewed in the Locality sections of the Evidence Report.

5.300 The approach was informed by heat network operators and technical experts, with zones categorised by how stable and viable they might be. Not all the zones identified on the web-map may be formally designated.

5.301 Fife Council supports the Heat in Buildings Strategy vision “that by 2045 our homes and buildings are cleaner, greener, and easy to heat, and no longer contributing to climate change, as part of the wider just transition to net zero”.

5.302 Heat network zones will be used to assess decarbonised heat options for proposals. This will consider a range of factors that are aimed to support heat networks for example: proximity of new development to heat sources; heat infrastructure e.g. pipes, energy centres etc.; and opportunities to link unused or waste heat. The areas of heat network potential identified through work on the LHEES will also help to inform the spatial strategy of the Local Development Plan in accordance with NPF Policy 19.

5.303 As part of wider work to implement the LHEES Fife Council are developing a pilot place-based energy plan for Dunfermline & Rosyth. This will look at how the wider energy system can support/impact a settlement wide heat network. This is an innovative approach to heat network planning. Technical experts including heat network operators and consultants have expressed support for such an approach. Furthermore, SP Energy Networks are a key stakeholder of the plan. The outputs from this pilot will help to inform proposals in the Dunfermline and Rosyth area and may highlight issues that apply more widely across Fife.



5.304 As mentioned in the Climate Emergency section of the Evidence Report, climate projections indicate an increase in the number of days where high temperatures may impact on health and infrastructure. NPF4 highlights that buildings occupied by people should be designed to promote sustainable temperature management, for example by prioritising natural or passive solutions such as siting, orientation, and materials.

5.305 Higher temperatures on hot days are likely to be exacerbated within urban areas as buildings, roads etc. can increase absorption of the sun’s heat, while waste heat from buildings and vehicles can impact on the surroundings. In addition to the design of buildings, natural solutions such as trees can have a natural cooling effect and provide shading.

Links to Evidence

- National Mission Local Impact – Infrastructure Investment Plan for Scotland 2021/22 to 2025/26
- Infrastructure Commission for Scotland
- Draft Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP)
- Annual Compendium of Scottish Energy Statistics 2020
- Fife local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan)
- Heat Network (Scotland) Act 2021
- Dunfermline and Rosyth Energy Prospectus 2024
- Fife Council Renewable Energy Monitor 2023
- SPEN Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (Nov 2021)
- SPEN Investment in Fife – ED1 & ED2 (incl. emails from SPEN)
- Scotland Gas Networks CONFIDENTIAL Investment and Capacity Reports
- Department of Energy and Climate Change
- Fife Council Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy (Jacobs 2023)
- Potential future schemes in the pipeline
- The Scottish Government Onshore wind: policy statement 2022
- Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021
- The Scottish Government Hydrogen Policy Statement (2020)
- Hydrogen Action Plan (2022)
- Dataset showing opportunities for creating geothermal energy from water in abandoned flooded mines
- H100 Fife Hydrogen Project

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on energy, heating and cooling infrastructure for the Proposed Plan:

- Development site allocations in the new LDP will be required to show the development programming so that development does not lead to electricity supply issues and or lead to capacity issues on the energy transmission grids. This will be achieved through collaborative working with infrastructure providers. Allocations will be monitored through the LDP Delivery Programme.
- Opportunities to allocate land for local energy generation and storage of energy may be specified in the LDP's development requirements.
- Consider including sites identified for electric vehicle charging infrastructure as well as the requirements in this respect for new development.
- The Scottish Government Onshore wind: policy statement 2022 requires consideration of enabling additional wind generation as part of meeting the increased electricity demand. This will be considered as part of the Proposed Plan stage.
- Take account of the land use needs for potential connections from offshore generators direct to Fife to support the energy supply and transition.
- Consider the impact of renewable development on prime agricultural land and employment sites as part of LDP site selection, allocation and policy formulation.
- The new LDP will need to consider how to realise the full potential of Fife for opportunities for renewable, low carbon, and zero emission energy in Fife. These are among several new demands for land in Fife. There may be the need to provide additional guidance on siting of low carbon energy infrastructure across Fife.
- Consider the implications for Fife as a potential location for a Regional Hydrogen Hub, as well as current and proposed hydrogen projects in Fife in relation to land-use planning, with consideration to distribution and storage.
- Apply energy considerations as part of the LDP strategy and in the site assessment methodology by taking account of considering the proximity of and potential for heat network zone designation in designating proposed development sites.
- Support an area wide energy transition through LHEES and other strategies. This will be critical to support new development, and facilitate the infrastructure required to support existing development, including any designated Heat Network Zones.
- Fife's just transition towards decarbonising heat will require the changing use of existing energy infrastructure. This will be influenced by where grid improvements and additional generation are required, and in the long-term moving away from natural gas. SP Energy Networks, Scotland Gas Networks, and Scottish Government must take the lead role in this (for upgrading the electricity grid, looking at alternative fuels, and providing national coordination, respectively). The LDP has a role by providing local context based on the outputs of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- Fife Council has regularly and closely engaged with Scotland Gas Networks (SGN), Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN), Scottish Water (SW) and relevant Fife Council services with regards to infrastructure to inform the Evidence Report. Business & Employability Services are the Council lead for the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) roll-out project and have provided evidence in respect of this area. Reflecting the joint working, there are no areas of disagreement and the Evidence Report has been agreed by all parties. The Policy and Place team has continued to engage with stakeholders to provide a robust infrastructure baseline that can be used to inform the next Local Development Plan.
- A stakeholder engagement exercise took place throughout the development of the Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy. This included meetings and workshops with internal teams and officers, as well as key external partners. External stakeholders included national bodies; energy and utility providers; registered social landlords; developers; public and third sector partners; skill and supply chain development sector; and retrofit experts.
- A formal six-week public engagement exercise for the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy took place between 18th September and 29th October 2023. This took the form of an online survey, with a public information session also taking place on 5th October. A summary of the survey responses can be found on the Council's LHEES webpage. The outcome of that engagement will inform the Proposed LDP where there is a land use of policy requirement.
- Fife Council is also one of the leading councils for Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies and actively participate in forums with other councils to discuss key opportunities, challenges and offer advice where needed.
- Following publication of the Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy the originally identified potential heat network zones were revisited. The aim of this was to determine whether existing zones could become larger and new zones identified. To inform this approach heat network operators and technical experts were engaged to determine how to best refine the modelling approach. Feedback from experts was positive, as the new zones help demonstrate each zone's stability/viability. After the new zones were developed the council delivered a workshop with key Scottish Government teams. Feedback was very positive, with it being noted these zones are significant step towards designation. Fife Council was the first council to engage Scottish Government on the heat network zone designation process.
- Meetings have also taken place with housing developers on the zoning to showcase opportunities. This has resulted in ongoing discussions to explore potential decarbonised heating solutions for their sites. The amended potential heat network zones have also been presented at various events and conferences. They have received positive feedback and interest from a wide range of stakeholders, including other councils and heat network operators.

- In June 2025 SGN was sent a final copy of the resubmission document. SGN stated that they disagreed with the Evidence Report, highlighting that

paragraph A11.51 of Annex 11 (Infrastructure First) should refer to 'H100 Fife' rather than Levenmouth H100. A URL for H100 Fife was also supplied.

- Fife Council response: These matters have been addressed in the resubmission version.

- In June 2025 SPEN was sent a final copy of the resubmission document. They agree broadly with the content and focus on Annex 11, specifically. Some updates were suggested for Figures 6-9 in the Annex relating to future energy scenarios.
- Fife Council response: Annex 11's distribution future energy scenarios (DFES) in these Figures were based on the 2024 DFES report. The 2025 version has been included in the links in this Annex but the Figures remain unchanged as the information will continue to change and dialogue will continue with SPEN as the LDP is prepared to access the latest available information at that time. Evidence Report has not been re-written to incorporate all updates change as some updates will not be material changes in the evidence base.

- In June 2025 SSE-T was sent a final copy of the resubmission document. SSEN-T agrees broadly with the finalised Evidence Report. Some additional reference sources published by National Energy System Operator (NESO) were suggested because they provide the justification for why the electricity transmission grid needs to be upgraded and expanded by 2030 and beyond across SSEN Transmission and SPEN licenced operating areas in Fife.
- Fife Council response: The additional reference sources have been incorporated.

Water supply and wastewater processing in Fife – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy 18: Infrastructure First

LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

Plans should align with relevant national, regional, and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy.

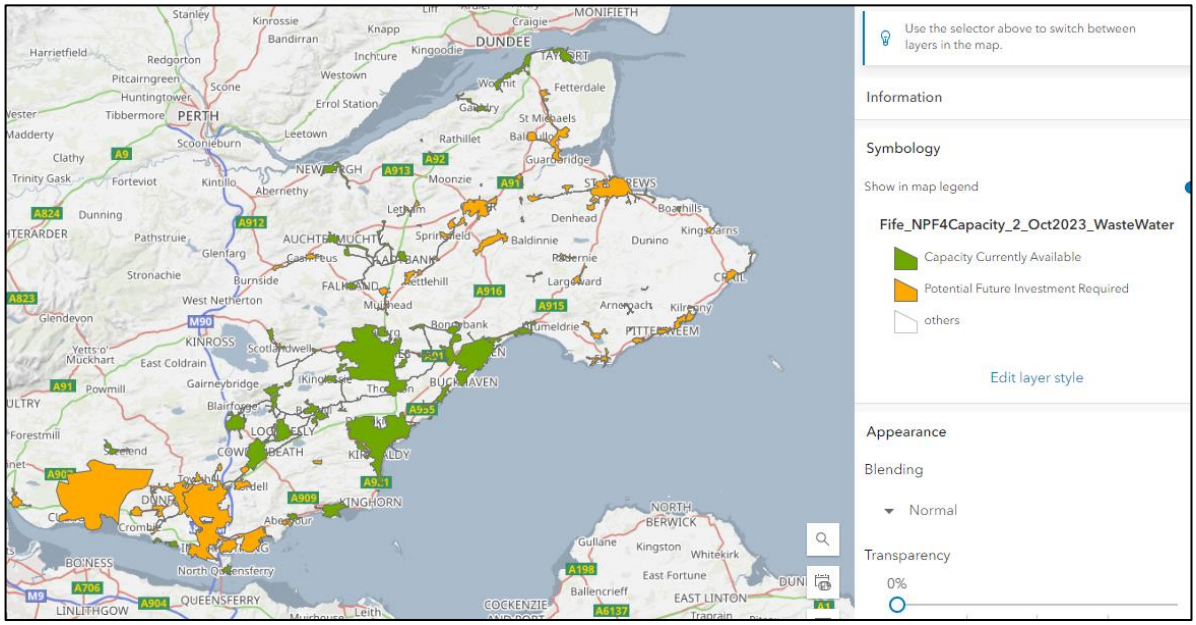
Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.306 Scottish Water provides water to domestic and commercial properties in many parts of Fife (some rural areas have private water sources). Scottish Water also provides waste-water treatment services in most settlements in Fife. In rural areas, wastewater is treated on site via septic tanks or other means.

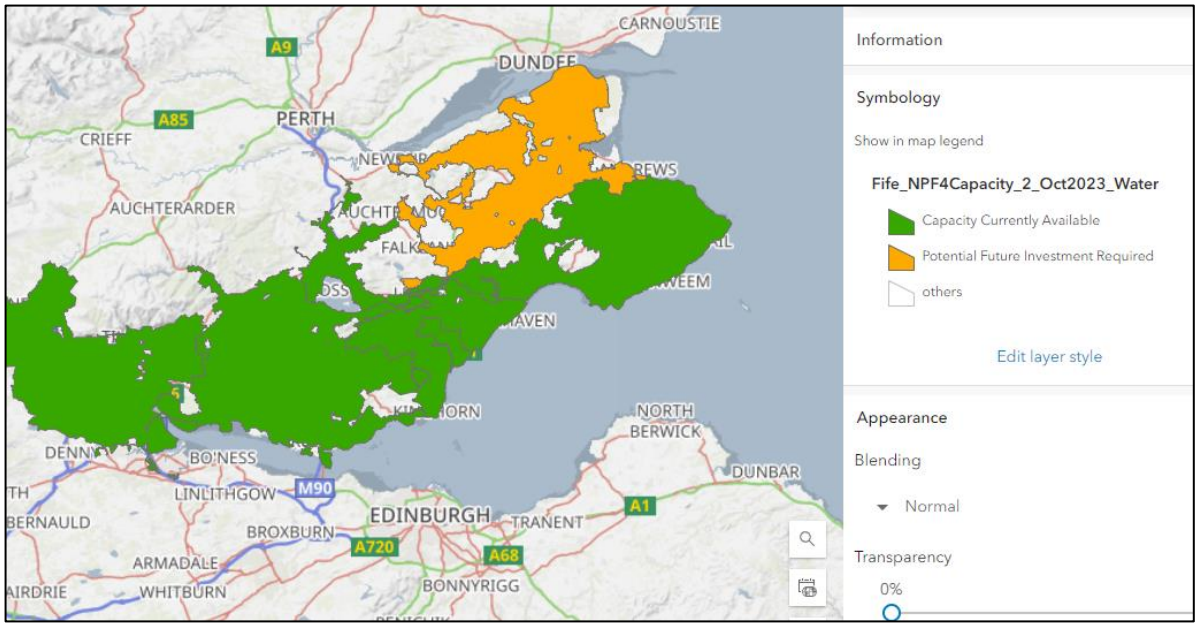
5.307 Scottish Water provides local authorities with water supply and wastewater capacity GIS data that shows which areas of Scotland may require further investment. The information is in a format that cannot be accommodated fully in the Evidence Report. The figures below map the position for Fife. These maps only show high-level constraints and therefore there may be localised issues which are not reflected in this data. Any localised issues will be identified by Scottish Water through the site assessment process for the Proposed Plan. Any required mitigation and timescales for this work will be picked up through the Delivery Programme.

Figure 5.21: Waste water treatment capacity in Fife



Source: Scottish Water

Figure 5.22: Water supply capacity in Fife



Source: Scottish Water

5.308 At this time, it is not possible to identify how capacity constraints may restrict development or result in a need for specific phasing. This will depend on the use of a site, the timing of development, and which sites in any given area are planned for development. The figures above indicate that North East Fife, City of Dunfermline, Cupar and parts of South and West Fife are potential areas where wastewater treatment capacity might need intervention

to accommodate further development. It is particularly a relatively large area of North East Fife that has potential issues with water supply with additional small pockets in Mid and West Fife. Through the LDP site selection process, all sites will be assessed with regards to water supply, wastewater treatment capacity and connectivity. The Council will continue to work closely with Scottish Water to plan new development that does not lead to supply issues or issues with the treatment of wastewater.

5.309 For more information on water and wastewater infrastructure is in Annex 11 (Infrastructure First).

Links to Evidence

- Water supply capacity in Fife GIS Data (Scottish Water GIS data)
- Wastewater supply capacity in Fife GIS Data (Scottish Water GIS data)

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on Water Supply and Wastewater Treatment for the Proposed LDP:

- The phasing and delivery of infrastructure will be reflected in development requirements, if required, and monitored through the Delivery Programme.
- Investigate funding mechanisms;
- Phasing of development in collaboration with utility companies and developers, monitored through the Delivery Programme; and
- The LDP site selection process will take account of Scottish Water advice on water supply and wastewater treatment capacity and connectivity.
- Where development needs do not justify a strategic assessment, a developer may be asked to conduct a standalone network impact assessment and deliver any infrastructure upgrades which may be eligible for Reasonable Cost Contribution (RCC) reimbursement from Scottish Water.
- Scottish Water is responsible for the main carrier systems that take surface water in built up areas. The drainage capacity is being stretched by climate change so the new Local Development Plan should give guidance on the role of blue-green infrastructure and possible disconnection of surface water from existing development.
- Scottish Water's Surface Water Management Policy requires all new development applying for connection to public networks to design sites in a manner that promotes sustainable above ground green-blue based surface water solutions. Scottish Water does not allow new connections of surface water to combined drainage networks, unless under very exceptional circumstances. LDP guidance may be needed to identify, require, or promote blue-green nature-based solutions as the future to manage flood risk.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- Fife Council has worked closely with Scottish Water and other stakeholders to produce the Evidence Report and will continue to do so in preparing the Local Development Plan.
- In June 2025 Scottish Water was sent a final copy of the resubmission document and a small amendment was suggested. Reflecting the ongoing joint working, there are no areas of disagreement, and the Evidence Report and associated annex have been agreed by all parties (see Annex 11).
- Fife Council response: Matters raised by Scottish Water have been addressed in the resubmission version.

Education provision at a Fife-wide level – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

NPF4 Policy 18: Infrastructure First

LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

Plans should align with relevant national, regional, and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy.

Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.310 Planning plays a key role in securing the provision, through land allocations, and developer obligations funding of education infrastructure in Fife. The existing, and future, school education provision has a pivotal role to play in place making, sitting at the heart of a community. New residential development across Fife will have an impact on the existing school estate.

The Fife wide education needs of the population

5.311 In Fife, the Education Authority discharges its duty to secure adequate and efficient education for the local authority area by operating a "catchment" system, to enable parents/carers to comply with their duty to provide efficient education for their child(ren). Postcodes for each address in Fife are associated with a denominational (Roman Catholic) and non-denominational primary and secondary school, known as catchment schools. Parents can check their catchment area at Check school catchment areas School enrolment for mainstream places is managed in Fife through the Schools Admission Policy which can be found at Schools-Admission-Policy-April-2018.docx (live.com).

5.312 In responding to the requirements of the Local Development Plan, the Education Authority plans their estate around school roll projections which take into account Housing Land Audit (HLA) development sites, live planning applications, births in each of the primary catchment areas, pupil choice and national population projections.

5.313 In terms of a future Local Development Plan, the projected pupil product from new housing is determined using an agreed methodology of an average across Fife. In addition, there will be nursery aged pupils from new developments also requiring early learning places and an increase in pupils requiring additional support classes for pupils who require specialist provision. This specialist provision is not provided within every mainstream primary school. New development sites will produce new pupils in these areas and the Education Directorate will need to respond to manage pupil numbers and ensure they fulfil their statutory obligation to provide education provision.

5.314 In some areas of Fife, new pupils can be managed within existing primary school capacity. However, in other areas new primary schools will be required, new catchment areas to be formed and catchment reviews may need to be considered. The outcome of a catchment review is subject to public consultation and no certainty can be provided that a rezoning proposal will be approved by Committee following a statutory consultation process.

The likely effect of development and use of land on those needs

5.315 Each of the development sites within the Local Development Plan may or may not have an impact on education provision within each of the school catchment areas. This will be determined through the existing review process for planning applications. Where a capacity issue is expected, mitigation will be required and fully funded by a developer. This could be a permanent solution or a temporary solution and will be determined based on the information available at the time of application. It should be noted that there will always be a level of uncertainty especially for young people in small areas over long periods of time.

The capacity of education services in the area

5.316 As there are 133 primary schools and 18 secondary schools, a locality-wide approach has been undertaken to establish town-wide capacity constraints. The Council has a capital programme which will deliver improvements to Council assets within the Education Directorate, and these improvements are determined based on condition and suitability core information. Any new school provision will be determined as per the requirements of the Local Development Plan based on the number of housing units.

School capacity risk RAG mapping

5.317 Fife Council's Red-Amber-Green (RAG) school capacity risk web app reflects the latest school roll projections. The web app, which is only available internally, highlights school catchments by their current and projected capacity risk. It will be used to inform the site assessment process for the Proposed Local Development Plan. Due to decreasing birth rates, there is a lot of capacity across the school estate but not necessarily in every school. In these circumstances, spare capacity allows the building users to utilise the classrooms for other curricular activities. The school capacity web app helps identify where there are capacity issues.

5.318 In terms of new school provision, the Council has developed a standard primary specification based on floor metric from the Scottish Futures Trust Learning Estate Investment Programme Guiding Principles and Metrics.

5.319 Planned New Schools New secondary schools have been constructed and being developed as part of the Scottish Government replacement school programme:

- Replacement Woodmill and St Columba's High School on a single site with Fife College, known as Dunfermline Learning Campus – Opened August 2024.
- Replacement Inverkeithing High School – relocation from Inverkeithing to Fleet Grounds, Rosyth – August 2026 (formation of a new school).

5.320 Some new primary schools are required to accommodate pupils from new housing growth as allocated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017. These schools will be funded by developers, as detailed in the financial framework of the FIFEplan, or through the Council's capital programme. The new primary schools are listed in the seven locality statements.

Figure 5.23: An aerial view of Dunfermline Learning Campus under construction

Source: Fife Council

Higher and further education

5.321 Beyond identifying and addressing the educational needs generated by new development for Fife's school estate, the LDP requires to also identify address any specific housing needs for those in further and higher education. Fife Council has engaged with Fife College and the University of St Andrews to identify student housing need within Fife and any specific issues that require addressed. This highlighted above in the specialised housing need section and discussed in more detail in Annexes 8 and 9.

Links to Evidence

- https://www.gov.scot/publications/overview-core-facts-publication/
- Check school catchment areas | Fife Council
- Schools Admission Policy
- School Estate Report 2018
- Public Agenda Pack 22 June 2023

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on Education capacity the Proposed Plan:

- Education provision is a fundamental part of community infrastructure which requires to be considered as a core part of assessing land for housing as it will have an impact on additional school capacity needs and will have implications for existing school catchment areas.
- Whilst there is some capacity in primary and secondary schools across the seven localities in Fife there are constraints within individual schools which will need to be considered in developing the spatial strategy and subsequent site allocation.
- Should a spatial strategy be developed which directs growth towards areas where there is, or will be, spare capacity in the school estate, this may require sieve-mapping to identify where capacity is projected to exist alongside house building phasing/programming.
- Ongoing or programmed school catchment reviews may also affect these and need to be built into scenario planning. Close liaison with Fife Council's Education Service.
- Investigate whether the spatial strategy should specifically target growth to geographic areas where schools are at risk of closure due to falling school roles.
- Consider, through analysis of the existing school estate, which education properties and grounds have scope to be expanded, if required.
- Consider the cost implications, to the Council and developers, of directing growth to locations where there are critical capacity issues (both capital and revenue cost implications).
- Changing priorities which could impact on the school estate capacity; for example, the expansion of early years provision. P1-P5 all now receive free school meals and if this is rolled out, this will have an impact on space available within schools. The Scottish Government are also considering more support for 2-year-olds and breakfast clubs.
- Fife Council policies may also impact on the capacity within the school estate. For example, decisions on classroom sizes and multi-purpose areas, used for non-curriculum activities such as I.T. suites, drama & music rooms to ensure the full breadth of the curriculum is delivered.
- The Climate Emergency will also have an impact on the existing and new estate as we prepare for net zero standard schools.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute

- Fife Council Education and Communities Directorates have been consulted. No areas of dispute have been identified. However, the resourcing of new education projects continues to be an area of concern.

Health provision at a Fife-wide level – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

NPF4 Policy 23: Health & Safety
LDP spatial strategies should seek to tackle health inequalities particularly in places which are experiencing the most disadvantage. They should identify the health and social care services, and infrastructure needed in the area, including potential for co-location of complementary services, in partnership with Health Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships.

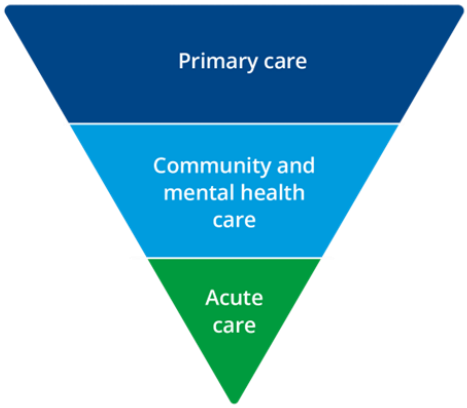
See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.322 NHS Fife provides healthcare to a population of more than 370,000 and employs around 8,500 staff. Covering a large urban and rural area, with a varied geography and several centres of population, it has property and assets across Fife including 80,000 hectares of land and over 70 NHS sites. NHS Fife requires to balance increasing demand through demographic changes with pressure on both capital and revenue resources.

5.323 NHS Fife's Population Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Whole System Planning approach (see below) allows them to shape their services and estate sustainably, providing healthcare provision locally and hospital care. As well as health provision in Fife the NHS Fife estate can bring added value to local populations, including open spaces which they will continue to develop through their green space strategy and the rationalisation of land and assets for housing opportunities in conjunction with their partners and stakeholders.

5.324 NHS Fife's Population Health and Wellbeing Strategy, has been developed through engagement with communities, staff, patients, and partners. The work has highlighted what matters to the people of Fife when they need health care services and how communities want to be supported in maintaining and improving their health and wellbeing. There is therefore a clear emphasis on prevention and early intervention whilst continuing to provide hospital care when it is required.

Figure 5.24: Healthcare System



Source:NHS Fife Prpoerty and Assest Management Strategy 2023

5.325 Within the overall vision of the Strategy, four key priority themes have been developed to direct NHS Fife. These are:

- Improve health and wellbeing: This priority is about working to close the inequality gap ensuring that all people of Fife can flourish from cradle to grave. It is about prevention and the creation of opportunities to allow individuals to improve their own health and wellbeing.
- Improve the quality of health and care: This priority is about the provision of the safest and best possible health and care services for the people of Fife. It includes providing person-centered integrated health care in the most appropriate setting, and close to home as far as possible.
- Improve staff experience and wellbeing: This priority is about valuing and looking after staff. It is also about providing opportunity for staff to develop and excel at what they do.
- Deliver value and sustainability: This priority is about using resources wisely to ensure our services are sustainable to meet our population's needs. This includes providing the right services in the right places with the right facilities and ensuring the best use of our land and assets. It is also about reducing energy usage and carbon emissions.

5.326 At a practical level, this will largely mean evolution of the existing estate. Whilst NHS Fife plan to reduce activity and disinvest in some sites overtime others will see development and growth. Further information regarding NHS Fife's estate plans can be found within their Property and Asset Management Strategy.

5.327 The area that requires to be connected within the Local Development Plan, is Primary Care. Primary Care proportionately represents the first point of contact for individuals seeking access to health and wellbeing services which are supported by multi-disciplinary teams. Sustainable primary care services are vitally important to support people's health and wellbeing and reduce the need for hospital admittance. Primary care services are impacted by multiple

drivers for change including demographic growth, housing impacts and service change to support system wide demand.

5.328 To enable quantification of what this might mean, NHS Fife commissioned a NHS Fife Primary Care Services and Premises Review to consider current provision (2023) versus what might be required in the future to sustain and improve primary care services for our local population. The report recommended short, medium, and long-term measures. The short to medium term measures are being dealt with locally by NHS Fife as they largely include small and manageable interventions within existing assets. The longer-term priorities that require to be highlighted within the Local Development Plan to enable sustainable services include the following:

Table 5.14 - Key Areas for long-term major capital investment

Cluster	Practice/ premises	Investment
Glenrothes	Rothes North Glen Cos Lane	Major new build for some of the practices. Those not redeveloped would potentially transfer cluster-based services to the new development. The new development would include all cluster hub services.
Kirkcaldy	St Brycedale Path House Nicol Street	Major new build for some of the practices. Those not redeveloped would potentially transfer cluster-based services to the new development. The new development would include all cluster hub services.
Dunfermline	Nethertown New Park Hospital Hill Bellyeoman	Major new build for some of the practices. Those not redeveloped would potentially transfer cluster-based services to the new development. The new development would include all cluster hub services.
North East	Cupar (Eden Villa & Bank Street)	Property extension and site master planning to provide additional capacity for the impact of new housing.
South West Fife	Kincardine Health Centre	Proposed new-build to improve local service capacity/provision and replace an aging asset.
Cowdenbeath	Lochgelly Health Centre	Proposed new-build to improve local service capacity/provision and replace an aging asset.

Source: NHS Fife

5.329 Further information on the health and wellbeing of Fife's residents can be found in the Fife Strategic Assessment 2020 and the links to the seven Local Strategic Assessments 2022 listed under Links to Evidence, above. The Knowfife Dataset also includes sections on Health & Wellbeing and Health & Care, which give general health information based on the 2021 Census data.

5.330 The Fife Strategic Assessment concluded that “demographic change will continue. The population will begin to reduce, with older people making up an increasing proportion of the population. This may create increasing demand, particularly in respect of demand on health and social care services”.

5.331 Note that information on public health and wellbeing, and health and safety is in the Evidence Report’s Fife-wide Public Health and Wellbeing section.

Links to Evidence

- Knowfife Dataset - KnowFife
- Fife Strategic Assessment 2020 Fife Council Research Team - Fife Strategic Assessment 2020
- Local Strategic Assessments 2022 Draft: City of Dunfermline Local Strategic Assessment 2022; Cowdenbeath Local Strategic Assessment 2022; Glenrothes Local Strategic Assessment; Kirkcaldy Local Strategic Assessment 2022; Levenmouth Local Strategic Assessment 2022; North East Fife Local Strategic Assessment 2022; South & West Fife Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- NHS Fife Green Space Strategy 2023
- NHS Fife Population Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028
- NHS Fife Primary Care Services & Premises Review – Buchan Associates for NHS Fife – Interim Report August 2023

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on health for the Proposed LDP:

- The changing nature of primary care delivery and demographic changes likely to impact on Fife over the timescale of the Proposed Plan are a move towards health and wellbeing hubs which provide multi-disciplinary care, and increasing elderly-driven demand, which will put pressures on services such as health and social care. As a result, in preparing of the Proposed LDP, consideration needs to be given to:
- Spatial implications of development proposals on health infrastructure capacity and future primary care service delivery in Fife. This will form part of the Local Development Plan site assessment methodology.
- The long-term solutions advocated by NHS Fife to address pressure points for existing new housing developments.
- NHS Fife is moving towards primary care delivery through multi-disciplinary care teams situated within cluster hubs.
- Supporting new or replacement health and wellbeing hubs and for combining health hubs with other community uses.
- Continue working jointly with the Fife Partnership, to take a 'whole system' approach to health.
- In preparing the LDP, consider how make better use of the public estate by identifying coincidence of interests in the estates and disposals strategies.
- Recognise the benefits of environment and quality of space, on health and wellbeing, when delivering new development
- Health Impact Assessments (HIA) may be required for developments in Fife.
- Planned growth and demographic changes mean there is a need for additional capacity/provision in primary care sector across all localities.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- Health and community partners including Public Health Scotland, NHS Fife and the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership and been involved in the preparation of the Evidence Report.
- In June 2025 health and community partners were sent a final copy of the resubmission document. Some additional text was suggested by partners.
- No areas of dispute have been identified. However, the resourcing of new health infrastructure continues to be an area of concern for all parties.
- Fife Council response: The text changes have been addressed in the resubmission version.

Managing waste in Fife – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context

Policy 12: Zero Waste
LDPs should identify appropriate locations for new waste management infrastructure to support the circular economy and meet identified needs in a way that moves waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.332 Zero waste targets set by the Scottish Government are ambitious with reductions across all types of waste and a short timeframe to achieve them, (the target year for most is 2025), The targets include a 15% reduction of all waste arisings and a complete ban on biodegradable municipal waste being sent to landfill due to come into effect in Jan 2026. There is more detail on these targets in Annex 12.

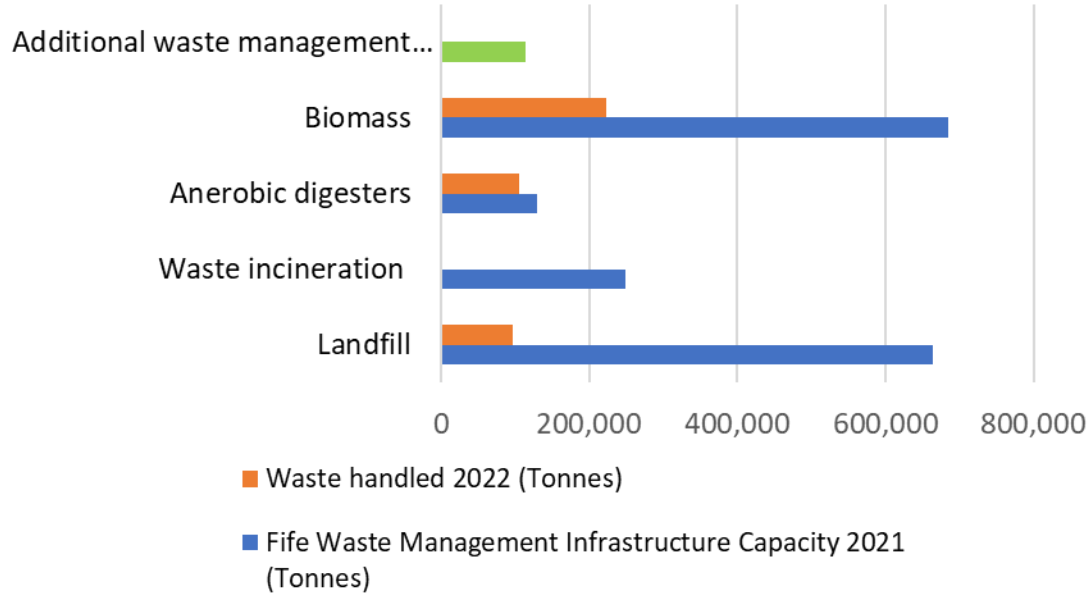
5.333 Scottish Government has published the Circular Economy Route Map, a strategic plan to achieve Scotland's zero waste targets. The priorities identified in the route map include, embedding circular construction practices such as the refurbishment of buildings; and minimising the impact of disposal of waste that cannot be reused or recycled. NPF4 Policy 12 provides the necessary policy structure to support these priorities.

5.334 It is not possible to calculate all the waste generated in Fife as some data such as construction and demolition waste is only collected at national level. However SEPA does publish figures on household and business waste at a local authority level. These figures show a significant reduction in waste arisings in Fife from 2011 to 2018. Part of this is due to a decreasing trend in household waste, however the majority is due to the closure of Longannet Power Station in 2016 reducing the amount of combustion waste recorded. Annex 12 provides more detail on waste arisings in Scotland and Fife.

5.335 Fife has two operational landfill sites, Lochhead in Dunfermline and Lower Melville Wood near Ladybank in North East Fife. In 2022, 208,100 tonnes of waste was disposed of across the two landfill sites[3] (see figure below). There are now less than 160,000 tonnes of capacity left across the two sites. From January 2026 minimal amounts of non-municipal waste can be landfilled.

[3] Source: SEPA Scottish Waste sites and capacity tool.

Figure 5.25: Annual capacity of Fife's Waste Management Infrastructure and waste handled (2021) with additional waste management infrastructure needed to support circular economy targets (in green) (Waste Transfer Stations and Metal recycling operations not shown)



Notes:

† Based on applying a pro-rata figure for Fife to Table 1 from SEPA Calculation Methodology for Waste Infrastructure Capacity Estimates (Dec 2020). Shows the waste infrastructure management needed to support targets in Making Things Last – a Circular Economy Strategy for Scotland (2016).

Source: SEPA Calculation Methodology for Waste Infrastructure Capacity Estimates (Dec 2020). Anerobic digester data: UK Anerobic digestion sites map (does not include data from Peacehill Farm and Inchdairnie Farm)

5.336 Fife does not have enough incineration capacity to manage all the waste which is currently landfilled in the area. After the landfill ban, any waste that cannot be recycled or the materials recovered goes to Westfield Energy Recovery Facility. Fife also has two combined heat and power waste facilities, at the Diageo Cameronbridge operations and Lochhead landfill site.

5.337 There are two biomass plants in Fife which generate energy from waste, a large biomass plant in Markinch fuelled by 90% waste wood and the Westfield Biomass Plant which mainly incinerates chicken litter.

5.338 Fife has recycling points in most settlements and there are 11 recycling centres to collect household waste throughout the area.

5.339 The way waste is managed is changing because of the necessity to cut carbon. Less waste will go to landfill from 2025 and there will be a focus on reducing waste creation and seeking to re-use waste before recycling options. Consequently, Fife will require new waste management infrastructure to meet Scottish Government objectives for waste and the circular economy (see figure above).

5.340 The exact nature of the infrastructure required is unclear at present, but Scotland and the UK need more specialised waste processing facilities for plastics etc. This likely to include many smaller businesses reusing waste in

different ways but there is also the potential need for some specialist larger plants which would serve wider areas. This is an opportunity for Fife to promote itself as somewhere to establish new businesses and create jobs. The Local Development Plan could provide more flexibility in employment area designations to allow these types of businesses to be located within them. There is more detail on Fife's waste infrastructure in Annex 12.

5.341 Fife Council currently operates a 4-bin system of waste collection for most domestic properties in Fife. It is important that the LDP ensures new development provides appropriate facilities for on-site waste management so that waste bins do not impact on the visual quality of places.

5.342 More detail on waste managed and waste management infrastructure in Fife is available in Annex 12.

Links to Evidence

- Annex 12: Waste
- SEPA - Waste infrastructure capacity Fife 2021
- SEPA Waste Data Fife and Scotland – extract
- Scottish Government – Managing Waste
- Scottish Government - Scotland's circular economy and waste route map to 2030
- SEPA – Household Waste Data
- SEPA – Business Waste Data Tables 2021
- RWE CHP Biomass Plant - Markinch
- Modern Power Systems – Westfield poultry waste plant comes on line

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on waste infrastructure for the Proposed LDP:

- The main implications of moving towards a circular economy for the Local Development Plan will be the need for additional waste management infrastructure to: sort and process recyclable materials which have been separately collected; and manage the remaining residual waste in a way which maximises resource value and minimises the impact of disposal on the environment.
- The location and scale of new infrastructure needs to be considered, with consideration of whether a few larger sites or several smaller local-scale facilities will be needed. New policy may be required to support greater recycling and reuse of waste and new waste disposal innovations.
- The layout and design of future development will be a consideration in the development requirements and guidance for LDP2. Changes in practice and design will need to consider consequences for waste management collection and implications for the Council's waste management fleet. Development requirements to accommodate waste management changes may be needed to be specified in the LDP.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- SEPA and Fife Council Waste management services were offered the opportunity to comment on the waste section.
- Fife Council Waste Management provided comment which has been incorporated into the Evidence Report.
- In June 2025, SEPA was sent a final copy of the resubmission document for comment. SEPA replied stating that given the need to focus their time where they can add most value, they don't provide extra input at the evidence report stage (beyond the provision of advice included in their Evidence Sources Glossary - A glossary of relevant evidence sources for local development plans presented by issue) for areas such as waste management/zero waste, soils or air quality. Therefore, no comments were received from SEPA in relation to waste.

Digital Connectivity in Fife – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

NPF4 Policy 18: Infrastructure First

LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

Plans should align with relevant national, regional, and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy.

Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment.

NPF4 Policy 24: Digital Infrastructure

LDPs should support the delivery of digital infrastructure, including fixed line and mobile connectivity, particularly in areas with gaps in connectivity and barriers to digital access.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

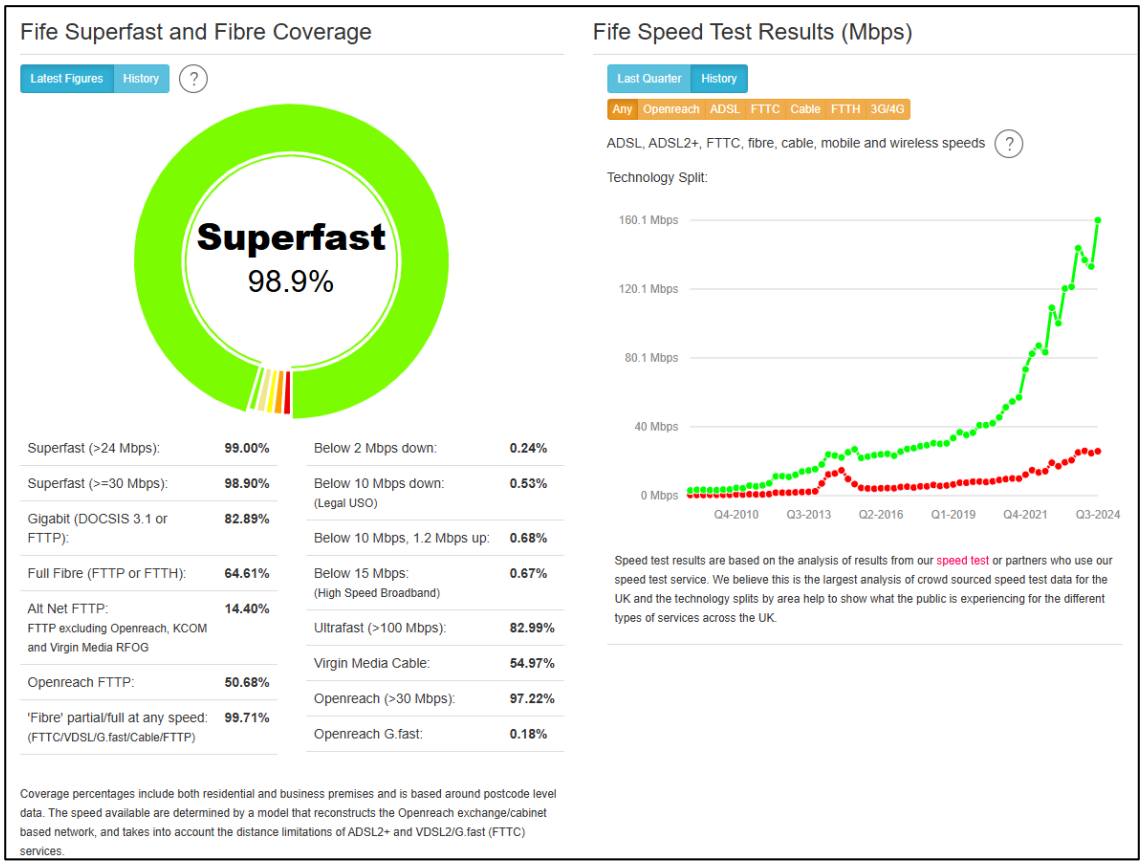
5.343 The Government aims to deliver nationwide gigabit broadband as soon as possible. Scotland's Digital Strategy aims include provision of high-quality connectivity across the whole of Scotland and ensuring new buildings are digital ready. A digital fibre network is one of six national developments in NPF4 to support the delivery of liveable places and help to facilitate more sustainable ways of living including in rural and island communities.

5.344 Digital connectivity is important to a successful Fife both in terms of business and economic development and for community and social connectivity and is a key focus of the Fife Economic Strategy (2023-2030). The Edinburgh & South East Scotland Regional Prosperity Framework's priority actions include a data-driven innovation led approach to visitor economy destination management to allow for the implementation of innovative digital assets to help work towards a truly responsible and sustainable visitor economy for the region.

5.345 Through its Digital Strategy the Scottish Government is looking at a range of technologies that can provide next generation connectivity, from fixed line broadband, to mobile, wireless, and satellite connections rather than just fibre. New fibre infrastructure will play a crucial role in the future deployment of 5G, which is likely to require extensive use of small cells (essentially mini base stations), connected to the core network by backhaul (usually a fibre connection). Mobile is particularly relevant for Fife's rural areas and for use of autonomous vehicles.

5.346 Since the adoption of FIFEplan, Fife's fibre network has received significant private and public sector investment and the fibre footprint in Fife has spread significantly. Superfast and fibre coverage currently sits at just under 99% as shown in the figure below. All Fife's exchanges and Openreach cabinets are now fibre enabled. Building upon the success of the fibre footprint, the objective is to require fibre to the premises (FTTP) for most new developments. As part of delivering access to superfast speeds to all, Fife Council is participating in the R100 initiative which aims to help harder to reach properties, particularly in rural areas, access superfast speeds.

Figure 5.26: Superfast and Fibre coverage in Fife



Source: Think Broadband

5.347 Future residential and employment development can remain at the forefront of advances in digital connectivity, allowing Fife to be a market leader and remain a highly attractive location for businesses and residents. If no proactive policy is emergent, it is unlikely that new developments would be future-proofed by developers. This could result in retrospective investment with higher costs and poorer quality digital connectivity for residents and businesses, impacting upon quality of life, home working, and productivity.

5.348 Existing FIFEplan policy requires consideration of the visual and/or cumulative impact of the installing of mobile telecommunications equipment. Operators need to demonstrate consideration of site selection, alternatives considered, reasons for solutions chosen, visual assessments, and a declaration of conformity with regards to public exposure of emissions. The policy requires developers to demonstrate consideration of aspects such as mast sharing, location of equipment on buildings or visually disguised to minimise the visual impact of equipment within communities and wider landscape. The LDP will continue to require consideration of the visual and/or cumulative impact and require operators to demonstrate consideration and impact on the public from exposure to emissions. See Annex 11 (Infrastructure First) for more information.

Links to Evidence

- Scottish Government Digital Strategy
- Fife Economic Strategy (2023-2030)
- Regional Prosperity Framework's
- Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband
- Ofcom Research, statistics and data
- Think Broadband
- Reaching 100% - Superfast Broadband for All - R100 Programme
- Scottish Government Building Standards technical handbook April 2024: domestic buildings
- Scottish Government Building Standards technical handbook April 2024: non-domestic buildings

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on digital connectivity in Fife for the Proposed LDP:

- The LDP will support the delivery of digital infrastructure in all new-built development in urban and rural areas and to support smart cities and towns. That may involve specifying development requirements.
- The LDP will continue to require consideration of the visual and/or cumulative impact of digital connectivity infrastructure in implementing NPF4 Policy 24: Digital infrastructure.
- Consider if the LDP can support Digital Improvement Districts.
- Scottish Government legislation requires developers to ensure all new build homes have the physical infrastructure as well as a gigabit-capable connection, subject to a £2,000 cost cap per dwelling. Where this is not possible, new builds should have the next fastest broadband connection within the cost cap. Local Development Plan for Fife will reflect this in the site requirements.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- Fife Council has regularly and closely engaged with Fife Council's Business & Employability Services in producing the evidence report. Business & Employability Services are the Council representative for the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) roll-out project and so provided the evidence in respect of this area. Planning Services will continue to work closely with Business & Employability Services and other stakeholders in preparing the next LDP.
- Online public consultations held to inform the Evidence Report have highlighted infrastructure issues including poor broadband speeds.

Cemetery provision in Fife – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

NPF4 Policy 18: Infrastructure First

LDPs and delivery programmes should be based on an integrated infrastructure first approach. Plans should:

- be informed by evidence on infrastructure capacity, condition, needs and deliverability within the plan area, including cross boundary infrastructure;
- set out the infrastructure requirements to deliver the spatial strategy, informed by the evidence base, identifying the infrastructure priorities, and where, how, when and by whom they will be delivered; and
- indicate the type, level (or method of calculation) and location of the financial or in-kind contributions, and the types of development from which they will be required.

Plans should align with relevant national, regional, and local infrastructure plans and policies and take account of the Scottish Government infrastructure investment hierarchy and sustainable travel and investment hierarchies in developing the spatial strategy.

Consistent early engagement and collaboration between relevant stakeholders will better inform decisions on land use and investment.

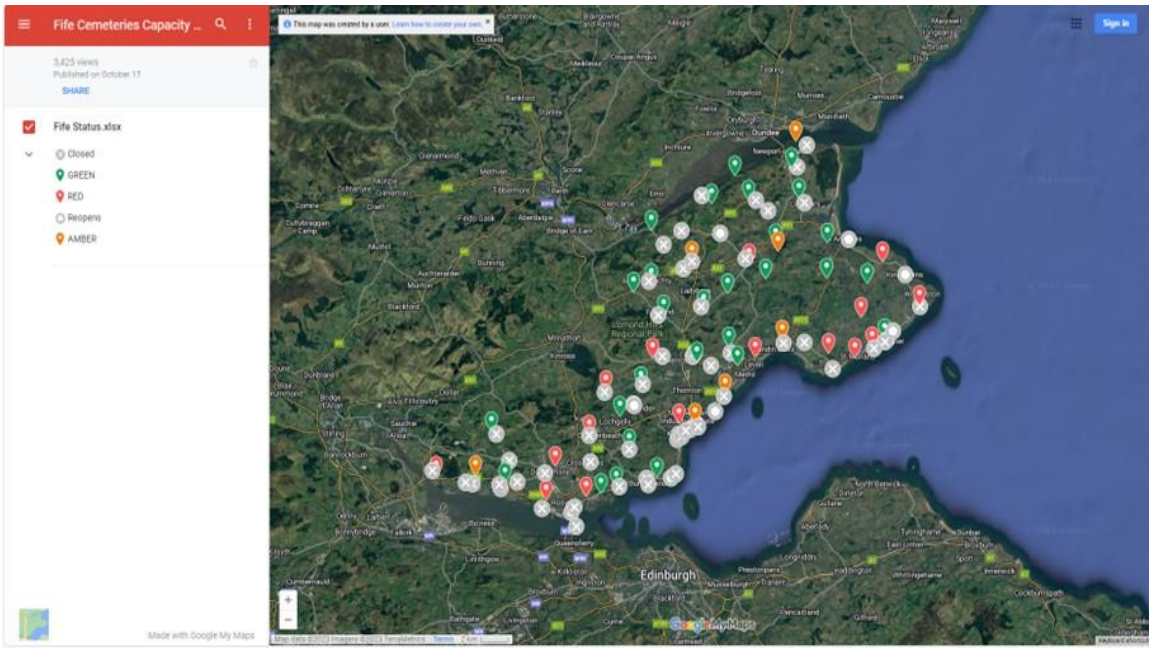
See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.349 Fife Council has 115 cemeteries but only 61 are active – that is, where there are still regular burials; the remaining 54 are historical or full and are maintained only. Within the next 20 years, 16 cemeteries will be nearing capacity; 11 cemeteries have capacity of fewer than 10 years and 7 have fewer than 5 years. A new Bereavement Strategy for 2023-28 has been proposed giving immediate priority to the sites which are running out of space. The figure below illustrates the current cemetery capacity and more legible version is available through the Fife Cemeteries capacity status link listed below.

5.350 An online consultation showed "growing interest" in 'green' burials. National statistics show that 78% of people express a preference for cremation but there was still a steady demand for burial.

5.351 Plans for a new crematorium in Glenrothes were approved in December 2024.

Figure 5.27 - Cemetery capacity in Fife



Source: Fife Council

Links to Evidence

- Fife Council Cemetries Strategy 2022-2027
- Future Provision of Cemeteries in Fife - Community Consultation
- Fife Cemeteries Capacity Status - Google My Maps

Implications of cemetery provision evidence for the Proposed LDP:

- Fife Council Cemeteries Strategy 2023-2028 includes guiding principles to act as a framework for decision-making which mirrors the four stages of the Scottish Government guidance:
    - Determining future need,
    - Assessing scope of existing assets to meet the need,
    - Evaluating options and
    - Delivery of the preferred option.
- In terms of the Proposed Local Development Plan the Strategy does not identify the need for additional land to support new or expanded cemetery provision. The Strategy does note a strong interest from the general public in the development of the provision for green burials which could potentially impact on Fife's green belts.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/Dispute:

- Fife Council Bereavement Services, within Property Services have been consulted. No areas of dispute have been identified

How Fife’s economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

Economy – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context:

NPF4 Policy 26: Business and Industry

LDPs should allocate sufficient land for business and industry, taking into account business and industry land audits, in particular ensuring that there is a suitable range of sites that meet current market demand, location, size and quality in terms of accessibility and services. This allocation should take account of local economic strategies and support broader objectives of delivering a low carbon and net zero economic recovery, and a fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy.

NPF4 Policy 25: Community Wealth Building

LDPs should be aligned with any strategy for community wealth building for the area.

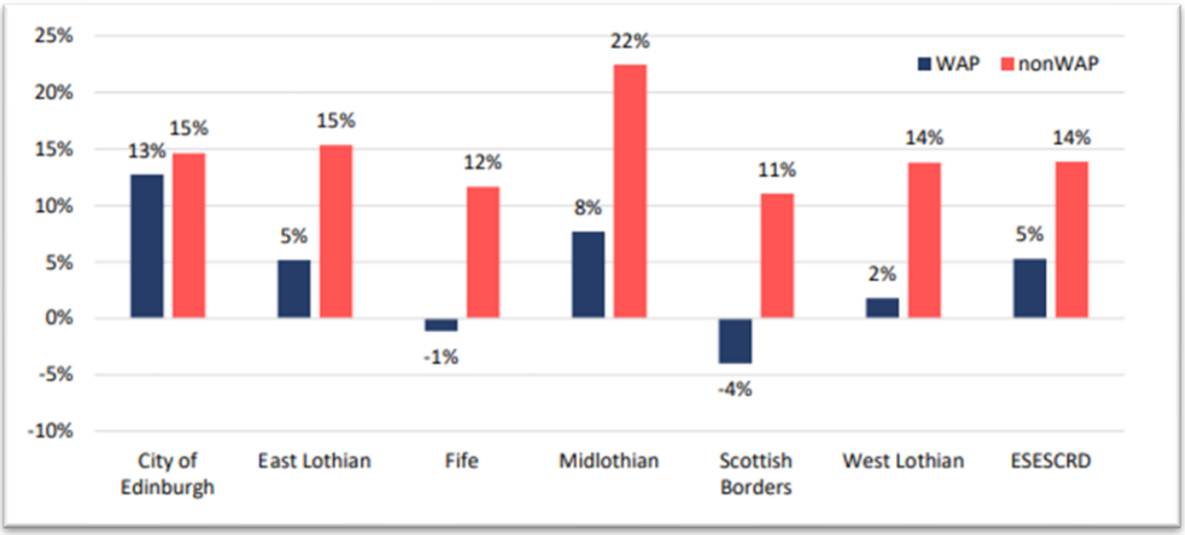
Spatial strategies should address community wealth building priorities; identify community assets; set out opportunities to tackle economic disadvantage and inequality; and seek to provide benefits for local communities.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.352 Around 370,400 people live in Fife, 6.8% of Scotland's population. Looking at the population structure of Fife and its committee areas:

- Levenmouth has the smallest proportion of people of working age (aged 16 to 64 years) (60%).
- North East Fife and Levenmouth have the highest proportions of people aged over 65 (23%) whilst Dunfermline has the lowest (18%).
- North East Fife has the largest proportion of people who are of working age (64%), and the lowest proportion of children (14%).

Figure 5.28: Percentage change in age categories by local authority 2009-2019 (working age population)



Source: NRS (based on Mid-2018 population estimates)

5.353 The number of people of working age in Fife is expected to decrease by 22,306 by 2043, equivalent to almost one in ten of the current working age population. Retaining and attracting businesses into the region to support and sustain the region's workforce will be an important factor in preventing further population decrease by attempting to avoid outward migration of younger people in search of opportunities elsewhere.

COVID-19 Impacts

5.354 The economic impact of COVID-19 and business recovery has, to date, been uneven. From a positive perspective, the demand for financial and technical (Fintech) services has increased as online retail has thrived. Manufacturing has demonstrated a high degree of resilience and adaptability during the crisis. Construction has recovered, bolstered by accelerated investment in infrastructure; although the availability of materials and labour has become problematic and material costs have increased. Transportation & Storage services are also in particularly high demand but have been hindered by a shortage of HGV drivers and unprecedented global shipping costs resulting from international supply chain disruption and the combined impact of COVID and additional measures arising from the UK's exit from the European Union.

5.355 The high proportions of employment within the public sector and health & social care sector in Fife have protected the jobs of many residents in the region, many of whom are working from home.

5.356 Although unemployment has been far more stable than initially anticipated, the combined impact of COVID and Brexit has led to critical workforce shortages in key sectors, supply chain disruption, a spike in fuel and energy prices, and a significant shortage and increase in costs for raw materials.

Regional Prosperity Framework (2021-2041)

5.357 There is a desire to establish the Edinburgh and South East Scotland area, including Fife, as the data capital of Europe, ensuring that the social and economic benefits of this status are accessible to all. The Framework's vision includes providing opportunities for every community member to develop essential skills that can help reduce societal inequalities. Protecting the environment and maximising the value of the built and natural heritage is a focus. The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region will lead a just transition to a net-zero economy with institutions, both historic and modern, continuing to deliver positive results.

Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy (2019-2039)

5.358 The Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy and the accompanying Tay Cities Deal Proposal, published in 2017, outlined a regional plan along with a detailed program and project proposals. These initiatives were part of a City Deal investment submission aimed at fostering economic growth in the region.

5.359 More information regarding Eden Campus Guardbridge, Longannet, and other Fife projects supported by the regional and local economic strategies can be found later in this section and in the relevant locality sections of the Evidence Report.

Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-30

5.360 Fife's strategy, informed by both the Regional Prosperity Framework and Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy, sets out the approach that Fife Council and its community planning partners will take to achieve the ambition of growing a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife.

5.361 The Strategy identifies three priorities where economic development and employability activities will be focused over the next seven years - supporting businesses; investing in premises and infrastructure; and delivering skills, training and fair employment. It also commits to the adoption of a cross-cutting community wealth building approach to maximise the local economic and social benefits of investment in projects and programmes, and to making sure that its interventions support the Partnership's commitment to tackling climate change. Parts of Fife are rural in nature and these settlements and areas are a key consideration in delivering the strategy and the next Local Development Plan.

5.362 Data from the Office for National Statistics highlights that the number and rate of people claiming out-of-work benefits are consistently higher in Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath and Levenmouth than the rest of Fife and the under-performance of the Mid-Fife economy remains a concern.

5.363 The number of registered businesses in the area has fallen every year since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In overview, whilst there are more businesses and jobs in Fife than 10 years ago, the number of both fell between 2020 and 2022. Fife's business survival rates fell in both 2000 and 2021 and are now lower than national survival rates, having been higher before the pandemic.

5.364 The number and proportion of high growth businesses has fallen, and a large proportion of jobs are within the public sector supporting many of the jobs in three of the largest employing sectors – public administration, education, and health and social care. Seven sectors have a location quotient of over 1, suggesting that Fife has a specialisation in them: manufacturing; construction; wholesale and retail trade; transportation and storage; information and communication; education; health and social work; and arts; entertainment and recreation.

5.365 Fife's job density is lower than that for Scotland as a whole, which is to say there are fewer jobs per resident of working age. Job densities are lowest in the Cowdenbeath and North East Fife UK Parliamentary Constituency Areas.

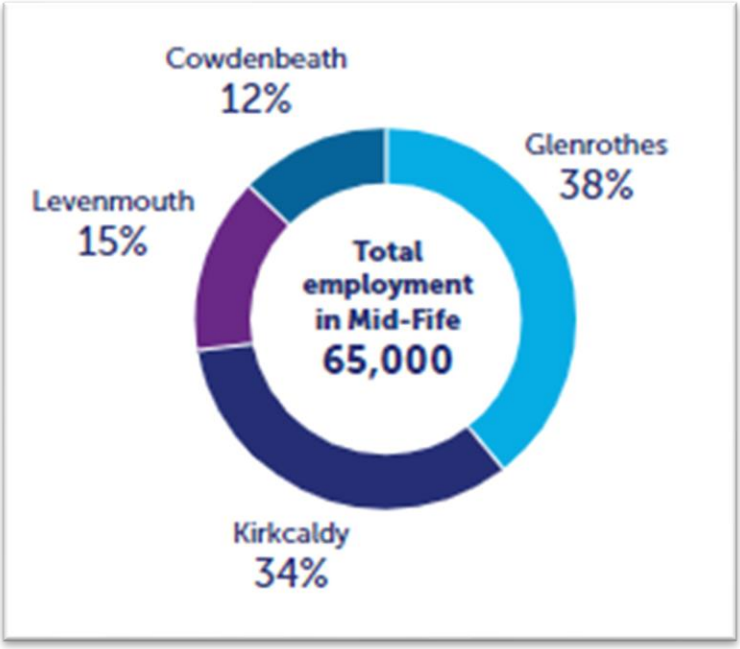
Mid-Fife Focus

5.366 Through the Mid-Fife Economic Action Plan (2019) parts of mid-Fife have been identified as areas of strategic concern for deprivation with very high unemployment. Local level issues of strategic level importance include the ongoing issues linked to Mid Fife (Kirkcaldy, Levenmouth, Cowdenbeath, and Glenrothes localities).

Mid-Fife Challenges:

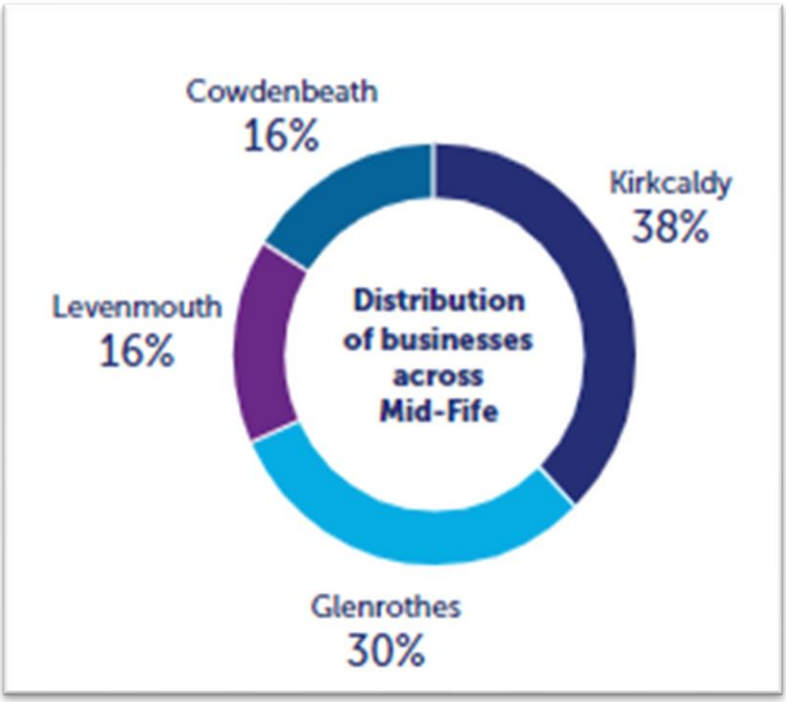
- The Mid-Fife business base is more than a third smaller than the Scottish average.
- Since 2010, the number of businesses in Mid-Fife has grown at half the Scottish rate and a quarter of the Fife rate.
- The job density in Mid-Fife is around 25% below the Scottish average.
- There is a reliance on public sector employment (4 in 10 jobs) and an under-representation of jobs in the Knowledge-Intensive Business Services sector.
- Full-time workplace jobs in Mid-Fife pay less than the Scottish average (12% less for men and 15% less for women).
- There is a shortfall of those in work of more than 2,000; the area has no single major employment centre.
- Figures for Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth show around 1,000 fewer women in work in each of these areas compared with the Scottish average.
- Skills levels in Mid-Fife are significantly below the Scottish average.

Figure 5.29: Total Employment in Mid-Fife



Source: Mid-Fife Investment Prospectus

Figure 5.30: Distribution of businesses across Mid-Fife



Source: Mid-Fife Investment Prospectus

5.367 To address these issues, the Mid-Fife Investment Prospectus was produced setting out an agreed framework (see figure below) of proposed

programmes, projects and opportunities. These target appropriate interventions in Mid-Fife and can be developed, implemented and/or accelerated as funding opportunities are identified and resources permit.

5.368 Some projects have been progressed through additional funding secured via the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal and, despite the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, the initial sites in Mid-Fife are now nearing completion, with further delivery phases to come in future years

Figure 5.31: Mid-Fife Investment Priorities

Source: Mid-Fife Investment Prospectus

5.369 The opening of the £70m Levenmouth rail link is anticipated to boost the area. In addition to the rail link investment itself, a further £10m has been jointly committed by the Scottish Government and Fife Council to support the development of Levenmouth.

5.370 Sitting alongside this work is another unique opportunity for the area. The Leven Programme was established in 2018 and is a regeneration initiative that firmly puts the environment and people at its heart. The programme brings together government agencies, non-government organisations, private sector businesses and local communities who want to breathe life back into the River Leven and improve the areas surrounding it, making them great places.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Regional Prosperity Framework (2021-2041)
- Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Tourism Strategy
- Mid-Fife Investment Prospectus (2021)
- Office for National Statistics, Job Density, accessed via NOMIS
- Office for National Statistics, Business Demography, UK
- Office for National Statistics, UK Business Counts, accessed via NOMIS
- Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey, accessed via NOMIS
- Office for National Statistics, Claimant Count, accessed via NOMIS
- Businesses in Scotland: 2024 and Scottish Annual Business Statistics 2022, Scottish Government
- The Leven Programme
- Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation, 2022

Key and Growth Sectors

5.371 Fife's key employment sectors include tourism, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail. Businesses within these sectors need to be supported to increase their resilience as well as enabling them to grow. The manufacturing sector is still in decline nationally, so it would be unrealistic to expect that sector to grow in terms of employment numbers. There is potential to grow new sectors such as energy, low carbon, and renewables which would help to make Fife's economy more resilient.

5.372 The Skills Development Scotland - Fife Regional Skills October 2024 indicates that whilst manufacturing is forecast to have the greatest employment contraction over the same period, the region's specialisms are predominantly related to manufacturing with key employment centres in Glenrothes, Rosyth, Dunfermline, Leven and Methil. Manufacturing is the third largest private sector employer in Fife (after wholesale, retail and repairs and education, health and social work activities) and is the most productive sector, generating the highest GVA and the highest turnover per employee.

5.373 Advanced manufacturing has been identified as one of the area's key sectors and support is being given to help the resilience and growth of existing businesses in this sector. Other sectors which have been identified as having both growth potential and a strength in the area are Food and Drink, Tourism and Hospitality, Financial & Business Services and the Energy Industries.

5.374 Skills Development Scotland's Green Jobs in Scotland Report identifies the sectors that make a significant contribution to the transition to net zero: agriculture, construction, manufacturing (with engineering), energy and waste treatment and transport. construction and manufacturing (with engineering) are the largest of these sectors in Fife in terms of employment.

5.375 NOMIS key sector data illustrates that since 2015, the levels of employment in the key sectors have remained steady. Transportation and storage has seen an increase over the years which reflects the changes in areas such as retail shopping.

Forth Green Freeport

5.376 The Forth Green Freeport, which became operational in June 2024, is set to attract new businesses into Burntisland and Rosyth. Financial and tax incentives, simplified customs processes and place-based investment will be used to de-carbonise, re-industrialise and regenerate the north and south shores of the Firth of Forth.

5.377 Support is required for large scale digitally enabled manufacturing and shipbuilding, further developing the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus, and strengthening the nation's agribulks hub by expanding and creating new trade routes to continental Europe. LDP support will also be focused on the following sectors: offshore wind, hydrogen, sustainable fuels, modular manufacturing and logistics.

5.378 There is potential to designate a Masterplan Consent Area at the Freeport. The Town and Country Planning (Masterplan Consent Areas) (Scotland) Regulations 2024 legislation came into force on 5 December 2024. Fife Council has not yet identified or assessed potential locations for which it may be desirable to bring forward a MCA scheme. The Council intends to consider the potential for MCAs while preparing the new Local Development Plan (Fife's Place Plan) which is expected to be adopted in 2028.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Tourism Strategy
- Mid-Fife Investment Prospectus (2021)
- Businesses in Scotland 2024
- NOMIS Key Sectors Data
- Skills Development Scotland - Fife Regional Skills

Investing in premises and infrastructure

5.379 This Fife Economic Strategy priority commits Fife Council and its partners to developing serviced employment land sites and bringing vacant and derelict land and buildings back into productive use. Many of Fife's industrial estates and properties need significant investment and growing businesses are having to leave the area because of the lack of suitable premises. There are also gaps in digital and transport connectivity.

5.380 Usable employment land and premises across Fife is in short supply, with the financial viability of building new premises the biggest constraint on supply. There is evidence of firms leaving Mid-Fife due to premises being no longer suitable, and of premises which can no longer be refurbished.

5.381 The ten-year, £58 million Fife Industrial Innovation Investment Programme funded by the Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Region Deal is continuing to deliver new industrial, office and business space and serviced employment sites in growth corridors in Mid and South-West Fife (Dalgety Bay), Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Cowdenbeath (Lochgelly), Levenmouth and Dunfermline. Some completed projects up to February 2024:

- Flemington Road (Glenrothes)– 9 Units built.
- Dunnikier Business Units (Kirkcaldy) – 7 units.
- West Way Business Units (Dalgety Bay) – 1393m2 – 8 Units.
- Levenmouth Task Force Business Units – 7 Units (Complete Spring 2024).
- Fife Interchange North (Dunfermline)– 10 Units (Complete Autumn 2024).
- Flemington Road (Glenrothes) – 9 Units built.

Employment land

5.382 The primary aim of the Fife Employment Land Strategy (FELS 2014-2021) is to ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. FELS aims to do this by identifying 20 key settlements (settlements with a population of 5,000 or more) across Fife and allocating a 7-year general supply requirement and an additional strategic requirement in those settlements assessed as of strategic importance. A traffic light system (RAG) is applied to each settlement with regard to meeting the requirement.

Table 5.15 - Key Settlements Availability of employment land by traffic light (RAG) status

Key Settlement	Audit Year	RAG Status	Percent Requirement Met	Total Requirement (hectares)
Ballingry, Lochore and Crosshill	2023	Red	0%	1.9
Burntisland	2023	Red	33%	1.7
Cardenden / Bowhill	2023	Red	0%	1.6
Cowdenbeath	2023	Green	137%	1.8
Cupar	2023	Red	0%	11.1
Dalgety Bay	2023	Amber	93%	2
Dunfermline	2023	Red	44%	50.9
East Neuk	2023	Green	203%	1.5
Glenrothes	2023	Red	79%	44.9
Howe Of Fife	2023	Green	291%	1.1
Inverkeithing	2023	Red	0%	12.9
Kelty	2023	Red	0%	1.9
Kennoway/Windygates	2023	Red	0%	1.4
Kirkcaldy	2023	Red	21%	29.4
Levenmouth	2023	Green	147%	24.4
Lochgelly	2023	Red	26%	9.8
Rosyth	2023	Red	49%	27.9
St Andrews	2023	Red	2%	11.5
Tayport/Newport	2023	Red	28%	1.2
West Fife Villages	2023	Red	49%	1.8

Source: Fife Employment Land Audit 2023

Green – where the allocation of marketable employment land meets or exceeds the requirement defined in FELS (100%+)

Amber – where the allocation of marketable employment land accounts for 80 – 99% of the requirement set in FELS. These settlements have limited employment land available which needs to be augmented in terms of area and/or range of uses.

Red – Where the allocation of marketable employment land meets less than 80% of the requirement set in FELS. These settlements have an inadequate amount of employment land available.

5.383 The table above highlights that, as at 2023, 14 of the 20 key settlements do not meet the available employment land requirement as set out in FELS (2014-2021). Six of 20 key settlements have met none of their requirement with only 4 of the 20 providing more than 100% of their requirement. This suggests that the LDP requires to support development of employment land across Fife by allocating deliverable sites with a range of potential employment uses and site sizes.

5.384 Fife Council's Business and Employability Service, in collaboration with the Planning Service and other stakeholders is currently preparing a new

employment strategy for Fife. The emerging strategy will identify employment sites to address the shortfall in employment land provision and this will be reflected in the next Local Development Plan. It is proposed that the emerging FELS will focus on sites over 1 hectare meaning there may be a role for the LDP to identify and allocate smaller scale sites i.e. those under 1 hectare.

5.385 Research carried out by Ryden to inform the emerging FELS indicates that Mid-Fife in particular has issues of obsolescence and dilapidation of industrial and commercial premises. There is a need to invest in the quality and availability of industrial premises across the Mid-Fife area to facilitate growth in existing firms (including advanced manufacturing firms) and to attract and cater for the higher value-added services that Mid-Fife lacks.

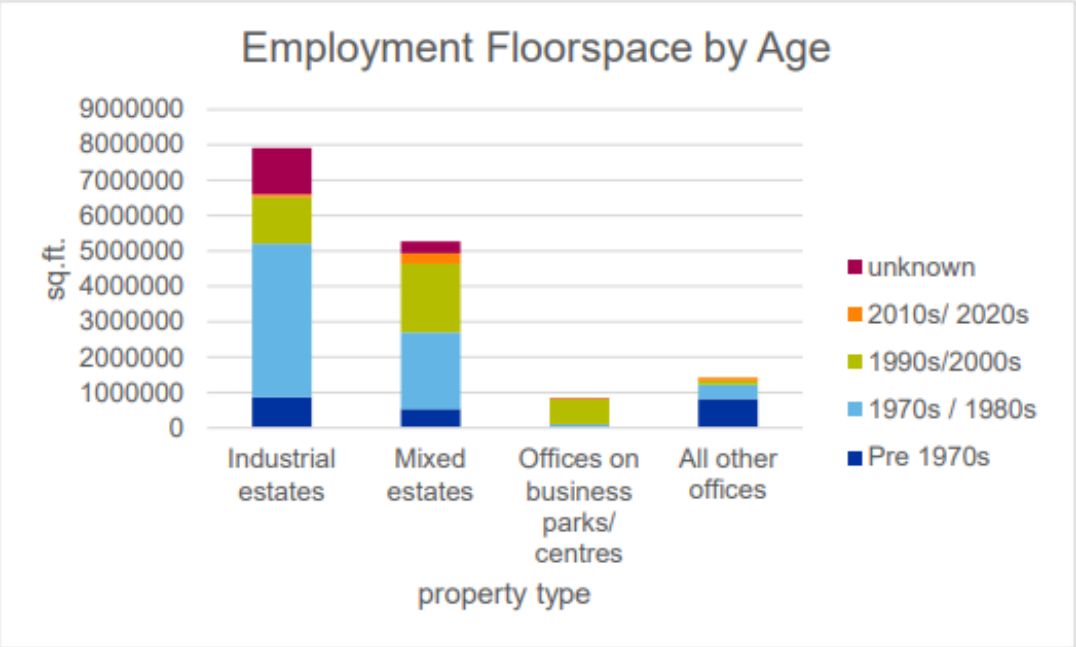
5.386 The 2022 survey of local businesses and organisations highlighted several issues that they face and would like to be addressed including: the lack of people available to work, the poor quality of the public realm around premises, poor public transport connectivity to employment areas, and more provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Employment Property Demand

5.387 A large proportion of Fife's employment property stock was built pre-1990 and in many instances much earlier than this, with only a minority having been developed over the past 25 years.

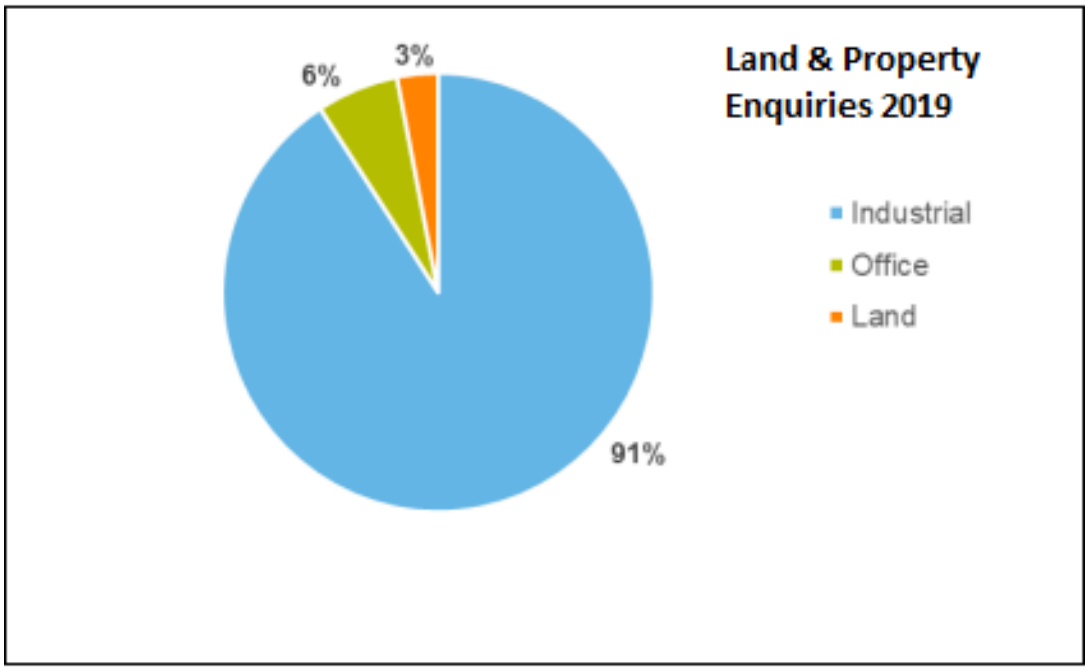
5.388 Since 2019 most enquiries regarding end use are for industrial property, with 326 enquiries totalling 70,000-150,000 square metres.

Figure 5.32: Employment floorspace in Fife by age of building



Source: Rydens

Figure 5.33: Land and property enquiries to Fife Council's Economic Development team (2019)



Source: Fife Council

Vacant and derelict land

5.389 In Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2023, there were 203 sites (713 hectares) of vacant and derelict land across Fife. Derelict land has a broader impact than vacant land in terms of total area (604.6ha) and in the number of individual sites (154) and South & West Fife contains the largest proportion of vacant & derelict land (49% of Fife's total). Reducing the amount of vacant and derelict land has been a priority for Fife and since 2015, Fife has been one of only five Scottish local authorities to receive funding from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Regional Prosperity Framework (2021-2041)
- Tay Cities Regional Economic Strategy
- Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021)
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Tourism Strategy
- Mid-Fife Investment Prospectus (April 2021)
- Office for National Statistics, Job Density, accessed via NOMIS
- Office for National Statistics, Business Demography, UK
- Office for National Statistics, UK Business Counts, accessed via NOMIS
- Office for National Statistics Annual Population Survey, accessed via NOMIS
- Office for National Statistics, Claimant Count, accessed via NOMIS
- Businesses in Scotland: 2024 and Scottish Annual Business Statistics 2022, Scottish Government
- The Leven Programme

Community wealth building

5.390 The Scottish Government has given community wealth building (CWB) a place in national planning policy to encourage, promote, and facilitate a new strategic approach to economic development that also provides a practical model for building a wellbeing economy at local, regional, and national levels. Community wealth building seeks to change the way that economies function by aiming to retain more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people.

5.391 Community wealth building is a central part of the Scottish Government's strategy for achieving a wellbeing economy. To advance the use of the Community Wealth Building model, the Scottish Government has committed to introducing the Community Wealth Building Bill during the 2024-25 parliamentary year. The Bill seeks to address economic and wealth inequality and ensure consistent implementation of the model across Scotland.

5.392 Fife is one of five pilot areas in Scotland that received support from the Scottish Government during the COVID-19 pandemic to develop a community wealth building action plan. Fife Council, and its partners, worked with CLES (Centre for Local Economic Strategies) to develop an action plan, which was published in March 2021 and laid the groundwork for adopting a community wealth building approach.

5.393 Since then, Fife Council and the Community Planning Partnership has positioned community wealth building as the unifying approach to deliver the Local Outcome Improvement Plan's (Plan4Fife) priorities to tackle poverty and prevent crisis, grow Fife's economy, and address the climate emergency,

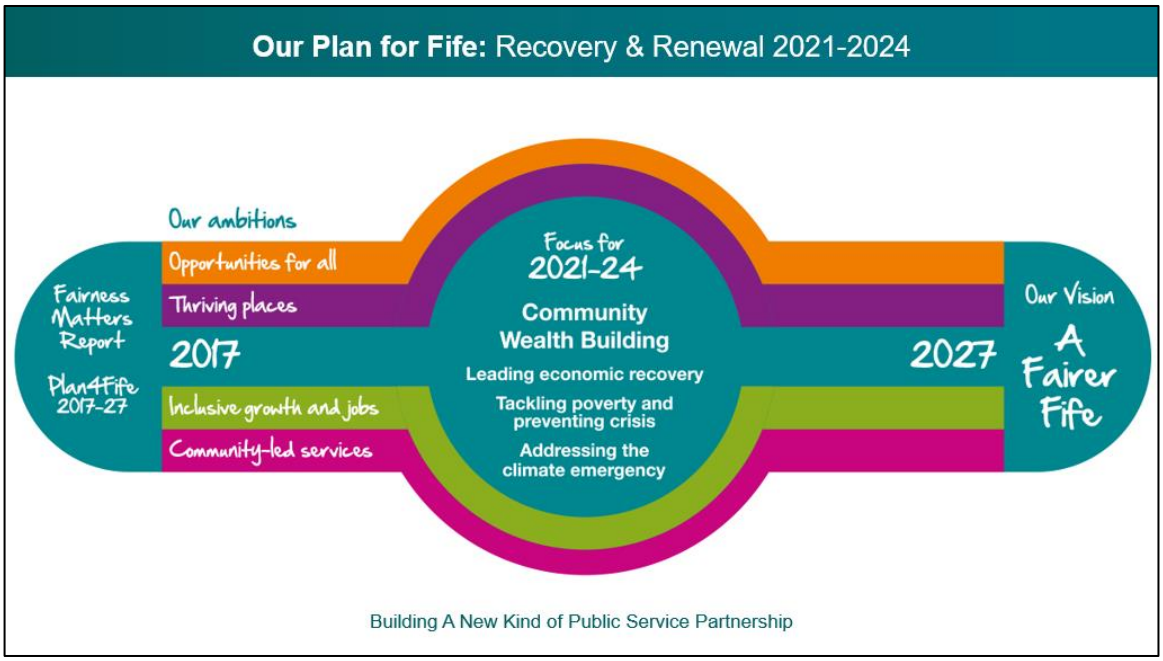
5.394 In April 2022, Fife partners adopted the Fife Anchor Charter, demonstrating their commitment to deploy a community wealth building approach to reframe Fife's local economy and improve communities and their wellbeing. This demonstrates a long-term commitment to collaboration that is being reflected in Fife's key strategies and plans. Some examples of how community wealth building is being embedded in strategic planning and policy intents are:

- Climate Fife's Big Community Move sets CWB as a fundamental part of supporting community climate action and a Just Transition.
- NHS Fife's Population Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028 sets out NHS Fife as an anchor institution, as a key area of transformation to support the population of Fife and its healthcare needs. It sets out three of the CWB pillars as strategies for supporting communities and influencing health and wellbeing.
- Fife Health & Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 describes adopting a CWB approach within its commissioning strategy to increase the choice and availability of, and develop sustainable, social care services.
- The Fife Tourism Strategy 2023-2030 is prioritising Sustainable Tourism and sets out CWB as a model to be used to work with communities and localities

to develop their own tourism offering, and to develop community run facilities that give Fife a competitive edge.

- Fife Council's Corporate Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 recognises CWB as one of its four Strategic Drivers, incorporating Sustainable Procurement alongside it.

Figure 5.34: Plan 4 Fife Community Wealth Building and Economic Recovery



Source: Fife Council, Plan 4 Fife

5.395 In 2023, Fife Council published its new Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030, which is underpinned by taking a community wealth building approach. The strategy seeks to grow a stronger, greener and fairer economy and ensure that more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in Fife and its communities for the benefit of all. The Economy and Community Wealth Building Board was established in December 2024 and seeks to more strongly connect the policy priorities of economy and community wealth building and develop a collaborative programme of work to transform policy into impactful practice and deliverables.

5.396 Central to the community wealth building model are five key strategies, or 'pillars', that are helping Fife deliver the approach: spending; workforce; land and property; plural ownership, and finance. Of these, the LDP can support and influence the spending, and land and property, and plural ownership pillars.

Spending

5.397 Spending involves investing in local businesses and supplier development to support a local supply chain, delivering tangible benefits for community organisations and promoting Fair Work principles (e.g. the living wage) with suppliers.

5.398 Public sector spending with Fife businesses is key to keeping wealth flowing locally. In 2023-24, Fife Council awarded 48% of its regulated contracts to Fife suppliers, 78% of which were Fife small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

5.399 The Dunfermline Learning Campus brings two High Schools and Fife College together on one site with purpose-built, low carbon facilities. The High Schools building opened its doors to pupils, staff and the community in 2024 and is the largest Passivhaus building in Europe. Contracts for the whole campus have generated significant and varied community benefits ranging from jobs, apprenticeships, work placements, and have supported Fife's supply chains. Also to benefit are community organisations, which received volunteer hours and donations, including donating two portacabins and materials for a community hub in Duloch Park.

Workforce

5.400 This pillar involves recruiting locally and supporting long-term employment opportunities, embedding Fair Work principles and promoting work that is secure, provides flexible working and training opportunities and supports the workforce to have an effective voice.

Land and Property

5.401 The new LDP can have a significant role in this. The pillar is about being imaginative in how land and property assets for communities and the environment are used and managed. Tackling vacant and derelict land and working with communities to explore different ownership models, like Community Asset Transfers. Community organisations are supported to explore community ownership and management of land and assets and find the right model that suits their needs. This may be a Community Asset Transfer, a subsidised lease policy or management of a council-owned asset. There are many examples of thriving community-owned assets (not just buildings), for example, Gallatown Community Hub, Forgan Arts Centre and Crail Community Hub (as well as small pieces of land in Crail).

5.402 Fife Council and NHS Fife have recently entered into shared use of council-owned buildings. NHS Fife staff have moved into Fife House and Bankhead, both in Glenrothes, meaning co-location of services can better support partnership work, whilst also demonstrating shared use of public assets.

5.403 The Proposed LDP can identify further opportunities to repurpose or share public sector assets, and avoid policies or designations that may inadvertently prevent these aims from being achieved.

Plural Ownership

5.404 Plural ownership is about developing and growing more local enterprises, like employee-owned enterprises, co-operatives, and social enterprises. Again, the Proposed LDP can support and not inhibit such enterprises which can contribute to the revitalisation of towns, villages, and neighbourhoods.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Economic Strategy (2023-2030)
- The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015

Implications of Fife-wide economy evidence for the Proposed LDP:

- Identify land use or policy requirements to support the 10-year, £58 million Fife Industrial Innovation Investment Programme funded by the Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Region.
- Support the delivery of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy (FELS) through the development of the spatial strategy and land use allocations.
- Ensure a sufficient supply and range of employment land sites across Fife to encourage new businesses and attract businesses to Fife with a focus on manufacturing and other growth sectors.
- Support Rosyth and Burntisland as part of the Forth Green Freeport. It is understood that planning processes may be streamlined.
- Consider the potential for MCAs while preparing the new LDP.
- Safeguard existing employment areas as well as analyse the current uses within these areas to identify areas where development that is not for employment use classes 4, 5 and 5 may be supported.
- Consider a tailored approach to the rural economy and provision of employment land to meet individual localities' needs.
- Tackle obsolescence and dereliction across the existing employment land and building stock and the prioritise the re-use of brownfield land within existing estates in preference to new allocations in greenfield locations.
- Focusing on redevelopment of vacant and derelict land sites will be a priority of the next LDP. The LDP will allocate appropriate uses for these sites including non-housing, employment, local energy generation and storage and community food growing.
- Consider allocating employment land in Mid-Fife with a focus on the manufacturing sector and in particular advanced manufacturing and engineering. The continued contribution of manufacturing to the Fife

economy will require an adequate supply of land use of class 5 to contribute to overall productivity growth.

- Consider allocating sites for employment uses in locations related to town centres and local centres, where appropriate, with better access to employment destinations using public transport and other sustainable methods of transport. This will be applied through the proposed site assessment methodology.
- Assist with delivering the aims of the City Region to be the capital of data driven innovation and the opportunities highlighted for Fife including geothermal potential, the Energy Park Fife in Methil and the Port of Rosyth/bridgehead.
- Promote the strategic location and rail connectivity of Longannet to benefit local communities around this part of the Forth. There are further opportunities for a range of economic activities and investment in ports associated with a green economy at Rosyth, Burntisland, and Methil.
- Identify economic development opportunities to capitalise on the Levenmouth rail link which reconnects Leven to the mainline rail network with new stations at Leven and Cameron Bridge. This will enhance the communities it serves and contribute positively to the lives of people who live there by unlocking access to social, cultural, employment, and educational opportunity.
- Support the roll-out of superfast broadband and mobile technologies to help make Fife companies competitive as well as reduce car travel and deliver net zero ambitions.
- Allocating land for affordable homes across Fife to help retain younger people to maintain working population levels required to meet the employment needs.
- Embed community wealth building principles in its spatial strategy, ensuring that land use and development promote economic resilience, reduce inequalities, and prioritise community benefits.
- Develop guidance on how community wealth building will be applied through the planning system.
- Continue joint working sider working with other Council Services and partner pubic sector organisations involved in asset transfers with regard to site allocation and associated suitable uses.
- Consider allocating land for co-location of services and shared use of public assets.
- Consider policies that could actively promote developments to generate local employment opportunities, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas, while fostering skills development in key sectors such as the green economy, digital industries, and tourism. Additionally, policies could require major developments to prioritise local suppliers and contractors, thereby enhancing economic circulation and strengthening the region's economy.
- The Local Development Plan could encourage and facilitate projects that transfer public or vacant assets to community groups for regeneration, housing, or enterprise development.
- The Local Development Plan should promote creating spaces that balance economic growth with social and environmental benefits. This could include

supporting mixed-use developments, green infrastructure, and sustainable transport systems

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- A key agencies group was set up to help preparation of the Evidence Report. Scottish Enterprise were represented on that group.
- No areas of disagreement were raised with regard to the evidence in this section. However, Scottish Enterprise suggested an additional data source.
- Fife Council response: This matter has been addressed in the resubmission version.

- The Planning Service has worked and will continue to work closely with Fife Council's Business and Employability Service, Community and Neighbourhood Service, and other stakeholders in producing the Local Development Plan. These Services and Community planning Partnership bodies are represented on an operational group set up to prepare the LDP.
- Fife Council will continue to work with communities and other stakeholders to inform the emerging Local Development Plan spatial strategy and site selection process and help deliver the aims of Fife's economic strategy.

City/Town Centres, Commercial Centres and Retail – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy context

Policy 27: City, Town, Local and Commercial Centres
LDPs should support the sustainable futures for city, town and local centres, in particular opportunities to enhance city and town centres. They should, where relevant, also support proposals for improving the sustainability of existing commercial centres where appropriate.

LDPs should identify a network of centres that reflect the principles of 20-minute neighbourhoods and the town centre vision.

LDPs should be informed by evidence on where clustering of non-retail uses may be adversely impacting on the wellbeing of communities. They should also consider, and if appropriate identify, any area where drive through facilities may be acceptable where they would not negatively impact on the principles of local living or sustainable travel.

LDPs should provide a proportion of their Local Housing Land Requirements in city and town centres and be proactive in identifying opportunities to support residential developments.

Policy 28 Retail
LDPs should consider where there may be a need for further retail provision, this may be:

- where a retail study identifies deficiencies in retail provision in terms of quality and quantity in an area; or
- when allocating sites for housing or the creation of new communities, in terms of the need for neighbourhood shopping, and supporting local living. LDPs should identify areas where proposals for healthy food and drink outlets can be supported.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.405 Fife has nine town centres as defined in the adopted Local Development Plan (FIFEplan 2017). However, Dunfermline is now recognised as a city and this will be reflected in the LDP. Although nine town centres are defined there are many local shopping centres which serve settlements such as Burntisland and Inverkeithing. Many settlements have local shopping centres which are often the heart of the settlements and residential areas in the larger settlements such as Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes. More information on local shopping centres can be found in the locality sections of the Evidence Report.

5.406 One of the main aims of the Fife Economic Strategy (2023-2030) is to create vibrant, attractive and re-purposed key city/town centres by delivering place-

based investment in business premises and infrastructure. This is also a key aim of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan for Fife (LOIP). Some of the ways in which the Council and its partners intend to deliver the outcomes of the Economic Strategy include:

- Opportunities arising from Dunfermline's new city status.
- Public realm improvements & built heritage regeneration.
- Public realm improvements and town centre housing developments in Kirkcaldy.
- Delivering Glenrothes town centre masterplan.
- Built heritage regeneration programmes, including those in Inverkeithing and Buckhaven.
- Town centre housing.
- The productive redevelopment of vacant & derelict land.
- Town centre business improvement grants.
- Shop local initiatives & town centre animation events.

5.407 Fife has continued to deliver significant capital investment in infrastructure and place, including the Fife i3 Programme[4] and town centres. However, retail vacancy rates remain high in key city/town centres, with particular issues around major large-scale vacant retail units.

5.408 The challenges facing Fife's city/town centres are largely the well-known ongoing issues, although following the COVID-19 Pandemic the impact of some of these has increased with a notable shift in the pace of change. There is recognition that a number of these challenges present opportunities to implement fundamental change for towns and city.

5.409 The future of Fife's city/town centres continues to generate debate and much concern. An increasing number of prominent stores have closed units in Fife, with Kirkcaldy particularly badly affected. Some 8.8% of workers in Fife (14,900) are employed in sales or customer service occupations, highlighting the human impact that may come from further store closures.

5.410 Experian GOAD data indicates that the number of shops in the main city/town centres in Fife has declined since 2018, the exception being Cupar, where there has been an increase. The number of shops in Glenrothes has not changed, indicating stability. The greatest decline has been in Kirkcaldy, which has not performed well, and in St Andrews. In the case of the latter, the effects of the pandemic will have been felt in terms of reduced visitor spending, for example.

5.411 A town centre framework was produced for Kirkcaldy (2015) with one for Dunfermline city centre underway. In 2020 a masterplan was devised for Glenrothes town centre creating an overall vision for the town centre over a 10-year period with a focus on connectivity. It identifies potential

[4] Fife Industrial Innovation Investment.

opportunities, key design principles and provides an action plan setting out details of specific actions and interventions.

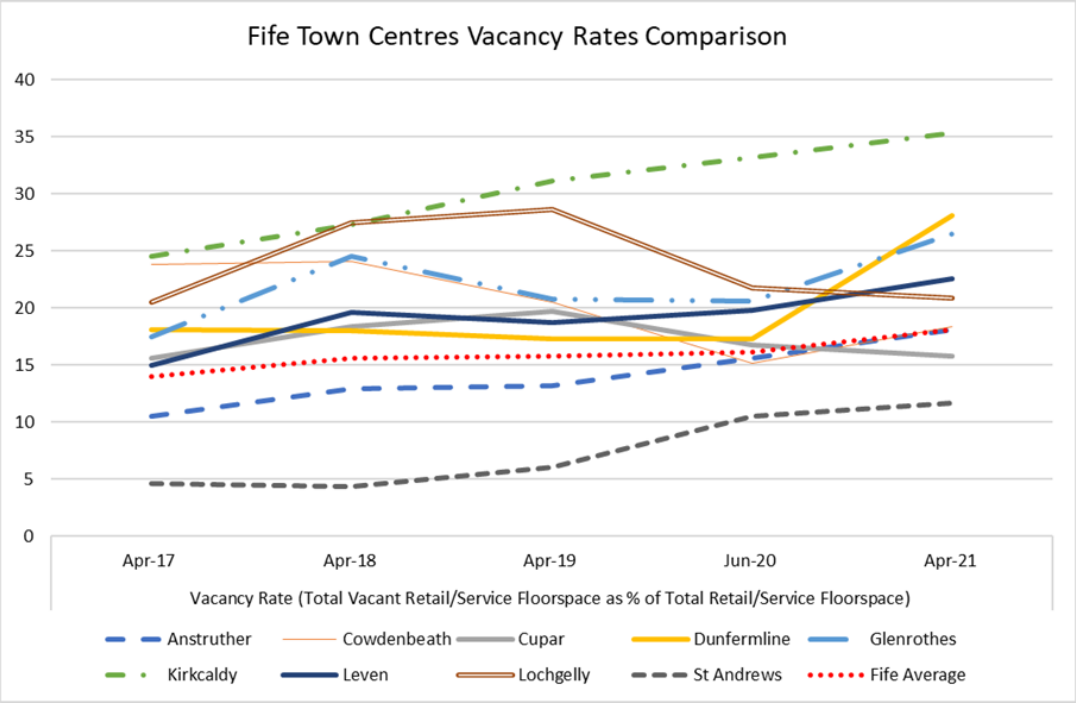
City/Town Centre Vacancy Rates

5.412 Experian GOAD vacancy rate data highlights rates in Fife have risen markedly in Kirkcaldy and St Andrews since 2018. There have also been significant increases in vacant units in Dunfermline and Glenrothes. Vacancies have decreased in Cowdenbeath and Cupar.

5.413 City/Town centre vacancy rates see significant variation across Fife, with mid-Fife again badly affected. Vacancy rates of city/town centre retail/service units as at April 2021 includes 22.6% in Leven, 26.5% in Glenrothes, 35.3% in Kirkcaldy and 28.1% in Dunfermline, all above the Fife average of 18.8%.

5.414 The average Fife city/town centre retail vacancy rate in 2021 was above the Scottish average rate of 12.1%. City/Town centre action plans are exploring ways to rejuvenate these areas, such as transforming traditional shopping areas into multi use zones containing housing, community facilities, entertainment and offices. One reason for an increase in vacancies is that many of the units in Fife's city/ town centres are too small and so not attractive to new businesses.

Figure 5.35: Fife City/Town Centres Vacancy Rates Comparison 2017-2021



Source: Experian GOAD

5.415 There are high and rising retail vacancy rates in many of Fife's town and city centres as their role continues to evolve as a result of changing shopping habits and community behaviours. The responses required to manage this change and revitalise city/town centres are complex and will need to be different for each place. Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, Dunfermline and Leven have

seen significant rises in their vacancy rates since 2017. Smaller towns have not had as steep an increase in their vacancy rates. Whilst St Andrews' vacancy rate has risen it tends to buck the trend due to the high visitor rates and location of St Andrews University.

Table 5.16: Changes in City/Town Centre Uses 2012-2021

Use Type	City/Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m2) Change between 2012 and 2021		
	Fife April 2012	Fife April 2021	Fife Change
Assembly	11,830	11,630	**-200**
Comparison	138,100	104,730	**-33,370**
Convenience	21,030	20,670	**-360**
Convenience/Comparison	16,460	12,300	**-4,160**
Food and Drink	33,360	36,410	**3,050**
Hotel/Hostel	4,630	3,830	**-800**
Leisure	20,790	25,300	**4,510**
Medical	2,000	2,460	**460**
Office	10,000	10,100	**100**
Service	55,320	50,330	**-4,990**
Vacant	44,720	76,920	**32,200**

Data Source: Experian GOAD

5.416 The table above shows the changes in uses within Fife's city/town centres from 2012 and 2021 using Experian GOAD data. As well as the significant increase in vacant floorspace, there has been a significant decrease in comparison floorspace within city/town centres which strengthens the need to diversify town centre uses to create vibrant, healthy, creative, enterprising, accessible and resilient places for people to live, learn, work, enjoy and visit. Convenience floorspace has remained around the same level over the period whilst convenience/comparison (supermarkets etc) floorspace has decreased albeit not at the same scale as comparison floorspace.

Non-Domestic Rates

5.417 Non-Domestic Rates remains an issue for many businesses with disparities which were highlighted during the Barclay Review[5] still remaining. Online retailers which have grown in number since the pandemic are not subject to rates and so it is not a level playing field. Whilst it should be acknowledged that reliefs such as the Small Business Bonus Scheme have assisted many small businesses in city/town centres across Fife, the rates system has

[5] Commissioned by the Scottish government in 2017, the Barclay Review (chaired by Kenneth Barclay) was introduced to reform the business rates system in Scotland in order to better support business growth.

several anomalies, remains outdated and places a huge burden on many city/town centre businesses.

5.418 Of concern in a Fife context, is the lack of incentive for owners of listed buildings to find economic uses for empty/neglected historic buildings. These are often hard to let/renovate and attract 100% empty property relief. The Barclay review proposed to address this by focusing relief on active property and further to increase liabilities on long-term vacant listed buildings.

Physical Constraints

5.419 City/town centres by their very nature are constrained, often developed over time on historic street patterns. City/town centres typically contain older buildings which are often difficult and expensive to re-develop. The additional costs of addressing these buildings often act as a disincentive meaning potential investors will opt for edge of centre or out of town sites which are easier to develop and typically generate greater returns.

5.420 The opportunity is to look at the VAT elements associated with town centre developments (similar to the former Business Property Renovation Allowance and made available in all town centre areas) and look at other supports which could incentivise developers such as energy and environmental efficiency, noise mitigation and provision of green space in city/town centre locations.

City/town centre living

5.421 City/town centres offer a social, cultural, and economic heart to a community and people are increasingly looking to live well locally. By developing and delivering a programme of city/town centre housing, the Council can help pivot struggling high streets away from an over-reliance on retailing and align with Scottish Government's Town Centre First Approach and focus on 20-minute neighbourhoods. Overall, city/towns remain relatively underpopulated in term of city/town centre living an there is an opportunity to develop homes in town centres which play a role in achieving stronger communities. Rejuvenated town centres that have more people living them is central to this ambition.

5.422 In June 2021, Fife Council's Policy and Coordination Committee approved the development of a City/Town Centre Housing approach as part of an in-principal proposal for the development and delivery of a transitional two-year development programme from May 2022. The Council's Planning, Business & Employability, Estates, Communities & Neighbourhoods, and Housing Services and the Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) have collaborated on town centre housing projects during the Phase 2 and Phase 3 Affordable Housing Programmes. These projects are important to stimulate city/town centre regeneration, economic recovery and to create affordable

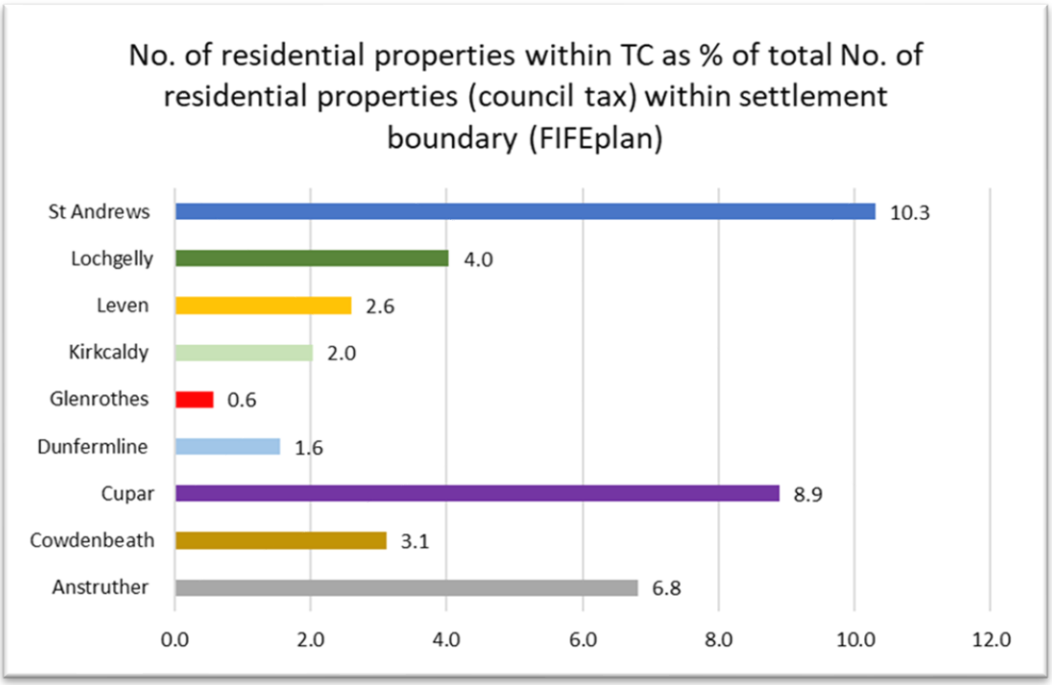
town centre living opportunities. To achieve a greater and sustained impact, a more comprehensive approach for the housing in town centres is required.

Table 5.17: Number of residential properties by city/town centre

City/Town Centre	No. of residential properties within City/Town Centre (No. of properties where council tax is paid)	Total No. of residential properties (council tax) within settlement boundary (FIFEplan)
Anstruther	147	2,158
Cowdenbeath	182	5,842
Cupar	397	4,466
Dunfermline	390	25,115
Glenrothes	102	17,705
Kirkcaldy	516	25,277
Leven	337	12,948
Lochgelly	145	3,590
St Andrews	714	6,925

Source: Scottish Assessors Portal

Figure 5.36: Residential properties within City/Town Centres as % of total properties within settlement



Source: Scottish Assessors Portal

5.423 Recent residential development projects in Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy, and Cupar town centres, have demonstrated that mixed use developments could

enable the Council to lever in other sources of funding. Partners have worked to assemble town centre sites of sufficient scale for 20 - 30 units. These have been assembled from repurposing Council assets, former industrial buildings, sites in the ownership Fife Housing Association Alliance partners and using Compulsory Purchase Orders. Different approaches are being tested to work within education capacities such as smaller units, targeting older occupiers and mid-market rental units to cater for the widest range of occupiers and funding opportunities. The figures above provide an overview of the current housing located within Fife's city and town centres. The low figure for Glenrothes can be accounted for due to the fact it is essentially a shopping mall and is surrounded on three sides by residential uses.

Commercial Centres

5.424 Development Plans should identify a network of centres and explain how they can complement each other. Plans should also identify commercial centres which have a more specific focus on retailing and/or leisure uses. Fife has four commercial centres:

- Fife Leisure Park (Dunfermline)
- Halbeath Retail Park (Dunfermline)
- Fife Central Retail Park (Kirkcaldy)
- Saltire Retail Park (Glenrothes)

5.425 Town centre frameworks were developed for the town centres and out of centre commercial centres indicating acceptable uses within the current LDP (FIFEplan). The Local Development Plan will consider the appropriate uses within town centres and commercial centres whilst employing a town centres first policy. Fife has the largest online retail offer in Scotland at the Amazon Regional Distribution Centre in Dunfermline. However, it is exposed to the channelling of most investment into major cities such as Edinburgh.

Convenience and comparison retail

5.426 The COVID pandemic significantly negatively affected the retail sector and there is still uncertainty to what extent Fife has recovered. Other factors such as the 2008-09 recession have played a part along with changes in shopping behaviour. The pandemic accelerated trends in the retail sector of which the following are identified:

- Concentration of retail investment into dominant centres.
- Growth in online shopping.
- Diversification away from shopping.
- Lifestyle changes influencing shopping patterns.

Convenience expenditure capacity and forecast capacity 2021-2031

5.427 The 2021 Retail Capacity Study shows that Fife is well-provided with supermarkets and discount food stores. While there is no forecasted spare convenience capacity in each of the three catchment areas up to 2031, (especially in West Fife), it does not mean no new development beyond the existing consents, just that any further development is likely to be limited.

5.428 National trends indicate a trend towards more localised convenience shopping trips as part of changing lifestyles, with more people working from home and increasing traffic congestion making trips by car tiresome. Consideration of additional new store development proposed in the future is likely to be required to address quality and choice, rather than meeting a deficiency in convenience floorspace.

5.429 The lack of forecast capacity would not generally be an obstacle to providing for this trend. However, the next LDP would need to identify opportunity locations for additional local or neighbourhood centre provision.

Comparison expenditure capacity and forecast capacity 2021-2031

5.430 Forecast retail capacity is a broad-brush exercise. New retail developments will also be partly serviced by trade diversion from existing stores and centres, which is a factor not included in retail capacity studies generally.

5.431 Furthermore, the high proportions of online comparison expenditure in recent years add complexity, as some new retail developments could divert trade back to retail floorspace that might otherwise remain online. That prospect is unlikely to be of sufficient importance to undermine the basic estimated percentage of internet spending as a guide to what expenditure is available (after it is deducted) to service retail floorspace in capacity studies.

5.432 In West Fife, the forecast spare comparison expenditure would support low/moderate levels of new retail development up to 2031 (over and above existing consents) - up to some £21 million. If potential trade diversion from existing retail floorspace to new proposals in the future is considered, the level would be higher.

5.433 In Mid Fife, the forecast spare capacity could support substantial additional comparison retail floorspace up to 2031- up to some £57 million expenditure.

5.434 In East Fife, the forecast spare comparison expenditure capacity is limited up to 2031 (up to £3.5 million expenditure) but could support minor levels of additional comparison floorspace over and above existing consents.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Economic Strategy (2023-2030)
- Fife Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)
- Experian GOAD Retail Uses Statistics 2012-2021
- Experian GOAD Vacancy Rate Statistics
- A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres Feb 2021
- Inquiry into Retail and Town Centres in Scotland Report Nov 2022
- Town Centre Action Plan Review: joint Scottish Government and COSLA response April 2022
- Fife Council's Town Centre Housing Approach
- Kirkcaldy Town Centre Framework 2015
- Glenrothes Town Centre Masterplan 2020
- Town Centres SWOT Analysis 2022
- Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Surveys
- Fife Housing Land Audits
- Fife Retail Capacity Study 2021
- The Future is Now | Kirkcaldy | Love Oor Lang Toun

Implications of commercial centres and retail evidence for the Proposed LDP:

- Civic and commercial centres will be prominent in the new LDP spatial strategy.
- Consider how to plan for Fife's city and town centres to increase their resilience and reduce their vulnerability to changes in shopping patterns and the accessibility of other retail and leisure opportunities. This may include a gradual changing of role of city/town centres seeing more facilities and services for local residents, supporting the Living Well Locally approach.
- Use a City/Town Centres First policy to implement NPF4 Policies 27 and 28. This may involve bespoke local policies and the use of development frameworks for town centres and commercial centres to support their revitalisation and re-use.
- Consider a policy framework to enable uses other than traditional retail and service within town centres including community, health, and employment uses. Multi-functional community hubs should be investigated.
- Identify opportunities to create city/town centre accommodation/living space alongside retail, leisure, public services and other non-traditional uses should be maximised.
- Plan for a variety of accommodation types including accommodation for older people within city/town centres.
- Consider allocating viable development sites for residential use within city/town centres with a focus on redeveloping brownfield land.

- Where possible, plan for facilities, such as health care and infrastructure at the same time as planned housing, or prior to the provision of housing. This may require development requirements to be specified in the LDP.
- Protect and enhance the heritage, cultural, and leisure assets of city/town centres.
- Consider redeveloping/repurposing buildings where possible and, where they are too dilapidated or unfit for reuse, consider demolition and redevelopment in a way that contributes to a placemaking agenda for city/town centre spaces.
- Identify opportunities for the enhancement and creation of green and social spaces in city/town centre locations.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- There were no areas of disagreement with regard to the evidence in this section. Planning Services worked closely and will continue to work closely with Fife Council Services, Business and Employability Service's Town Centres Unit, other Council services and stakeholders.
- Responses by businesses and the public to an invite to have their say about where the live and visit identified concerns about commercial centres, shopping, and related environmental matters.
- Fife Council will continue to work closely with businesses, communities and other stakeholders, including the Council's Town Centres Unit, to embed a town centres first approach in the Local Development Plan and look at how town centres are repurposed so they can thrive and be a place that can be used by all.

Tourism – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy context

Policy 30 - Tourism:
LDPs should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector. The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. Relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies should also be taken into account. The spatial strategy should also identify areas of pressure where existing tourism provision is having adverse impacts on the environment or the quality of life and health and wellbeing of local communities, and where further development is not appropriate

NPF4 seeks to encourage and support sustainable tourism development that benefits local people, is consistent with net zero and nature commitments, and inspires people to visit Fife. Local Development Plans should support the recovery, growth and long-term resilience of the tourism sector.

The spatial strategy should identify suitable locations which reflect opportunities for tourism development by taking full account of the needs of communities, visitors, the industry and the environment. Relevant national and local sector driven tourism strategies should also be taken into account.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.435 The Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030 identifies tourism as a key sector within the Fife economy and recognises the importance of the sector in contributing to Fife's overall economic growth. The figure below highlights some key tourism statistics for Fife. Tourism is strong thematically and locationally with St Andrews and Dunfermline being major drivers. Important to the tourism offer is Fife's outstanding historic and natural environment. The Economic Strategy aims to support and deliver investment in sustainable tourism infrastructure.

Figure 5.37: Fife Tourism Statistics

Source: Welcome to Fife

5.436 The vision for Fife as a tourism destination is set out in Fife's Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2030. This was developed in partnership with the industry in Fife. It is a key growth sector in Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-230 that aims to grow a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife, ensuring that more wealth is generated, circulated and retained in Fife and its communities for the benefit of all.

Tourism Strategies

5.437 Scotland Outlook 2030, the national tourism strategy, was produced by the Scottish Tourism Alliance, Scottish Government, VisitScotland, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland. Tourism plays a significant role in delivering wider Fife and Scotland wider economic strategies. The role of tourism has changed since the pandemic, the UK's EU exit and changes in consumer wants and needs and the Local Development Plan will play its part in enabling change and growth of the tourism sector.

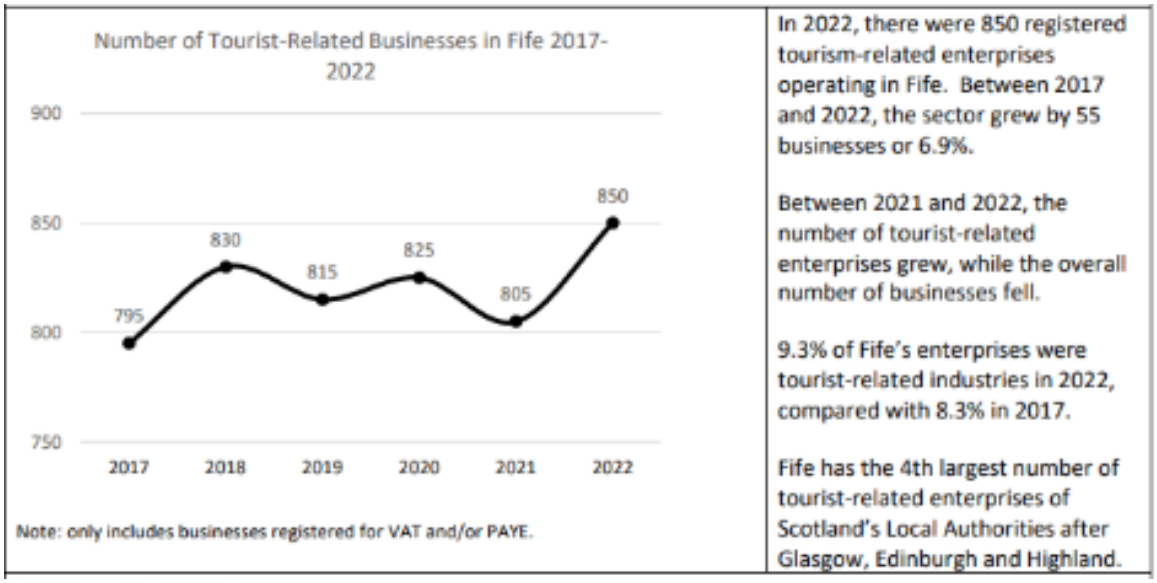
5.438 It is the aim of Fife's Tourism Strategy that, by 2030, the Kingdom of Fife will be a world class visitor destination known for being a leader in sustainable tourism, and renowned for the warm welcome visitors receive. Fife will be a venue for major events, and a first-choice destination renowned for its variety of offering including stunning scenery, relaxing escapes, cultural attractions & experiences, outdoor activities, and excellent local food & drink.

5.439 Fife's Tourism Strategy further emphasises tourism as a key sector in the Fife Economy. In the year prior to the COVID pandemic (2019), the Kingdom of Fife attracted 2.795 million visitors. The STEAM Report (see figure below) states that these visitors generated a total economic impact of £357.09m and supported 5,487 FTE jobs. This represents 7% of all jobs and 9% of Fife's businesses.

Figure 5.38: The Visitor Economy in Fife

Source: STEAM report – Fife Tourism Economic Impact

Figure 5.39: Number of tourist-related businesses (2022)



Source: ONS UK Business Counts

5.440 In 2023 the visitor economy had recovered from the pandemic and was enjoying a period of growth, with 3.2 million visitors generating an economic impact of £513m. As illustrated in the figure above, from 2021 to 2022 there was a noticeable increase in the number of tourist related businesses in Fife rising from 805 to 850. Recovery in the international market has been particularly strong (for example 95% of business at the Old Course Hotel is from the North American market). Visitors help support accommodation and food service activities across Fife. The Plan4Fife (LOIP) sets out ambitions to increase visitor numbers, and value, to generate more tourism businesses and employment in Fife.

5.441 Fife is linked with Edinburgh and the Lothians in the south by the Forth Bridge, one of Scotland's eight UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is a 2.5km-long, 110m-high cantilever bridge that stretches across the estuary of the River Forth. It is visible from south Fife, dominating the outlook across the Forth. The Forth Bridge was innovative in its design, materials and scale.

5.442 The top 3 reasons for visiting Fife highlighted in the Visit Scotland Visitors Survey 2023 are the scenery and landscape (72%), history and culture (48%), and outdoor activities available (33%). 65% of visitors to Fife are domestic, 35% international. 68% stayed in non-serviced accommodation, 32% in serviced accommodation. Visitors stayed for an average of 4.1 nights. Industry engagement has highlighted gaps in the provision of serviced accommodation in some settlements e.g. City of Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, and Cupar.

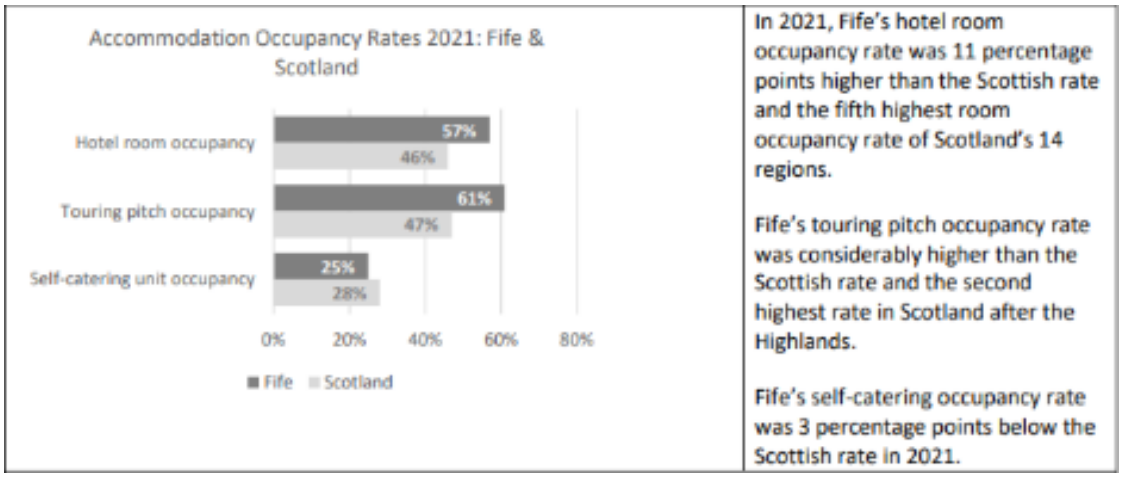
5.443 Fife's accommodation is often used by visitors to the City of Edinburgh at peak times. A lack of mid-range serviced accommodation in key locations is a barrier to growing the group travel sector in Fife. Short-term lets (STLs) is an issue for some locations in Fife and the Council is considering information on the sector with a view to deciding whether there is a need to designate a control area. It is nevertheless recognised that STLs do serve the visitor economy. STLs are further considered in a housing context in the main Evidence Report in the Fife-wide housing section, the localised housing for the North East Fife locality, and Annexes 8 and 9.

Visitor Accommodation

5.444 The supply of non-serviced accommodation makes a positive contribution to local economy, supporting the food, art, entertainment and recreation sectors in the local economy. Many businesses have applied for a short-term let licence. Second homes also contribute to serviced accommodation supply and 29% of visitors come to visit friends and family. Fife performs above the Scottish average in terms of hotel room occupancy and touring pitch occupancy; however it is below the average for self-catering unit occupancy as the figure below illustrates. The University of St Andrews' student accommodation is also dual purpose, used for visitors, business conferences and events during the summer recess. However, there is a requirement to

manage the negative aspects of this type of accommodation on local communities.

Figure 5.40: Accommodation Occupancy (2021)



Source: Visit Scotland

5.445 Welcome to Fife, Fife's Tourism agency, regularly surveys visitors to assess the socio-economic demographic of visitors and their needs, and consumer trends. Requirements found in Fife Tourism: Identifying Growth Opportunities Report (2023) include places for wellness, relaxation, outdoor activities and getting away from it all, and environmental sustainability and responsible tourism, to protect destinations for the future. Key domestic target markets are young families and retirees. These reflect in the ambitions for tourism in Fife – to extend the visitor season with a particular focus on the shoulder months; to ensure that sustainability is at the forefront, contributing to Fife's climate change ambitions, and ensuring that the Fife tourism industry is inclusive and accessible.

5.446 Outcomes from the Identifying Growth Opportunities Report (2023) show that Fife's tourism assets include its greenspace, coastline, its landscapes, historic buildings, conservation areas, town centres and quality food and drink offering. They have dual purpose – enjoyed by residents as much as by visitors, contributing to quality of life and community. Maintaining and widening access to these assets is critical for the wider distribution of visitors, encouraging them to travel and explore Fife sustainably and to provide an inclusive destination. Fife is ideally placed as a visitor location with good rail links (especially in light of the new Levenmouth rail link) and proximity to Edinburgh Airport. However, visitors can struggle to navigate themselves around the area by public transport once here.

5.447 Fife aims to be a venue for major events. This is more than international golf events in St Andrews. It is increasingly a purpose of Fife's town centres. There is a requirement that these places have the capability to do so safely, and efficiently to offer entertainment to visitors and residents. It has been

well documented that the tourism and hospitality sector struggle to attract and retain staff. Tourism jobs are often located in rural areas, with shift working where there is a shortage of affordable homes.

5.448 Some of the findings from local tourism research are applicable for the whole of Fife. From the City of Dunfermline tourism evaluation in 2023, visitors seek authentic cultural experiences engaging with residents to share local culture (see figure below). There is an opportunity to develop Fife's physical cultural assets from its industrial past to offer a competitive proposition to visitors. However, there is evidence of gaps in Fife's tourism infrastructure and areas where over-tourism can be an issue at peak periods. The use of motorhomes by visitors requires a wider network of infrastructure to support increasing demand. Car parking for visitors with accessibility requirements, public toilets, access points for visitor destinations across Fife, and digital connectivity are all required if Fife is to sustain the resilience of the sector in the future.

Figure 5.41: Concerns regarding Fife as a tourism destination

Source: Identifying Growth Opportunities Report 2023

Tourism Environmental Impact

5.449 Both international and domestic tourism are significant contributors to climate change. Services such as travel, accommodation, food, and activities create substantial social and environmental impacts. It is easy to assume these are international destinations, beach resorts and airlines, however 80% of the tourism industry is made up of small and medium-sized businesses like many of those in Fife.

5.450 The tourism sector is also highly vulnerable to climate change with natural assets such as beaches, forests and oceans being affected, as well as historic buildings being damaged by a warmer, wetter climate. With more extreme weather, tourism businesses could lose physical assets or if the risks of a more volatile climate drive up the cost of business. This has

already been experienced with the heatwaves and fires of Summer 2022, flooding, and winter storms. Building back after the pandemic has given Fife an opportunity to rethink tourism, its impacts, benefits and advance the transition towards a carbon neutral and resilient tourism economy.

Sustainable Tourism

5.451 Scotland Outlook 2030, the national tourism strategy was developed with a much greater emphasis on sustainability and responsible tourism is the biggest shift in global tourism priorities since before the pandemic. Local Authorities, industry bodies and stakeholders have their own climate change targets to meet which in turn makes businesses think about their sustainability goals. This is not wholly environmental sustainability, but social and economic as well. Visitors have higher needs and expectations which must be met in order for a destination to remain competitive. Fife Council and partners will ensure that Fife retains that competitive edge by:

- Environmental sustainability – delivering the Fife Sustainable Tourism Action Plan and promote responsible tourism practices.
- Transport – facilitating the use of active travel options for visitors in Fife and make this option as easy to access as possible.
- Community Wealth Building – working with communities and localities to develop their own tourism offering, and to develop community run facilities.
- Accessibility – positioning Fife as an inclusive and accessible destination.

5.452 The Local Development Plan can potentially assist with these aims in several ways including protecting and enhancing the natural environment, improving public transport provision and accessibility and embedding a community wealth building approach in its policy framework.

Links to Evidence

- Strategy - Welcome to Fife for Industry
- Fifes Economic strategy 2023-30
- Scotland Outlook 2020 - Sustainable Tourism
- City of Dunfermline tourism evaluation in 2023
- ONS UK Business Counts
- STEAM report – Fife Tourism Economic Impact
- Visit Scotland Visitors to Fife survey 2023
- Fife Tourism – Tourism Statistics & Research (VisitScotland.org)
- Fife Tourism: Identifying Growth Opportunities April 2023

Implications of tourism evidence for the Proposed LDP

- Future policy approaches will take account of the importance of the tourism industry to the Fife economy. Any local policies or principles will be developed with the tourism agencies and business stakeholders.
- Consider identifying suitable locations for tourism development.
- Consider the impact of climate change on existing and future tourism from the effects of climate change.
- Support the aims and ambitions of sustainable tourism which cover environmental sustainability, transport, community wealth building and accessibility.
- Take account of ongoing work on the planning policy position of short-term let accommodation.
- Identify opportunities to re-use redundant buildings for tourism and leisure purposes.
- Identify policies, principles, or proposals that will support the implementation of Fife's tourism objectives.
- Tourism opportunities within rural areas may require a tailored policy approach which will be better understood as the Proposed LDP is prepared.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- There were no areas of disagreement regarding the evidence in this section. The Planning Service will continue to work with other Fife Council Services, businesses, and other stakeholders as well as communities to ensure the aims and objectives of the Tourism strategy are met, and to inform the Proposed LDP.

Minerals in Fife – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context

Policy 33: Minerals
LDPs should support a landbank of construction aggregates of at least 10-years at all times in the relevant market areas, whilst promoting sustainable resource management, safeguarding important workable mineral resources, which are of economic or conservation value, and take steps to ensure these are not sterilised by other types of development.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.453 NPF4's policy outcomes intend that sufficient mineral resources available to support industry and the Scottish economy, particularly in manufacturing, construction, and agriculture. It also safeguards important mineral deposits from being sterilised by other developments while implementing measures to protect communities and the environment from the impacts of extraction.

5.454 With an area of just over 500 square miles, Fife has a varied geography and geology. Due to the diversity of the latter, Fife is rich in potentially exploitable mineral resources such as igneous rock, sand and gravel, coal and silica sand.

5.455 Formerly Fife's main industry, the winning and working of coal resources has declined in tandem with the fall in the coal market and the move towards non-fossil fuel energy sources in addressing the climate crisis. Whilst there are, therefore, no longer any deep or opencast mines operational in Fife, the legacy of Fife's coal mining past remains an important factor in assessing both the suitability of new sites for development and the rehabilitation of former coal-related sites across Fife. The Mining Remediation Authority recently (July 2024) provided public sector bodies access to the individual layers which make up the Development High Risk Areas mapping. The Remediation Authority's Licences for Public Sector Bodies FAQ lists the mining data available under this arrangement. This additional detail on the presence of coal mining features will be particularly helpful during the site assessment and selection process, where coal mining features may impact on the quantum of development which can be accommodated on a site.

5.456 Over the last 10 years, three large abandoned opencast coal sites have been rehabilitated to an acceptable environmental condition using bond monies secured through conditions of planning permission. One of these sites has been secured as a community woodland by Forestry and Land Scotland; another has been restored to agriculture; whilst the third now has an active development proposal for a positive re-use of the site. The former

Westfield opencast coal site and hard rock quarry is under rehabilitation through new industrial and energy projects, whilst the former Comrie Colliery deep mine has planning permission in principle for renewable energy and leisure-led redevelopment. At Comrie Colliery, Pitfirrane, Frances and a number of other locations in Fife, progress is being made on turning the negative legacy of coal mining to positive future use by harnessing minewater as a geothermal resource, in line with the Scottish Government's ethos of Just Transition and linking to the LHEES.

5.457 In relation to non-coal mineral resources, the sand, gravel and hard rock aggregates are of good quality, with some very high value resources such as silica sand (used for glassmaking) and high PSV (polished stone value) hard rock aggregates available from Fife quarries. Fife is home to two of only four silica sand quarries in Scotland, for example, and the higher value and more scarce mineral resources have a wider market range than those worked for simply local use. NPF4 outlines that Local Development Plans should support a landbank of construction aggregates of at least 10 years at all times. The calculation of a single 10-year landbank figure is, however, not a simple exercise.

5.458 Whilst Fife Council keeps detailed records of the tonnage of minerals approved through planning permissions, there are several factors that militate against our ability to report a definitive landbank calculation for Fife. These factors include:

- the absence of specific demand figures for minerals across all user sectors (roads construction, housebuilding, renewables etc);
- the lack of detailed guidance at national level for the calculation and reporting of landbank figures; and
- the varying quality and scarcity (and therefore economic value and market range) of minerals, which leads to uncertainty over what the “Fife market” for minerals actually is.

5.459 In common with other minerals Local Authorities in Scotland, the calculation and evidencing of minerals landbanks is a matter that is currently under review by Fife Council through its participation in the Scottish Local Authorities Minerals Officers Working Group (MOWG). The MOWG sits under the auspices of the Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) Climate Change, Energy and Resources sub-committee, and is currently chaired by Fife Council's Lead Professional for Minerals. There are legitimate questions around market areas for different products (and different qualitative grades of the same product), as well as locational considerations with cross-authority/cross-national border impacts, which introduce uncertainty and lead to variation across local authorities in their interpretation of calculating the minimum 10-year landbank for Local Development Plans. In the coming year, the MOWG will be seeking to work with Government and industry representatives to bring consistency to a number of areas of minerals governance, including the requirement for a robust methodology for

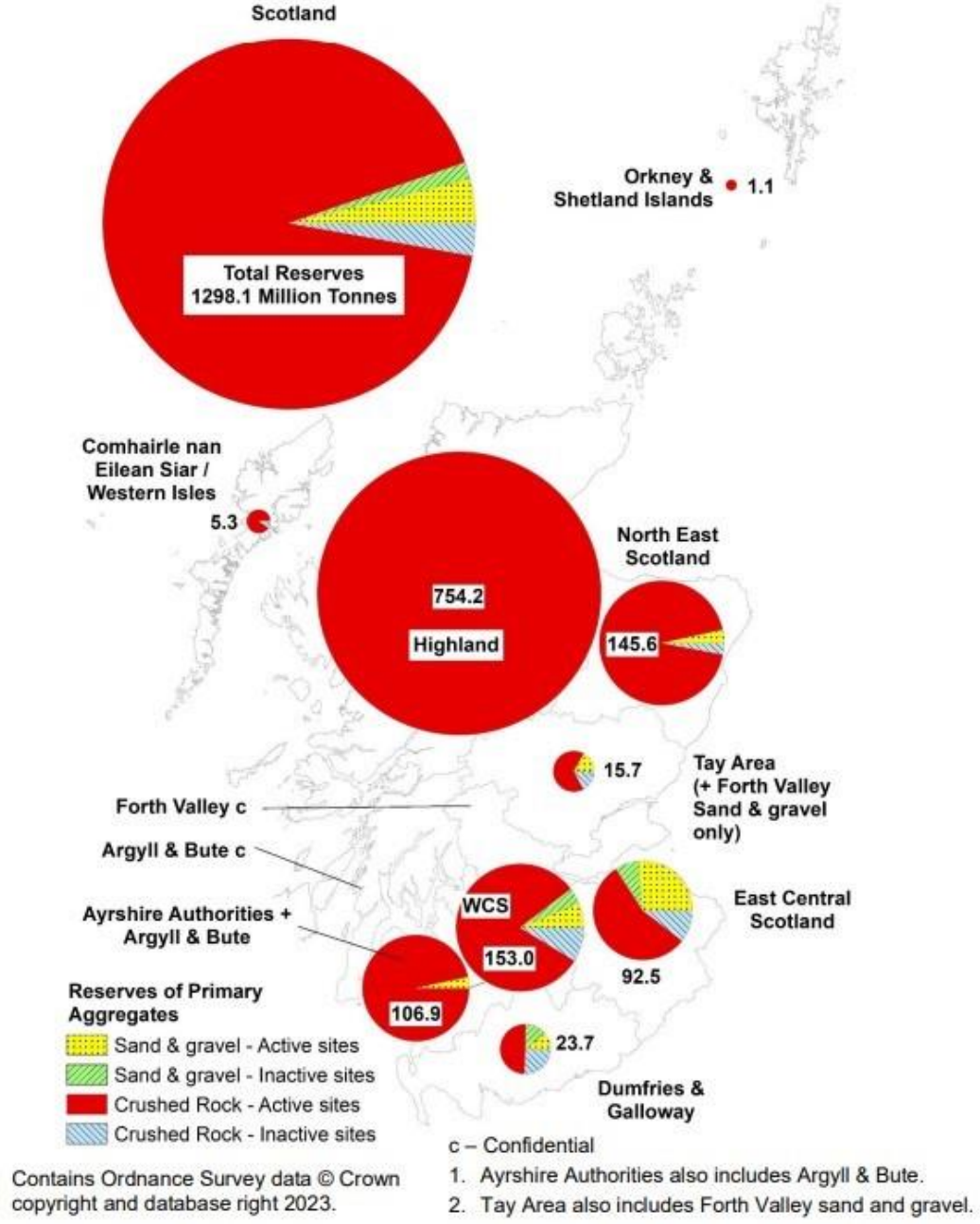
calculating a minimum 10-year minerals landbank to satisfy national guidance.

5.460 In seeking to address a number of the aforementioned factors, Fife has established an annual minerals survey for operators with quarries in the Fife Council area. This is to gain a better understanding of the up-to-date position of each quarry, assessing the tonnage of minerals worked and remaining, and understanding (commercial confidentiality permitting) what the market coverage is for each mineral resource. In all the annual mineral surveys carried out, neither the quarry operators nor the minerals planning agents have ever raised concerns regarding the lack of a sufficient minerals landbank in Fife, and Fife Council has not received any such intimation from the representative minerals industry bodies.

5.461 Fife currently has 15 active quarries: 8 hard rock; 6 sand and gravel (of which 2 are specialist silica sand quarries); and one quarry which produces both hard rock and sand and gravel. There are also dormant quarries, some of which operate on a campaign basis only, providing specialist minerals (e.g. dimension stone, which has a very high heritage value).

5.462 In addition to Fife Council's own annual minerals survey, the Scottish Government has recently partnered with BGS (British Geological Survey) to administer the national annual minerals survey. The 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland shows that East Central Scotland, which includes the Fife region, has the highest level of sand and gravel reserves (31.6 Mt) which is equivalent to 46% of the total sand gravel reserves in Scotland.

Figure 5.42 - Map of permitted reserves of primary aggregates across Scotland (2019)



Source: 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland

5.463 Taking these minerals surveys together, Fife Council is confident that an appropriate level of consented minerals resource – across a number of sectors and markets – is available within Fife.

5.464 Fife Council also currently chairs the Minerals Officers' Working Group (set up through the Heads of Planning Scotland committee structure), which is working at a national level to address the factors noted above.

5.465 Given the above, the priorities for Fife in the minerals context are safeguarding important workable mineral resources from sterilisation by other developments and minimising the impacts of the extraction of minerals on communities and the environment.

Links to Evidence

- Minerals Supplementary Guidance 2018
- 2019 Aggregate Minerals Survey for Scotland
- List of Fife's Quarries

Implications of Fife-wide evidence on minerals for the Proposed LDP:

- Notwithstanding the national challenges identified, there is a need to identify the 10 year landbank requirement.
- Site specific content from the existing Minerals Supplementary Guidance should be integrated into Local Development Plan 2 and/or additional supplementary guidance prepared.
- The new Local Development Plan should continue to prioritise the identification and safeguarding of significant mineral resources to meet local and regional demands, contributing to Fife's economy and supporting construction, energy production, and manufacturing industries.
- The new Local Development Plan should encourage opportunities for the increased use of secondary or recycled minerals resources to assist in the industry's contribution to addressing the climate emergency.
- The new Local Development Plan should reinforce PAN 50 principles and best practice on mitigating dust, noise, pollution, and landscape impacts from extraction activities, ensuring developments meet strict environmental standards.
- Consider if policy should reinforce emerging best practice on the use of Environmental Clerks of Works during operations and highlight that independent compliance officers will be appointed for all new minerals sites approved.
- Include policy which continues to require robust restoration and aftercare plans for quarry sites, promoting biodiversity enhancement, agriculture, or community use post-extraction.
- The new Local Development Plan should assess whether certain mineral resources require specific identification and safeguarding to ensure a sustainable supply and prevent sterilisation by other types of development, balancing economic benefits with environmental and social considerations. This assessment should consider:
    - Active mineral extraction sites, including those producing crushed rock, sand and gravel, and limestone, ensuring their continued contribution to supply. Consented but inactive sites, where extraction has been approved but is not currently taking place, to determine their strategic importance.
    - Previously consented or abandoned sites, evaluating whether they should be safeguarded for future extraction or repurposed for other uses.
    - Dormant quarries that provide building stone, preserving their potential role in heritage restoration and local construction needs.

- Other mineral resources with extraction potential, where industry demand and local support exist. This includes ongoing work which Fife Council is pursuing with the Mining Remediation Authority to assess the potential for underground minewater (a legacy of Fife's coal mining industry) to be harnessed for use as renewable heat in existing and proposed Heat Networks.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

Fife Council

The Lead Professional for Minerals has been informally engaged throughout the evidence gathering process for the Evidence Report. This approach involved:

- Assisting with the Fife Council Annual Minerals Survey to all Fife Quarry Operators.
- Assisting with the Annual Scottish Aggregate Minerals Survey.
- Involvement in the HOPS (Heads of Planning): Minerals Officers' Working Group meetings.
- Visits to local quarry sites.

Fife Quarry Operators

- Fife Council has established an Annual Minerals Survey to all Fife Quarry Operators. This records the minerals being quarried, annual production tonnage, the main uses of the product (indicative percentage), known market areas, the current reserves of the quarry (both consented and what could be available as an extension to the workings), and the quarry's anticipated lifespan. This is to gain a better understanding of the up-to-date position of each quarry, assessing the tonnage of minerals worked and remaining, and understanding (commercial confidentiality permitting) what the market coverage is for each mineral resource.
- Quarry operators participate in the annual minerals survey on a **voluntary basis**. Whilst a good rate of survey return is usually received, the optional nature of participation can be one of the difficulties of collecting sufficient information to inform a 10-year landbank calculation. To maintain positive working relationships between Fife Council and quarry operators, it is important that commercial confidentiality (with regards the information voluntarily provided by the quarry operators) is practiced and safeguarded.
- Fife Council's Lead Professional for Minerals has recently commenced a Review of Old Mineral Permissions (ROMP) with a number of quarry sites.

Scottish Local Authorities Minerals Officers Working Group (MOWG)/HOPS (Heads of Planning): Minerals Officers' Working Group

- The Local Authorities Minerals Officers Working Group (MOWG) is currently chaired by Fife Council's Lead Professional for Minerals. This is a forum for Scottish local authority planners involved with minerals to share experience,

learning and best practice in the subject. These meetings have recently explored potential approaches to achieving 10-year landbank calculations.

Cultural venues in Fife – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context

Policy 31: Culture and creativity
LDPs should recognise and support opportunities for jobs and investment in the creative sector, culture, heritage and the arts.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.466 Fife has cultural venues of varying sizes and types such as performance venues for theatre, dance, music, and the arts, museums, art galleries and libraries and are found throughout Fife with most being located in the largest settlements. Many of these are managed by OnFife[6] for Fife Council.

5.467 The Dunfermline, St Andrews, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, and Cowdenbeath localities all have music and theatre venues including the Carnegie Hall and Alhambra Theatre in Dunfermline, Byre Theatre in St Andrews, the Adam Smith Theatre in Kirkcaldy, the Rothes Halls in Glenrothes, and the Lochgelly Centre. Museums and Art Galleries also contribute to Fife's cultural offering as does commercial leisure which includes cinemas. Sporting venues for senior and more junior level sporting clubs may also be considered as cultural venues.

5.468 Protecting existing arts venues from the impact of new development is part of NPF4's Policy 31. This states that proposals within the vicinity of existing arts venues will fully reflect the agent of change principle. Proposals will only be supported where they can demonstrate that measures can be put in place to ensure that existing noise and disturbance impacts on the proposed development would be acceptable and that existing venues and facilities can continue without additional restrictions being placed on them because of the proposed new development.

5.469 These assets and the activities and services they provide are considered an integral part of what make's Fife's places.

[6] OnFife is the trading name Fife Cultural Trust, a Fife Council arm's length organisation.

Figure 5.43: Adam Smith Theatre, Kirkcaldy & the Lochgelly Centre, Lochgelly

Source: OnFife

Links to Evidence

- OnFife venues interactive map

Implications of Fife-wide cultural venues evidence for the Proposed LDP:

- The LDP will adopt and support the agent of change principle to protect existing arts venues from new development proposals having an unacceptable impact on their operation; and to identify new arts venues which generate noise in locations where they will not impact on noise sensitive land uses.
- If the proposed refresh of the Cultural Strategy for Fife is published prior to the publication of the Proposed Plan, the LDP will reflect the strategy and address any land use implications.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- OnFife was consulted on the cultural venues text, they stated they were happy with the text regarding cultural venues but asked that reference be made to a refreshing of the Cultural Strategy for Fife.
- Fife Council response: the requested reference was included in the Evidence Report.

Aquaculture – Summary of Evidence

NPF4 Policy Context

Policy 32: Aquaculture
LDPs should guide new aquaculture development in line with National and Regional Marine Planning, and will minimise adverse environmental impacts, including cumulative impacts, that arise from other existing and planned aquaculture developments in the area while also reflecting industry needs.

See Annex 13 for NPF4 Policy Intent, Policy Outcomes and Local Development Plans Requirements.

5.470 Aquaculture involves the production of fish, shellfish, crustaceans, seaweeds, or algae in a managed environment, often enhancing production beyond that which would normally be achieved naturally. Scottish aquaculture is dominated by Atlantic salmon, but shellfish farming is also a significant and growing aquaculture sector in Scotland. There is potential for a seaweed industry to develop in Scotland. The product from seaweed farms has the potential to be used in a number of ways, including food for human consumption, animal feed, nutraceuticals, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and fertilisers.

5.471 Despite an extensive coastline, Fife does not have a very large aquaculture industry. Scotland's Aquaculture mapping details that Fife currently has:

- 1 Active Shellfish Site (Todd Shellfish Hatchery)
- 1 Inactive Shellfish Site (Rastech – Eden Campus)
- 1 Inactive Freshwater Finfish Site (Rastech – Eden Campus)
- 1 Inactive Combined Seawater and Freshwater Finfish Site (Todd Shellfish Hatchery)
- 6 Classified Shellfish Harvesting Areas:
- Elie Razors
- Firth of Forth: North
- Fife Ness Surf Clams
- Firth of Tay Razors
- Forth Estuary Surf Clams
- Forth Estuary Largo Bay

5.472 Fife's active shellfish site is Todd Shellfish Hatchery, operates from Hillend & Donibristle Industrial Estate in Dalgety Bay (more detail on this industrial estate can be found in the South and West Fife locality section. The lobster hatchery supports local fishery operate more sustainably by raising baby lobsters through the vulnerable larval and early juvenile stages then releasing them back to sea when they have the best chance of survival.

5.473 Whilst not recorded by Scotland's Aquaculture, there is evidence of seaweed and salt harvesting industry operating in Fife at East Neuk Salt Company, based in St Monans (a historic location for salt panning).

Links to Evidence

- Scotland's Aquaculture
- Todd Fish Tech in Fife
- East Neuk Salt Company

Implications of aquaculture evidence for the Proposed LDP:

- The Local Development Plan may require local policies to support development in identifying areas/locations around the coast suitable for aquaculture development opportunities.

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

Marine Directorate, Scottish Government (previously Marine Scotland)

- Fife Council met with the Marine Directorate in November 2022 (see Annex 4) to discuss marine planning and implications for Fife's next Local Development Plan. This meeting confirmed that there was no Regional Marine Plan proposed for East Scotland and no partnership proposed.
- During further consultation (October 2024), the Marine Directorate reconfirmed the status of regional marine planning as discussed in 2022 – there is currently no marine planning partnership or regional marine plan for the Forth and Tay marine region. However, the Marine Directorate confirmed that the National Marine Plan is still a relevant consideration for the development of the Local Development Plan. No areas of dispute have been identified.
- The text in this section of the Evidence Report (specifically sections Aquaculture and Marine Planning) was circulated to the Marine Directorate (April 2025) for comment. The Marine Directorate confirmed they are content with Fife Council's approach and the text as amended. There are no areas of dispute.

Part 3 – Fife's seven localities

This part of the Evidence Report covers the following topics for each of Fife's seven localities. The implications of the findings of the evidence for each locality and what that means for Fife's new Local Development Plan are set out throughout this Evidence Report.

How past development has shaped how the locality is today:

- Issues for each locality in transitioning to lower carbon development.
- Heritage and risks to historic assets.

How the locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies:

- Flooding.
- Water quality and scarcity.
- State of local habitats and biodiversity.

The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the locality within the lifetime of the Plan:

- Education.
- Healthcare provision.
- Leisure and sports facilities.
- Quality of play spaces and open spaces.

How the locality's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future:

- Provision of employment land.
- Issues for the city/town centre, local shopping centres and retailing.

6 The City of Dunfermline locality evidence and issues

Introducing the City of Dunfermline locality

6.1 The City of Dunfermline locality sits a few miles to the north of the Firth of Forth in the south west of Fife. The city has a history stretching back nearly 1,000 years with strong links to its royal and religious heritage. Dunfermline is the largest settlement in Fife and is a major centre for large-scale retail and leisure facilities. Over the last two decades it has experienced considerable growth, with substantial development taking place within its eastern expansion area.

Figure 6.1: Plan showing the location of the Dunfermline locality within Fife

Source: Fife Council

6.2 Two key priorities were identified for the City of Dunfermline locality from an early LDP workshop carried out between Fife Council and the Key Agency Group in September 2021:

- Developing further sustainable transport opportunities and enhanced active travel to existing facilities.
- Focussing on the heritage, leisure and tourism benefits for the town centre economy. This includes quality hotel accommodation, and town centre improvements such as additional residential provision, more co-working offices, improved parks and greenspaces.

6.3 Addressing these priorities will require collaborative working across several organisations and partners.

6.4 An additional locality workshop was attended by representatives from Fife Council to collect place-based comments for the City of Dunfermline area.

6.5 According to the 2022 Local Strategic Assessment, with 59,101 people in 27,453 households, the City of Dunfermline locality has the 3rd largest total population in Fife, after North East Fife and Kirkcaldy. The Area has a higher level of home ownership (68%), and lower levels of social renting (19%).

6.6 At 78.1% the employment rate is higher than Fife. A lower percentage of the population are economically inactive (13.7%), and claimant rates (3.8%) are also lower. Income (9.2%) and employment deprivation (7.9%) are below the Fife average. Dunfermline has higher levels of 16 to 19-year-olds participating in Education (77%) and is just below Fife for participation in employment (15%).

6.7 In terms of health, in 2019 the average life expectancy for males living within the City of Dunfermline locality was 78.9 years and 82.1 years for females.

6.8 In addition, 20% of the area's population were registered as living with a long-term physical health condition during the period between 2019 and 2020.

Links to Evidence

- City of Dunfermline Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- ScotPHO profiles tool
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary
- Key Agencies and Fife Council: Support for place-based Local Development Planning - City of Dunfermline Area Workshop Report 23.05.2023

Implementation of FIFEplan in the City of Dunfermline

6.9 There are several place-specific proposals in the current FIFEplan in the City of Dunfermline. This section outlines the success of FIFEplan in delivering its outcomes including allocations.

6.10 A green belt at Dunfermline is designated through FIFEplan. When the green belt was designated in 2012, it was established for the following 20 years. It has not been subject to significant development pressures since the plan was adopted, indicating the current designation is effective. It is therefore not considered necessary to revisit the designation of the Dunfermline green belt as part of the next local development plan (see Dunfermline Green Belt for more detail).

6.11 There are two strategic development areas (SDAs) in the City of Dunfermline locality. Planning permissions have been granted across the sites and development is underway at Dunfermline North (Wellwood SDA). Actions to deliver the Northern Link Road are progressing, supported by Edinburgh & South East Scotland City Deal funding. There has been no progress at the Berrylaw SDA.

How past development has shaped how the City of Dunfermline locality is today

Urban development and local living

6.12 How and why the settlements of the City of Dunfermline locality developed and changed over time heavily influences how they work today and the issues they face in reducing carbon emissions and tackling social and economic inequality.

6.13 Dunfermline has a historic core which expanded gradually over time as a compact settlement around the core. These early areas of expansion tend to have good internal connections although much of this area has subsequently been cut off from the city centre by busy main roads and the railway (see figure below); and they can be physically remote from the city centre – which lies at the western edge of the settlement.

Figure 6.2: Map extract of Dunfermline showing large roads and the railway which create barriers around the city centre

Source: Fife Council

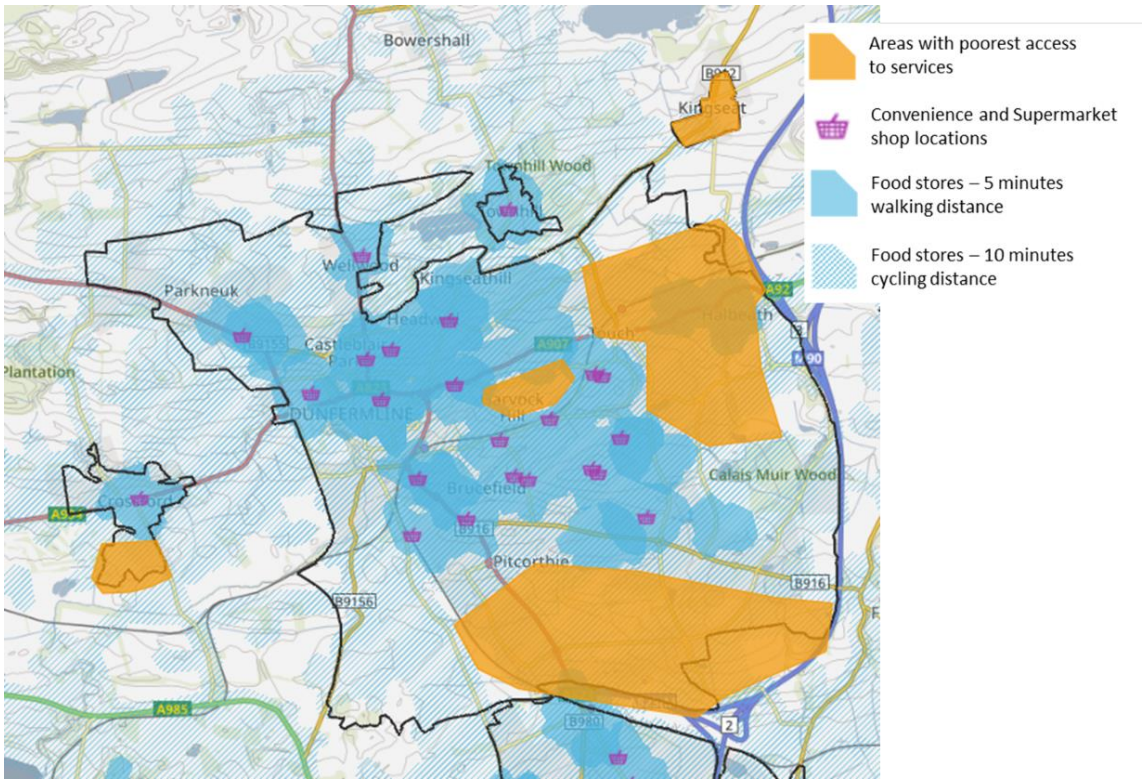
6.14 Since the M90 motorway was constructed in the late 1960s Dunfermline has expanded rapidly and substantially to the east, often as quite discrete areas. Much of this development has poor connectivity both internally and with the surrounding areas making it less attractive to walk and cycle. The railway forms a barrier between the north and south of the expansion to the east as there are few vehicular crossings over it, and many of the pedestrian crossings are not overlooked or are overgrown which impacts on individuals perception of safety.

6.15 Outside of Dunfermline itself, Crossford has expanded considerably since the mid-20th century. Much of this expansion has poor connectivity both internally and to the centre of the village.

6.16 The evolution of the City of Dunfermline locality has strongly influenced how easy it is to access services within a ten-minute walk or cycle.

6.17 As the figure below illustrates, most of Dunfermline has reasonable access to services and facilities within a 5 to10 minute walk although there are some gaps.

Figure 6.3: Example extract from Local Living and 20 MN interactive mapping showing walking and cycling distances from convenience stores in the City of Dunfermline area, and the areas which are least well served by services and facilities



Source: Fife Council

6.18 However, new housing areas on the extremities of the city are more poorly served as is an area in the centre around Brucefield and Garvock Hill. The south of Dunfermline is also particularly poorly served.

6.19 Most of Townhill and Crossford have reasonable access to services and facilities although areas in south and west Crossford less so. Kingseat has few facilities and services within a 10 minute walk.

6.20 Annex 7 provides more information on Living Well Locally and 20 minute Neighbourhoods in Fife.

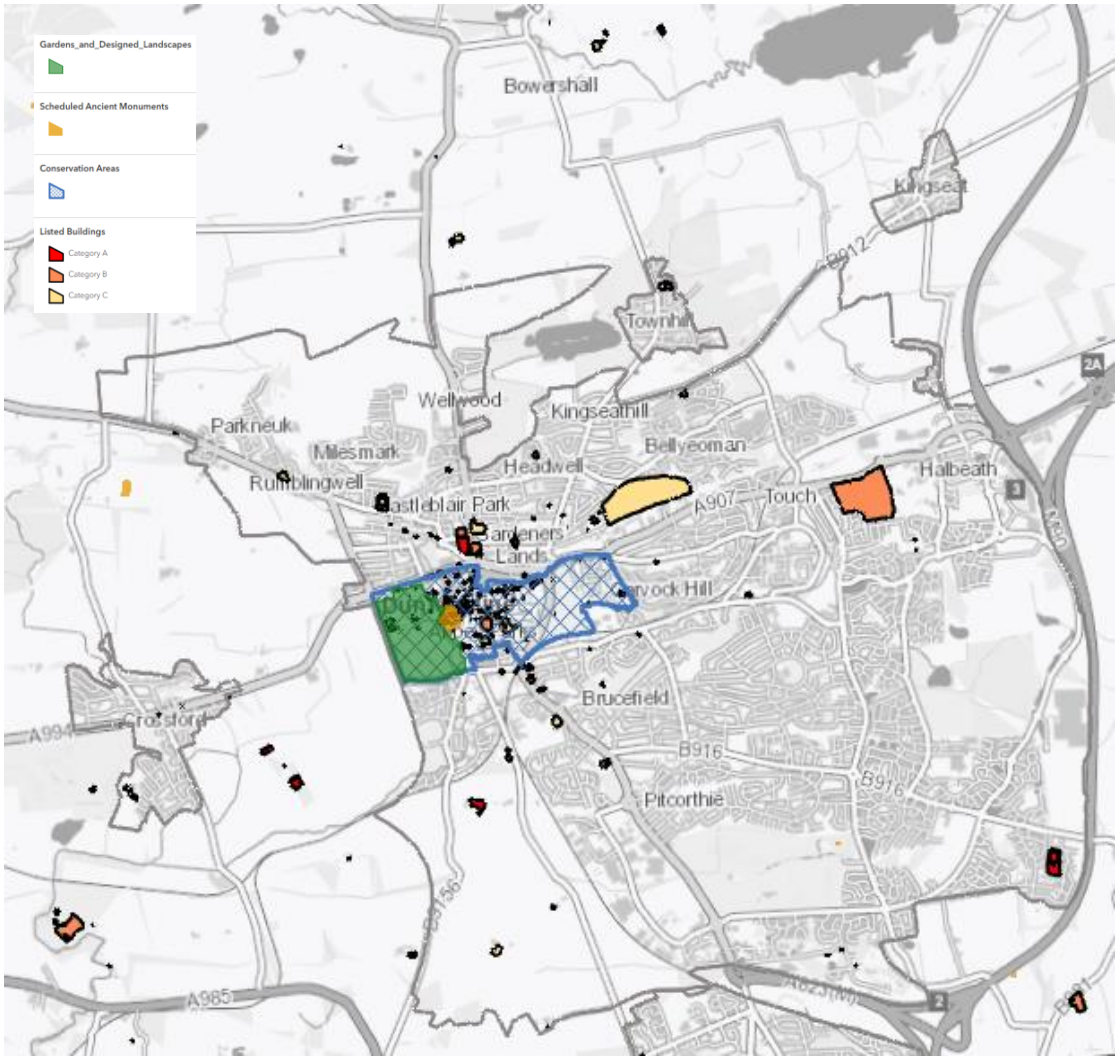
Links to Evidence

- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Interactive Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods mapping

Historic environment in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.21 The City of Dunfermline has a large conservation area which covers the city centre and its environs, the city also has 233 listed buildings (see figure below). Scheduled monuments in the area include Dunfermline Abbey and the remains of Malcolm Canmore's Tower.

Figure 6.4 Map extract showing historic environment assets in the City of Dunfermline locality



Source: Fife Council

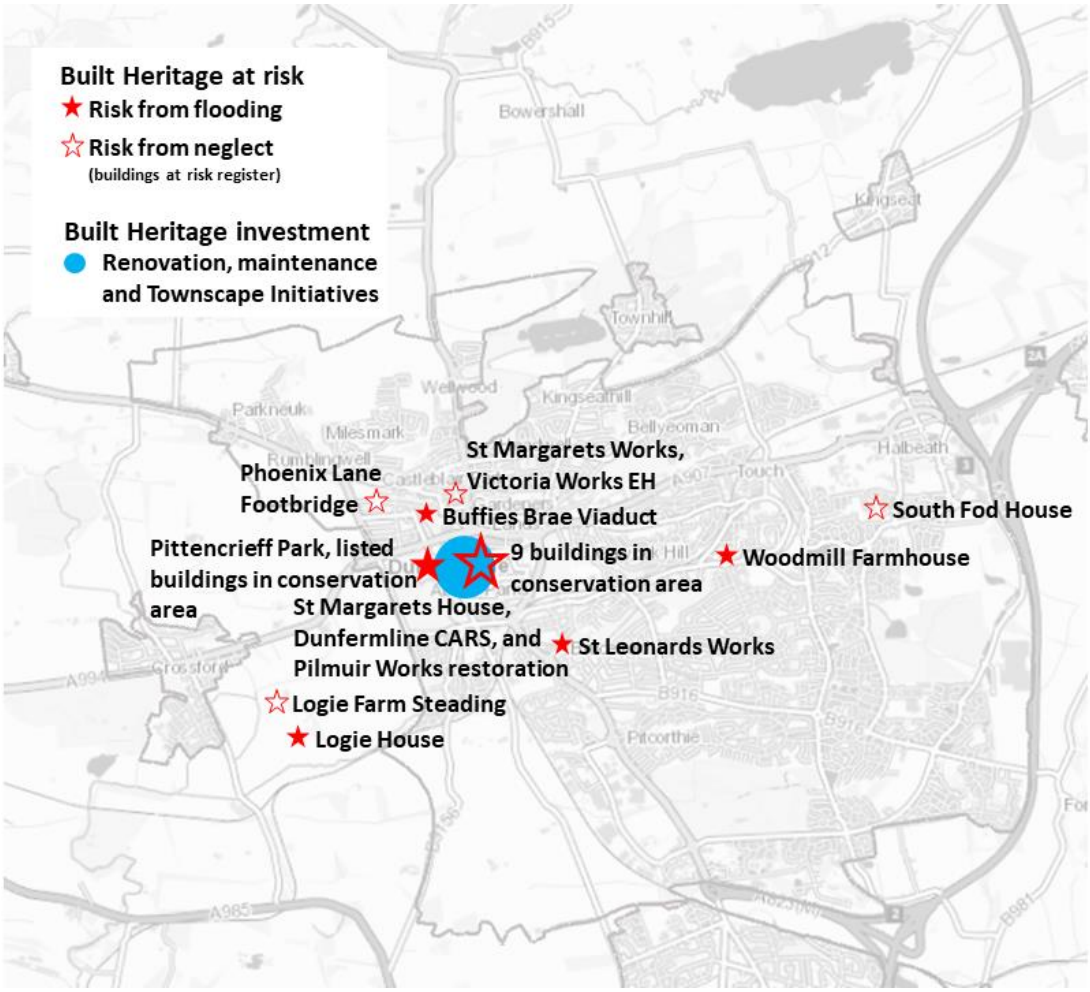
6.22 The historic centre has many high-quality historic buildings including Dunfermline Abbey and Palace and includes Pittencrieff Park which is a designated Garden and Designed Landscape. In general, the built heritage in the city centre is well maintained although there are occasional exceptions.

6.23 Nearly £3 million was invested in townscape and built heritage initiatives in Dunfermline a decade ago.

Risks to the historic environment

6.24 Dunfermline Conservation Area, Pittencrieff Park Garden and Designed Landscape, and some listed buildings including the railway viaduct at Buffies Brae and Tower Bridge are predicted by SEPA to be at risk of flooding from Tower Burn. The former St Leonards Works; Woodmill Farm House; and the A listed Logie House are predicted to be at risk of flooding from the Lyne Burn as highlighted below:

Figure 6.5: Map of the City of Dunfermline locality showing built heritage at risk from flooding and neglect; and some built heritage investment initiatives.



Sources: This map was created by visually comparing HES built heritage designations with the SEPA flood maps, the Buildings at Risk register and some areas which have received funding for townscape and heritage initiatives.

6.25 All these areas are predicted to be at risk from surface water flooding which is also a risk for the Gasworks site at Grange Road and St Leonards Church.

6.26 There are currently 14 buildings on the Buildings at Risk register in the City of Dunfermline locality.

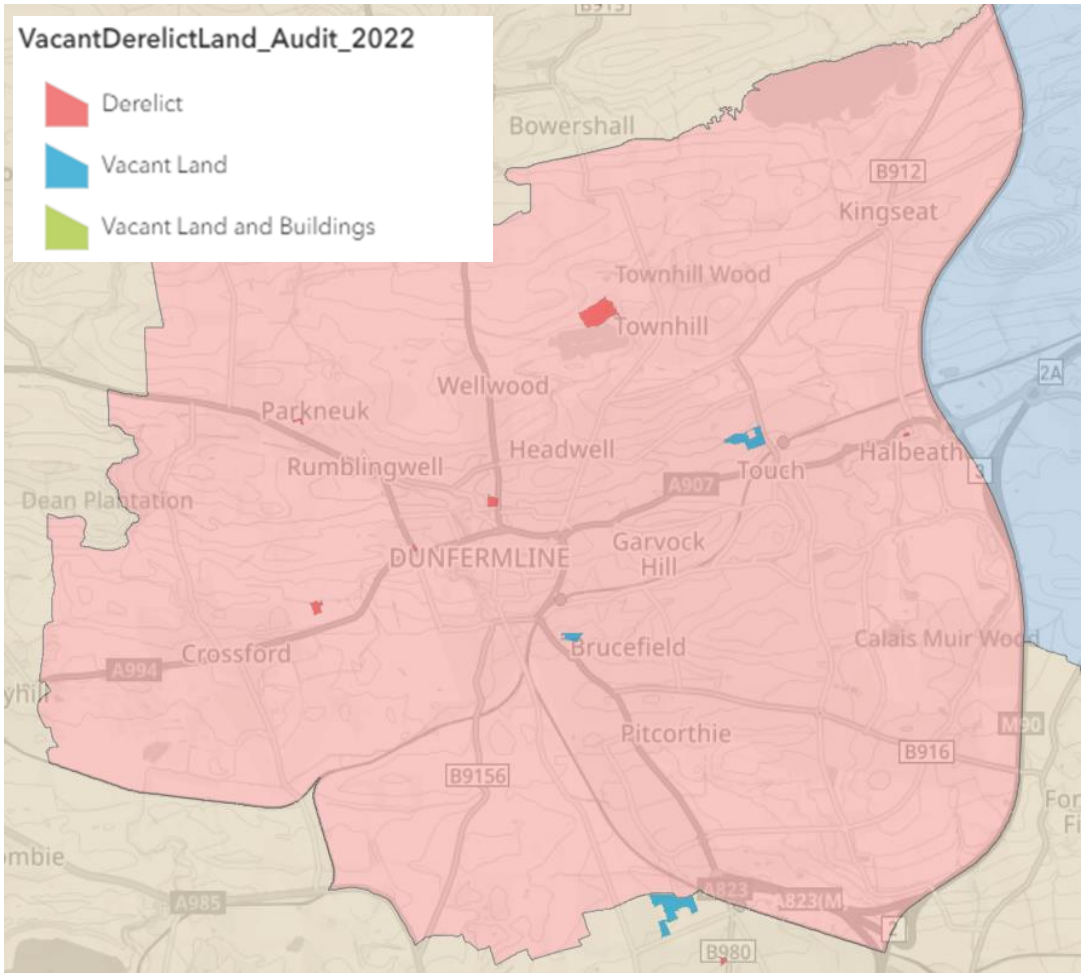
Links to Evidence

- Dunfermline Conservation Area Appraisal
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report
- Buildings at Risk register
- Fife Historic Buildings Trust Dunfermline
- Historic Environment Scotland Interactive map showing built heritage, landscape character designations
- SEPA flood maps

Vacant and derelict land and environmental hazards in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.27 The City of Dunfermline locality has the lowest amount of vacant and derelict land in Fife. The largest sites are the derelict former power station in Townhill and vacant land at Queen Margaret Hospital.

Figure 6.6: Extract from the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2022 showing the City of Dunfermline locality



Source: Fife Council

6.28 Between 2021-22 the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit identified that two vacant and derelict sites were brought back into use in the City of Dunfermline locality; one for residential use and one as parking to serve a housing development. No additional sites were identified in the area.

6.29 The Mossmorran to Grangemouth Ethane pipeline passes to the north of Dunfermline. Development close to this pipe and within associated zones is subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. There is also a consultation zone which relates to the Naval Dockyard in Rosyth which

covers the far south west of the City of Dunfermline locality. The Health and Safety Executive consultation zones can be viewed on the adopted FIFEplan proposals map (advice/consultation information). The Health and Safety Executive have advice on the type and scale of development within the pipeline consultation zones.

6.30 There are currently no air quality management areas in the City of Dunfermline locality as the Appin Crescent Air Quality Management Area was revoked in 2023. There are 3 smoke control zones to the north east of the city, (it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney in these areas). Air quality is monitored by Fife Council along Appin Crecent, along with sites on the B9155, A907 and A823 which are all in the north east.

Links to Evidence

- Fife Vacant and Derelict land audit 2022
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning methodology
- Fife Air Quality Annual Progress Report 2024
- Fife Council – Smoke Control Zones
- Fife Council – pollution mapping

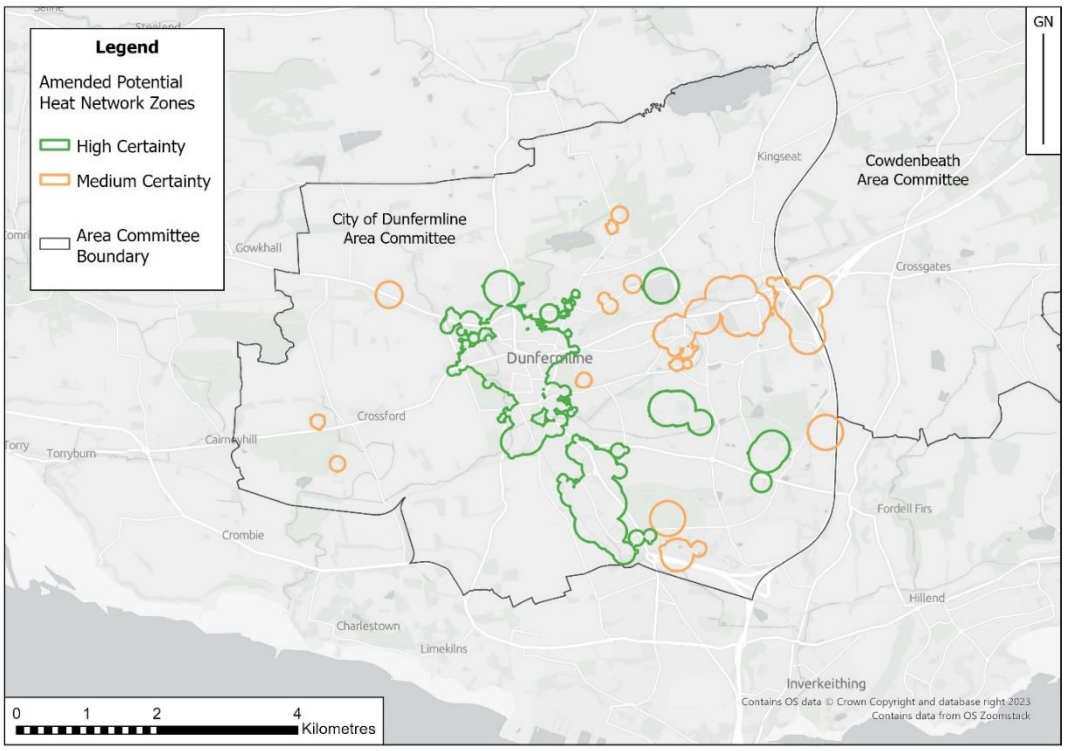
How the City of Dunfermline locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

6.31 In common with other inland areas of Fife, the City of Dunfermline locality faces challenges arising from the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Opportunities will need to be taken to decarbonise heating in the area to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding and this will affect how development is planned in the future. Water quality and protecting important habitats are also key issues in the City of Dunfermline locality.

Decarbonising heating in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.32 Decarbonising heating will be important in helping Fife tackle the climate emergency and meeting net zero commitments. Potential Heat Network Zones in the City of Dunfermline are being identified as part of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Fife. The potential heat network zones are shown on the map below. Further work to identify Heat Network Zones will be undertaken in 2024-25.

Figure 6.7 Potential heat network zones in the City of Dunfermline locality (source: Local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan | Fife Council)



Source: Fife Council

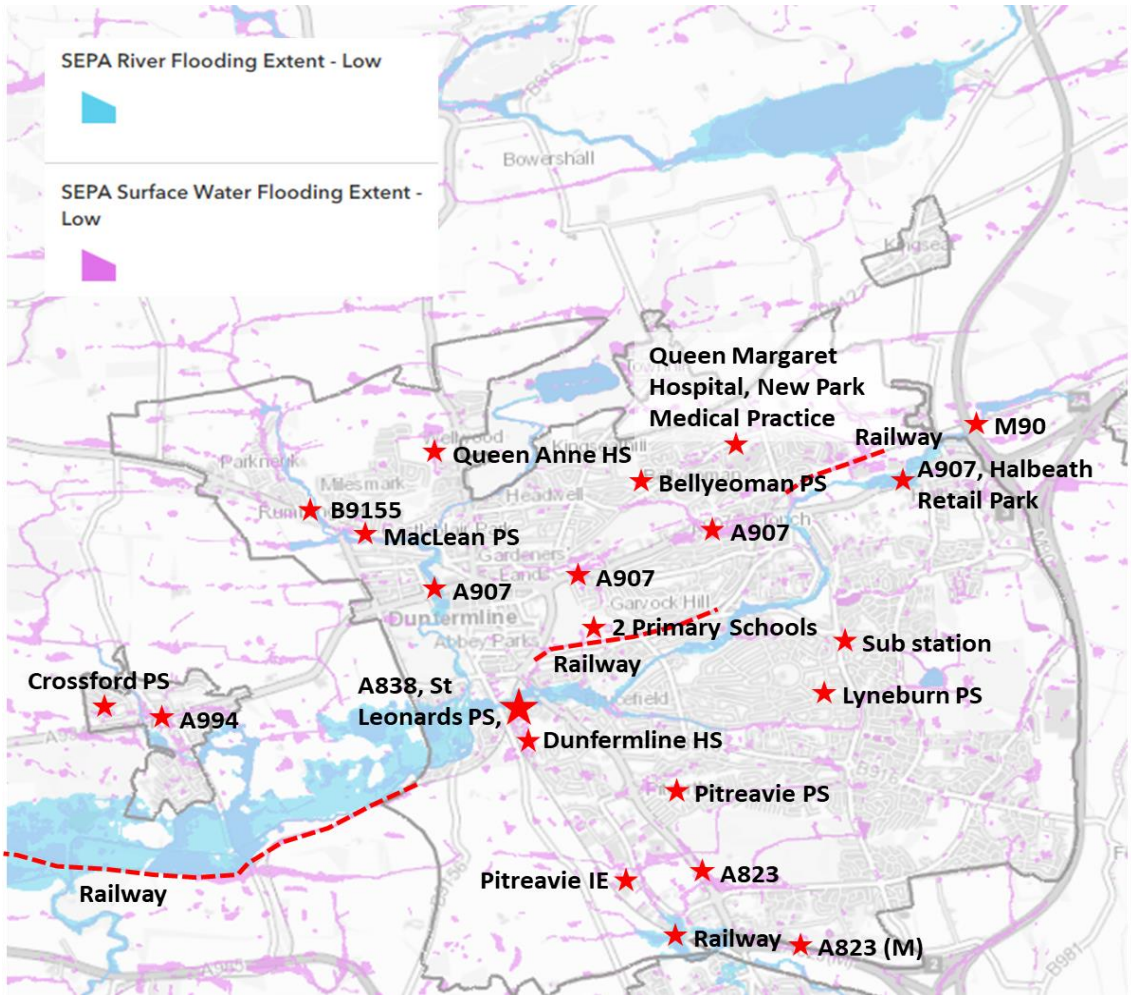
Links to Evidence

- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Flood risk in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.33 SEPA identifies parts of the City of Dunfermline locality to be at risk of flooding – a risk that is increasing because of climate change. As the map below illustrates, the risk is mainly from river flooding, from the Tower Burn and the Lyne Burn. There is also risk from surface water flooding.

Figure 6.8 Plan showing key assets predicted to be at risk of flooding in the City of Dunfermline locality.



Sources: Fife Council & SEPA. This map was created by visually comparing: Fife Council data on schools, healthcare facilities and key employment areas (see Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood interactive map) and Mastermap and OS Base mapping with SEPA flood maps

Notes: Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

6.34 There have been many incidents of flooding in the City of Dunfermline locality in recent years; Queensferry Road has been repeatedly affected and there was significant flooding in Halbeath Retail Park in 2022.

6.35 There are two existing flood prevention schemes in Dunfermline. One is over 30 years old the other was built in 2010. Additional detail on these can be found under *Formal Flood Protection Schemes* in the *Flooding* section of this Evidence Report. A detailed flood study is proposed for Dunfermline in the Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan and is underway. In addition, Scottish Water is carrying out an integrated catchment study to look at flood risk from sewers in the Iron Mill Bay area which includes Dunfermline.

6.36 SEPA has predicted that there is a risk of geomorphic change (change to the river channel) along stretches of the Lyne Burn in Dunfermline.

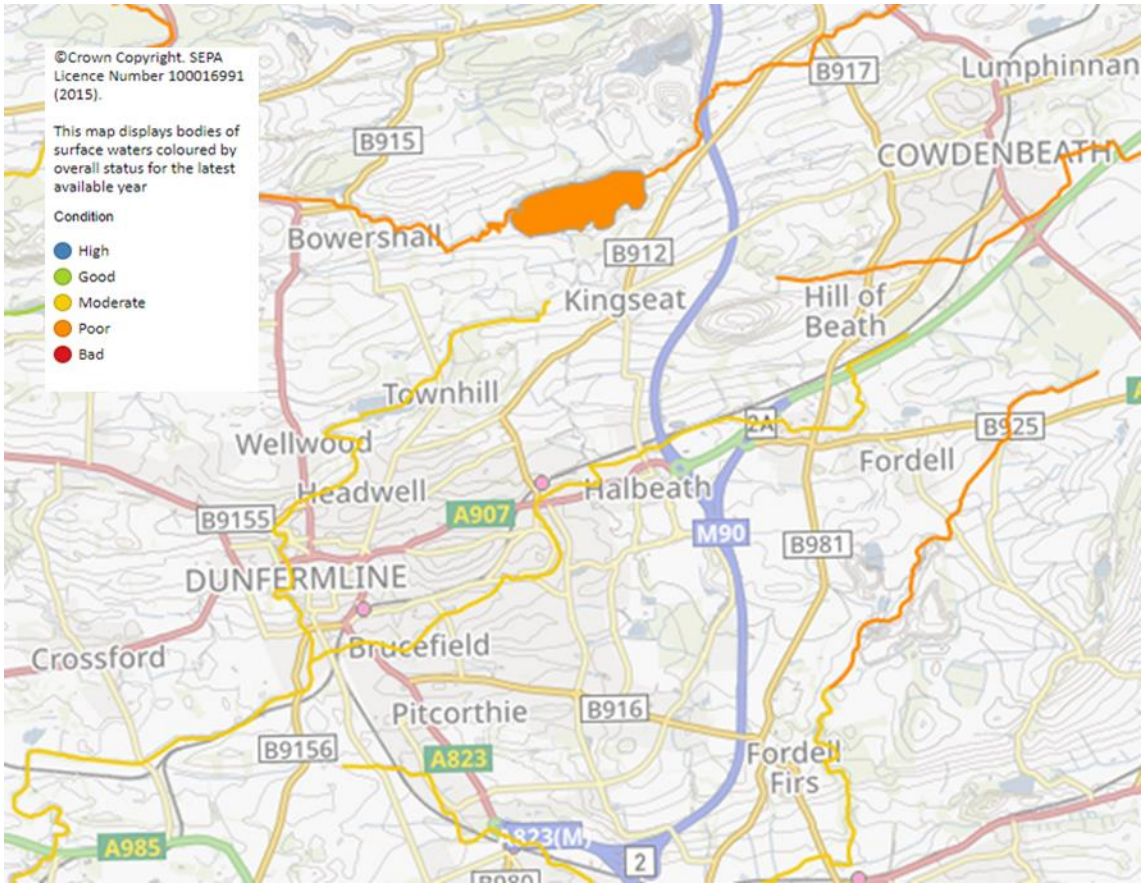
Links to Evidence

- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- SEPA Flood Risk Maps
- SEPA – Geomorphic Risk data
- Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife

Water quality in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.37 The SEPA water classification hub classifies the ecological condition of surface water in the City of Dunfermline as moderate.

Figure 6.9 Extract from SEPA water classification hub showing quality of surface waters in the City of Dunfermline locality



Source: SEPA

6.38 This has shown improvement in the quality over the last few years with the Tower Burn moving from being classed as having poor ecological condition in 2020 (identified on the SEPA water environment hub). There has been some local action which has helped to clean up the Tower Burn. The Lyne Burn in Dunfermline is also classed as having moderate ecological condition. The Lyne Burn has some sections which are heavily modified and channelised within the city. There has been a £1.5 million project to restore the Lyne Burn as it passes through Rex Park in Dunfermline, removing 500m of straightened channel and restoring natural meanders, this work was funded by SEPA's Water Environment Fund.

6.39 Groundwater quality has been identified as poor due to legacy pollution from mining activities. Water flows are also low due to business abstraction.

Links to Evidence

- SEPA water classification hub
- SEPA water environment hub
- Dunfermline Press article – Environmental Campaigner cleans up Tower Burn
- Fife Coast and Countrywide trust - The Lyne Burn Green Network Project

Green and Blue Networks within the City of Dunfermline locality

6.40 This area forms part of the Central Scotland Green Network – one of the eighteen national developments in NPF4 and is one of Europe's largest green infrastructure projects. Key green and blue infrastructure assets in the area include the Lyne, Brankholm and Tower Burns, Townhill Country Park, Pittencrieff, Public and Duloch Parks, Dunfermline Cemetery, golf courses and Calais Muir Wood.

6.41 Some of the key active travel routes within the City of Dunfermline locality include The Fife Pilgrim Way and the West Fife Way. National Cycle Network Route 764 also passes through Dunfermline providing connections to Clackmannan and North East Fife via National Cycle Network route 1. Investment is required to improve/upgrade the existing active travel routes.

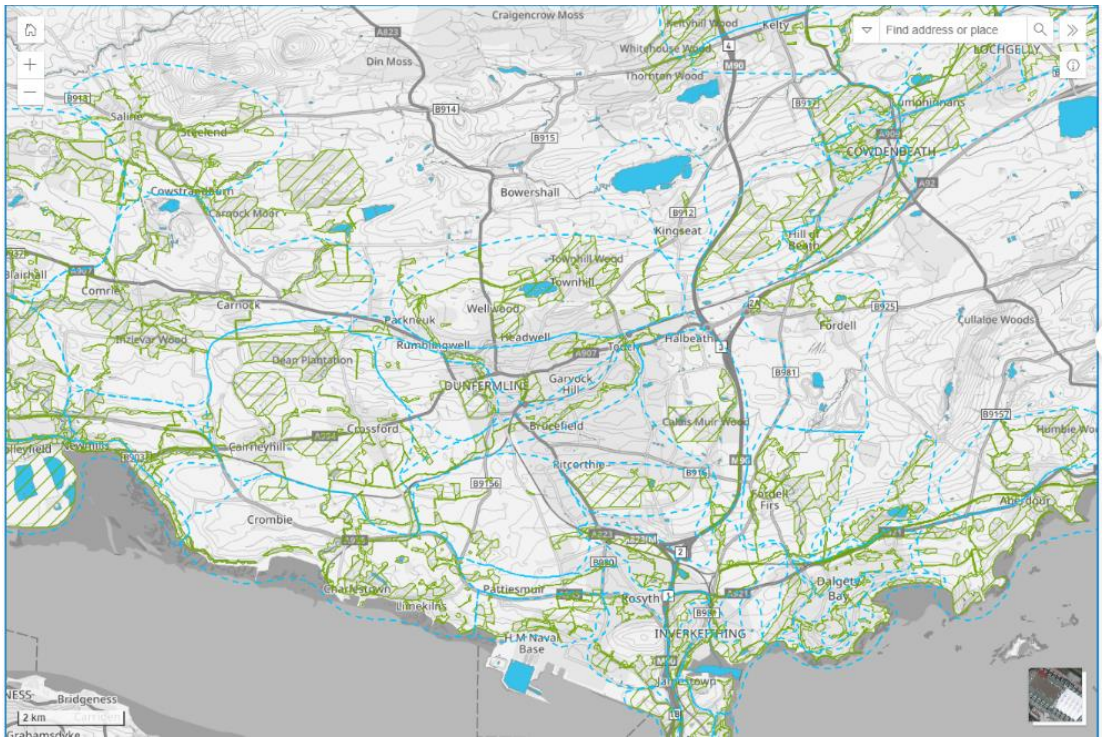
6.42 Green and Blue network opportunities in the area include biodiversity and greenspace enhancements in the Queen Margaret Hospital site and parks, river restoration along the Tower and Brankholm Burns as identified in the River Basin Management Plan 3, greenspace improvements along the Tower Burn and Duloch Park (including the Calais Muir woodland), and improving active travel linkages as part of the Dunfermline SDA (Kingswood) to improve connectivity with the rest of the city.

6.43 The Fife green and blue network audit report for the area is:

- Dunfermline Green and Blue Network report - Jan 2023

6.44 Green and blue networks are mapped on an interactive map (see figure below) and a storymap explains how the assets and opportunities were identified.

Figure 6.10 Extract from the interactive map of Fife's Green and Blue network 2023 update



Source: Fife Council

Links to Evidence

- Central Scotland Green Network
- Fife Pilgrim Way
- Sustrans National Cycle Network Routes in the Inner Forth area
- NHS Fife 2030 Greenspace Strategy (May 2023)
- The Tower Burn Trail project – Dunfermline Greenspace SCIO
- SEPA River Basin Management Plan 3 – Water Environment Hub
- Dunfermline Green and Blue Network report - Jan 2023
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystem services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap

Biodiversity in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.45 The priority habitats within the Dunfermline locality include a mix of ancient, semi-natural and coniferous woodland as identified in the table below. These woodland habitats support a wealth of wildlife (in Scotland the woodland ecosystem supports more priority species than any other ecosystem).

Table 6.1: Summary of the priority habitats found within the City of Dunfermline locality including key sites

Freshwater & Wetland Habitats	Lowland & Farmland Habitats	Woodland Habitats
Inland freshwater, such as **Town Loch** Rivers, such as **Lyne Burn** Ponds, such as those within **Townhill Wood** Reedbed habitats	Species-rich grassland, such as **Townhill Meadow** Field margins and boundaries Parks and areas with veteran trees, such as **Pittencrieff Park** Lowland heathland, such as **Townhill Muir (LWS)**	Ancient, semi-natural & long-established woodlands, such as **Townhill Wood** Mixed lowland woodland Urban woodland

Source: Fife Council - Fife's Local Biodiversity Action Plan

6.46 Some of the protected species found within the City of Dunfermline locality include bats (European Protected Species), the common frog (UK Protected Species), and deer (Scottish Protected Species).

6.47 The destruction of habitats is the number one cause of species extinction, so it is important that priority habitats are safeguarded.

6.48 Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan balsam, and Rhododendron also pose a threat to the various ecosystems within the City of Dunfermline locality.

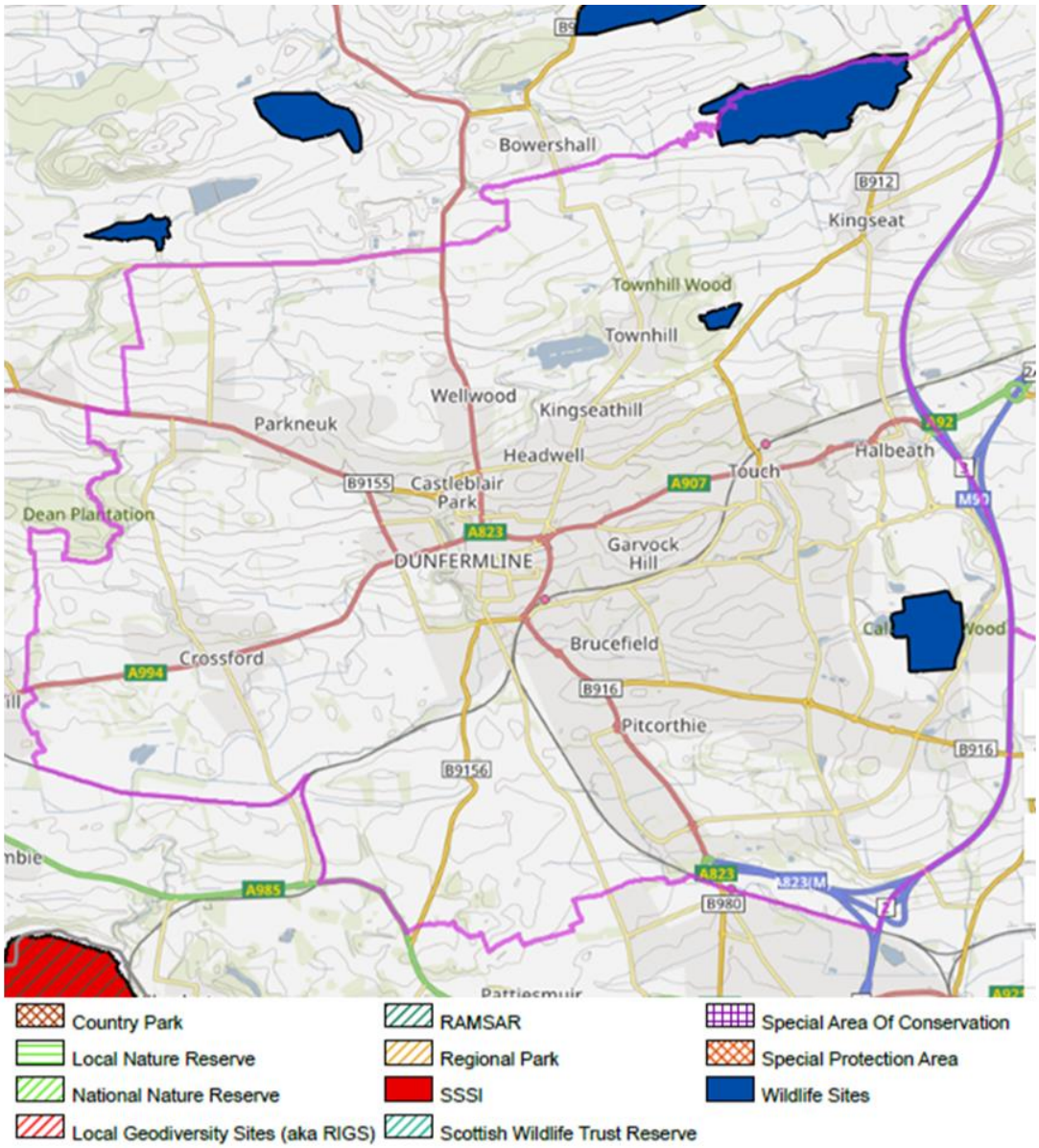
Links to Evidence

- NBN Atlas
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Nature Scot- Invasive non-native plants
- Nature Scot- Protected species A-Z guide

Natural Heritage Designations in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.49 There are three locally designated Local Nature Conservation Sites, (formerly called wildlife sites), in the City of Dunfermline locality (see figure below). Two of these were resurveyed around five years ago and found to be in an "OK"[7] condition (Calais Muir Wood and Townhill Muir). The other wildlife site at Loch Fitty has not yet been resurveyed.

Figure 6.11: Natural heritage designations in the City of Dunfermline locality. These can be viewed on the Green and Blue network interactive map



Source: Fife Council

[7] "OK" is the site status designation used in the sites survey.

6.50 More detail on why these sites have been designated for natural heritage in Fife is provided on the Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list.

Links to Evidence

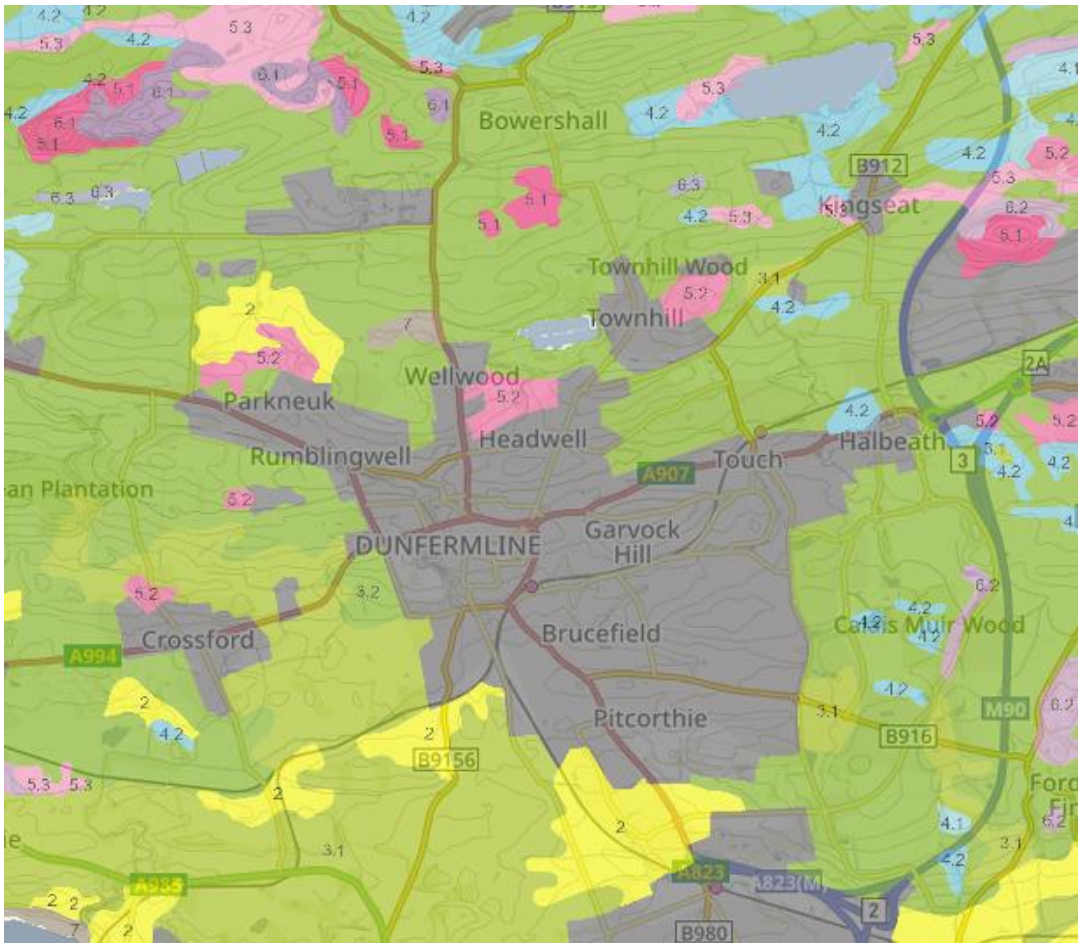
- NatureScot– local designations
- Fife Designated Natural Heritage sites list
- Fife Local Nature Conservation Sites tracker Dec 2023

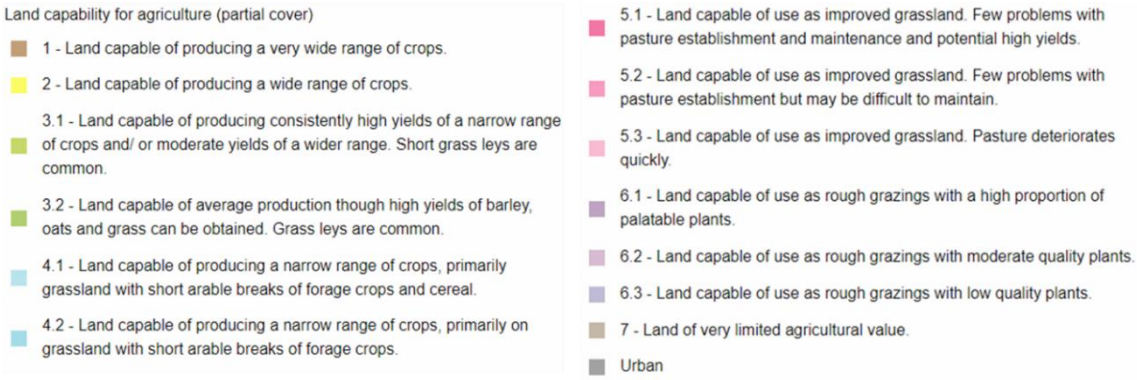
Landscape character and soils in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.51 The landscape of the Dunfermline locality is mainly urban with lowland hills and valleys to the north and west (as identified on NatureScot Landscape Character types (2019) mapping). The area contains the South West Dunfermline Local Landscape Area to the west of the city, and the Dunfermline Green Belt which extends along the western edge of Dunfermline down to Rosyth, as designated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017.

6.52 Outwith the main built-up areas there are some areas of prime agricultural land (classes 1 to 3.1 in the Scottish Land Capability for agriculture map) as highlighted below.

Figure 6.12 Extract from the land capability map for Scotland for the Dunfermline locality.





Source: Scottish Government - © Crown Copyright. Scottish Government Licence Number 100020540. All Rights Reserved

6.53 The City of Dunfermline locality only has a few small pockets of carbon rich soils identified on the 2016 Scottish Carbon and Peatland Map (Classes 4 and 5). These are located around Kingseat and in Calais Muir Wood.

6.54 There are no quarries or recent mining activity in the City of Dunfermline locality.

Links to Evidence

- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Types 2019
- Scotlands Soils – Land Capability for agriculture
- Carbon and Peatland Map 2016

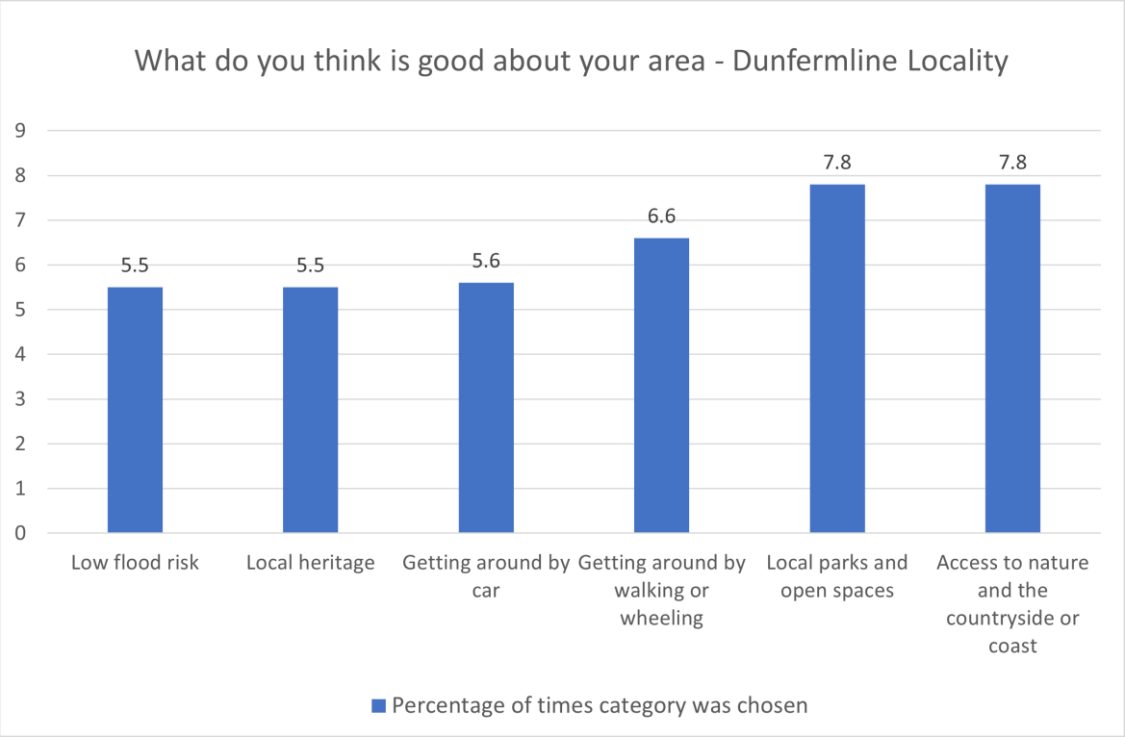
The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the City of Dunfermline within the lifetime of the Plan

6.55 The main infrastructure issues facing the City of Dunfermline locality relate to access to healthcare, the quality and provision of open space, and accessibility to education opportunities by public transport.

6.56 Additional school capacity need created by new housing is managed through the development management process which deals with planning applications and managing their impact.

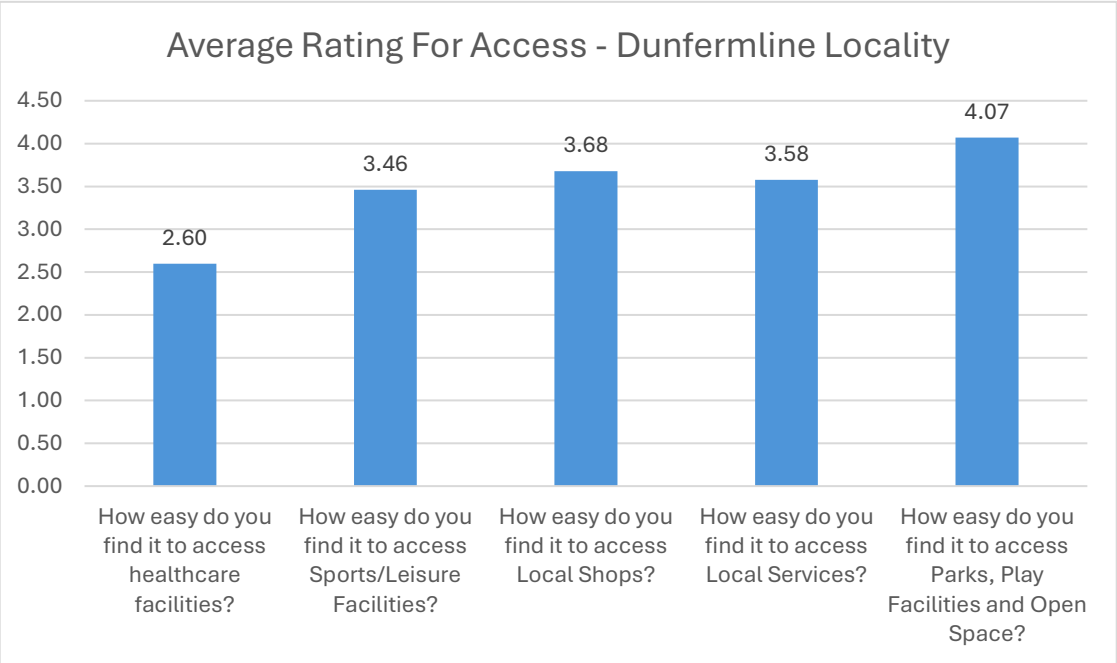
6.57 In the autumn of 2022, Fife Council asked residents what they felt was good about the City of Dunfermline locality, what wasn't so good, and what the key issues were that they felt needed to be tackled. Feedback, (see figures below) suggests that parks, play facilities and open spaces are easy to access in the City of Dunfermline.

Figure 6.13: What respondents think is good about their area



Source: Fife Council

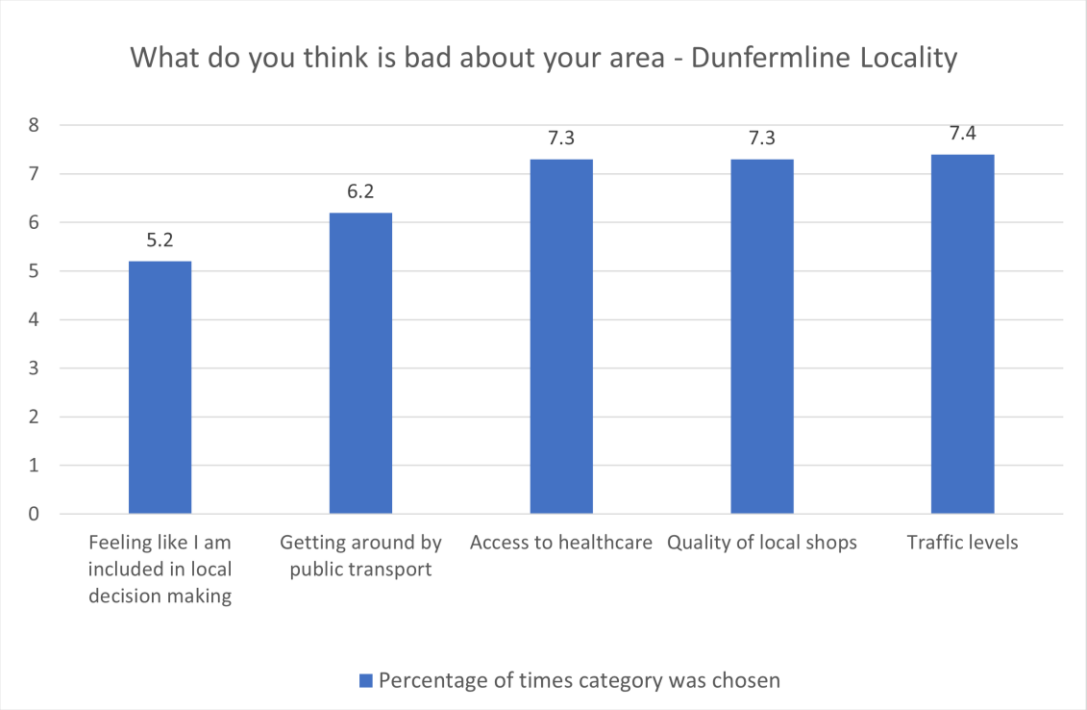
Figure 6.14: Average ratings for access



Source: Fife Council

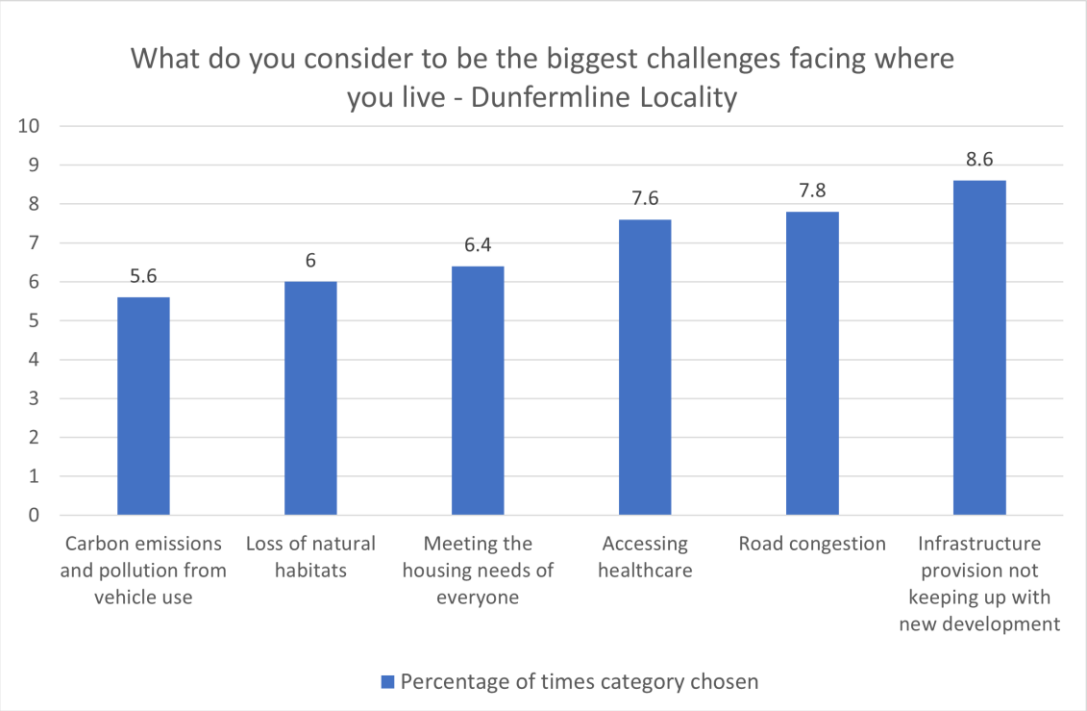
6.58 Obtaining appointments at healthcare facilities in the City of Dunfermline locality is regarded as difficult and, whilst access to healthcare by car is good, accessing the same facilities by public transport was described more negatively (see figures below).

Figure 6.15: What respondents think is bad about their area



Source: Fife Council

Figure 6.16: What respondents think the biggest challenges facing their area



Source: Fife Council

Healthcare in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.59 The City of Dunfermline locality has a range of health and care facilities across the City and surrounding area. However, planned growth and demographic changes (in particular, an ageing population) are likely to put increased pressure on these facilities. NHS Fife is moving towards health and wellbeing hubs which provide multi-disciplinary care. There is a need for new or replacement premises.

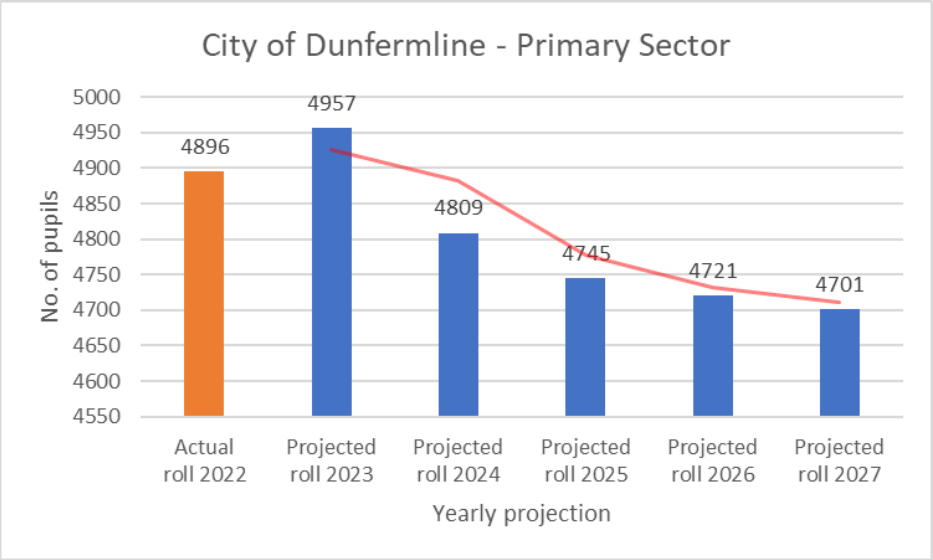
Links to Evidence

- NHS Fife Estates Strategy

School places in the City of Dunfermline locality

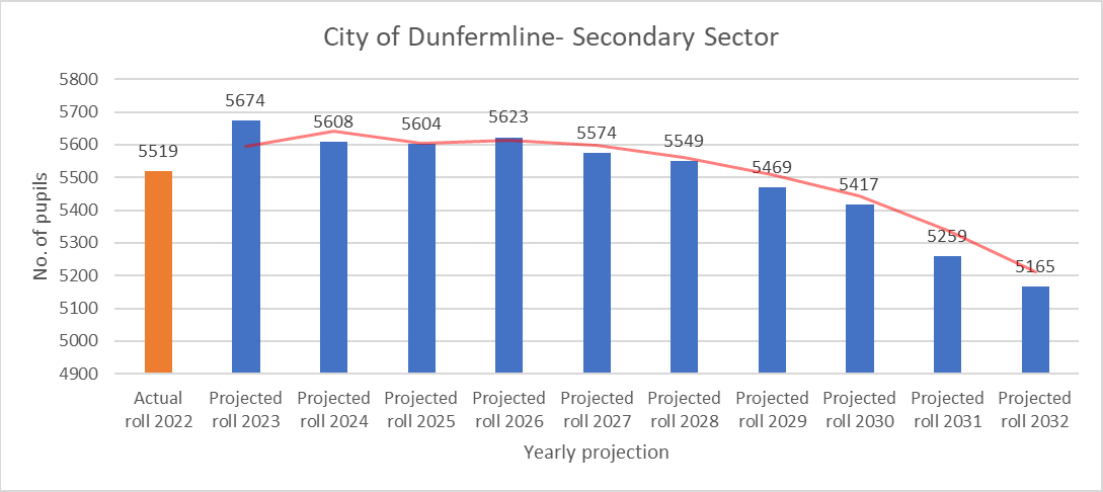
6.60 In education, there is projected pupil capacity across the whole of the existing and planned primary and secondary school estates to accommodate some further growth over the next ten years. However, individual schools do have capacity constraints. Spare primary school capacity across localities does not mean there is capacity for new homes across all primary schools in the area.

Figure 6.17 Projected pupil numbers in primary schools in the City of Dunfermline locality (2023 - 2027)



Source: Fife Council

Figure 6.18 Projected pupil numbers in secondary schools in the City of Dunfermline locality (2023 - 2032)



Source: Fife Council

6.61 Four new primary schools are planned in Dunfermline at Wellwood/Swallowdrum, Halbeath and Broomhall.

6.62 A new Dunfermline Learning Campus replacing Woodmill and St Columba's RC High Schools on a single site, co-located with Fife College, opened in August 2024.

Links to Evidence

- School Roll Projections by Area Committee September 2023

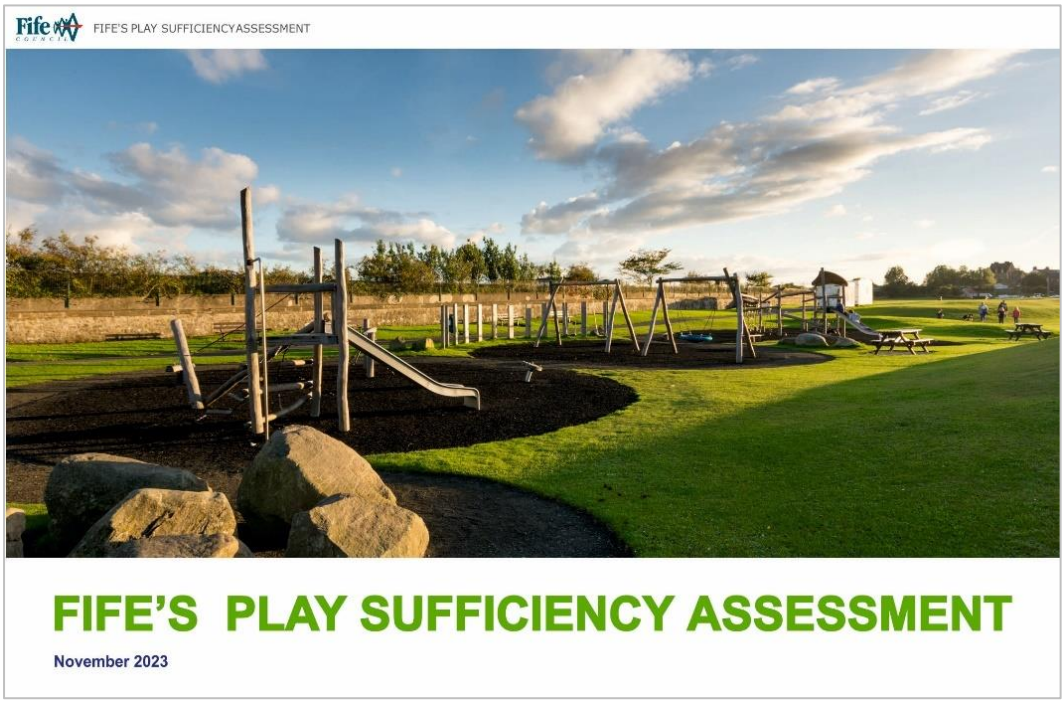
Open space, play spaces and sports facilities in the City of Dunfermline locality

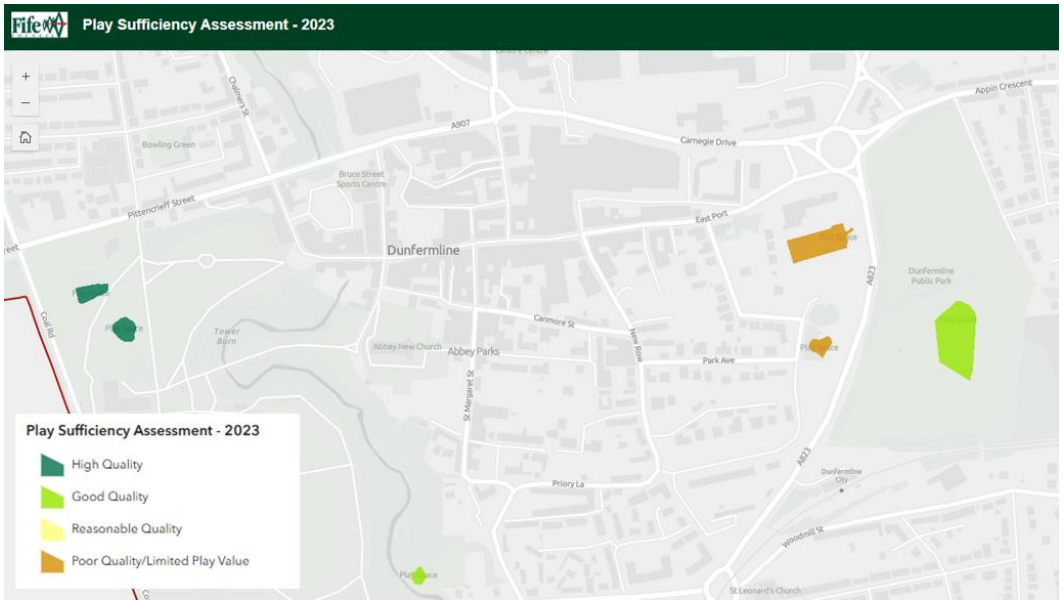
6.63 Open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, and outdoor places to play and socialise are key to successful placemaking. The outdoor spaces, including public parks in the City of Dunfermline have helped to make communities more pleasant, liveable, healthy, and resilient.

6.64 Work is underway to update the Fife Open Space audit and Strategy which will be finalised in late 2025. Site visits to update the quality audit have been completed. These visits found that Pittencrieff Park in Dunfermline was one of the highest scoring parks in Fife and is classified as a destination park. King George's Field Crossford and the recreation ground and Town Loch in Townhill also scored highly. Anti-social behaviour and poor maintenance were highlighted in the Tower Burn greenspace (also called Wooer's Alley) which scored poorly. There is a community led initiative that has begun to restore the Wooer's Alley woodland garden. The updated audit has found there is around a 5% decline in the quality of greenspaces in the City of Dunfermline locality and there has been a 41% increase in the amount of publicly useable greenspace in Dunfermline itself. This increase is mainly due to the expansion of Dunfermline to the north and associated areas of open space. However, Dunfermline still has a below average amount of greenspace per head of population and Crossford and Townhill were found to have a poor level of provision.

6.65 A Play Sufficiency Assessment for Fife was carried out in 2023, it identified that whilst there are several high-quality playparks in and around Dunfermline including Townhill Park, Bull Park, and Pittencrieff Park, there are many poorer facilities, with limited play value particularly in suburban residential areas. Dunfermline and Halbeath were found to have an insufficiency of play provision due to the large number of poor quality play spaces. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment storymap provides more information (see the figures below).

Figure 6.19: Indicative image from Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment interactive mapping (showing central Dunfermline)





Source: Fife Council

6.66 There is a good range of sports facilities across the City of Dunfermline locality. Key assets in the area are the Carnegie Leisure Centre which has a wide range of facilities, Dunfermline Learning Campus, and Queen Anne High Schools which are community use schools, Pitreavie Sports Ground, McKane Park Community Sport Hub and golf courses at Dunfermline, Canmore and Pitreavie Golf Clubs. There is also a Bannatyne's Health Club at the Fife Leisure Park to the east of Dunfermline with a pool and fitness suite.

6.67 A Facility Planning Model developed by sportscotland predicts patterns of demand for sports facilities (but not actual usage). The model outputs

suggest that Woodmill High School swimming pool is operating at capacity, but the school has now closed, and the replacement school does not include a swimming pool facility. The nearest pool facilities are the Carnegie Leisure Centre and Inverkeithing High School, and the model suggests these have some additional capacity. However, Inverkeithing High School is also due to close and again the replacement school will not have a swimming pool facility, so the capacity of swimming pool supply in the area will reduce in the next few years.

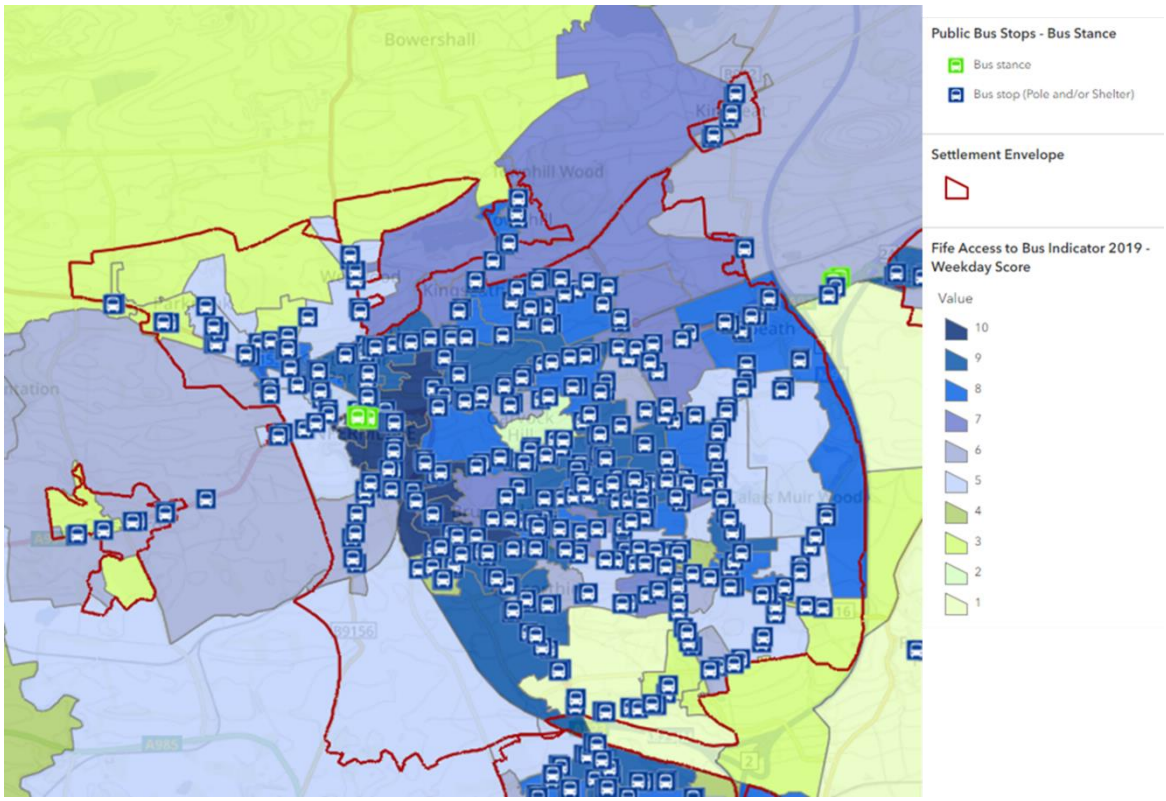
Links to Evidence

- Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023
- Fife Greenspace Audit 2010
- Open space quality audit – examples of good quality sites Jan 25
- Open space quality audit – examples of poor quality sites Jan 25
- Dunfermline Greenspace SCIO – Wooer's Alley
- SportScotland – Facility Planning Model Fife Council 2023
- SportScotland – Community sports hubs

Accessibility of public transport in the City of Dunfermline locality

6.68 Most parts of the City of Dunfermline locality have good access to public transport with regular bus services across the area and two rail stations. Areas with less easy access to public transport include the north-west and south of Dunfermline, and parts of Crossford and the Garvock Hill area.

Figure 6.20 Weekday access to buses in the City of Dunfermline area with bus stops (1= poor access, 10 = good access)

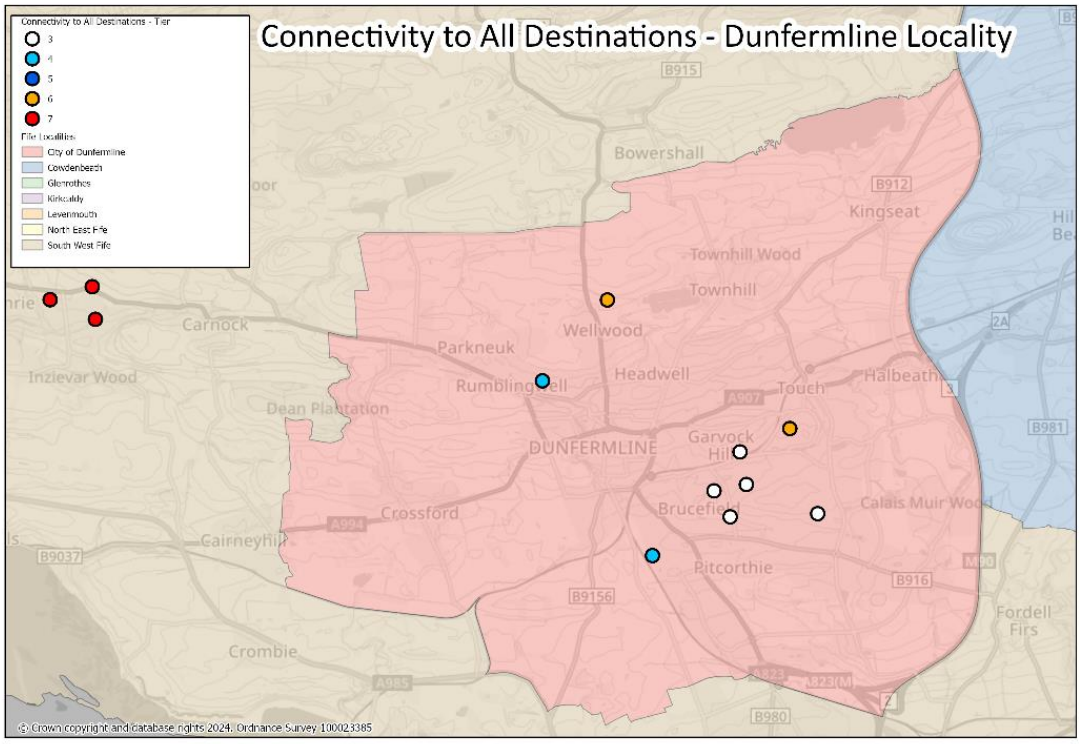


Source: Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)

6.69 Public transport access to regional and local employment and retail destinations from the City of Dunfermline locality is amongst the best in Fife. However, there are a few pockets in Dunfermline itself with poorer access.

6.70 The figure below highlights overall levels of access to destinations such as employment and further education from areas within the locality. Tiers 1 and 2 are not shown on the map as they are considered to be good access scores. Tiers 3 and above indicate access issues. Access to further and higher education is rated poor from parts of the City of Dunfermline locality, reflecting some of the community responses to the surveys. The area also has relatively poor connectivity to community health destinations when using public transport. More commentary on public transport accessibility is contained in Annex 10 (Transport).

Figure 6.21: Connectivity to all Destinations from Dunfermline Locality



Source: LTS/LDP Modelling and Options Report

Links to Evidence

- Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)
- LTS & LDP Strategic Transport Modelling and option Development Report 2022
- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- City of Dunfermline Area Surveys Analysis

How the City of Dunfermline's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

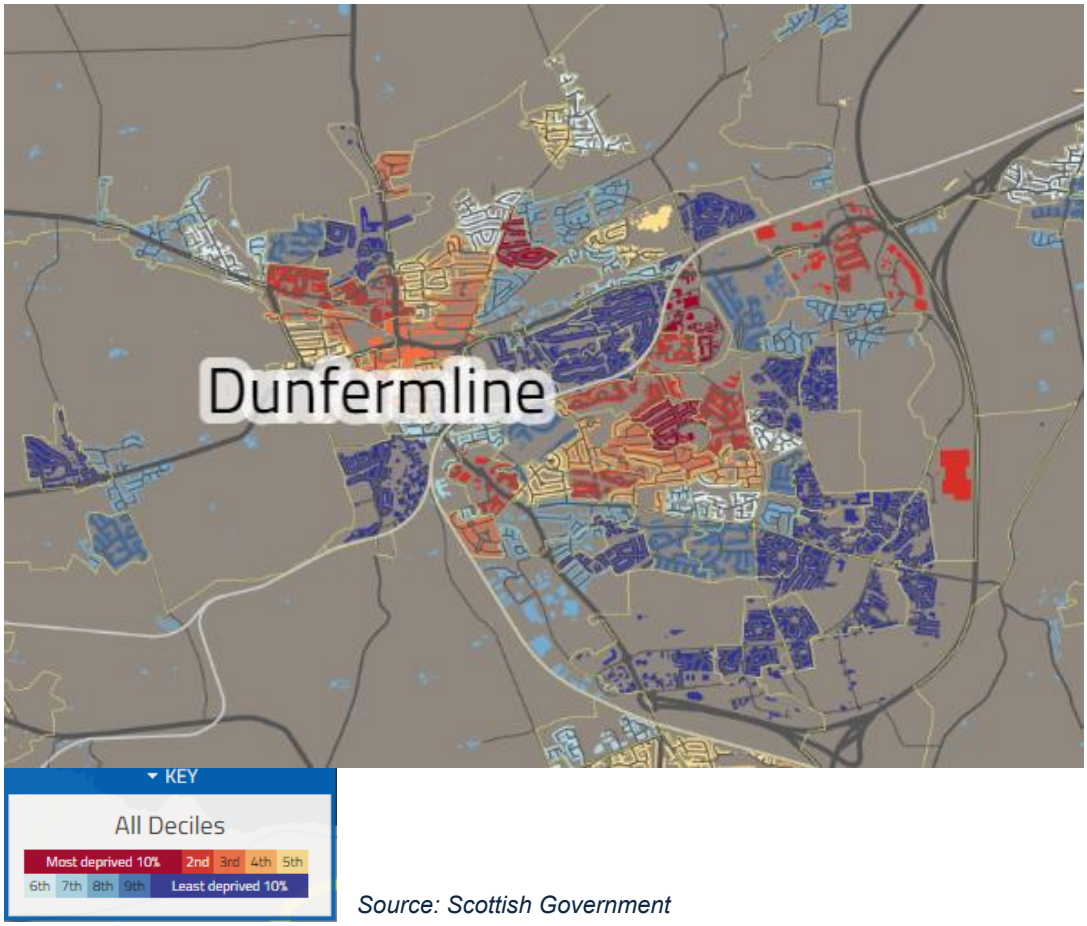
6.71 The City of Dunfermline locality has a lower level of deprivation compared to Fife in general.

6.72 The City of Dunfermline locality has a higher percentage of working age people qualified to NVQ4 or above than Fife and Scottish averages; and it has a slightly lower percentage of people who have no qualifications.

6.73 The locality has lower percentages of children who live in relative poverty and working age people who are employment and income deprived when compared to Fife averages. Claimant counts in the locality are also below the Fife average.

6.74 Large parts of Dunfermline and Crossford are in the 10% least deprived areas in Scotland, although Touch, Abbeyview and part of Bellyeoman are in the 10% most deprived.

Figure 6.22 Deprivation in the City of Dunfermline locality



Source: Scottish Government

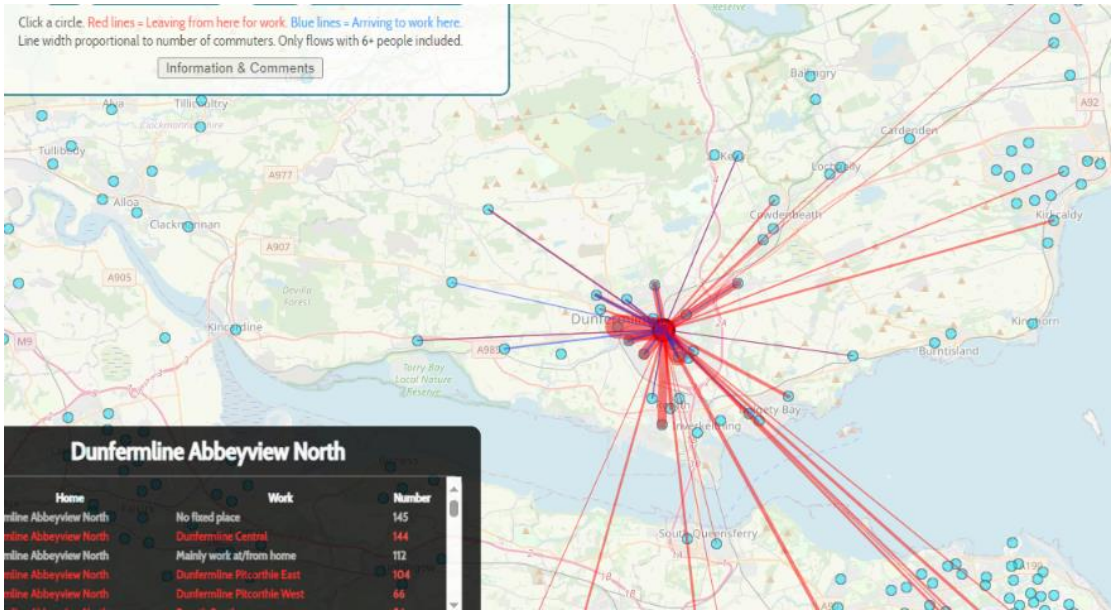
Employment in the City of Dunfermline locality

Travel to Work

6.75 Most of the travel to work trips are contained within the locality itself with Rosyth and Cowdenbeath being common destinations. Relatively low numbers of people travel to Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy from Dunfermline for work purposes.

6.76 There is a significant number of trips to Edinburgh from Dunfermline and the Forth bridgehead area with significantly fewer trips going the other way.

Figure 6.23: Example of journeys to work to and from part of the City of Dunfermline locality



Source: Datashine

Key Sectors

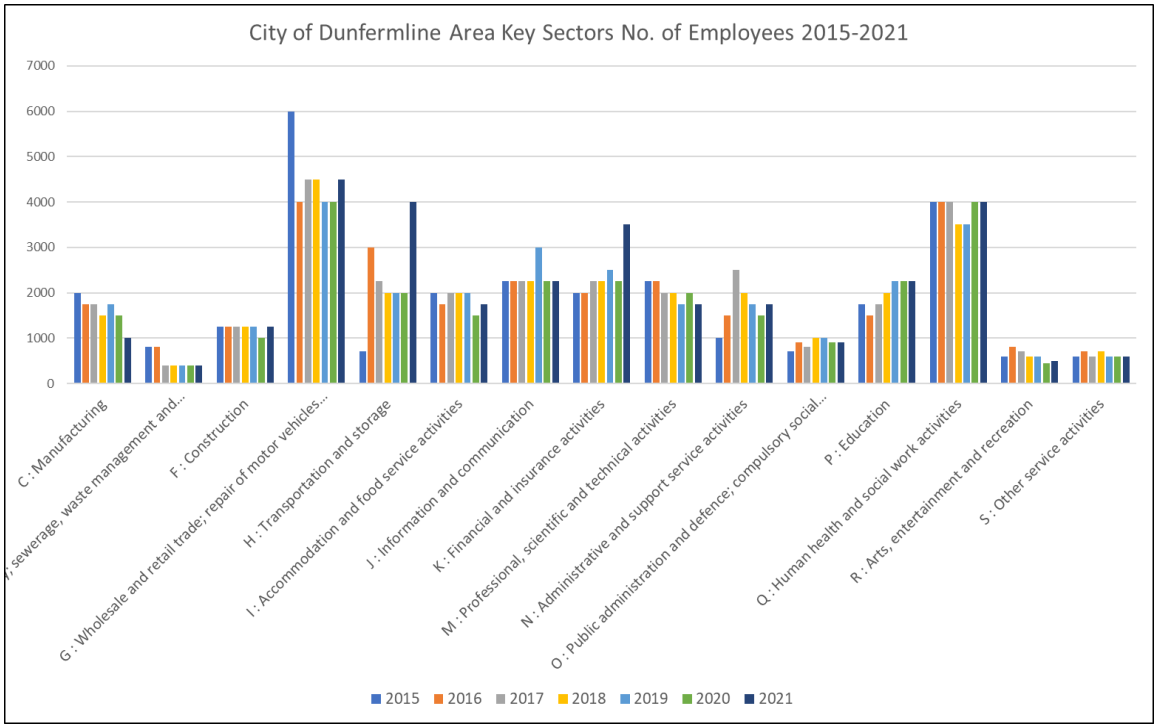
6.77 Nomis data indicates that whilst the City of Dunfermline locality does not have one dominant sector, retailing, and financial and insurance activities are the largest sectors.

6.78 In addition, 64% of all of Fife's jobs in the Information and Communication sector are in the City of Dunfermline locality.

6.79 Other important sectors include education (2,250 employed) and professional, scientific and technical (1,750 employed).

6.80 Growth Sector data is only available at a Fife-level so it is not included here. This is being considered as part of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy.

Figure 6.24: The City of Dunfermline locality's key employment sectors (number of people employed each year from 2015 to 2021)

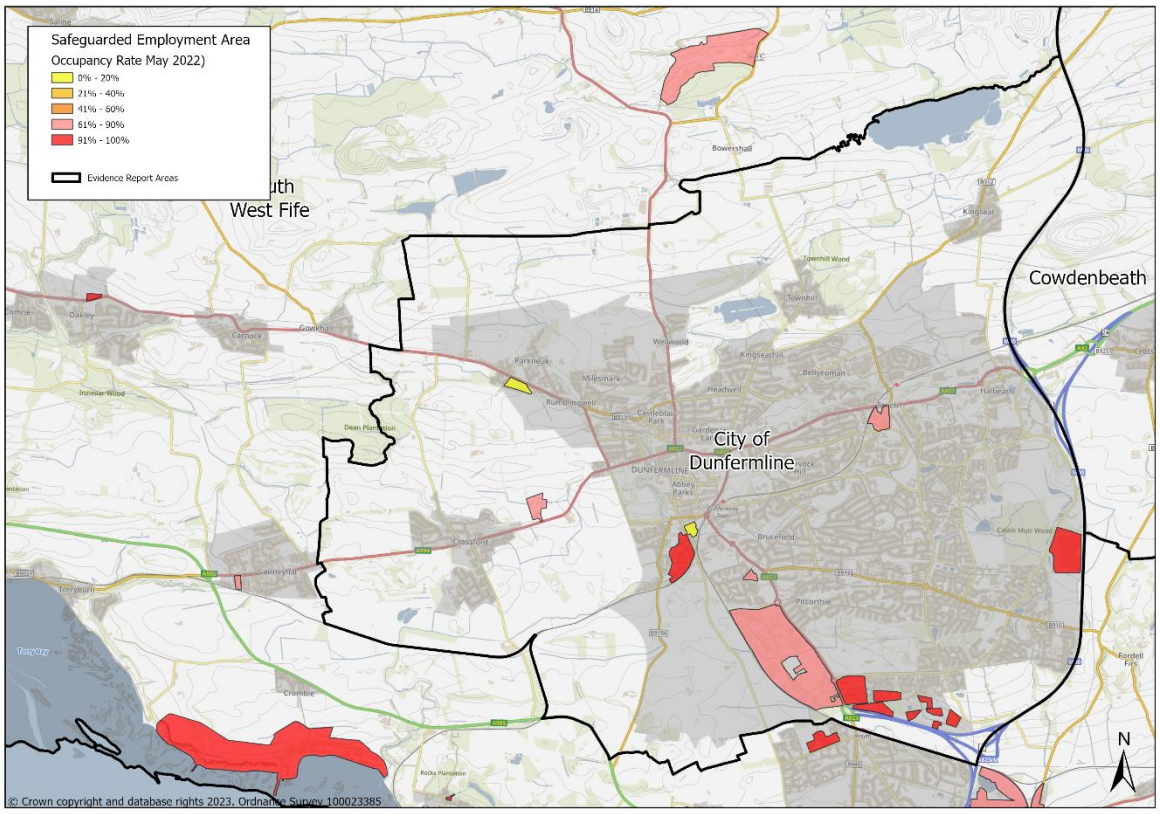


Source: www.nomisweb.co.uk/articles/1103.aspx

Safeguarded Employment Area Occupancy Rates

6.81 The occupancy rates of safeguarded employment areas (shown in the adopted LDP – industrial estates and business parks) in the City of Dunfermline locality range from 79% at Dunfermline Business Centre to 94.5% at Carnegie Masterton Employment Area indicating a need for more available employment land in the LDP.

Figure 6.25: Occupancy rates in Safeguarded Employment Areas in the City of Dunfermline Locality



Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

Availability of employment land in the city of Dunfermline locality

6.82 Within the Dunfermline Locality, as at 2023, the key settlement Dunfermline itself only meets 44% of the available land requirement as set out in the Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021) and monitored through the Employment Land Audit. There has been and continues to be a relatively significant level of development with the area.

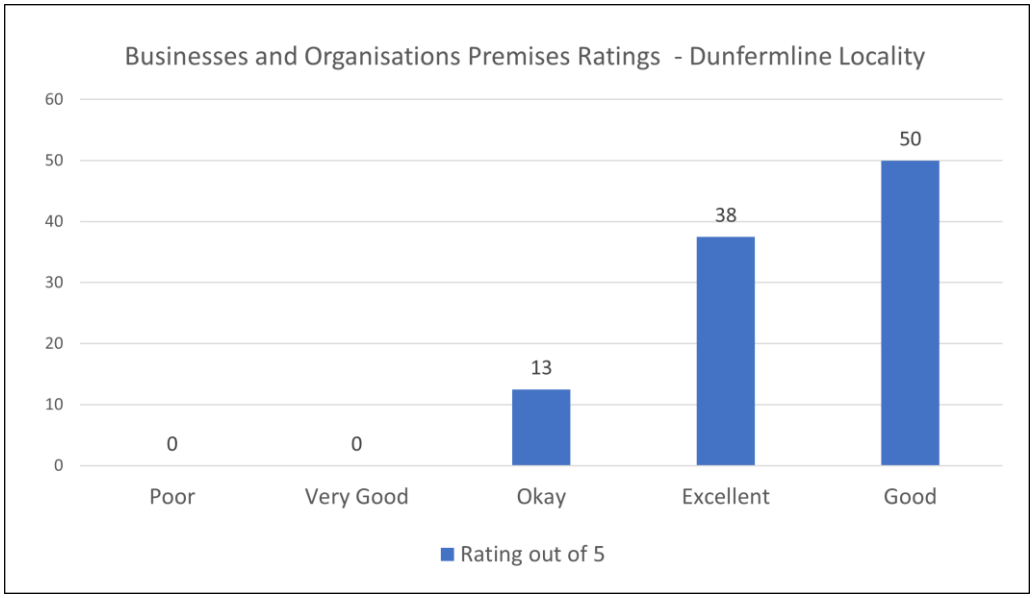
6.83 The emerging Employment Land Strategy and LDP will ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. For more information see the Fife-wide section of the Evidence Report.

Businesses and organisations consultation 2022

6.84 In 2022 as part of the evidence gathering, businesses and organisations were consulted on what works well and issues that they face operating in the locality. Respondents rated their premises as okay, good, or excellent indicating that there is a range of premises in terms of age, size, cost, and quality.

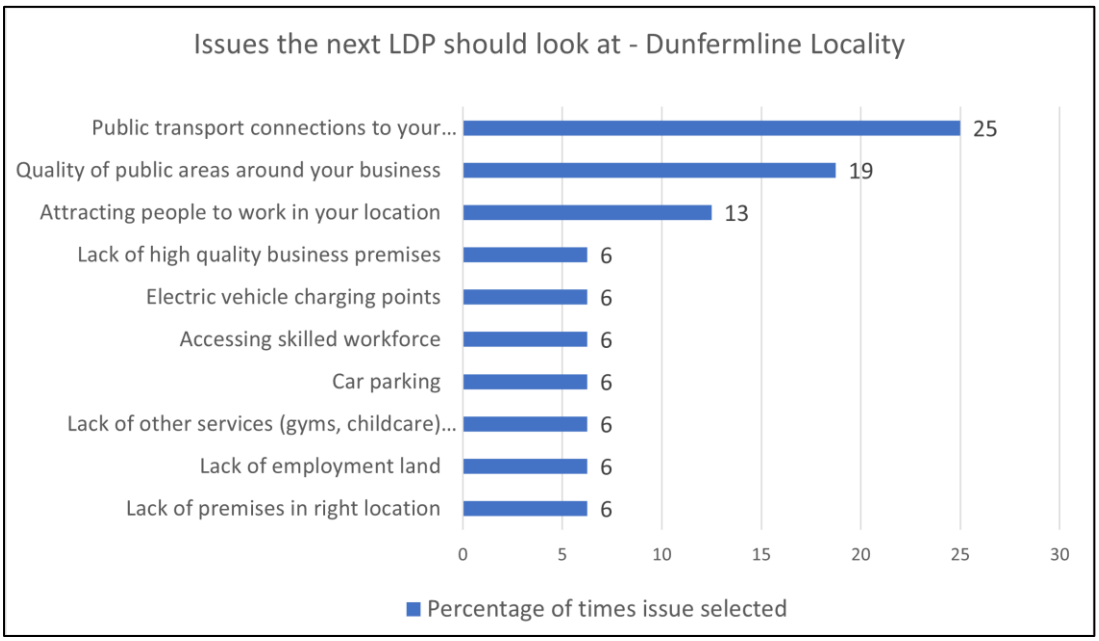
6.85 Access to the M90 motorway and good parking were seen as a positive with some respondents stating that there are no negatives. Some responses suggest that businesses are now at capacity to expand and physically grow due to a lack of suitably sized properties.

Figure 6.26: Premises ratings by local businesses and organisations in the City of Dunfermline locality



Source: Fife Council

Figure 6.27: Feedback about issues the LDP should look at in the City of Dunfermline locality



Source: Fife Council

6.86 One response was negative about the condition of Dunfermline town centre's public realm and how inaccessible it is for disabled persons. A lack of good shops to attract people was also highlighted as an issue.

6.87 The three main issues respondents wish the next LDP to look at are: public transport connections; the quality of public spaces around their premises; and attracting people to work in the area.

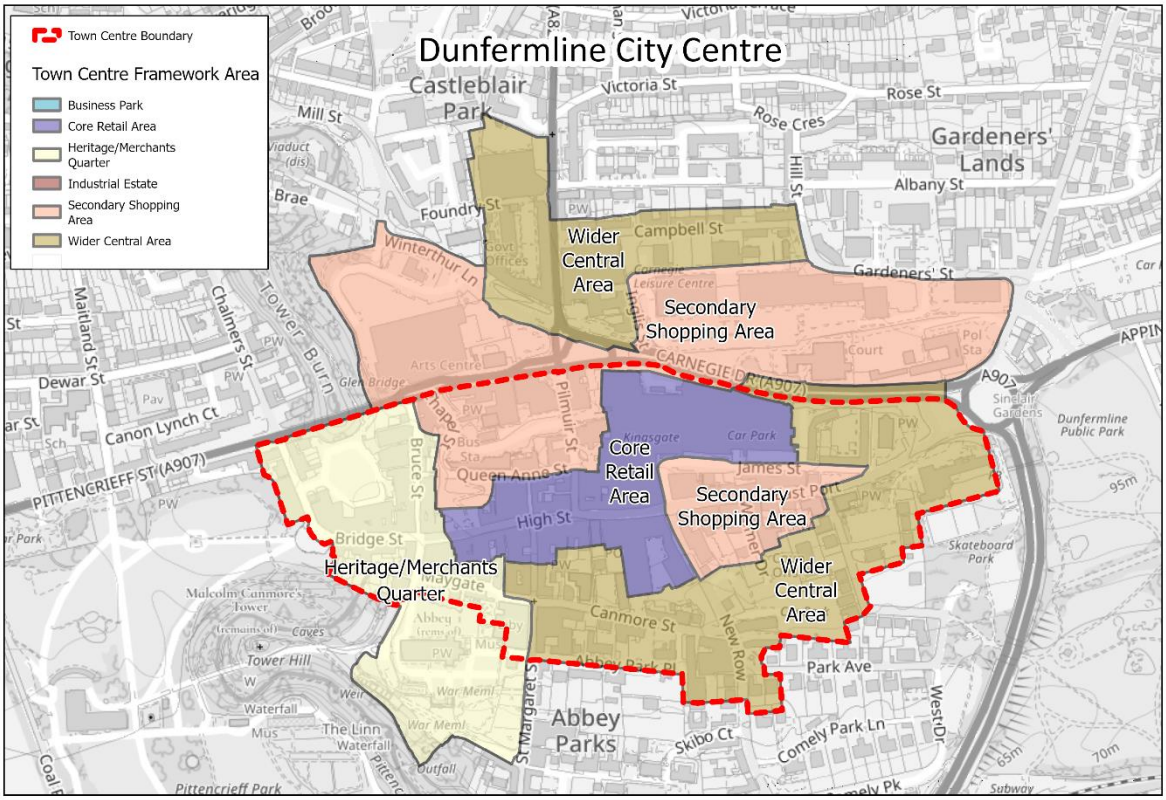
Links to Evidence

- DataShine: Scotland Commute
- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Economic Policy and Baseline Context April 22
- Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022
- Key sectors Number of Employed 15-22
- Review of safeguarded employment areas
- Employment Land Audit 2023
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Review (Ryden)

Dunfermline City Centre

6.88 Dunfermline City Centre is a regional centre facing many challenges, not least the changing nature of retail shopping. It is one of three main town centres in Fife along with Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes.

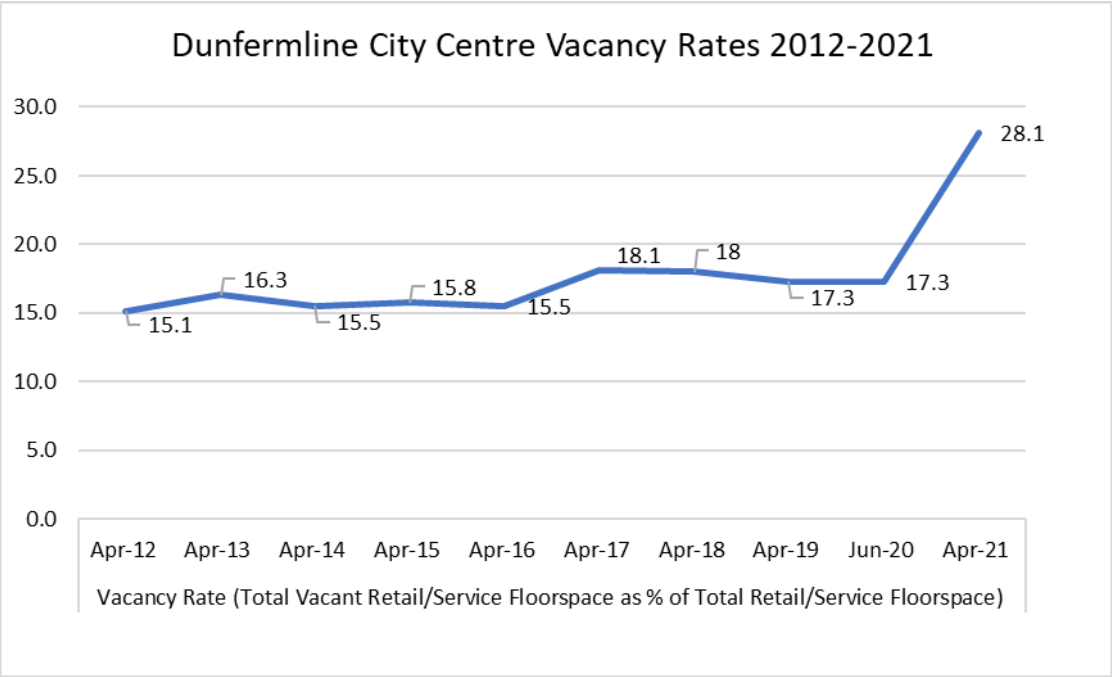
Figure 6.28: Map of Dunfermline City Centre



Source: Fife Council

6.89 Vacancy rates have risen in Dunfermline City Centre since from 15.1% in 2012 to 28.1% in 2021. A significant number of vacant units within Dunfermline City Centre are large and not suitable for modern retail needs.

Figure 6.29: Vacancy rates in Dunfermline City Centre (2012 – 2021)



Source: Experian GOAD

6.90 As the figure below illustrates, Dunfermline City Centre's total vacant floorspace has increased by 10,080m^2 since 2012 going from 10,370m^2 to 20,450m^2 in 2021. The largest reduction has been in comparison floorspace, with a reduction of 12,180m^2 from 38,240m^2 in 2012 to 26,060m^2 in 2021.

Table 6.2: Dunfermline City Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

	Dunfermline City Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) 2012 to 2021		
Use Type	**Dunfermline April 2012**	**Dunfermline April 2021**	**Dunfermline Change**
Assembly	1,360	1,240	-120
Comparison	38,240	26,060	-12,180
Convenience	2,650	2,720	70
Convenience/ Comparison	950	0	-950
Food and Drink	9,840	11,680	1,840
Hotel/Hostel	350	480	130
Leisure	3,830	3,810	-20
Medical	230	300	70
Office	850	1,800	950
Service	12,190	11,490	-700
Vacant	10,370	20,450	10,080

Source: Experian GOAD

6.91 Although there has been a loss of retail floorspace there has been an increase in office, and food and drink floor space in the city centre.

6.92 In addition to Dunfermline City Centre, there are six local shopping centres serving the locality including the village of Crossford. Occupancy rates are generally good ranging between 83.9% and 100%.

Quality of City Centre

6.93 The quality of place in Dunfermline city centre is mixed. The High Street is narrow due to its historic development pattern and with surfacing which is looking aged, and it is cluttered with cars and street furniture which adversely impacts on the pedestrian experience.

6.94 There are many attractive and historic buildings along the High Street which are for the most part in a reasonable to good state of repair; any modern building inserts tend to be of average quality. The shop frontages are mixed in quality, many are attractive and make concessions to the historic context, but a few have large generic corporate signage which has a detrimental impact on the overall look of the place.

6.95 Beyond the High Street there are a lot of attractive places around the Abbey and Palace, Maygate and Pittencrieff Park. These have high-quality, well-maintained buildings, public realm, and greenspaces. There is also the new museum and library building which is very high quality and responds well to its historic context.

6.96 A consideration of the comparative value of retail and service businesses found that Dunfermline centre is performing well relative to other town centres in Fife and compares well to similar centres outwith Fife.

6.97 Five Town Centre Building Improvement grants totalling just over £45,000 were awarded in the City of Dunfermline locality in 2022/23.

6.98 Austerity measures over the last 15 years have had an impact on the level of funding which can be accessed for town centre public realm and building improvements.

6.99 Looking ahead, work is underway to develop a city centre framework for Dunfermline to guide future development and interventions in the area and a City Plan/Local Community Plan is proposed with the aim of capturing and developing an innovative shared city vision and city plan with short, medium, and long terms actions.

6.100 The attainment of city status and the *Smart Dunfermline* initiative offers a basis for future local initiatives, some of which will can be supported by the new LDP.

Links to Evidence

- Dunfermline Businesses & Organisations Consultation 2022
- Dunfermline Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- GOAD data
- Fife Retail Capacity Study 2022
- Assessment of local shopping centres
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report - Summer 2023
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets – Summer 2023
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries – Summer 2023

Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of evidence specific to the City of Dunfermline locality:

- The City of Dunfermline has been the focus of much of the housing delivery under the current FIFEplan. However, the growth of the City of Dunfermline has created areas on the outskirts with relatively poor access to services within walking or cycling distance of homes. The market attractiveness has detracted from other locations in Fife and drawn traffic to the area. The spatial strategy will consider if new housing development should be directed to other locations.
- There has also been a growth in employment land in the locality, with its location close to the M90 and Forth crossings, as well as a skilled workforce in the locality, making it an attractive location to locate a business.
- Flooding and water quality are issues in parts of the locality, which will have implications for development under the new LDP.
- Sites allocated in the LDP should include information on priorities for the protection, enhancement and extension of blue and green networks on the site, this will include improvements to the condition of water bodies such as along the Tower, Lyne and Brankholm Burns; and opportunities to extend and enhance active travel routes such as through the Dunfermline SDAs.
- Across the locality, planned growth and demographic changes mean there is a need for additional capacity in the primary care sector that will need to be planned for.
- There is some capacity in primary and secondary schools across the locality and new schools are being built, and will need to be built, as part of the planned growth of the City of Dunfermline.
- Most people of working age either work in the City of Dunfermline locality itself or in neighbouring South and West Fife. However, there are still significant numbers of people travelling across the Forth to the Edinburgh area causing capacity issues on both the Queensferry Crossing and the Forth Rail Bridge.
- Dunfermline City Centre has a high level of commercial vacancies. The changing nature of consumer shopping habits has greatly affected the city centre which performed a role of a regional shopping centre. Today, there is too much commercial floorspace in the city centre, and much of

it is in an obsolete configuration. The role of the city centre is becoming as much about social transactions as it is a place to shop.

- The new Local Development Plan may need to consider if additional policies or support is needed in addition to national policy. Considerations are likely to include where additional scope exists for city centre living for different age needs in places where local access to neighbourhood and social facilities are readily available.
- The attainment of city status and the Smart Dunfermline initiative offers a basis for future local initiatives, some of which will can be supported by the new LDP.
- The closure of Woodmill and Inverkeithing High schools will reduce the capacity of swimming pool provision in the area.

7 Cowdenbeath locality evidence and issues

Introducing the Cowdenbeath locality

7.1 The Cowdenbeath locality is in Mid-Fife, bordering the larger city and urban Dunfermline locality. Much of the locality is characterised by low, undulating, arable landscape sitting to the south east of the Ochil Hills. Cowdenbeath, and the towns and villages that make up the locality, owe much to their historical links with coal mining and the extensive coalfields that characterised the locality.

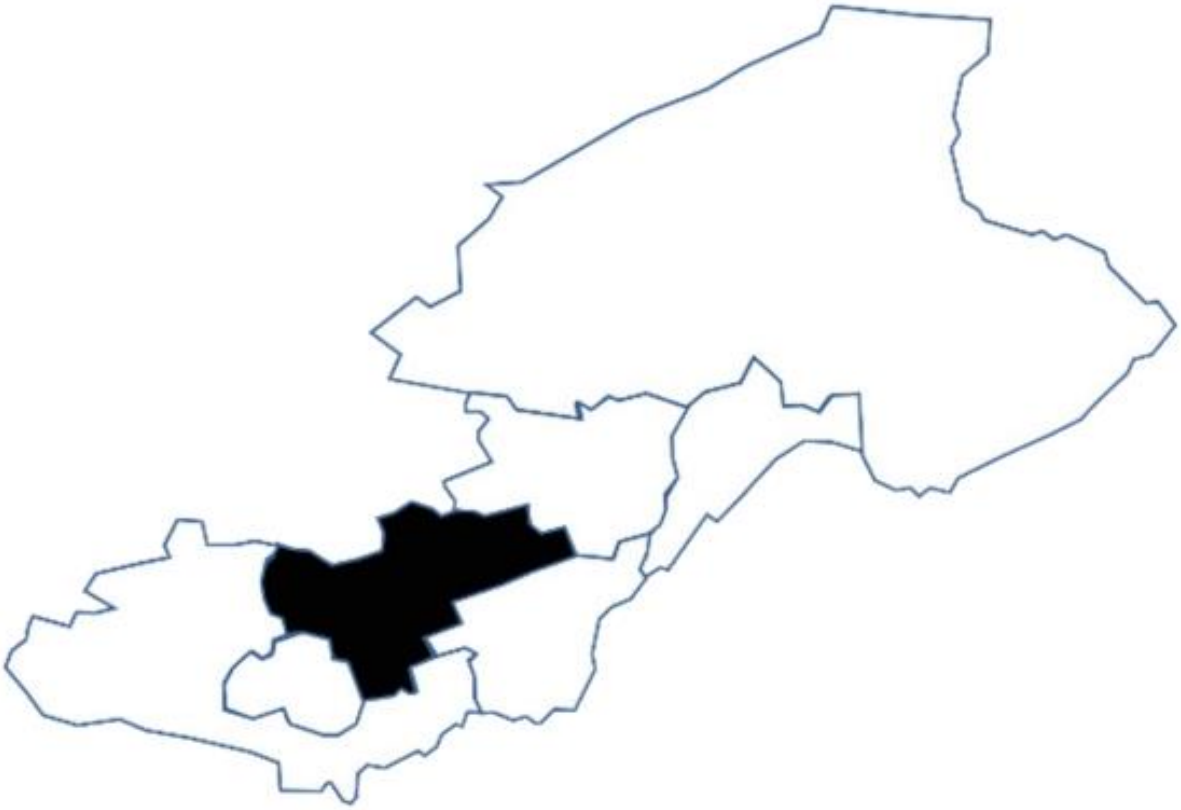


Figure 7.1: Plan showing the location of the Cowdenbeath locality within Fife

Source: Fife Council

7.2 A number of priorities were identified for the Cowdenbeath locality from an early LDP workshop carried out between Fife Council and the Key Agency Group in September 2021:

- Diversifying housing choice;
- Town centre living;
- Job diversity and associated education opportunities; and
- Creating quality, connected and sustainable places.

7.3 Addressing these priorities will require collaborative working across a number of organisations and partners.

7.4 An additional locality workshop was attended by representatives from Fife Council to collect place-based comments for the Cowdenbeath area.

7.5 The Cowdenbeath locality is one of the less populated regions of Fife, with 41,491 people in 20,123 households. A smaller proportion of homes are owned (55.7%) in the locality compared to Fife, with higher levels of social renting (34.9%), and lower levels of renting privately (7.4%).

7.6 The locality has a higher employment rate (76.6%) than Fife, and a smaller percentage of the working age population are economically inactive (17.7%). However, levels of employment (13.6%) and income deprivation (17.8%), and claimant rates (6.0%) are higher than Fife. Participation of 16-19 year olds in education, employment, or training (88.9%) is below the Fife average.

7.7 In terms of health, in 2019 the average life expectancy for males living within the locality was 75.3 years and 80 years for females.

7.8 In addition, 25% of the locality's population were registered as living with a long-term physical health condition during the period between 2019 and 2020.

Links to evidence

- Cowdenbeath Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- ScotPHO profiling tool
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary
- Fife Council: Support for place-based Local Development Planning Cowdenbeath Area Workshop Report 09.05.2023

Implementation of FIFEplan in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.9 There are several proposals in the current FIFEplan in the Cowdenbeath locality.

7.10 Development interest continues for the restoration of the former mining site at St Ninian's.

7.11 Planning permission in principle has been granted for the planned restoration of the Westfield site. The proposals include mixed use development including power generation/storage; waste recovery/recycling; employment, rail off-loading facility, and associated infrastructure.

7.12 There has been no activity on the Lochgelly strategic land allocation; however, there are several planning permissions for the Ore and Upper Leven Valley strategic development area. Planning permission in principle has been approved for part of the Kelty proposal and development is under construction at Cardenden Road West.

How past development has shaped how the Cowdenbeath locality is today

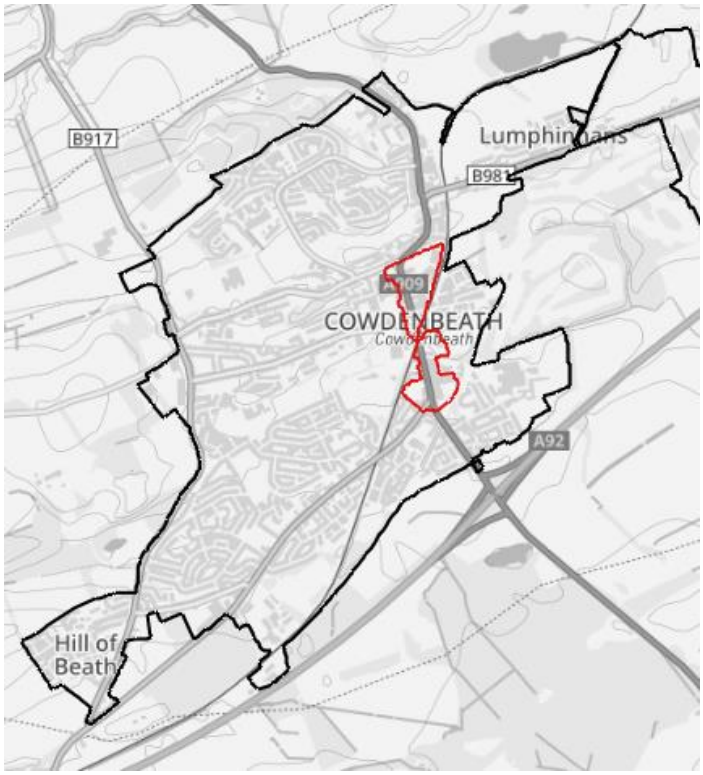
Urban development and local living

7.13 How and why the settlements of the Cowdenbeath locality have developed and changed over time heavily influences how they work today and the issues they face in reducing carbon emissions and tackling social and economic inequality.

7.14 Most of the towns and villages in the area developed to provide housing for workers in the collieries, with Lochgelly and Cowdenbeath being historically the largest settlements. In most settlements tightly packed 19th Century terraced housing has been replaced by mid-20th Century local authority built housing. These areas generally have a good network of routes within them and reasonable connectivity to town or village centres.

7.15 Much of Lochgelly, Cowdenbeath and Crossgates have reasonable access to most key services and facilities within a 10-minute walk; although there are areas such as south-west Cowdenbeath which are quite poorly served, (this is partly because the town centre is located to the east of the town rather than centrally).

Figure 7.2 Map extract of Cowdenbeath showing location of town centre in red



Source: Fife Council

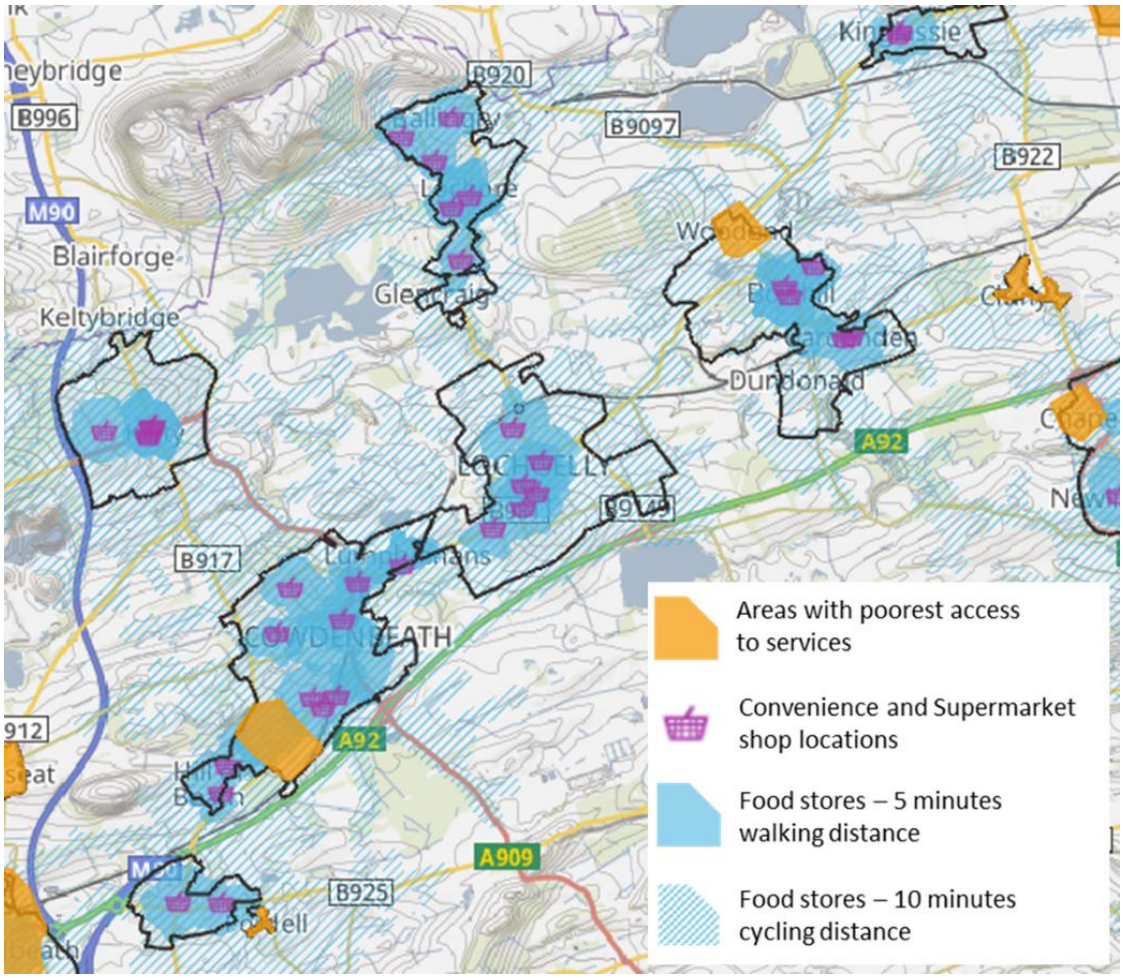
7.16 Fife Council carried out a detailed assessment of how people in Cowdenbeath access services as a case study to inform the local living work for the LDP. The study found that:

- Cowdenbeath generally has a good range of services and facilities but some key services located in the centre are beyond a 10 minute walk from peripheral parts of the town.
- The town is well served by public transport and the majority of people surveyed indicated that they use public transport.
- There are good well-lit footpath connections although maintenance is an issue.
- There is relatively poor access to community hall facilities in the area.

7.17 Some areas such as Cardenden and Lochore, Ballingry, and Crosshill have developed as smaller settlements which have merged together, this means that they are very spread out and have less well-defined centres. As a result, distances are further to travel, making walking and cycling a less attractive option.

7.18 The smaller towns and villages have more patchy access to services and facilities. Kelty and the Cardenden area both have a good range of services and facilities but have areas on their peripheries which are not well served.

Figure 7.3 Example extract from Local Living and 20 MN interactive mapping showing walking and cycling distances from convenience stores in the Cowdenbeath locality, and the areas which are least well served by services and facilities



Source: Fife Council

7.19 Later 20th and early 21st century housing tends to be laid out in cul-de-sac which create poor pedestrian permeability in those areas. Crossgates is particularly affected by this with poor pedestrian connectivity across the village.

Figure 7.4 Map extract of Crossgates showing layout of routes and culs-de-sac development

Source: Fife Council

7.20 The Fife Circle rail line is routed through the locality and connects Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly to the East Coast mainline railway.

7.21 Annex 7 provides more information on Living Well Locally and 20 minute Neighbourhoods in Fife.

Links to evidence

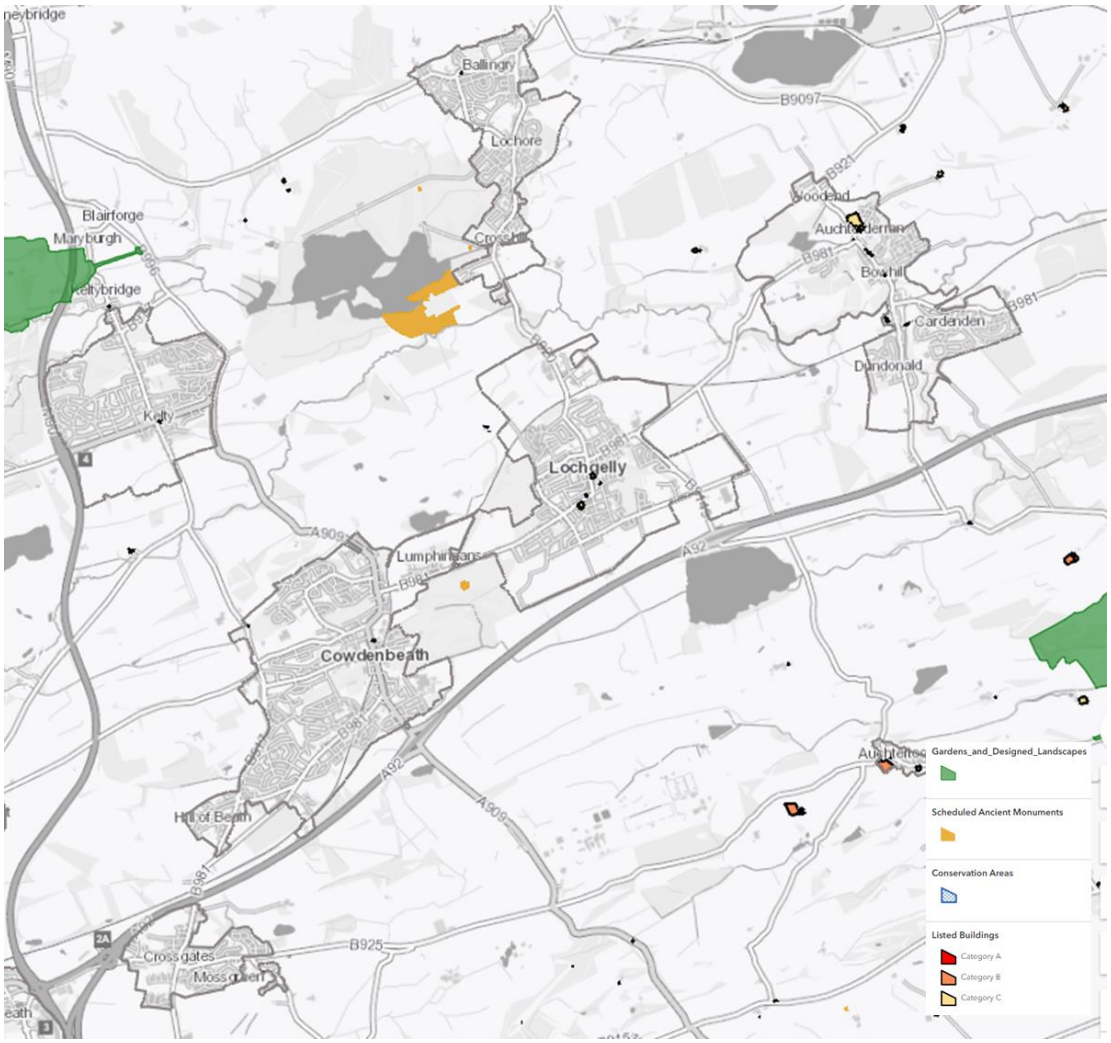
- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Living Well locally case study – Cowdenbeath
- Interactive Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods mapping

Historic environment in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.22 There are no conservation areas and only 37 listed buildings in the Cowdenbeath area with Cardenden having the highest number. Lochgelly and Cowdenbeath town centres have many traditional buildings but they tend to be ordinary in quality (hence they have no protection) and many have been substantially altered in ways that are detrimental to their quality.

7.23 There is a large scheduled monument, Clune Craig hut circles and enclosures, to the south east of Lochore Meadows.

Figure 7.5 Map extract showing historic environment assets in the Cowdenbeath locality



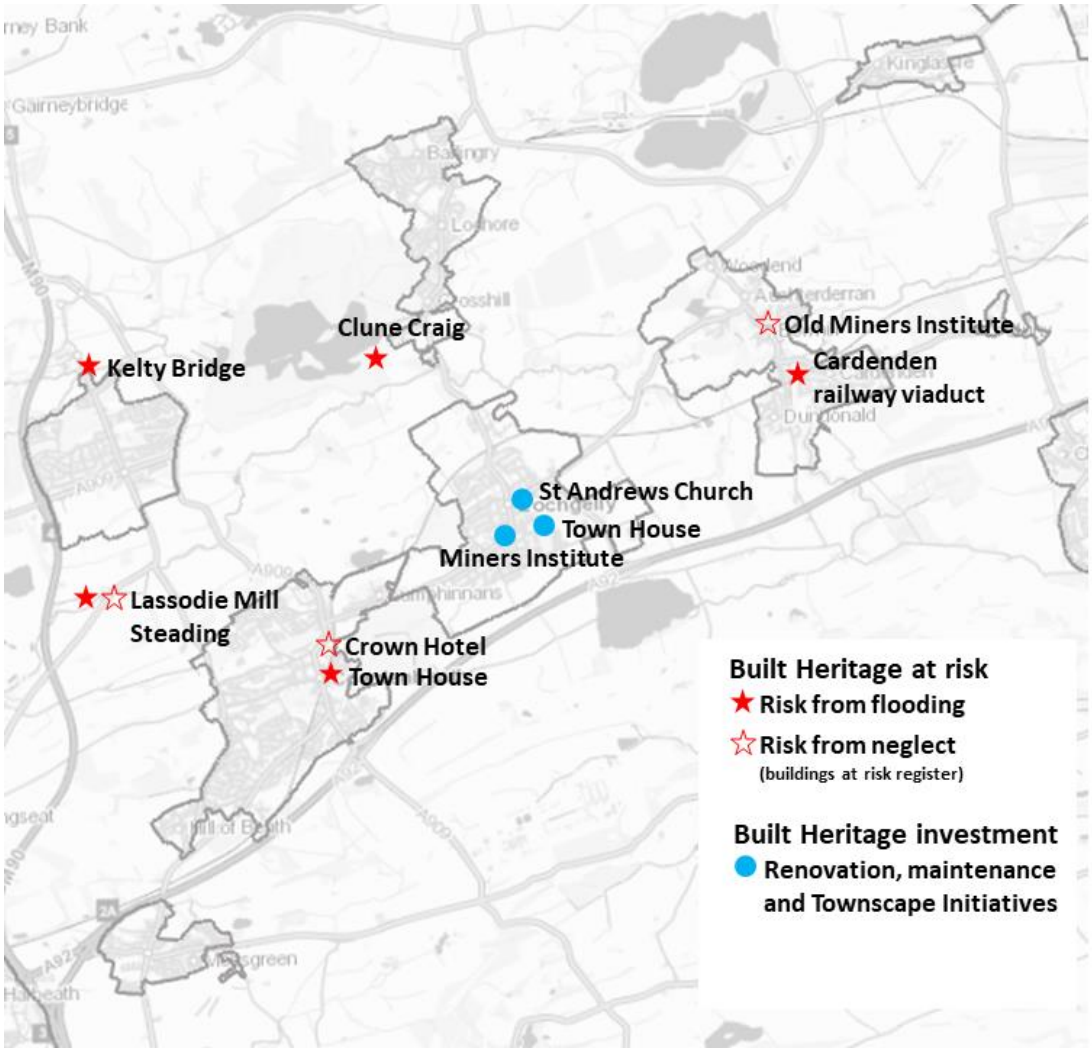
Source: Fife Council

7.24 There have been several projects in Lochgelly to save historic buildings, including the restoration of the former Miners Institute, Town House, and Co-op buildings, and the ongoing restoration works to St Andrews Church. However ongoing building and public realm maintenance is an issue in the area.

Risks to the historic environment

7.25 There are very few built heritage assets in the area which are predicted to be at risk from flooding on the SEPA flood maps. Two listed bridges; Kelty bridge and the Auchterderran Cardenden railway viaduct are predicted to be at risk of fluvial flooding. Lassodie Mill Farm and Steading is at risk of flooding from Lochfitty Burn and surface water flooding; and there is a small risk of surface water flooding of the Town House in Cowdenbeath. There is also a prediction of some risk to Clune Craig scheduled ancient monument of flooding from Loch Ore as highlighted in the figure below.

Figure 7.6: Map of the Cowdenbeath locality showing built heritage at risk from flooding and neglect; and some built heritage investment initiatives.



Sources: Fife Council, HES & SEPA

This map was created by visually comparing HES built heritage designations with the SEPA flood maps, the Buildings at Risk register and some areas which have received funding for townscape and heritage initiatives.

7.26 Three buildings in the area are identified on the Buildings at Risk register.

Links to evidence

- Historic Environment Scotland Interactive map showing built heritage, landscape character designations
- Fife Historic Buildings Trust - Lochgelly
- Buildings at Risk register
- SEPA flood maps

Vacant and derelict land and environmental hazards in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.27 The Cowdenbeath locality has three large vacant and derelict land sites which relate to former mining at Westfield and quarrying operations near Cardenden. The rest of the sites are all small scale and located within the settlements.

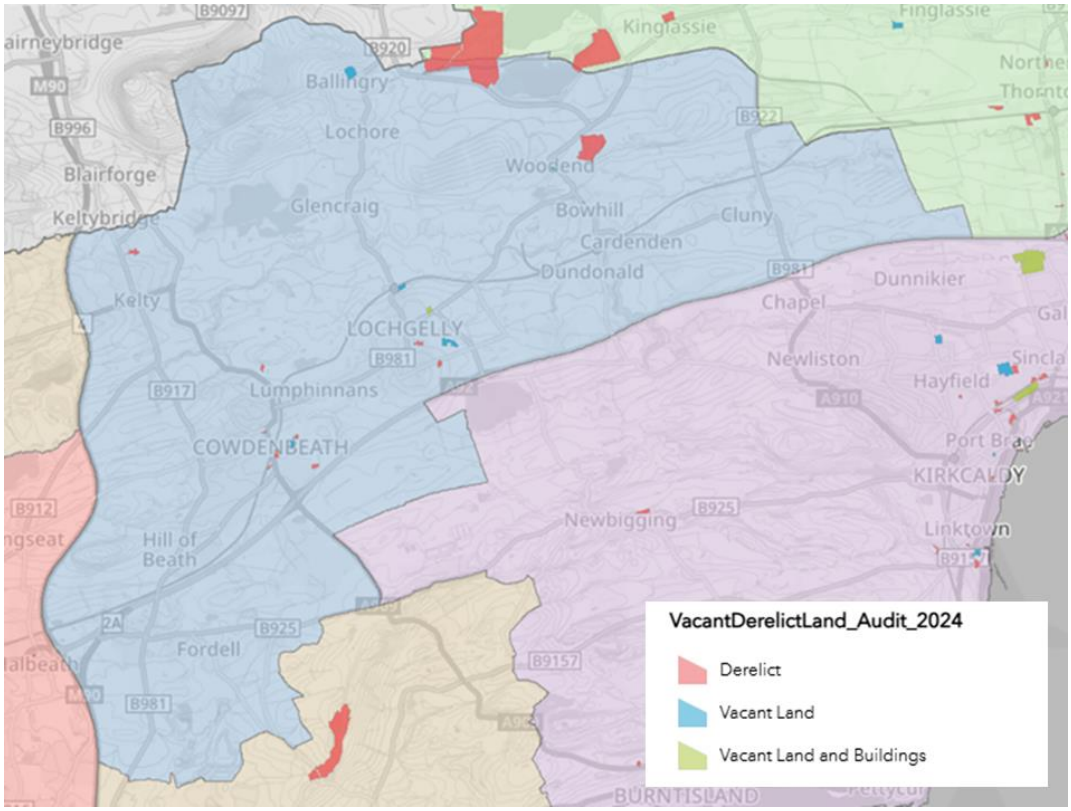


Figure 7.7 Extract from the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2022 showing the Cowdenbeath locality.

Source: Fife Council

7.28 Between 2021-22 the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit identified that no vacant and derelict sites in the Cowdenbeath locality were brought back into use and no additional site were identified. Funding from the Vacant and Derelict land fund has been allocated to support development of town centre sites in Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly and aid industrial estate regeneration at The Avenue in Lochgelly.

7.29 Five pipelines pass through the Cowdenbeath locality – two Scotland Gas Network pipelines north of Ballingry and one east of Lochgelly; an ethane pipeline from Mossmorran to Grangemouth north of Crossgates; and a major natural gas liquid pipeline from St Fergus to Mossmorran which runs to the east of Lochgelly. Development close to these pipelines and within associated zones is subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. Part of the consultation zones for Mossmorran also lie in the

Cowdenbeath locality, and there are consultation zones associated with the Diageo facility at Begg Farm. The Health and Safety Executive consultation zones can be viewed on the adopted FIFEplan proposals map (advice/consultation information). The Health and Safety Executive have advice on the type and scale of development within the pipeline consultation zones.

7.30 There are no air quality management areas in the Cowdenbeath locality but there is a smoke control zone in Ballingry, (it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney in these areas). Air quality is monitored by Fife Council on Cowdenbeath High Street and along the B925 through Crossgates. There is a history of complaints about flaring and emissions from Mossmorran.

Links to evidence

- Fife Vacant and Derelict land audit 2022
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning Methodology
- Fife Council – Smoke Control Zones
- Fife Council – pollution mapping

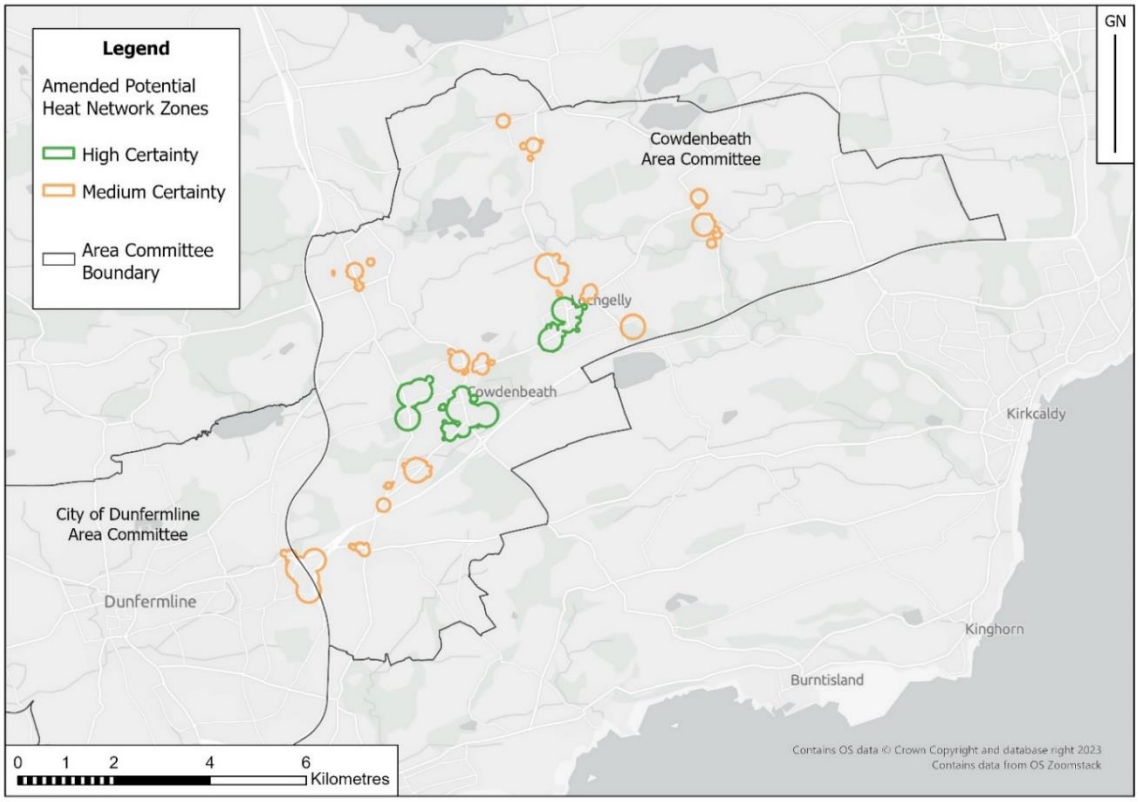
How the Cowdenbeath locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

7.31 In common with other inland areas of Fife, the Cowdenbeath locality faces challenges arising from the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Opportunities will need to be taken to decarbonise heating in the area to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding, and this will affect how development is planned in the future. Water quality and protecting important habitats are also key issues in the Cowdenbeath locality.

Decarbonising heating in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.32 Decarbonising heating will be important in helping Fife tackle the climate emergency and meeting net zero commitments. Potential Heat Network Zones in the Cowdenbeath locality are being identified as part of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Fife. The potential heat network zones are shown on the figure below. Further work to identify Heat Network Zones will be undertaken in 2024-25.

Figure 7.8 Potential heat network zones in the Cowdenbeath locality



Source: Local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan, Fife Council

7.33 Mine water also provides a possible decarbonised heat source in the Cowdenbeath locality.

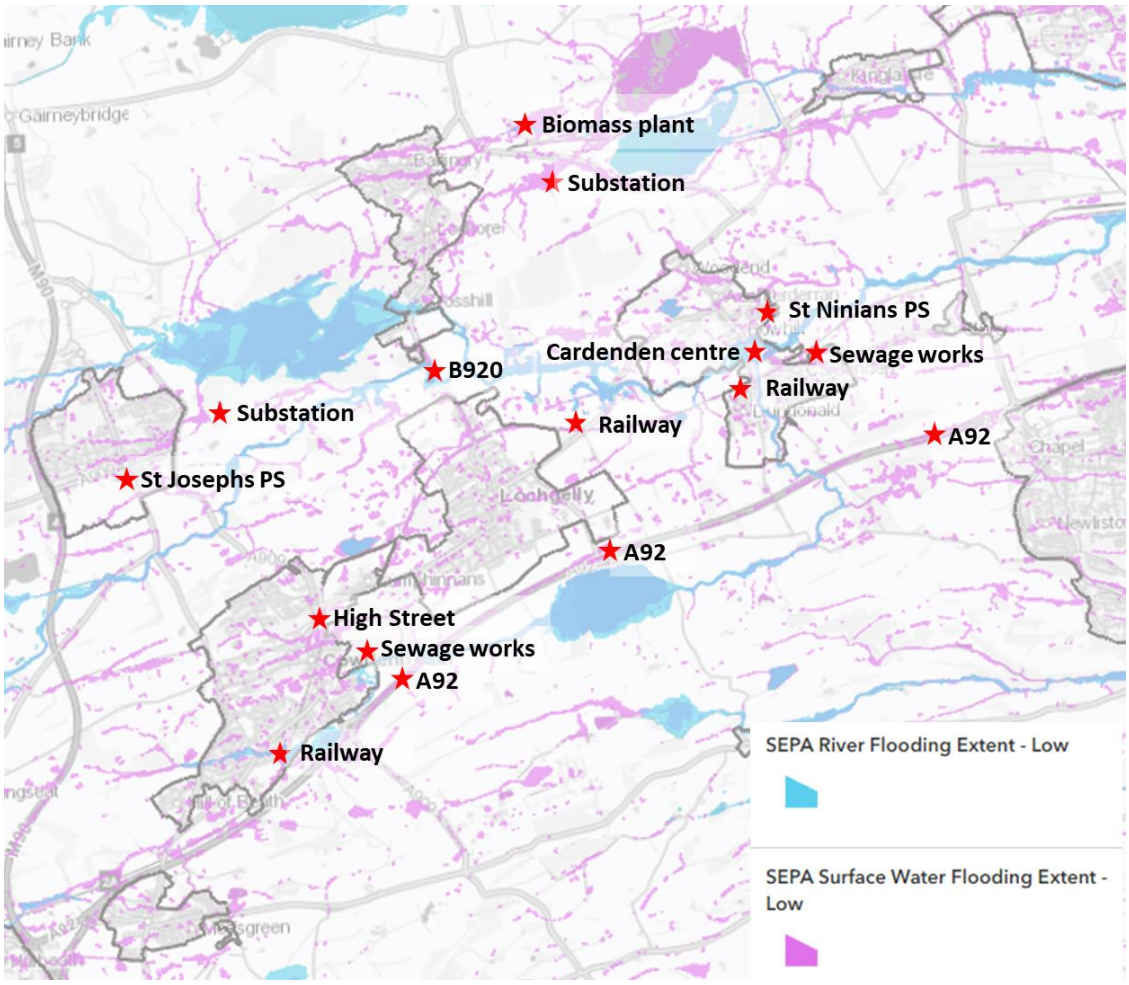
Links to evidence

- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Flood risk in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.34 As identified in the figure below, parts of the Cowdenbeath locality are identified by SEPA as predicted to be at risk of flooding, a risk that is increasing because of climate change. The risk is mainly from surface water flooding, particularly in Cowdenbeath town itself.

Figure 7.9 Plan showing key assets predicted to be at risk of flooding in the Cowdenbeath locality.



Source: Fife Council & SEPA

This map was created by visually comparing: Fife Council data on schools, healthcare facilities and key employment areas (see Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood interactive map) and Mastermap and OS Base mapping with SEPA flood maps

Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

7.35 There is also considerable risk from river flooding along the Den Burn and River Ore, particularly in Cardenden and a flood protection scheme is

proposed for Cardenden in the Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan.

7.36 There have been repeated incidents of flooding in the Cowdenbeath locality over the last few years, with Cardenden and Cowdenbeath being badly affected.

7.37 There are no existing formal flood protection schemes in the area. Cowdenbeath is identified as in need of a detailed flood study and a surface water management plan, both of which will make recommendations for flood mitigation in the area. A detailed flood study has been produced for Cardenden which recommended a scheme of works which will be delivered subject to funding becoming available.

7.38 SEPA has predicted that there is a risk of geomorphic change (change to the river channel) along stretches of the River Ore and Den Burn through Cardenden.

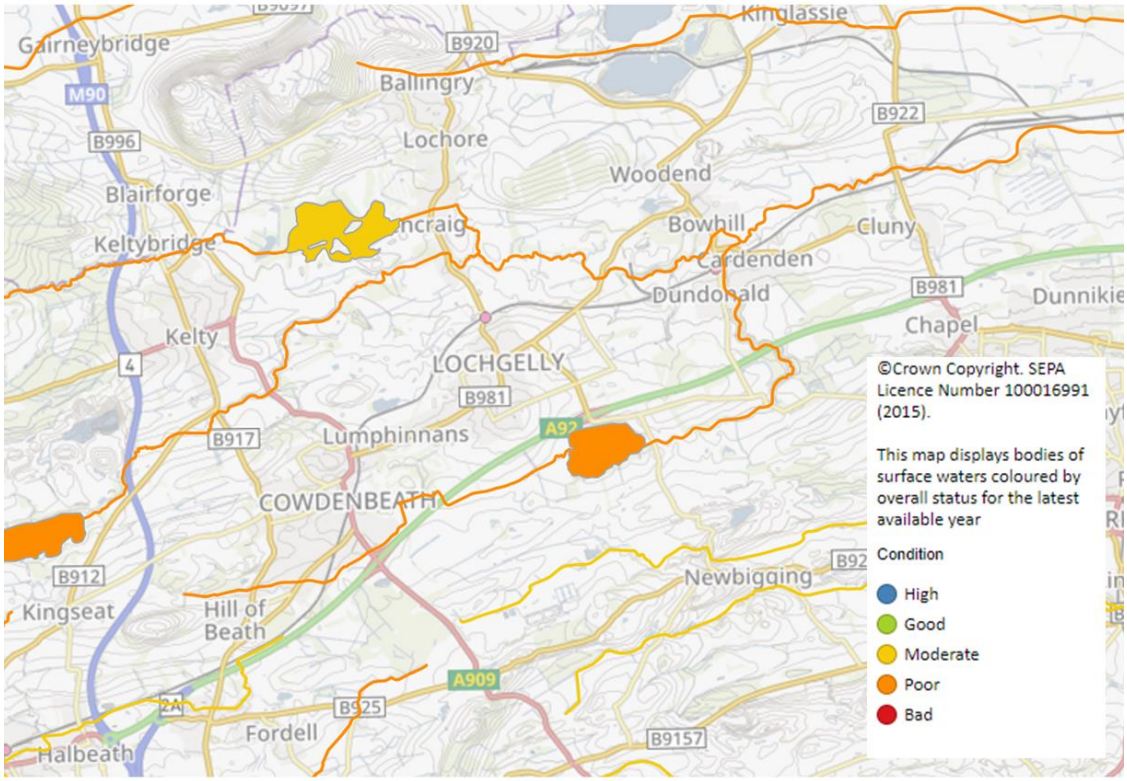
Links to evidence

- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- SEPA Flood Risk Maps
- SEPA – Geomorphic Risk data
- Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife

Water quality in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.39 Alongside flooding there are also issues with the ecological condition of surface water in the Cowdenbeath locality. The SEPA water classification hub classifies the Keithing Burn at Crossgates, Kelty Burn, the River Ore, Den Burn/Lochgelly Burn, Lochfitty Burn, Lochty Burn and Loch Gelly as poor quality. Pressures on surface water condition come from barriers to fish migration from legacy structures, and the impact of farming on modified channels and diffuse pollution (identified on the SEPA water environment hub). Loch Ore is classified as having moderate ecological condition.

Figure 7.10 Extract from SEPA water classification hub showing quality of surface waters in the Cowdenbeath locality



Source: SEPA

7.40 Groundwater quality has been identified as poor quality due to legacy mining or quarrying activities. Water flows are also low due to business abstraction.

Links to evidence

- SEPA water classification hub
- SEPA water environment hub

Green and blue networks in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.41 This locality is within the Central Scotland Green Network – one of the eighteen national developments recognised in NPF4 and is one of Europe's largest green infrastructure projects. Key assets in the area include the Lochore Meadows Country Park; Dora and Lochgelly Golf Courses, Hill of Beath and Benarty wood, the River Ore and Carden Den.

7.42 One of the main active travel routes within the Cowdenbeath locality is the Fife Pilgrim Way which provides connections to Kinglassie and Dunfermline. Other active travel and cycle routes are fragmented although there is a good network of core path links between the settlements. There are no national cycle networks routes which pass through the area.

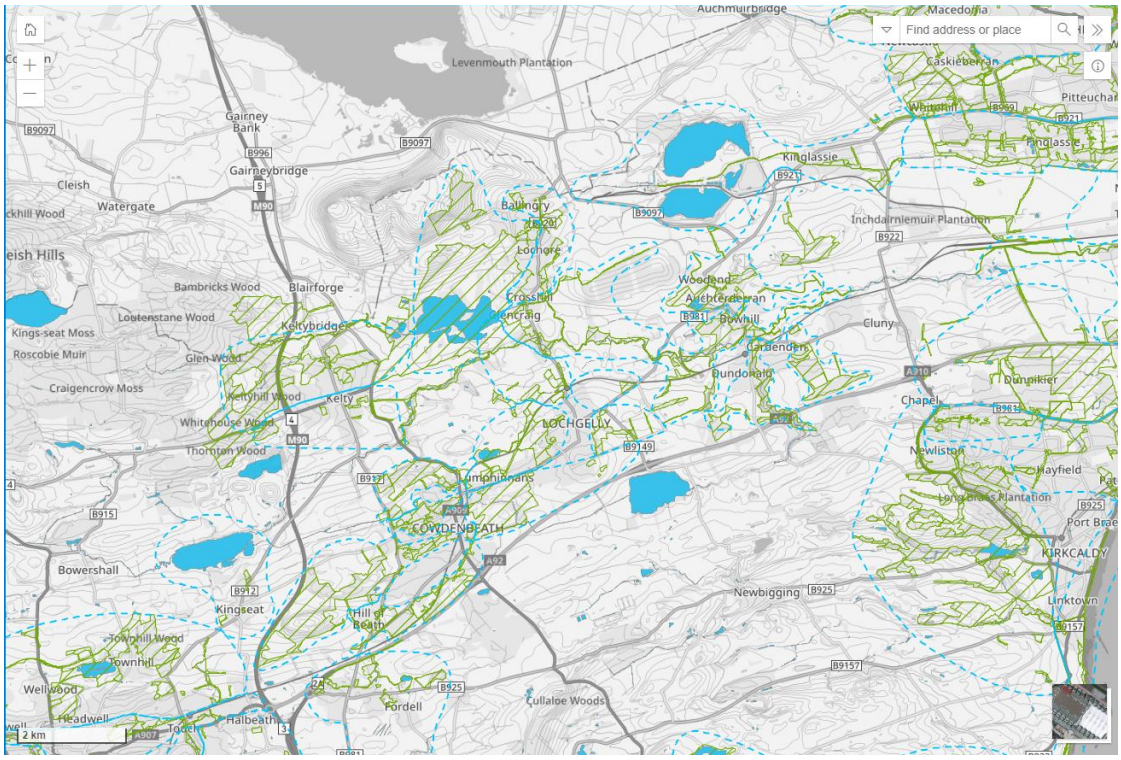
7.43 Green and blue network opportunities in the area include biodiversity and greenspace improvements at Rosewell Clinic, Lochgelly; habitat, biodiversity, recreation and active travel improvements at Lochore Meadows Country Park, Forestry and Land Scotland managed woods at Cardenden and Benarty, at the Dora Golf Course and Westfield former open case site; and river restoration along the Den Burn as identified in the River Basin Management Plan 3.

7.44 The Fife green and blue network audit reports for the area are:

- Cardenden report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Cowdenbeath report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Crossgates and Kingseat report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Lochgelly report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Lochore report Green and Blue Network update 2023

7.45 Green and blue networks are mapped on an interactive map and a storymap explains how the assets and opportunities were identified.

Figure 7.11 Green and Blue Network interactive map illustrating key assets and existing blue and green network policy areas



Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Cardenden report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Cowdenbeath report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Crossgates and Kingseat report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Lochgelly report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Lochore report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Central Scotland Green Network
- Fife Pilgrim Way
- Fife NHS 2030 Greenspace Strategy (May 2023)
- SEPA River Basin Management Plan 3 – Water Environment Hub
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystem services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap

Biodiversity in the Cowdenbeath area

7.46 Priority habitats within the Cowdenbeath locality include upland heathland, various bodies of standing water, lowland fen, lowland raised bog, species rich grassland, and a mix of ancient, semi-natural and long-established woodland.

Table 7.1 Summary of the priority habitats found within the Cowdenbeath locality including key sites

Upland Habitats	Freshwater & Wetland Habitats	Lowland & Farmland Habitats	Woodland Habitats
Upland heathland at **Benarty Hill (LWS)**	Inland freshwater such as **Loch Ore** Lowland fen Lowland raised bog Rivers Ponds	Species-rich grassland, such as **Lochore Meadows Country Park** Field margins and boundaries Parks and areas with veteran trees, such as **Lochore Meadows** Lowland heathland, such as **Benarty Hill (LWS)**	Ancient, semi-natural & long-established woodlands, such as **Dalbeath Marsh (SSSI, Local Nature Reserve)** Mixed lowland woodland Urban woodland

Source: Fife's Local Biodiversity Action Plan

7.47 These habitats support a wealth of wildlife including otters (European Protected Species), great crested newts (EPS), water voles, red squirrels, badgers, and bluebells (the latter of which are all UK protected species) – these species have all been recorded in the Cowdenbeath locality with Lochore Meadows being of particular importance. The Fife Biodiversity Action Plan states the destruction of habitats is the number one cause of species extinction, so safeguarding priority habitats is important for the new LDP

7.48 Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Rhododendron also pose a threat to the various ecosystems within the Cowdenbeath locality.

7.49 Another invasive non-native species which can be found within the Cowdenbeath locality is the American mink which poses a threat to domestic ducks and poultry, gamebirds, and fish. This species has also been linked to the decrease of water voles in the UK and is considered to have negative implications for commercial fisheries.

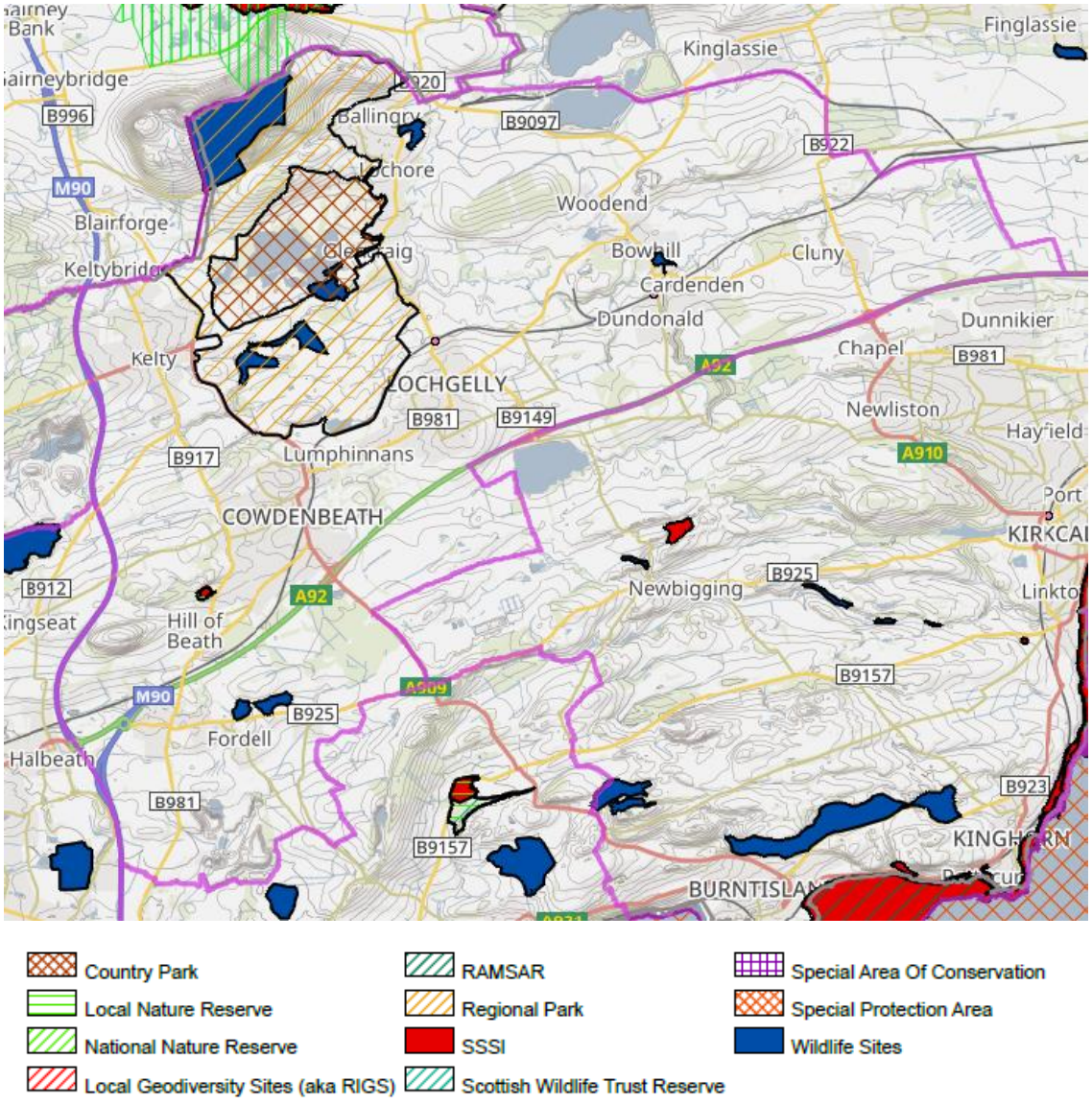
Links to evidence

- NBN Atlas
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Nature Scot- Invasive non-native plants
- Nature Scot- Protected species A-Z guide
- Selected Key Bluebell sites in Fife – Fife Nature
- Water Vole Presence records – Fife Nature
- Indicative Red Squirrel Sites – Fife Nature
- Great Crested Newt Records – Fife Amphibian & Reptile Group

Natural Heritage designations in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.50 There are a number of sites designated for natural heritage in the Cowdenbeath locality (see figure below), including Lochore Meadows Country Park and the western part of the Lomond Hills Regional Park and a SSSI at Dalbeath Marsh which is also a Local Nature Reserve.

Figure 7.12 Natural heritage designations in the Cowdenbeath locality. These can be viewed on the Green and Blue network interactive map.



Source: Fife Council

7.51 There are also six locally designated Local Nature Conservation Sites, (formerly called wildlife sites) in the Cowdenbeath locality area. Four of these

were resurveyed around five years ago. Three were found to be in an OK[8] condition (Cuttlehill, Benarty Hill and Ballingry Meadow); the Clune site was resurveyed more recently and found to be OK; one site (Hilton of Beath) was found to be degraded due to birch succession on a grassland habitat. The other wildlife site at Orebank Marsh has not yet been resurveyed. Since the survey part of the Ballingry Meadow Wildlife Site has been lost to development.

7.52 More detail on why these sites have been designated for natural heritage in Fife is provided on the Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Government – Natural Heritage Designations
- NatureScot– local designations
- Fife Designated Natural Heritage sites list
- Fife Local Nature Conservation Sites tracker Dec 2023

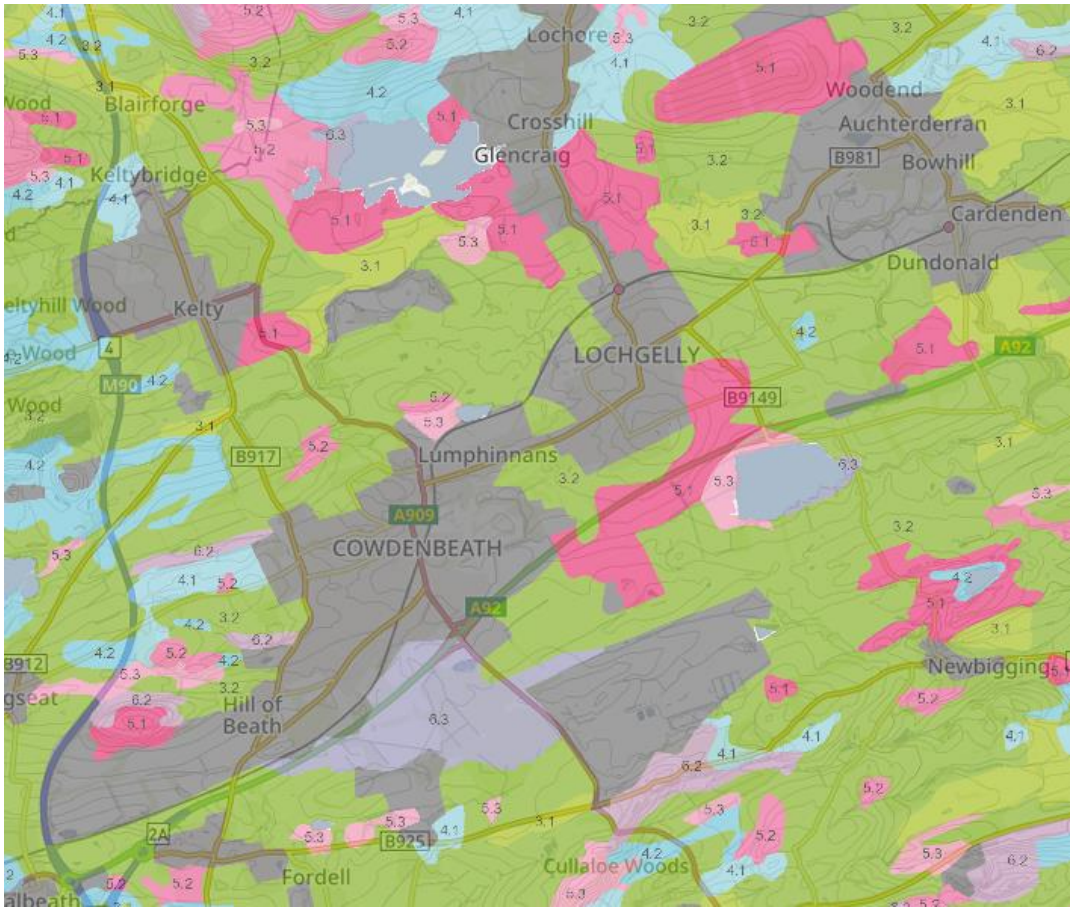
[8] "OK" is the site status designation used in the sites survey.

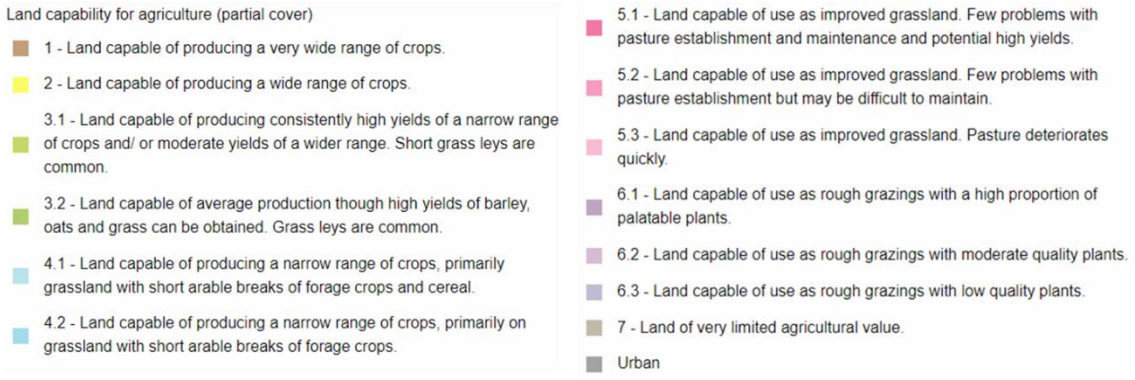
Landscape character and soils in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.53 The landscape of the Cowdenbeath locality is characterised by lowland hills, valleys and basins, and upland hills with some pronounced hills and crags (as identified on NatureScot Landscape Character types (2019) mapping). The locality contains the Loch Ore and Benarty Local Landscape Area as designated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017. There are no Green Belts in the Cowdenbeath locality.

7.54 Outwith the built-up areas there is relatively little prime agricultural land (Classes 1- 3.1 in the Scottish Land Capability for agriculture map); most is around Cardenden and Cluny and south of Loch Ore.

Figure 7.13:Extract from the land capability map for Scotland for the Cowdenbeath locality





Source: Scottish Government - ©Crown Copyright. Scottish Government Licence Number 100020540. All Rights Reserved

7.55 The Cowdenbeath locality has several areas identified as carbon rich soils in the Scottish Carbon and Peatland Map including class 1 peatland at Mossmorran and to the south-west of Crossgates. Class 1 soils are nationally important carbon rich soils.

7.56 Large areas of the Cowdenbeath locality have been extensively mined for coal but no mines remain active. The mining history does however leave a legacy of ground stability and contamination issues. There is a hard rock quarry, Craigs Quarry, to the north east of Cardenden, which is currently dormant.

7.57 The Muir Dean open cast mine near Crossgates is in the process of being restored.

Links to evidence

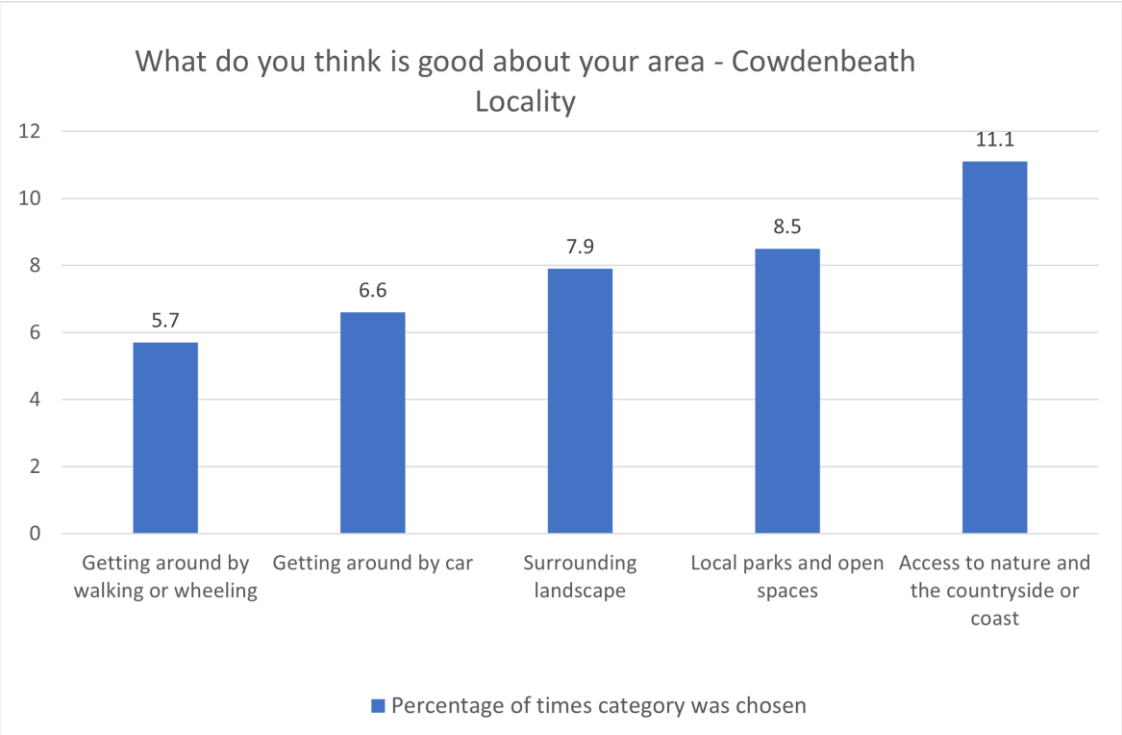
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Types 2019
- Adopted FIFEplan (2017) interactive map
- Scotlands Soils – Land Capability for agriculture
- Carbon and Peatland Map 2016
- List of Fife's Quarries
- Dunfermline Press – Crossgates opencast mine restoration plans progressing

The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the Cowdenbeath locality within the lifetime of the Plan

7.58 Locally, the main infrastructure issues are access to healthcare, quality of open green space in some parts of the locality, and accessibility of employment and education opportunities by public transport.

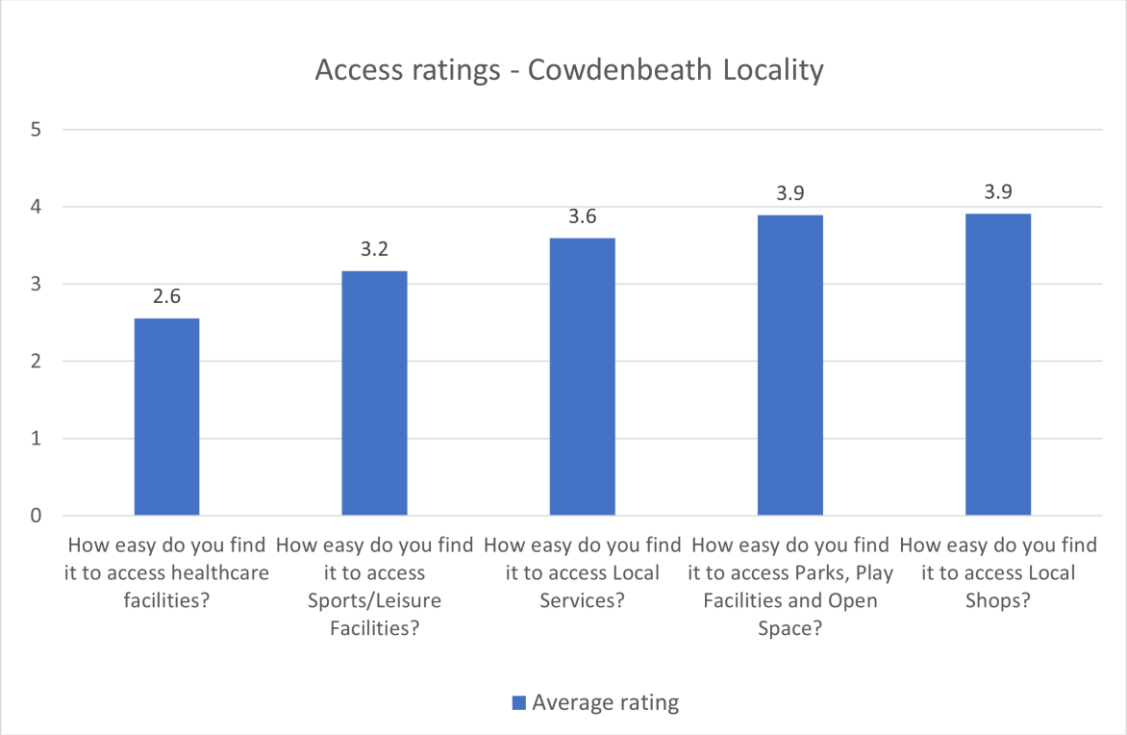
7.59 In autumn of 2022, the community was invited by Fife Council to say what they felt was good about the Cowdenbeath locality, what was not so good, and what the key issues were that they felt needed to be tackled (see figures below).

Figure 7.14: What respondents think is good about their area



Source: Fife Council

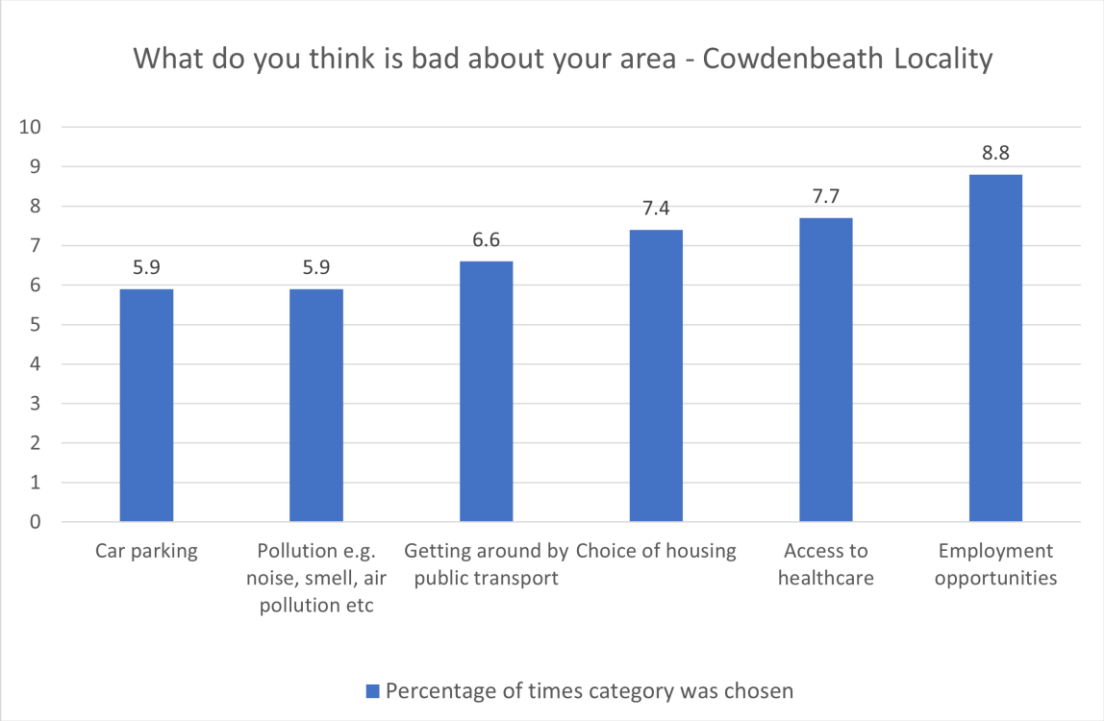
Figure 7.15: Average ratings for access



Source: Fife Council

7.60 As identified above, local shops were considered easy to drive to and usually met the community's needs. Respondents also said they would like to see more variety of shop types.

Figure 7.16: What respondents think is bad about their area

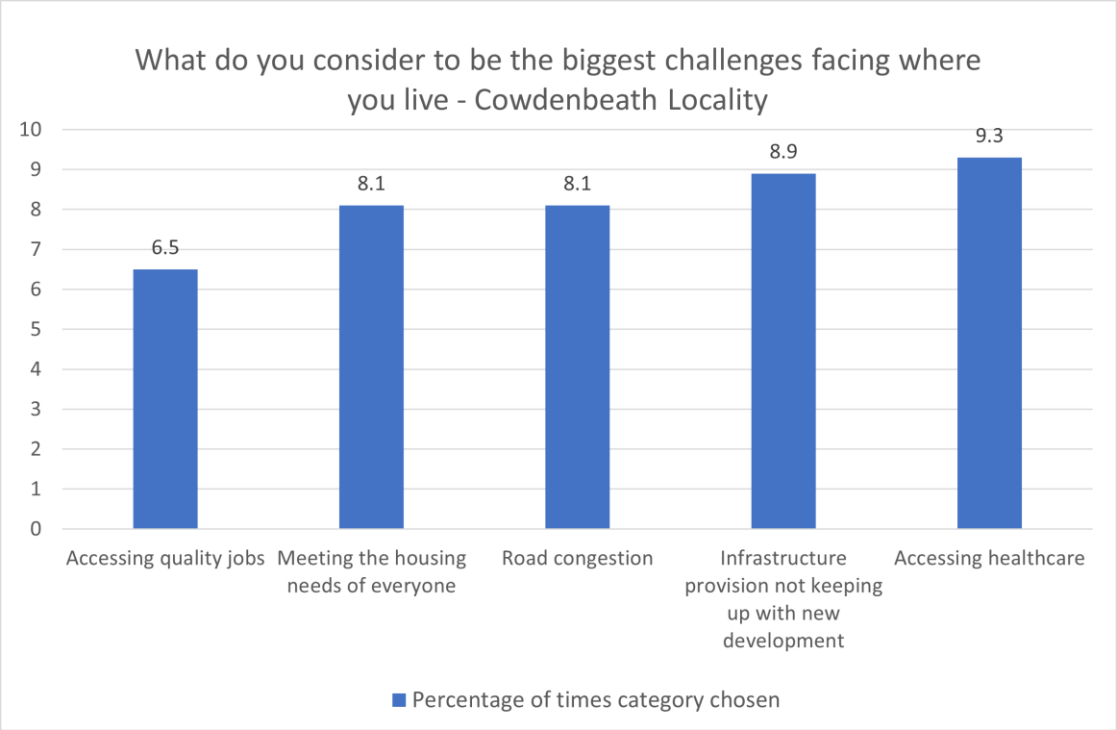


Source: Fife Council

7.61 Getting appointments at healthcare facilities in the Cowdenbeath locality was said to be difficult, and the lack of employment opportunities and lack of choice of housing are seen as issues in the area (see figure above). A subsequent 2025 meeting with Lochgelly Community Council which was established after the 2022 invitation to comment, confirmed that access to healthcare is a specific concern to that community. (Further information on the Community Council's concerns are noted in Annex 4 (Participation and engagement.)

7.62 Infrastructure not keeping up with development was also highlighted as a challenge.

Figure 7.17: What residents think the biggest challenges facing their area are



Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Cowdenbeath summary of survey (residents)

Healthcare in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.63 The Cowdenbeath locality has a range of health and care facilities across the towns in the locality. However, planned growth and demographic changes (in particular, an ageing population) are likely to put increased pressure on these facilities. NHS Fife is moving towards health and wellbeing hubs which provide multi-disciplinary care. There is a particular need for new or replacement premises.

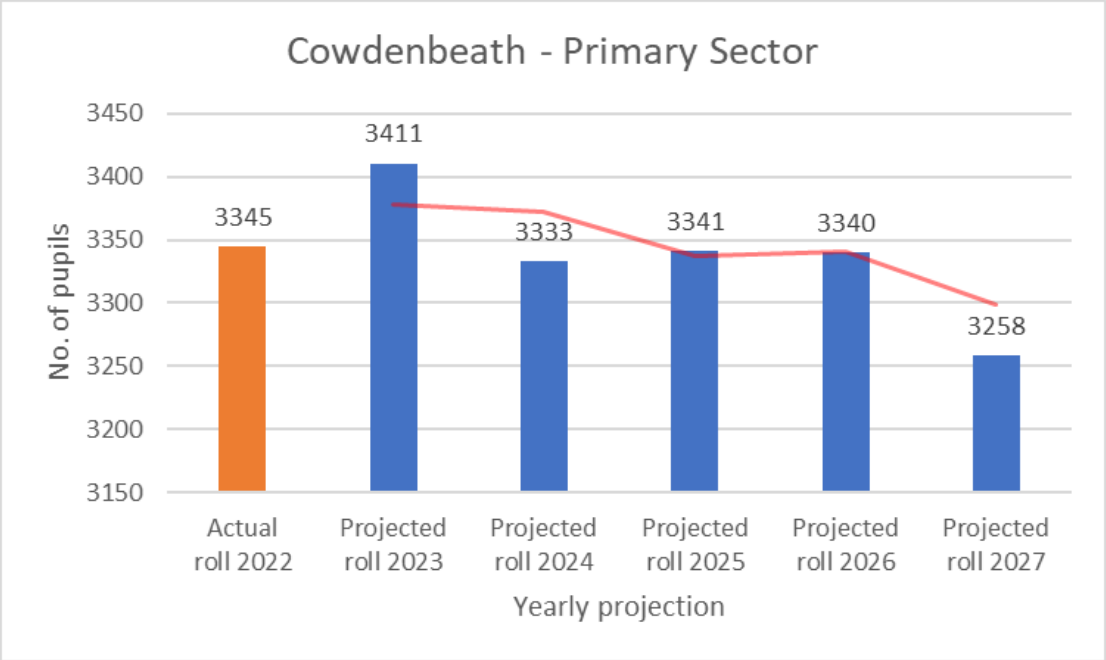
Links to evidence

- NHS Fife Estates Strategy

School places in the Cowdenbeath locality

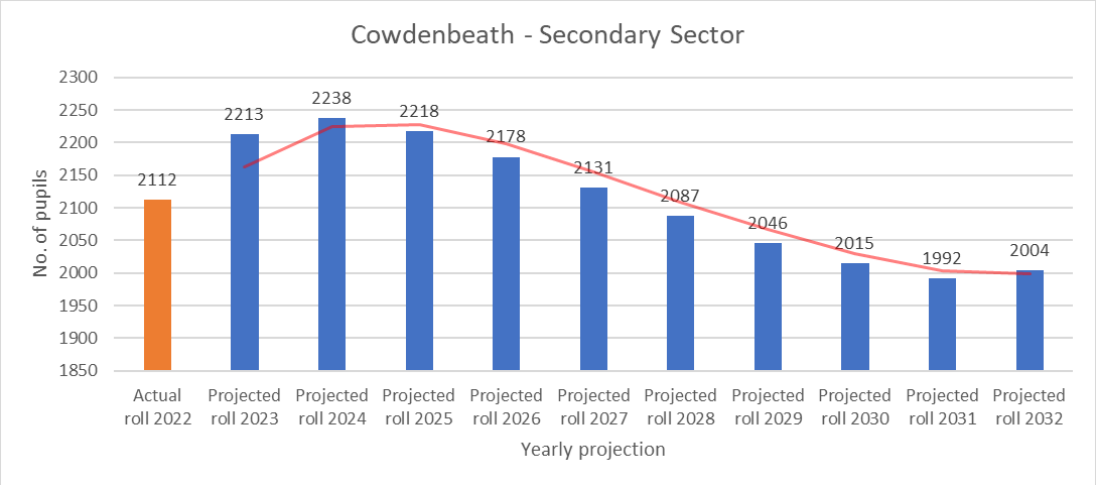
7.64 In education, there is projected pupil capacity across the whole of the existing and planned primary and secondary school estates in the Cowdenbeath locality to accommodate some further growth. However, individual schools do have capacity constraints. Spare primary school capacity across localities does not mean there is capacity for new homes across all primary schools in the locality.

Figure 7.18 Projected pupil numbers in primary schools in the Cowdenbeath locality (2023 - 2027)



Source: Fife Council

Figure 7.19 Projected pupil numbers in secondary schools in the Cowdenbeath locality (2023 - 2032)



Source: Fife Council

7.65 One new primary school is planned in the locality to accommodate pupils from new housing in Kelty, as allocated in the adopted FIFEplan (2017).

Links to evidence

- School Roll Projections by Area Committee September 2023

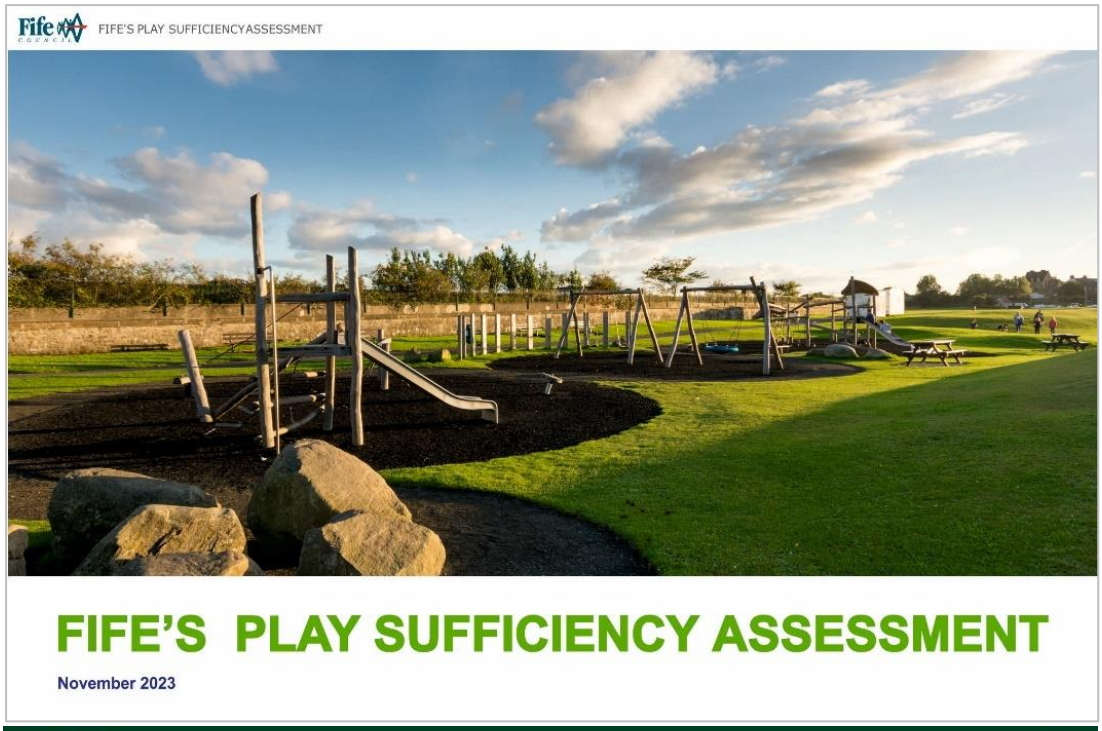
Open space, play space and sports facilities in the Cowdenbeath locality

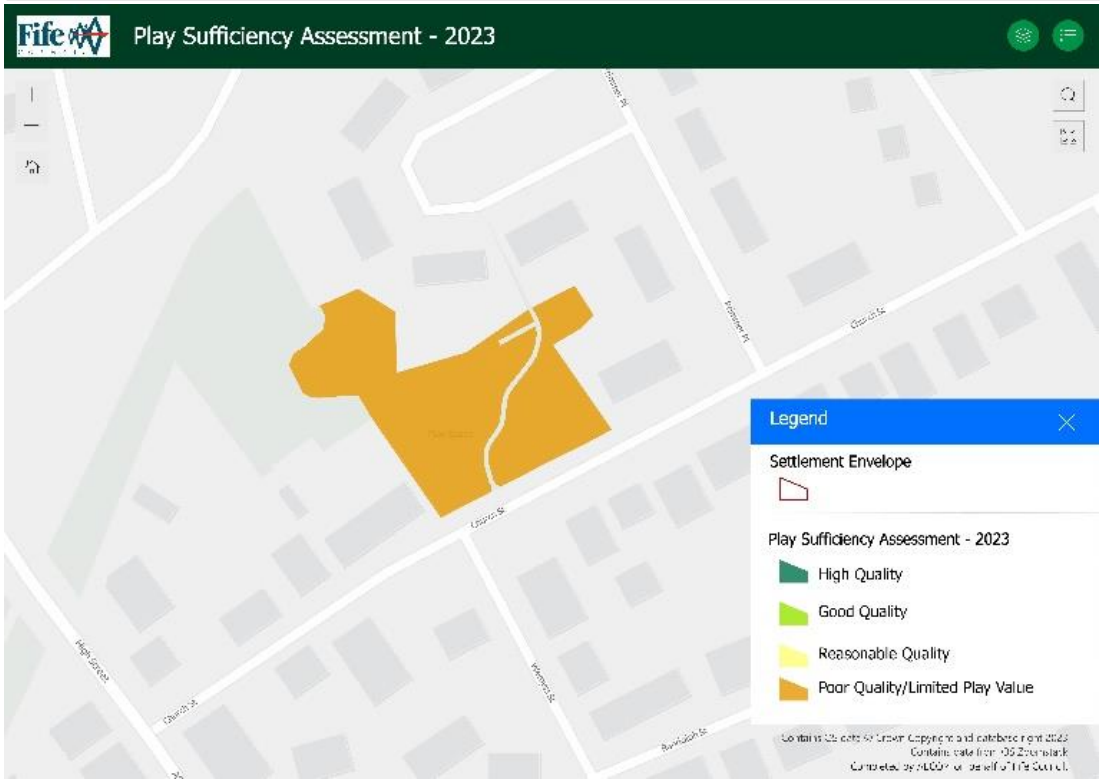
7.66 Open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, and outdoor places to play and socialise are key to successful placemaking. The outdoor spaces, in the Cowdenbeath locality have helped to make communities more pleasant, liveable, healthy, and resilient.

7.67 Work is underway to update the Fife open space audit and strategy which will be finalised in late 2025. Site visits to update the quality audit have been completed. These visits found that Lochore Meadows has the highest quality greenspace in the area and there are other high quality greenspaces in Cowdenbeath (Keirs Beith and Leuchatsbeath Wood). The Public Park in Lochgelly, Wallsgreen Park in Cardenden and Central Park in Kelty are all classified as good quality. There are open spaces which are classified as poor quality in each of the settlements in this locality apart from Cowdenbeath. The Public Park in Lochgelly was found to be one of the most improved greenspaces in Fife since the 2009 audit. The updated audit has found there is around an 8% decline in the quality of greenspace in the Cowdenbeath area. There has been a 4% decline in the amount of greenspace in Cowdenbeath and both Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly have below the Fife average provision of greenspace per head of population. Ballingry, Lochore, Crosshill, Glencraig and Crossgates all have well below the Fife average of provision.

7.68 A Play Sufficiency Assessment for Fife was carried out in 2023 and identifies that Lochgelly, Cardenden and Crossgates all have a high-quality play parks. Lochore Meadows was classed as good quality but since the audit there has been work carried out to upgrade the play facilities. Around half of the play parks assessed in the area were classed as having poor quality facilities. Cowdenbeath and Cardenden were found to have insufficient play provision mainly due to the number of poor quality play spaces. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment provides more information.

Figure 7.20 Indicative image from Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment (showing part of the Cowdenbeath locality)





Source: Fife Council

7.69 There are a good range of sports facilities available in the Cowdenbeath area including watersports at Lochore Meadows and clay pigeon shooting at Cluny Clays. Key sports facilities include the Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre, Bowhill Swimming Poll in Cardenden, Lochore Meadows Community Sports Hub, Lochgelly High School and Cluny Clays activity centre. There are five golf clubs across the area. Most of the settlements have pitches apart from the Lochore, Ballingry area and all settlements have bowling greens.

7.70 A Facility Planning Model developed by SportScotland predicts patterns of demand for sports facilities (but not actual usage). The model outputs suggest that the usage of the Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre will reduce over the next few years.

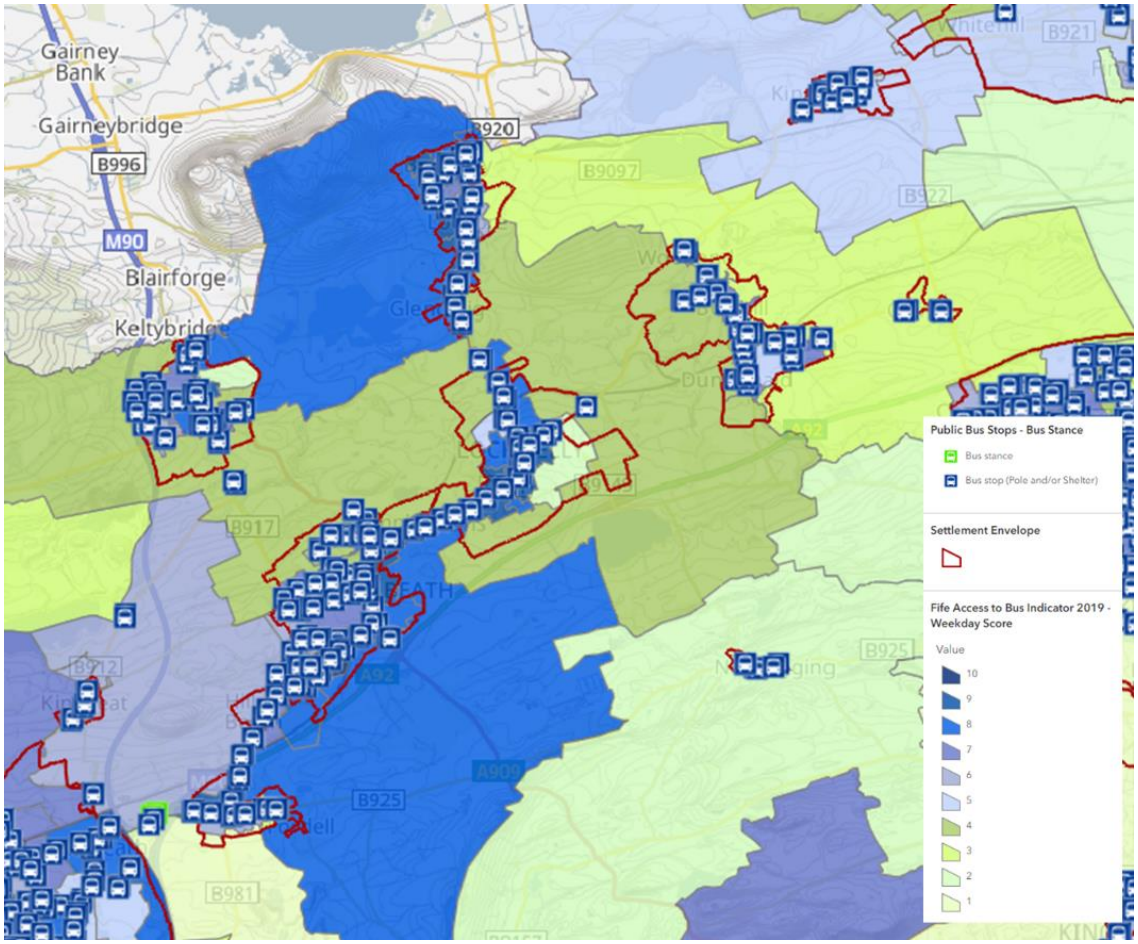
Links to evidence

- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Fife Greenspace Audit 2010
- Open space quality audit – examples of good quality sites Jan 25
- Open space quality audit – examples of poor quality sites Jan 25
- Draft Fife Greenspace Audit 2024 – key changes since 2009
- Fife Council: Lochore Meadows
- sportScotland – Facility Planning Model Fife Council 2023
- Sportscotland – Community sports hubs map

Accessibility of public transport in the Cowdenbeath locality

7.71 The centres of most of the settlements in the Cowdenbeath locality have good access to bus services. Access is poorer on the periphery of the settlements and Cardenden and Cluny have poorer access.

Figure 7.21 Weekday access to buses in the Cowdenbeath locality with bus stops (1= poor access, 10 = good access)



Source: [Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)]

7.72 Cowdenbeath, Lochgelly and Cardenden have rail stations located along the Fife Circle route which connect to other stations in Fife, Edinburgh, and the east coast mainline railway.

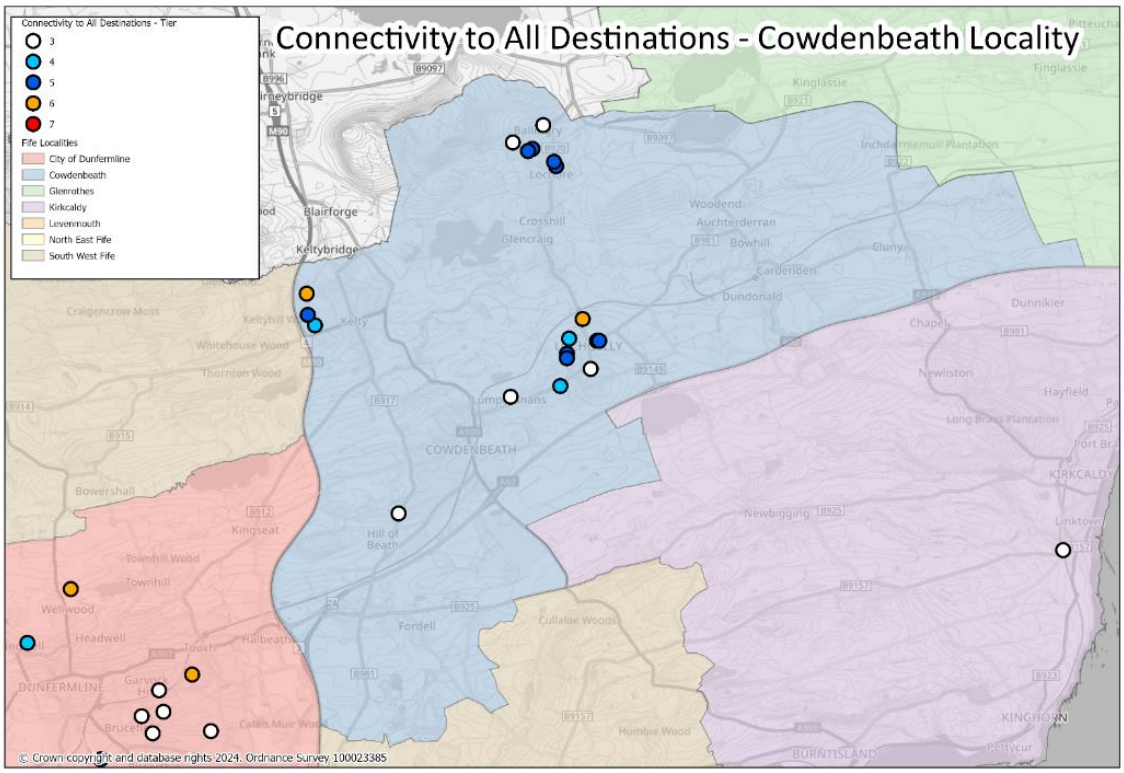
7.73 The towns on the Fife Circle railway line have relatively good access to key destinations such as Edinburgh and employment opportunities. However, towns and villages elsewhere in the Cowdenbeath locality have poor access.

7.74 The figure below highlights overall levels of access to destinations such as employment and further education from areas within the locality. Tiers 1 and 2 are not show on the map as they are considered good access scores. Tiers 3 and above indicate access issues. The area also has relatively poor connectivity to community health destinations when using public transport. Access to further and higher education across most of the Cowdenbeath locality is very poor.

7.75 Public transport accessibility of shops and retailing is poor in parts of the locality including Ballingry, Lochgelly and pockets within Cowdenbeath and Kelty. More commentary on public transport accessibility is contained in Annex 10 (Transport).

7.76

Figure 7.22: Connectivity to All Destinations from Cowdenbeath Locality



Source: LDP/LTS Modelling and Options Report

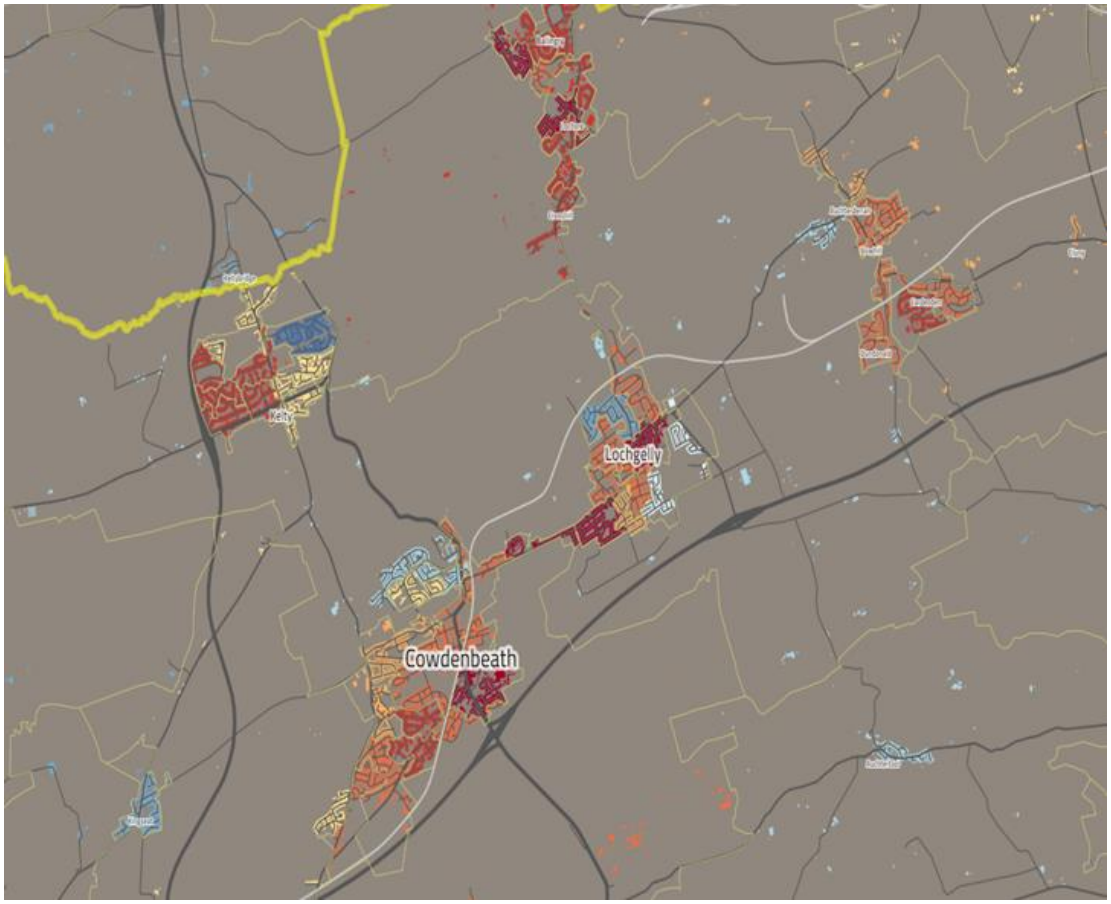
Links to evidence

- LTS & LDP Strategic Transport Modelling and option Development Report 2022
- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- Cowdenbeath Area Surveys Analysis 2022

How the Cowdenbeath locality's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

7.77 25.5% of children in the Cowdenbeath locality are living in relative poverty.

Figure 7.23: Deprivation in the Cowdenbeath locality



Source: Scottish Government

7.78 The locality has the lowest percentage of working aged people qualified to NVQ4 or above in Fife, and the highest percentage in Fife of people who have no qualifications.

7.79 Ensuring more equitable opportunities in the locality is a priority, with an aim to providing long-term sustainability in the local economy. The local economy struggles because of these long-term socio-economic problems, so creating circular economies where people work and spend locally would benefit the locality.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 18-10-04-Talk-of-the-Town.pdf (centreforcities.org)
- Wellbeing Index (coop.co.uk)
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22

Employment in the Cowdenbeath locality

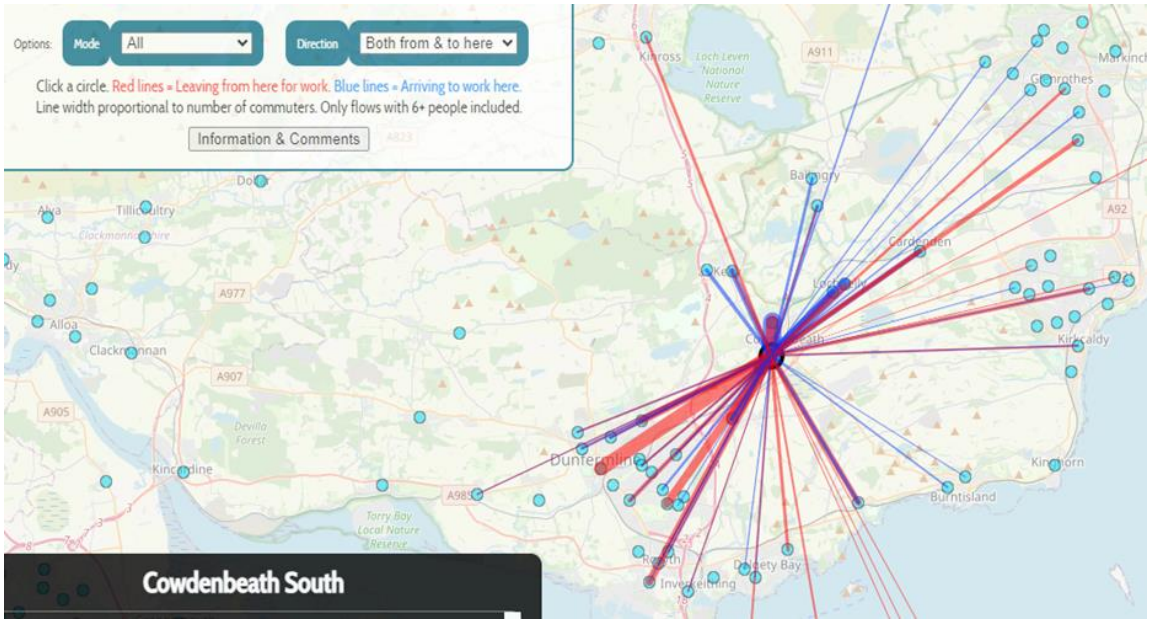
Travel to Work

7.80 A significant number of people travel to work in Dunfermline and Rosyth as well as remaining within the Cowdenbeath locality.

7.81 People in Lochgelly tend to travel to Cowdenbeath, Dunfermline, Rosyth, Glenrothes or Kirkcaldy. It is a similar picture to Cowdenbeath in Kelty with Kinross also being a destination for some. Similarly, people from Cardenden travel to a wider number of destinations for work.

7.82 A large number of people travel to Crossgates, mainly to use the Halbeath Park & Ride facility.

Figure 7.24: Example of journeys to work to and from Cowdenbeath itself



Source: Datashine

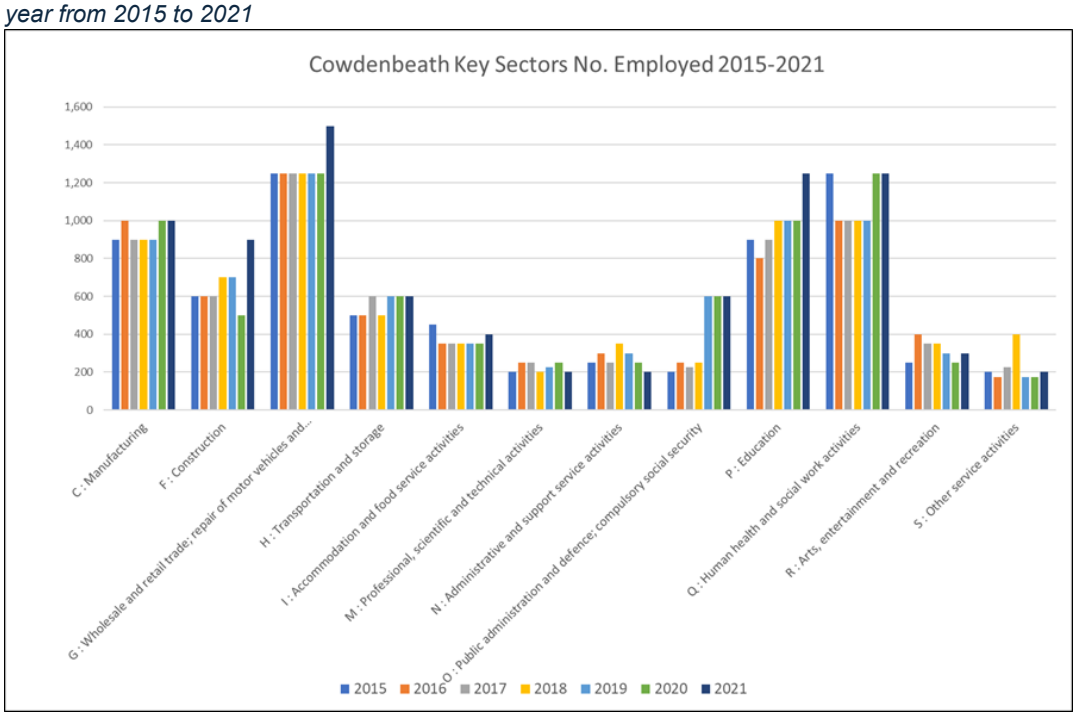
Key Sectors

7.83 Whilst the locality does not have one dominant sector, the manufacturing sector is an important one for the locality.

7.84 The employment numbers in all sectors have remained consistent since 2015. Other important sectors include Human Health and Social Work Activities; Wholesale and Retail Trade; Vehicle Repairs; and Education.

7.85 Growth Sector data is only available at Fife-level so it is not included here. This is being considered as part of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy.

Figure 7.25: The Cowdenbeath locality's key employment sectors (number of people employed each year from 2015 to 2021

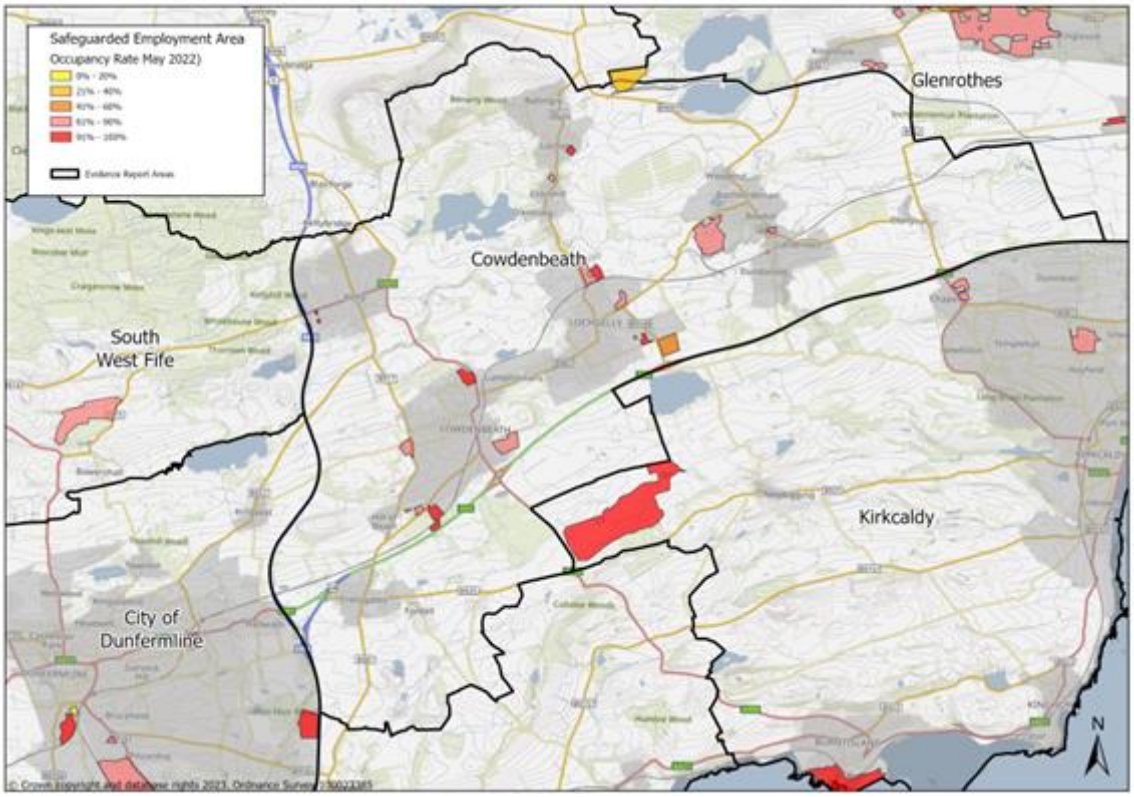


Source: NOMIS Key Sectors Data

Safeguarded Employment Area Occupancy Rate

7.86 The occupancy rates of Safeguarded Employment Areas – that is, industrial estates and business parks etc in the Cowdenbeath locality range from 0% at Lochgelly Industrial Park No.2 to 100% on four estates (Kelty Industrial Parks No.1 and No.2, Loanhead Avenue in Lochore, and Cartmore Industrial Estate in Lochgelly) indicating a need for more available employment land in the LDP.

Figure 7.26: Occupancy rates in Safeguarded Employment Areas in the Cowdenbeath locality



Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

Availability of Employment Land in the Cowdenbeath Locality

7.87 Within the Cowdenbeath Locality the levels of available employment land varies. Cowdenbeath itself, as at 2023, has more than its requirement as set out in the Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021) sitting at 137%. In contrast Lochgelly only has 26% of its requirement. The Ballingry, Lochore, Crosshil and Glencraig area and Kelty and the Cardenden meet 0% of the requirement.

Table 7.2: 20 Key Settlements Availability of employment land by traffic light status (RAG)

Key Settlement	Audit Year	RAG Status	Percent Requirement Met	Total Requirement (hectares)
Ballingry, Lochore and Crosshill	2023	Red	0%	1.9
Cardenden / Bowhill	2023	Red	0%	1.6
Cowdenbeath	2023	Green	137%	1.8
Kelty	2023	Red	0%	1.9
Lochgelly	2023	Red	26%	9.8

Source: Fife Employment Land Audit 2023

7.88 The emerging Employment Land Strategy and LDP will ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. For more information see the Fife-wide section of the Evidence Report.

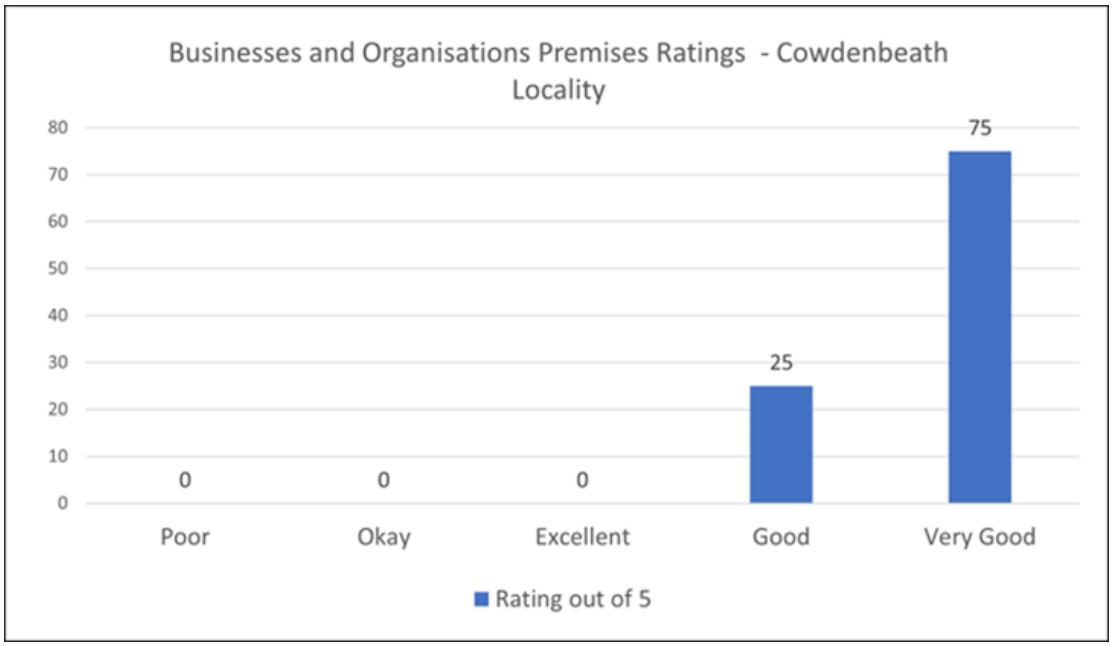
Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022

7.89 In 2022 Businesses and organisations were surveyed on the issues that they face operating in the Cowdenbeath locality as well as what works well. All respondents rated their premises as either good or very good.

7.90 Accessibility and transport links at Halbeath Interchange are considered good with convenient links to the A92, M90, and central Scotland.

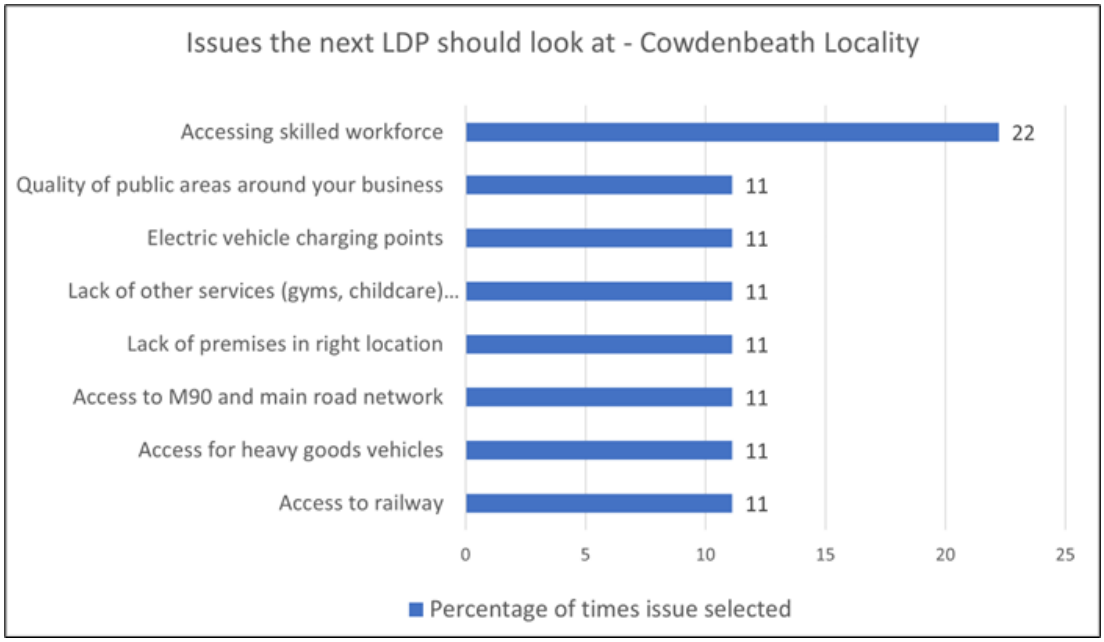
7.91 Accessing a skilled workforce was the most important issue (22.2%) respondents felt that the next local development plan should consider. The remaining issues include addressing the lack of premises in the right location, quality of public areas around employment areas, and access to electric vehicle charging points.

Figure 7.27: Premises ratings by local businesses and organisations in the Cowdenbeath locality



Source: Fife Council

Figure 7.28: Feedback about issues the LDP should look at in the Cowdenbeath locality



Source: Fife Council

7.92 A lack of ancillary services such as gyms and nurseries were highlighted as an issue within the industrial estates within the area.

7.93 It was noted that there is considerable pressure on businesses due to Cowdenbeath High Street's decline. Businesses are diversifying their operations and formats, targeting changing consumer needs (product types, and how and where they are made). Finding new premises on sites competing against major national brands is seen as a significant challenge.

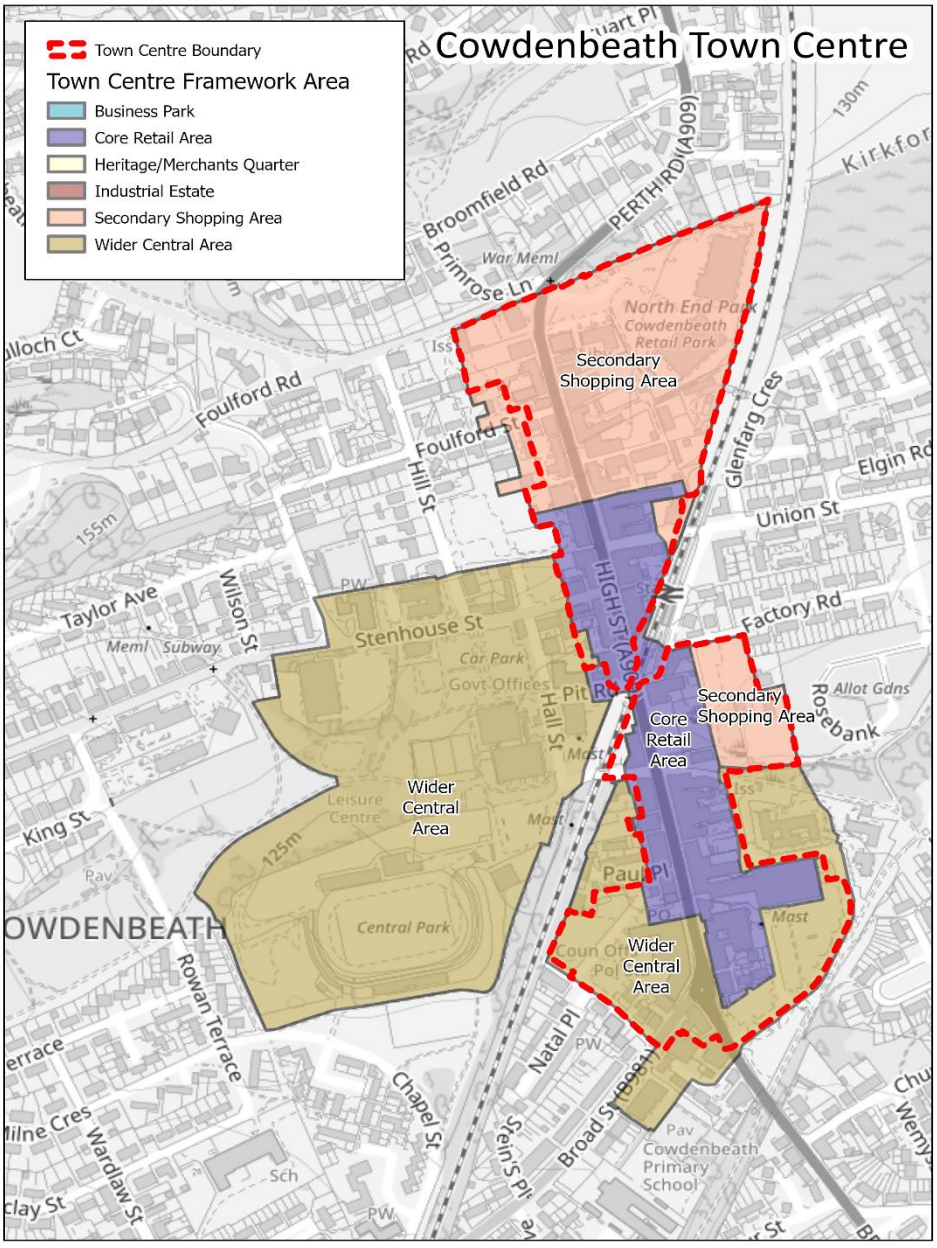
Links to Evidence

- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Economic Policy and Baseline Context April 22
- Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022
- Key sectors Number of Employed 15-22
- Review of safeguarded employment areas
- Employment Land Audit 2023
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Review (Ryden)

Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly Town Centres

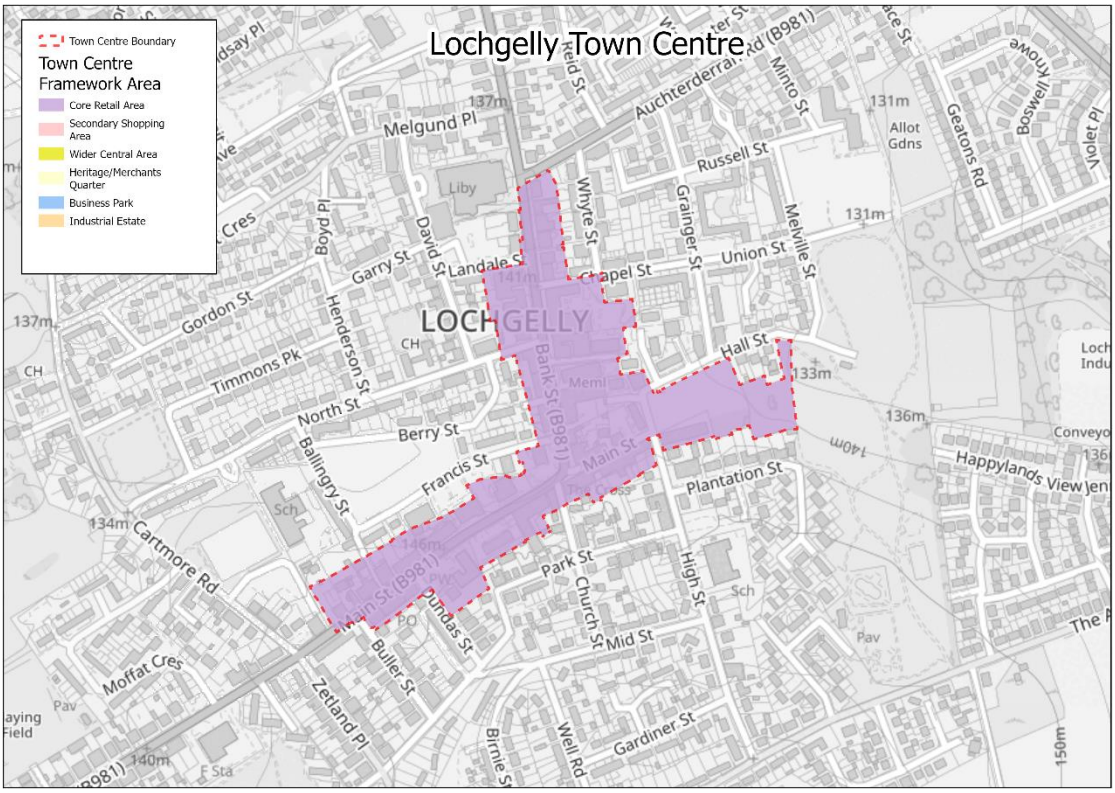
7.94 Both Cowdenbeath town centre and Lochgelly town centre are facing many challenges like other town centres across Fife and beyond, although with the advent of the Covid-19 Pandemic the impact of some of these has increased with a notable shift in the pace of change. There is recognition that a number of these challenges present opportunities to implement fundamental change for our towns.

Figure 7.29: Map of Cowdenbeath town centre



Source: Fife Council

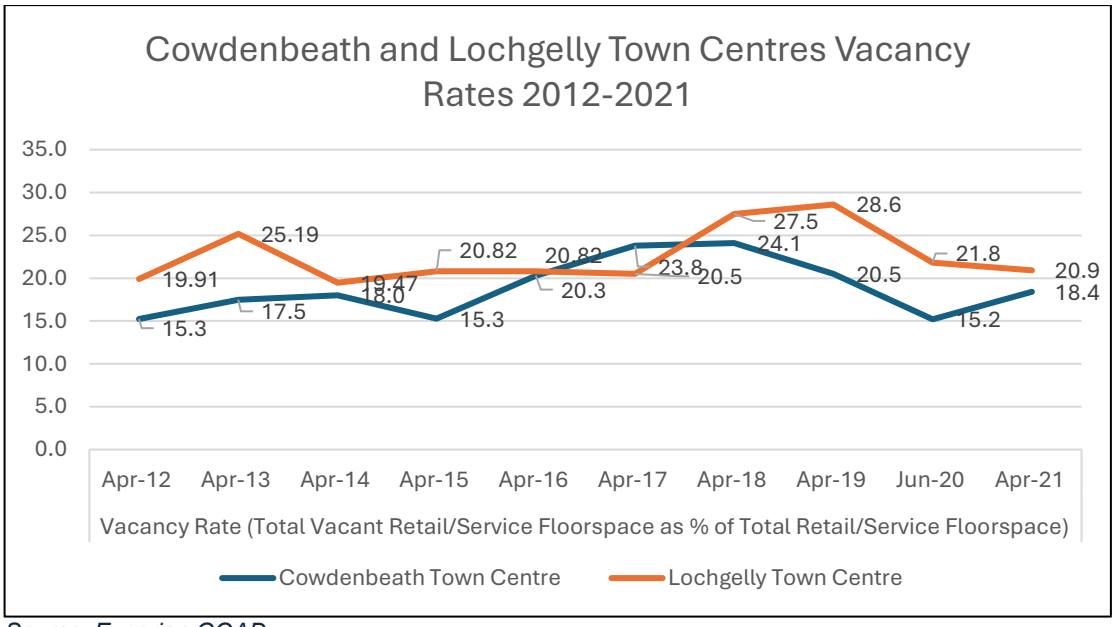
Figure 7.30: Map of Lochgelly Town Centre



Source: Fife Council

7.95 Vacancy rates have risen in Cowdenbeath Town Centre since 2012 from 15% to 18% in 2021. In Lochgelly Town Centre vacancy rates have remained high (20% in 2012 and 21% in 2021).

Figure 7.31: Vacancy rates in Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly Town Centres (2012 – 2021)



Source: Experian GOAD

7.96 A consideration of the comparative value of retail and service businesses in Lochgelly and Cowdenbeath found that they scored amongst the lowest in Fife, with Lochgelly scoring lowest of all Fife's town centres.

7.97 Despite an increase in vacancy rates, Cowdenbeath saw an increase in both convenience (100m^2) and convenience/comparison floorspaces (510m^2) aided by the addition of a Lidl supermarket and B&M as well as several smaller units. Lochgelly Town Centre saw an increase in comparison floorspace (1190m^2) with two relatively large units coming back into use, one selling carpets and the other a pharmacy along with several smaller units.

7.98 In addition to Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly town centres, there are eight local shopping centres serving Crossgates, Kelty, Cardenden (incl. Dundonald, Auchterderran, Bowhill), Ballingry, and Lochore. Occupancy rates are good in all of them being between 90% and 100%.

Table 7.3: Cowdenbeath Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) and Difference between 2012 and 2021		
Use Type	Cowdenbeath April 2012	Cowdenbeath April 2021	Cowdenbeath Change
Assembly	220	220	0
Comparison	4,710	4,270	-440
Convenience	2,450	2,550	100
Convenience/Comparison	2,110	2,620	510
Food and Drink	1,740	1,770	30
Hotel/Hostel	390	0	-390
Leisure	1,570	1,790	220
Medical	150	270	120
Office	1,600	380	-1,220
Service	4,280	4,130	-150
Vacant	1,730	3,500	1,770

Source: Experian GOAD

Table 7.4 Lochgelly Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m^2) 2012 to 2021

	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) and Difference between 2012 and 2021		
Use Type	Lochgelly April 2012	Lochgelly April 2021	Lochgelly Change
Assembly	1,090	1,580	490
Comparison	2,200	3,390	1,190
Convenience	1,260	1,090	-170
Convenience/Comparison	530	480	-50
Food and Drink	570	570	0
Hotel/Hostel	0	0	0
Leisure	1,290	570	-720
Medical	110	290	180
Office	1,290	1,430	140
Service	2,670	2,030	-640
Vacant	1,890	1,980	-90

Source: Experian GOAD

Quality of Town Centres

7.99 Both Cowdenbeath and Lochgelly town centres would benefit from more investment to improve quality of place. The centres still have a good number of historic buildings and features although lack of maintenance and alterations are an issue. Infill buildings from the mid-20th century onwards have been of mixed quality. There are some attractive shop frontages, however many are undistinguished which impacts on the quality of place.

Figure 7.32: High Street, Cowdenbeath

Source: Fife Council

Figure 7.33:Main Street, Lochgelly

Source: Fife Council

7.100 Both centres have busy roads passing through them which impact on pedestrian movement and sense of place.

7.101 There has been investment in the public realm in both Lochgelly and Cowdenbeath which has improved the attractiveness of some public spaces, although ongoing maintenance is an issue particularly in Lochgelly.

7.102 Two Town Centre Building Improvement grants totalling nearly £18,000 were awarded in the Cowdenbeath locality in 2022/23.

7.103 Austerity measures since 2008 have had an impact on the level of funding which can be accessed for town centre public realm and building improvements.

Links to evidence

- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries
- Cowdenbeath Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- Lochgelly Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- GOAD data
- Fife Retail Capacity Study 2022
- Assessment of local shopping centres
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report Summer 2023
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets Summer 2023

Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of evidence specific to the Cowdenbeath locality

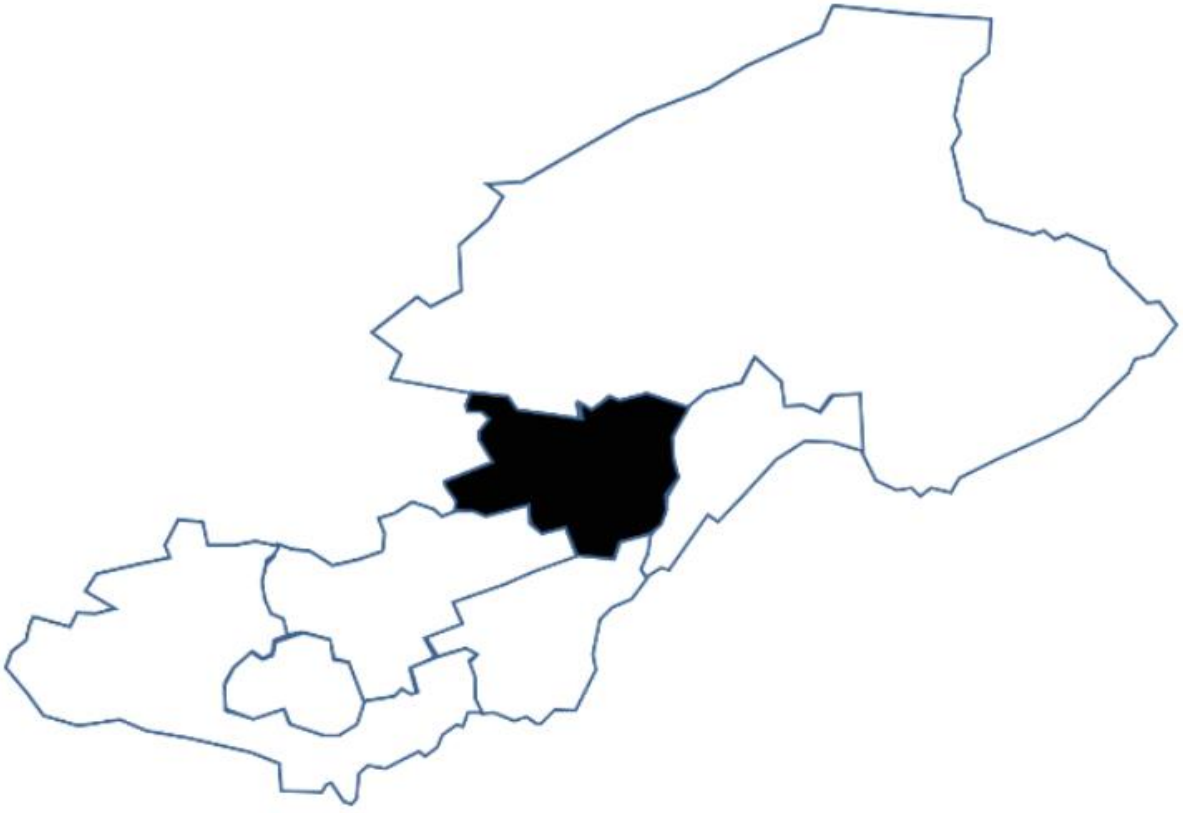
- The Cowdenbeath locality is a former coal mining area. Most of the towns and villages in the area were developed to provide housing for workers in the collieries. Some areas such as Cardenden and Lochore, Ballingry, and Crosshill have developed as smaller settlements merged, this means that they are spread out and have less well-defined centres. As a result, distances to services and facilities are further to travel, making walking and cycling a less attractive option. The smaller towns and villages have more limited access to services and facilities.
- The area has changed economically since the closure of the mines. It has above Fife average levels of employment, but incomes are on average lower, as are levels of qualifications, leading to the area having some of the highest levels of deprivation in Fife.
- Flooding and water quality are issues in parts of the area, which will have implications for development under the new LDP.
- Sites allocated in the LDP should include information on priorities for the protection, enhancement and extension of blue and green networks on the site, this will include improvements to the condition of water bodies such as the Den Burn and River Ore; and opportunities to connect, extend and enhance active travel routes such as through the Lochgelly SDA.
- Across the locality, planned growth and demographic changes mean there is a need for additional capacity in the primary care sector that will need to be planned for.
- There is some capacity in primary and secondary schools across the area although individual schools are more constrained.
- Away from the Fife Circle, railway connections to employment, training and services are relatively poor for an urban area.
- Strategic Development Areas identified in the current FIFEplan in the area have not been developed. The LDP will require to review these designations.
- Whilst the area is well-located for accessing the motorway network, a lack of premises and difficulties in finding a skilled workforce hinder economic development.
- Consider allocating employment land in Cowdenbeath, which is within the Mid-Fife regeneration area, with a focus on the manufacturing sector and in particular advanced manufacturing and engineering. The continued contribution of manufacturing to the Fife economy will require an adequate supply of land use of class 5, to contribute to overall productivity growth.

8 Glenrothes locality evidence and issues

Introducing the Glenrothes locality

8.1 Glenrothes locality sits in the centre of Fife, around 30 miles north of Edinburgh and 25 miles south of Dundee. The town of Glenrothes is the third largest built-up area in Fife behind the City of Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. Glenrothes was one of Scotland's first new town areas, and although established to house mainly mining workers and their families, it transformed into a centre for electronics and technical industries, particularly papermaking. The locality now relies heavily on public services and the service industry sectors, as well as manufacturing. Due to the development of major industrial and housing estates, many of Glenrothes town's boundaries merge with the neighbouring towns and villages.

Figure 8.1: Plan showing the location of the Glenrothes locality within Fife



Source: Fife Council

8.2 A number of priorities were identified for the Glenrothes locality from an early LDP workshop carried out between Fife Council and the Key Agency Group in September 2021:

- An economic environment that supports social and environmental priorities;
- Engagement with key stakeholders to identify limitations and possibilities; and
- Understanding the impact of national policies and legislation on housing.

8.3 Addressing these priorities will require collaborative working across a number of organisations and partners.

8.4 An additional locality workshop was attended by representatives from Fife Council to collect place-based comments for the Glenrothes area.

8.5 According to the 2022 Local Strategic Assessment, the Glenrothes Area has a population of 49,824 in 23,609 households. 61% of the population is of working age (16-64 years). Glenrothes is similar to Fife for the percentage of homes which are owner occupied (62%) social rented (25%) or private rented (11%).

8.6 The locality has a higher employment rate (74.5%), and a lower rate of those who are classed as economically inactive (21.8%) than Fife. Unemployment (10.9%) and income deprivation (13.8%) are just above the levels for Fife as a whole. 91.9% of 16 to19-year-olds are participating in education, employment or training, showing similar patterns to Fife across all categories.

8.7 In terms of health, in 2019 the average life expectancy for males living within the Glenrothes locality was 76.13 years and 80.5 years for females which is just below the Fife and Scotland average.

8.8 In addition, 24% of the population were registered as living with a long-term physical health condition during the period between 2019 and 2020.

Links to evidence

- Glenrothes Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- ScotPHO profiling tool
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary
- Fife Council: Support for place-based Local Development Planning - Glenrothes Area Workshop Report 02.05.2023

Implementation of FIFEplan in the Glenrothes locality

8.9 There are several proposals in the current FIFEplan located within the Glenrothes locality. The majority of FIFEplan housing sites are situated on the periphery of Glenrothes town with a sizeable portion located within the villages of Thornton and Coaltown of Balgonie. Thornton site THO003 is part of the Ore/Upper Leven Valley Strategic Development Area and has a planning application for circa 300 houses currently being considered. Several housing sites are under construction including to the south of Markinch (Site MAR001) and east of Kinglassie (Site KLS001).

8.10 There has been recent progress regarding the demolition and redevelopment of the Albany Gate section of the Kingdom Centre in Glenrothes (Site GLE031 – Development Opportunity). Town Centre site GLE029 has seen development in the form of a new retail park (The Henge), several drive thru restaurants and public realm improvements.

8.11 Employment land take-up in the Glenrothes locality has been steady with consent recently granted for developments at the Inchdairney distillery (Site GLE019) and Southfield South East (Site GLE020).

How past development has shaped how the Glenrothes locality is today

Urban development and local living

8.12 How and why the settlements of the Glenrothes locality developed and changed over time heavily influences how they work today and the issues they face in reducing carbon emissions and tackling social and economic inequality.

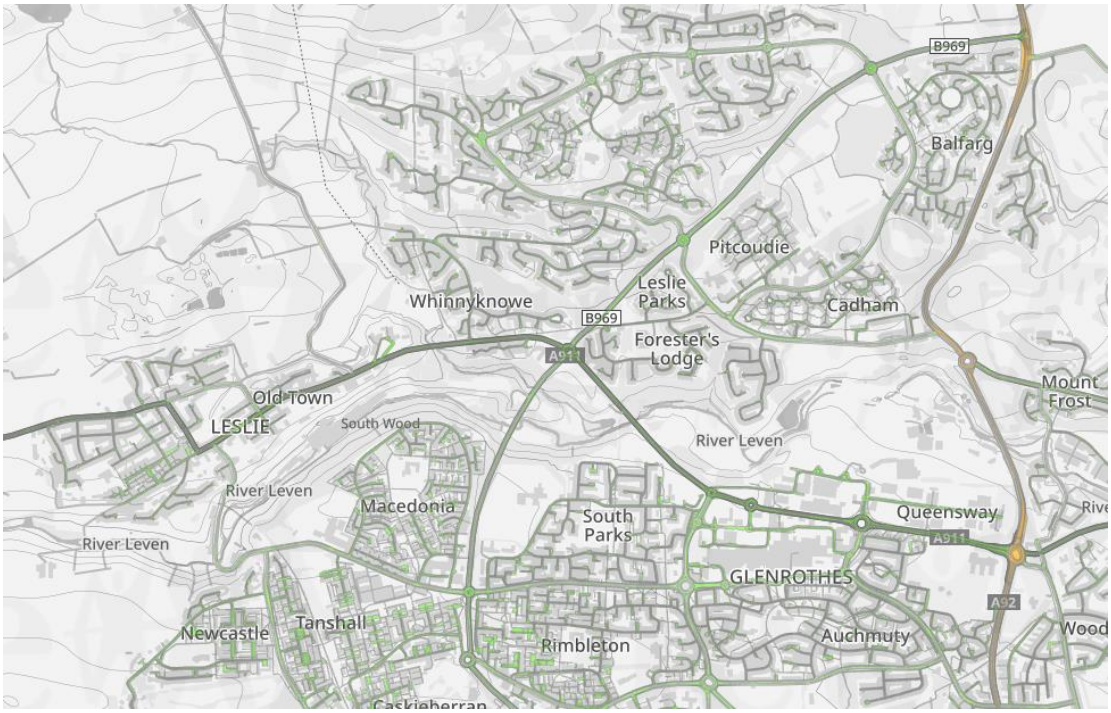
8.13 Glenrothes is a new town designed as a series of discrete neighbourhoods with their own centres. Whilst these neighbourhoods generally have fairly good internal connectivity, the connections between them are not as good and they are often separated from each other by dense planting, busy roads such as the A92, and/or industrial areas. There are plenty of pedestrian routes through the town, but these are segregated from a dominant road system, and they are not always well overlooked or maintained.

8.14 Historically, there were several Fife Council office buildings which dominated the Glenrothes skyline, namely Kingdom House and Rothesay House (which have been demolished) and Fife House which remains a feature.

8.15 The town centre mainly consists of the Kingdom Shopping Centre which presents unattractive rear elevations to the surrounding area. There have been some recent additional retail developments in the centre, but these have not helped to create a sense of place or contributed to improve the attractiveness of the town centre.

8.16 As identified in the figure below, the River Leven runs in a deep valley which cuts through Glenrothes and impacts on the integration of residential areas to the north of the town to the rest of the settlement.

Figure 8.2 Map extract of Glenrothes showing the barrier created by the River Leven valley.

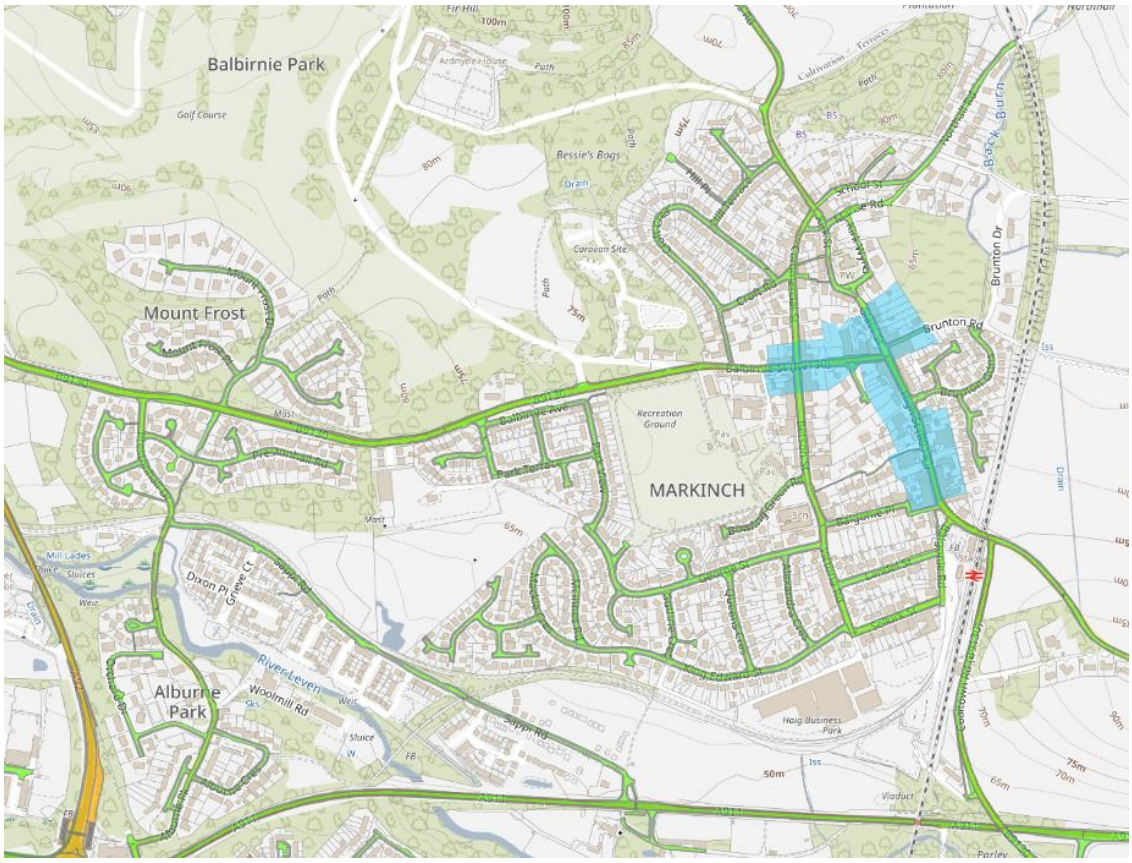


Source: Fife Council

8.17 Other settlements in the locality have historic cores which remain relatively intact. Coaltown and Milton of Balgonie have both just had small areas of expansion and are fairly well-connected places.

8.18 Development in Markinch has been contained to the east by the railway. However, the settlement has seen considerable expansion to the west and south. These areas of expansion are quite spread out and some parts of the village are some distance from the centre.

Figure 8.3 Map extract of Markinch showing the village centre in blue, the edge created by the railway, and expansion to the west.

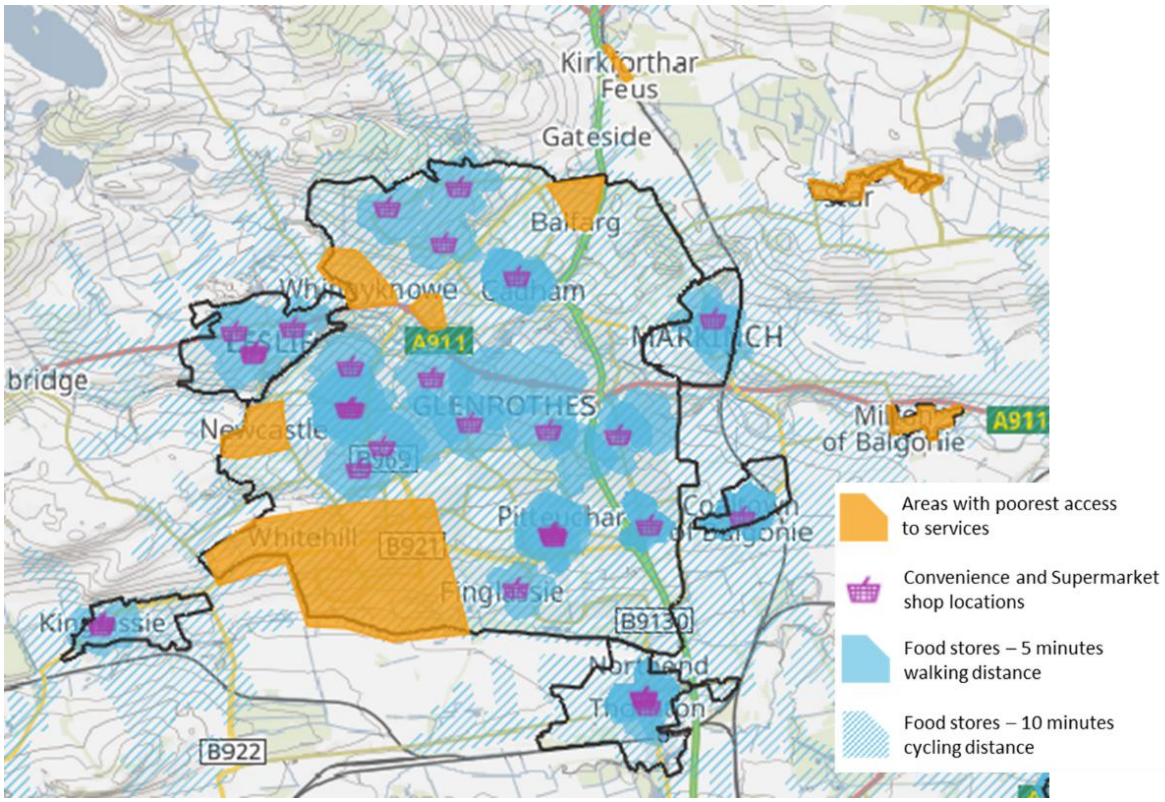


Source: Fife Council

8.19 Leslie, Kinglassie and Thornton have all seen some expansion although much of this has been over a long period. Early areas of expansion are often reasonably connected. However, many of the residential areas built in the late 20th early 21st century are laid out in cul-de-sac with often poor integration between different areas of development. This makes walking and cycling less attractive travel options in these places.

8.20 The evolution of the Glenrothes town has strongly influenced how easy it is to access services within a ten-minute walk or cycle. It was originally designed around a series of neighbourhood centres in order to give people easy access to community facilities and services. As a result, most places in Glenrothes have a reasonable access to services and facilities within a 10 minute walk (see figure below).

Figure 8.4 Example extract from Local living 20 MN interactive mapping showing walking and cycling distances from convenience stores in the Glenrothes locality, and the areas which are least well served by services and facilities



Source: Fife Council

8.21 There are however some areas in the town which have poorer access to services. These are mostly on the periphery of Glenrothes (South West Glenrothes, Newcastle, Whinnyknowe, and north east Balfarg in particular); but some areas are more central, like the west of Foresters Lodge.

8.22 Thornton and Markinch are overall well served by services and facilities, Milton of Balgonie and Coaltown of Balgonie have some facilities and services but Star of Markinch and Kirkforthar Feus have few if any. People in these areas will have to travel to nearby settlements to access a wider range of services.

8.23 Annex 7 provides more information on Living Well Locally and 20 minute Neighbourhoods in Fife.

Links to evidence

- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Interactive Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods mapping

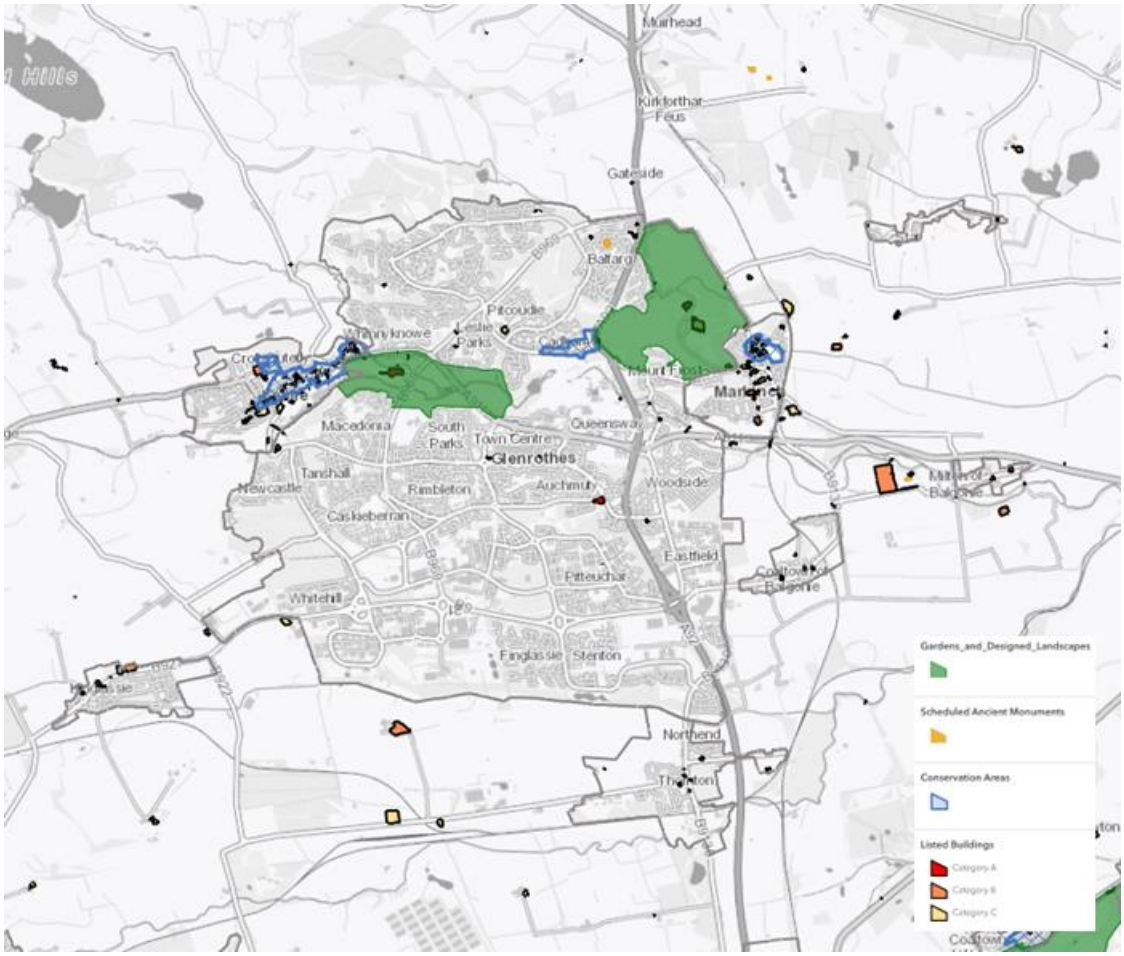
Historic environment in the Glenrothes locality

8.24 Glenrothes is a new town so has relatively few designated built heritage assets although the public art has been recognised as of cultural significance by Historic Environment Scotland.

8.25 However, the town itself does represent one of the best examples in Scotland of a post-war new town, many original features of which still remain. Whilst they are not individually recognised through statutory listing or conservation area status, collectively they make a significant addition to Scotland's built heritage and representation of post-war history.

8.26 There are some large areas of designed landscape at Balbirnie and Leslie House which are significant for the setting of the town.

Figure 8.5 Map extract showing historic environment assets in the Glenrothes locality



Source: Fife Council

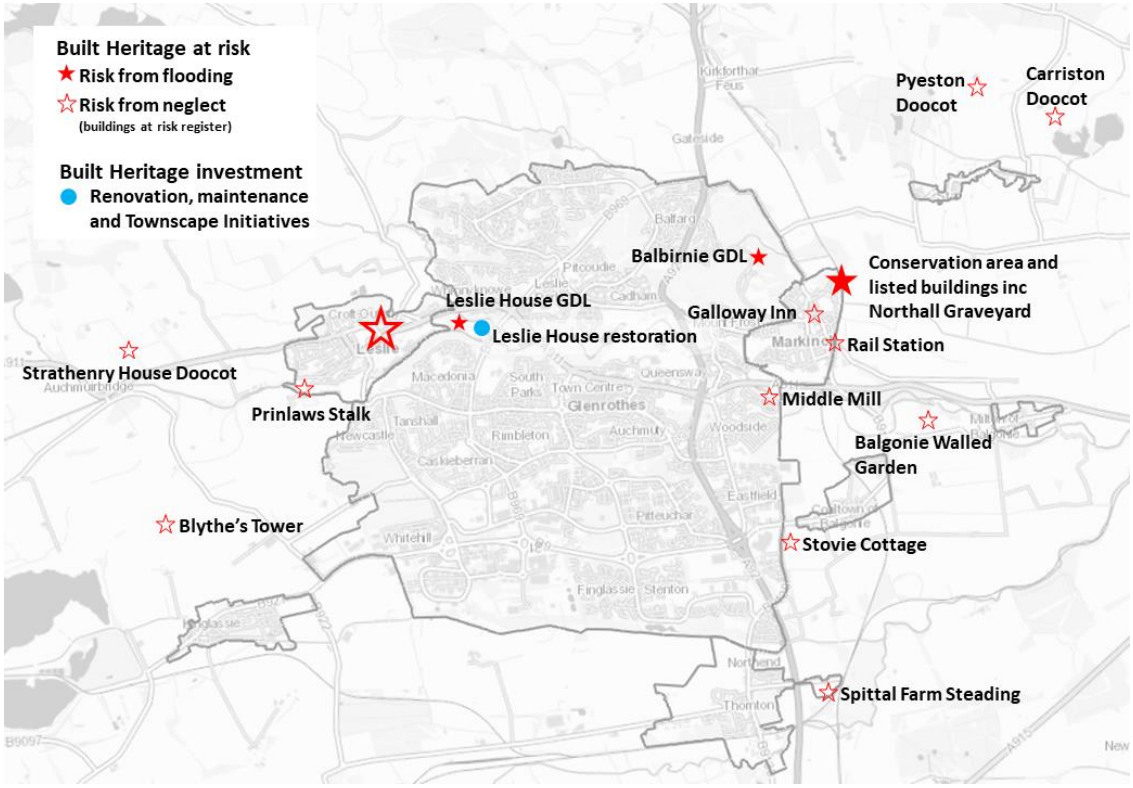
8.27 There are three conservation areas in the Glenrothes locality and a number of listed buildings especially in Leslie, Markinch and Kinglassie. There are only a couple of scheduled monuments in the area; Balfarg farmhouse, henge and standing stones and Balgonie Castle.

8.28 There have been no townscape heritage initiatives in the locality in recent times but the Leslie Heritage Group is currently gauging community support for improvements to the built heritage in the town.

Risks to the historic environment

8.29 There are relatively few built heritage assets in the locality which are predicted to be at risk from flooding on the SEPA flood maps. Leslie House Garden and Designed Landscape is predicted to be at risk from surface water flooding and flooding from the River Leven; listed bridges over the river Leven are also predicted to be at risk. The Balbirnie Garden and Designed Landscape and Markinch Conservation Area are predicted to be at risk of flooding from the Back Burn (see figure below).

Figure 8.6 Map of the Glenrothes locality showing built heritage at risk from flooding and neglect; and some built heritage investment initiatives.



Source: HES, SEAP & Fife Council

Note: This map was created by visually comparing HES built heritage designations with the SEPA flood maps, and the Buildings at Risk register.

8.30 There are 19 buildings at risk identified in the locality, seven of which are in Leslie, these include a C-listed chimney at Prinlaws Mill which was granted Listed Building consent for demolition in 2018 but remains in place. One building in Leslie has recently been restored and has been taken off the register.

8.31 At least one listed building in the area has been lost to fire damage, and the category A listed Leslie House was substantially damaged by fire during restoration works. However, after being derelict for a considerable time Leslie House is currently being restored again.

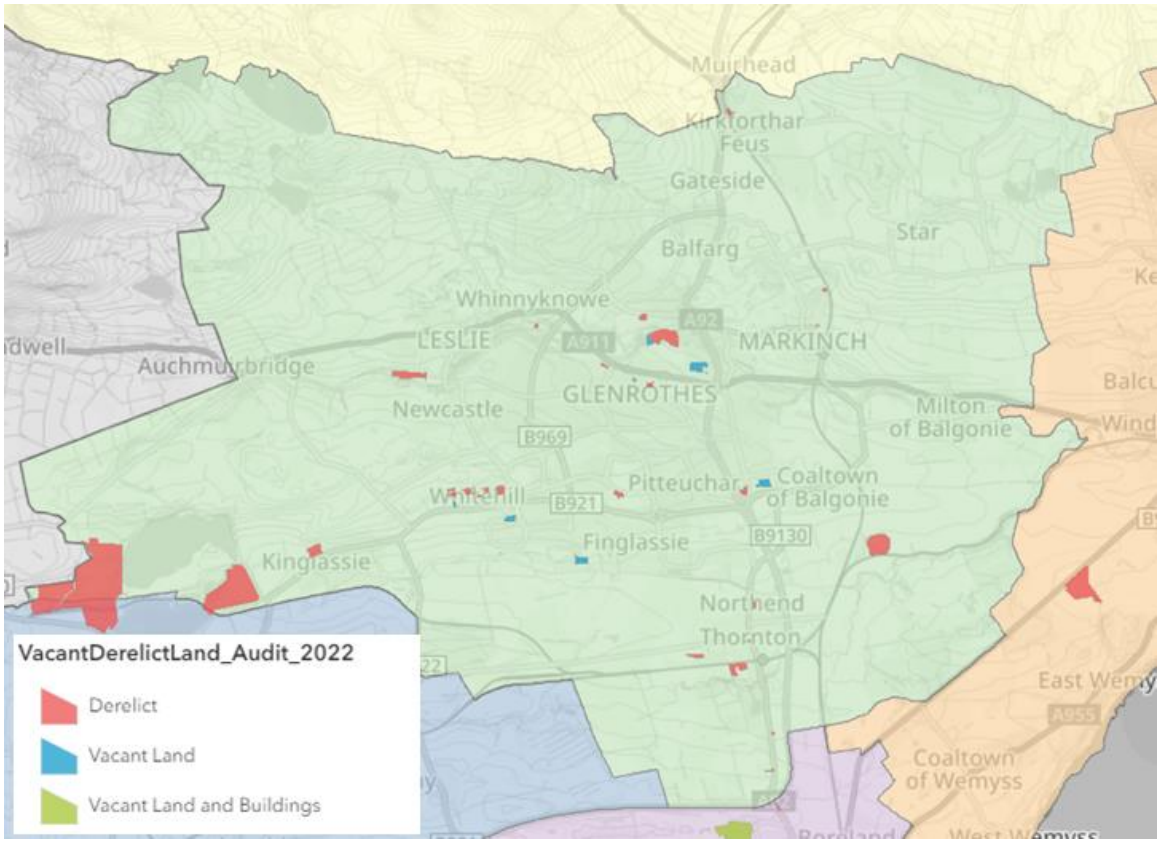
Links to evidence

- Conservation Area Appraisals
- Historic Environment Scotland Interactive map showing built heritage, landscape character designations
- Places: Glenrothes Town Art
- Buildings at Risk register
- SEPA flood maps
- The Courier – Leslie House: Restoration finally underway

Vacant and derelict land and environmental hazards in the Glenrothes locality

8.32 The Glenrothes locality has 37 vacant and derelict sites many of which relate to former industrial, mining and quarrying activities. The largest sites are at the Westfield former opencast mine site and Balgonie Bing.

Figure 8.7 Extract from the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2022 showing the Glenrothes locality.



Source: Fife Council

8.33 Between 2021-22 the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit identified that two vacant and derelict sites in the Glenrothes locality were taken off the vacant and derelict land register – both relate to a large scale mixed use development on the Tullis Russell site. One additional site was identified – to the south west of Westfield. Funding from the Vacant and Derelict land fund has been allocated to support the remediation of a site at Station Road Thornton and support regeneration works at Queensway in Glenrothes.

8.34 There are 4 gas network pipelines which pass through the Glenrothes locality to the north and west of Glenrothes. Development close to these pipes and within associated zones is subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. There are also 3 consultation zones associated with whisky production and storage operations and one relating to explosives in Glenrothes. The Health and Safety Executive consultation zones can be

viewed on the adopted FIFEplan proposals map (advice/consultation information). The Health and Safety Executive have advice on the type and scale of development within the pipeline consultation zones.

8.35 There are no air quality management areas in the Glenrothes locality but there are four smoke control zones which cover most of Glenrothes, (it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney in these areas). Air quality is not monitored by Fife Council in the Glenrothes locality.

Links to evidence

- Fife Vacant and Derelict land audit 2022
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning Methodology
- Fife Council – Smoke Control Zones
- Fife Council – pollution mapping

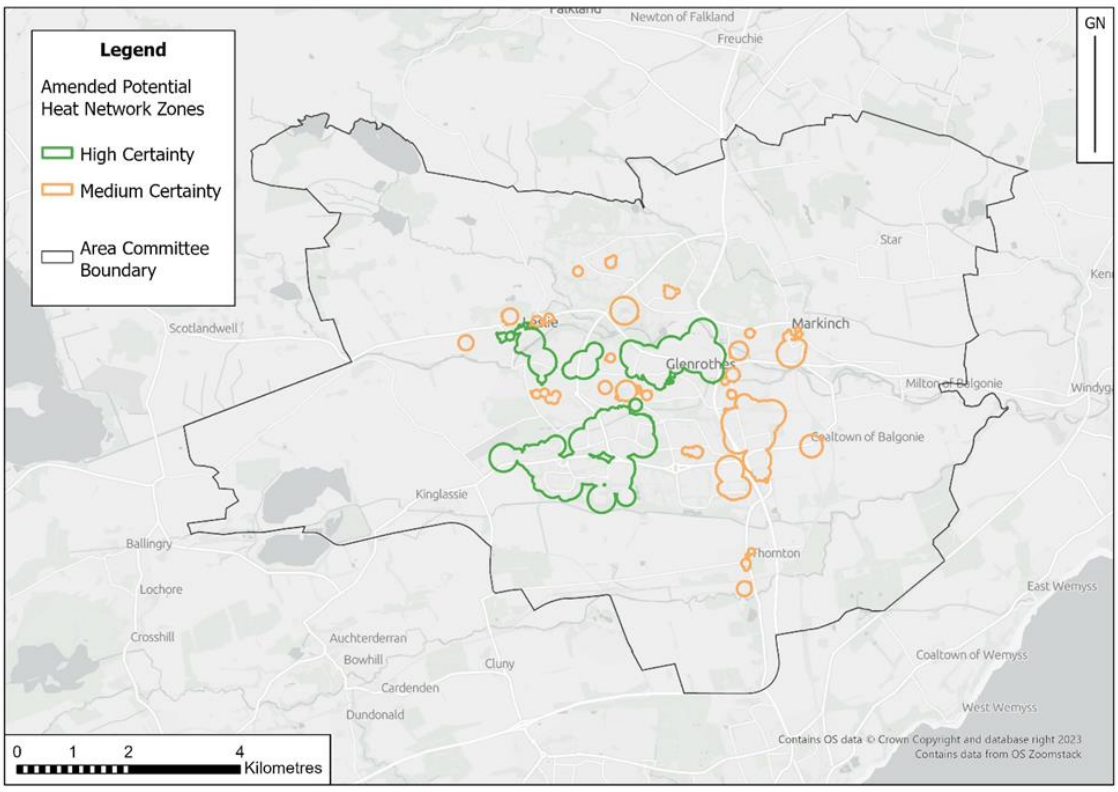
How the Glenrothes locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

8.36 In common with other inland areas of Fife, the Glenrothes locality faces challenges arising from the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Opportunities will need to be taken to decarbonise heating in the locality to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding and this will affect how development is planned in the future. Water quality and protecting important habitats are also key issues in the Glenrothes locality.

Decarbonising heating in the Glenrothes locality

8.37 Decarbonising heating will be important in helping Fife tackle the climate emergency and meeting net zero commitments. Potential Heat Network Zones in the Glenrothes locality are being identified as part of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Fife. The potential heat network zones are shown on the figure below. Further work to identify Heat Network Zones will be undertaken in 2024-25.

Figure 8.8 Potential heat network zones in the Glenrothes locality



source: [Local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan | Fife Council]

8.38 Glenrothes also has an existing heat network delivering low-carbon heat to houses, businesses and public sector buildings within Glenrothes town centre from the Markinch Biomass Combined Heat and Power plant.

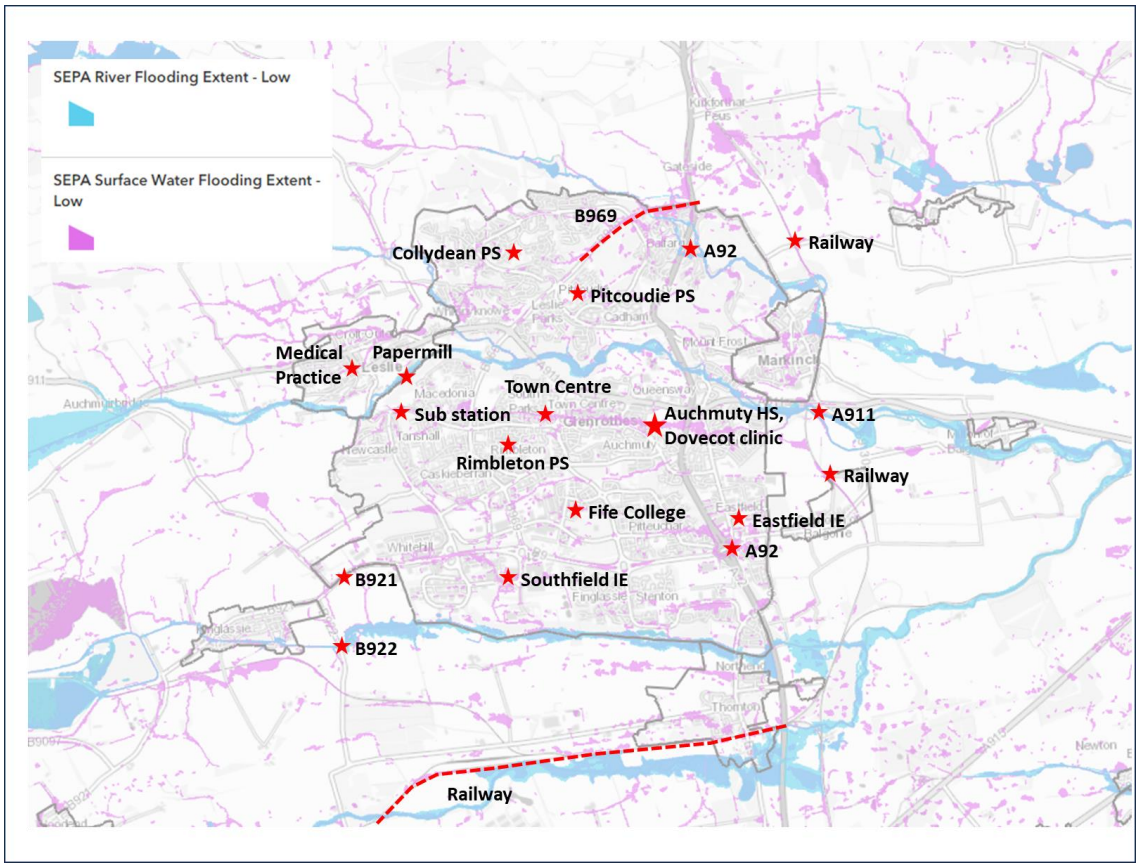
Links to evidence

- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Flood risk in the Glenrothes locality

8.39 Parts of the Glenrothes locality are identified by SEPA as predicted to be at risk of flooding, a risk that is increasing because of climate change. The risk is both from surface water flooding and river flooding.

Figure 8.9 Plan showing key assets predicted to be at risk of flooding in Glenrothes area.



Source: Fife Council

Notes: This map was created by visually comparing: Fife Council data on schools, healthcare facilities and key employment areas (see Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood interactive map) and Mastermap and OS Base mapping with SEPA flood maps.

Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

8.40 There have been repeated incidents of flooding in the Glenrothes locality over the last few years; areas such as the Balfarg junction in Glenrothes and Kinglassie being particularly badly affected.

8.41 There are no existing or proposed formal flood protection schemes in the area.

8.42 A detailed flood study carried out for Glenrothes found that the likelihood of river flooding affecting properties is minimal. Flood studies are also required to assess the risk of fluvial flooding in Markinch and Kinglassie. The Kinglassie study is now complete.

8.43 SEPA has predicted that there is a risk of geomorphic change (change to the river channel) along stretches of the River Leven through Glenrothes and Leslie.

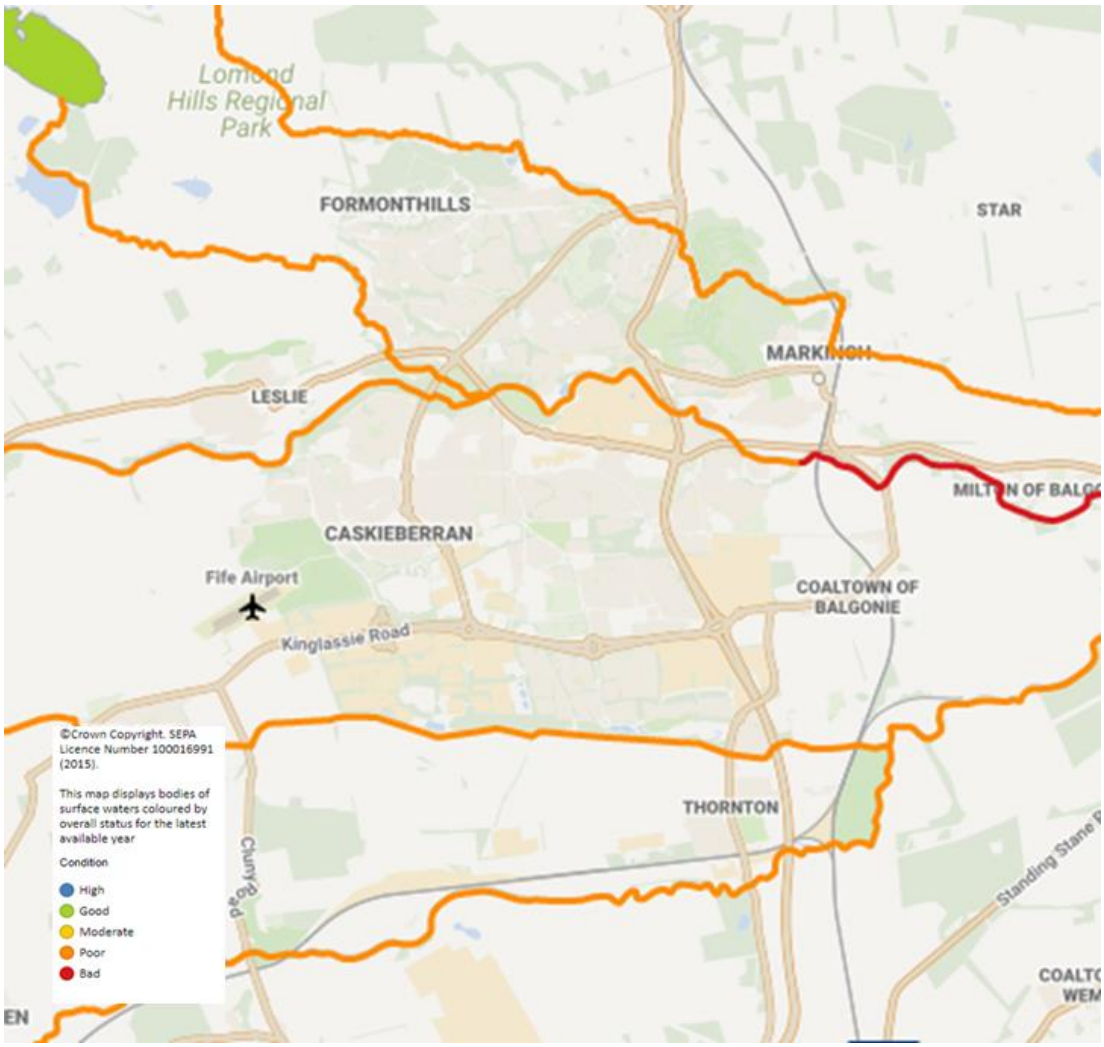
Links to evidence

- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- SEPA Flood Risk Maps
- SEPA – Geomorphic Risk data
- Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife

Water quality in the Glenrothes locality

8.44 The ecological condition of surface water in the Glenrothes locality is poor to bad. The SEPA water classification hub classifies the River Leven as in poor ecological condition between Loch Leven and Markinch and as bad condition to the east of Markinch. All other water bodies in the locality are classified as having poor ecological condition (see figure below). Pressures on surface water condition come from modifications to the channel from urban development and farming, and barriers to fish migration from legacy structures, paper production and public water infrastructure (identified on the SEPA water environment hub).

Figure 8.10 Extract from SEPA water classification hub showing quality of surface waters in the Glenrothes locality



Source: SEPA

8.45 The groundwater condition in the Glenrothes locality is classified as good.

8.46 There is a major project underway as part of the Leven Programme, to improve the quality of the Back Burn to the north of Glenrothes and towards Markinch restoring it to a more natural condition.

Links to evidence

- SEPA water classification hub
- SEPA water environment hub
- River Leven Programme - Restoring the Back Burn

Green and blue networks in the Glenrothes locality

8.47 This area is within the Central Scotland Green Network- one of the eighteen national developments recognised within NPF4 and is one of Europe's largest green infrastructure projects. Key assets in the area include the River Leven, River Ore and Lochty and Back Burns, Riverside and Balbirnie Park, part of the Lomond Hills Regional Park and woodlands though Glenrothes.

8.48 Some of the key active travel routes within the Glenrothes locality include: The Fife Pilgrim Way which connects Kinglassie to Markinch and the National Cycle Network Route 766 which provides connections to Kirkcaldy and North East Fife.

8.49 However, there are some wider connectivity issues within the Glenrothes locality with the A92, the railway and the B9130 acting as key barriers. The community in Thornton in particular have highlighted access to nature as an issue.

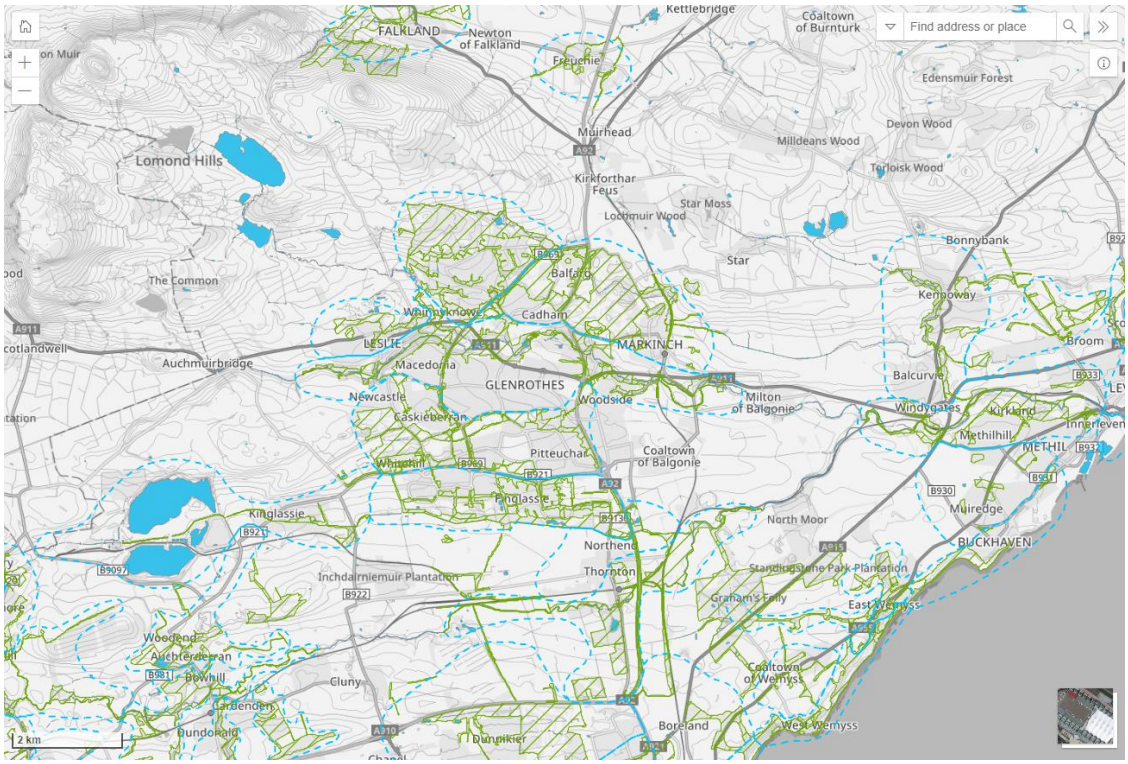
8.50 Green and blue network opportunities in the area include biodiversity and greenspace enhancements in the Glenrothes hospital site and in Riverside Park, river restoration proposals along the Back Burn and restoration of the Westfield open cast site.

8.51 The Fife green and blue network audit reports for the area are:

- Glenrothes report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Kinglassie report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Thornton report Green and Blue Network update 2023

8.52 Green and blue networks are mapped on an interactive map (see figure below) and a storymap explains how the assets and opportunities were identified.

Figure 8.11 Extract from the Fife Green and Blue Network interactive map illustrating key assets and existing blue and green network policy areas



Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Glenrothes report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Kinglassie report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Thornton report Green and Blue Network update 2023
- Central Scotland Green Network
- Fife Pilgrim Way
- Sustrans National Cycle Network Routes in the East of Scotland
- NHS Fife 2030 Greenspace Strategy
- Riverside Park progress update
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystem services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap

Biodiversity in the Glenrothes locality

8.53 Priority habitats within the Glenrothes locality include various bodies of standing and running water, some species rich grassland, and a mix of ancient, semi-natural and long-established woodland.

Table 8.1 Summary of the priority habitats found within the Glenrothes locality including key sites

Freshwater & Wetland Habitats	Lowland & Farmland Habitats	Woodland Habitats
Inland freshwater, such as Ballo and Harplerleas Reservoirs (SSSI) Lowland fen at Star Moss (SSSI) Rivers such as the **River Leven** Ponds such as Stenton Pond (LWS)	Species-rich grassland such as Coul Den (Local Nature Reserve) and Coul Reservoir (LWS) Field margins and boundaries Parks and areas with veteran trees, such as **Balbirnie**	Ancient, semi-natural & long-established woodlands, such as **Star Moss (SSSI)** Mixed lowland woodland Urban woodland

Source: Fife's Local Biodiversity Action Plan

8.54 These habitats support a wealth of wildlife including otters (European Protected Species), badgers, red squirrels, the common frog, and palmate newts (the latter of which are all UK protected species).

8.55 The Fife Biodiversity Action Plan states the destruction of habitats is the number one cause of species extinction, so safeguarding priority habitats will be a priority.

8.56 Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, and Rhododendron also pose a threat to the various ecosystems within the Glenrothes locality.

8.57 Another invasive non-native species which can be found within the Glenrothes locality is the American mink which poses a threat to domestic ducks and poultry, gamebirds, and fish. This species has also been linked to the decrease of water voles in the UK and is considered to have negative implications for fisheries.

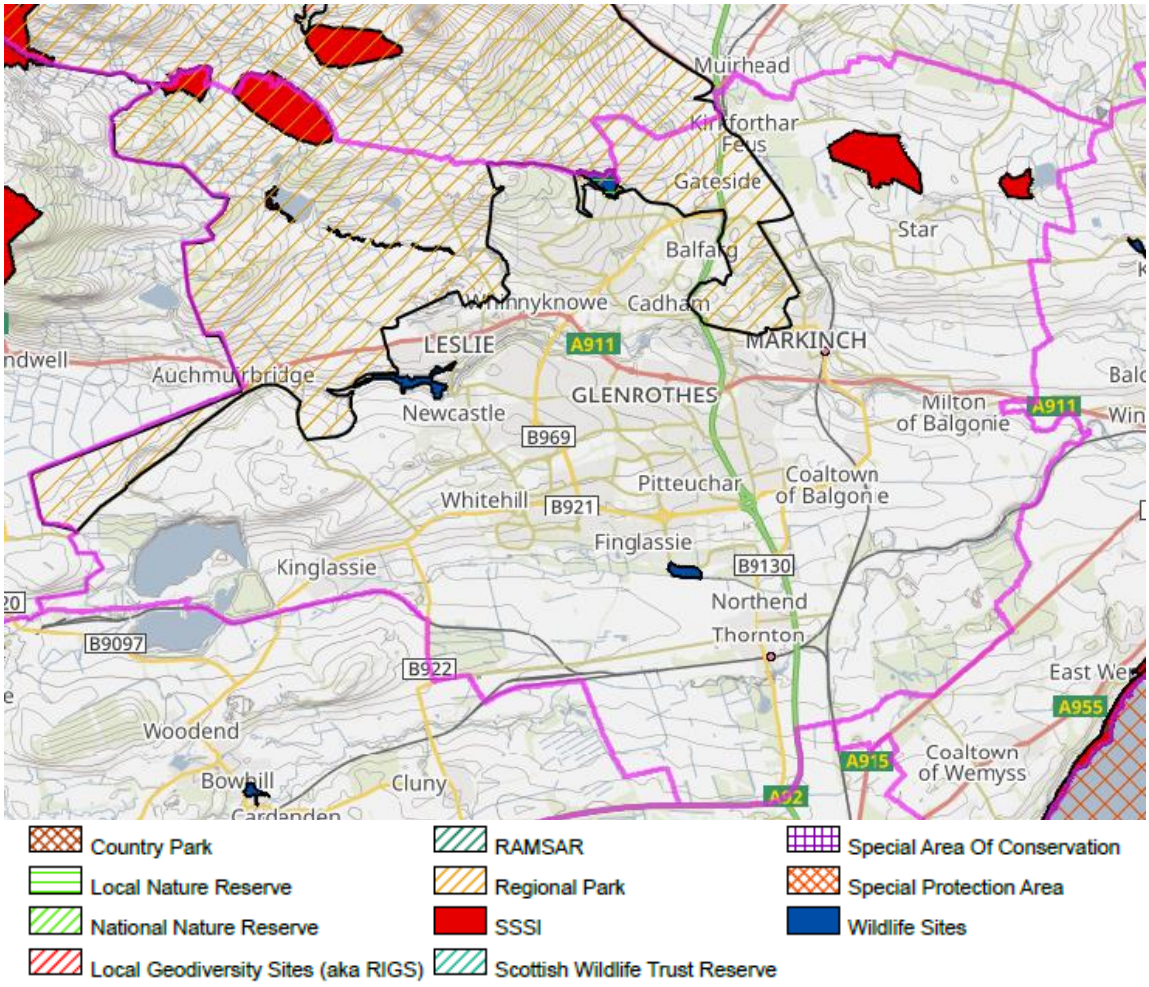
Links to evidence

- NBN Atlas
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Nature Scot- Invasive non-native plants
- Nature Scot- Protected species A-Z guide
- Indicative Red Squirrel Sites – Fife Nature

Natural Heritage Designations in the Glenrothes locality

8.58 There are a number of sites designated for natural heritage in the Kirkcaldy locality (see figure below). There are four SSSI sites in the Glenrothes locality; Ballo and Harperleas Reservoir, Holl Meadows, Star Moss and Carristion Reservoir. There is also one Local Nature Reserve; Coul Den.

Figure 8.12 Natural heritage designations in the Glenrothes locality.



Source: Fife Council

These can be viewed on the Green and Blue network interactive map.

8.59 There are three locally designated Local Nature Conservation Sites, (formerly called wildlife sites), in the Glenrothes locality: Coul Reservoir and Stenton Pond which were resurveyed around five years ago and found to be in an OK[9] condition. The Leslie – Strathendry wildlife site has not been resurveyed.

[9] "OK" is the site status designation used in the sites survey.

8.60 Part of the Lomond Hills Regional Park sits within the Glenrothes locality. Many of the designated sites are situated within the regional park.

8.61 More detail on why these sites have been designated for natural heritage in Fife is provided on the Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Government – Natural Heritage Designations
- NatureScot– local designations
- Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list
- Fife Local Nature Conservation Sites tracker Dec 2023

Landscape character and soils in the Glenrothes locality

8.62 The Glenrothes locality is predominately characterised by a mix of upland hills and lowland hills and valleys (as identified on NatureScot Landscape Character types (2019) mapping). There is one Local Landscape Area within the Glenrothes locality; Lomond Hills as designated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017.

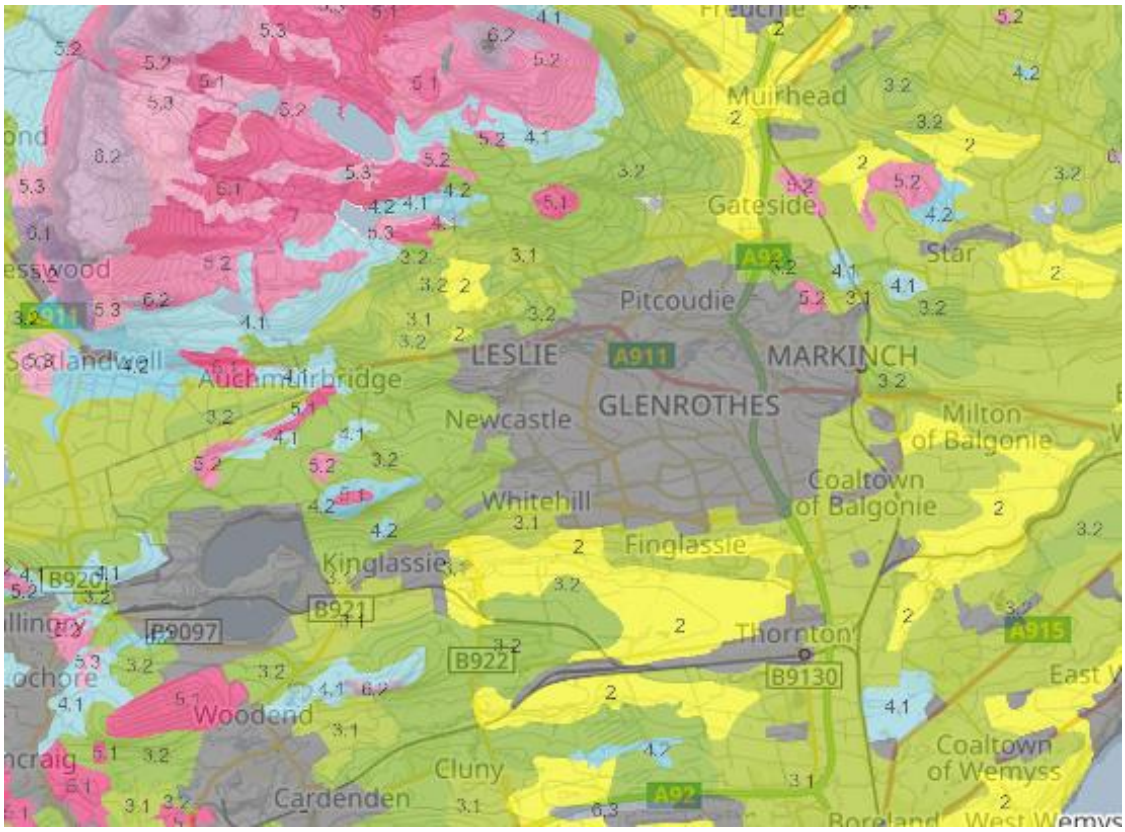
8.63 Lomond Hills became Scotland's first Regional Park in 1986 due to its importance for recreation and conservation and comprises 25 square miles of moorland, lochs, and farmland.

8.64 There are some locations of carbon rich soils within the Glenrothes locality identified on the 2016 Carbon and Peatland Map, including class 1 peatland at Star Moss near Star of Markinch. Class 1 soils are nationally important and are of high conservation value.

8.65 There is one working quarry within the Glenrothes locality- Lomond Quarry which is located to the North of Leslie and extracts both hard rock and sand and gravel. Also, the former Westfield opencast coal mine is a very large site located to the West of Kinglassie which has undergone major restoration works and parts of the site have been redeveloped for employment, waste management and energy generation uses.

8.66 Furthermore, outwith the built-up areas there is a high proportion of prime agricultural land within the Glenrothes locality (classes 1 to 3.1 in the Scottish Land Capability for agriculture map).

Figure 8.13 Extract from the land capability map for Scotland for the Glenrothes locality.



Source: Scottish Government - ©Crown Copyright. Scottish Government Licence Number 100020540. All Rights Reserved.

Links to evidence

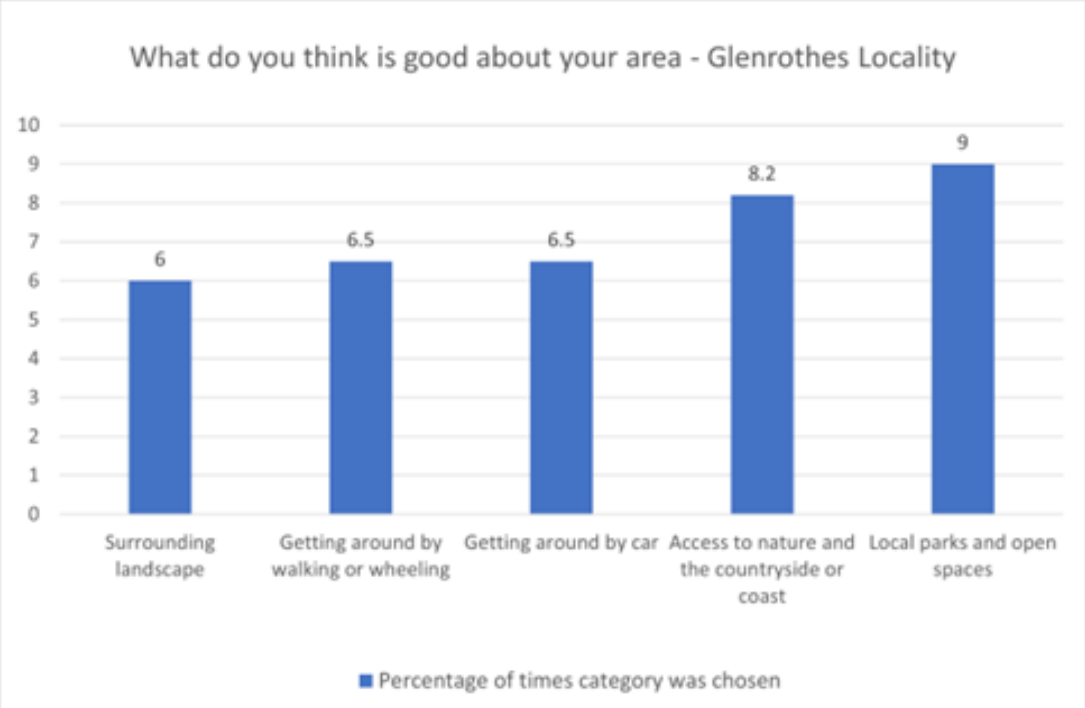
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Types 2019
- Adopted FIFEplan (2017) interactive map
- Scotlands Soils – Land Capability for agriculture
- List of Fife's Quarries
- Lomond Hills Regional Park
- Carbon and Peatland Map 2016

The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the Glenrothes locality within the lifetime of the Plan

8.67 At a local level, the main infrastructure issue facing the Glenrothes locality is access to healthcare.

8.68 In the autumn of 2022, Fife Council asked residents what they felt was good about the Glenrothes locality, what wasn't so good, and what the key issues were that they felt needed to be tackled.

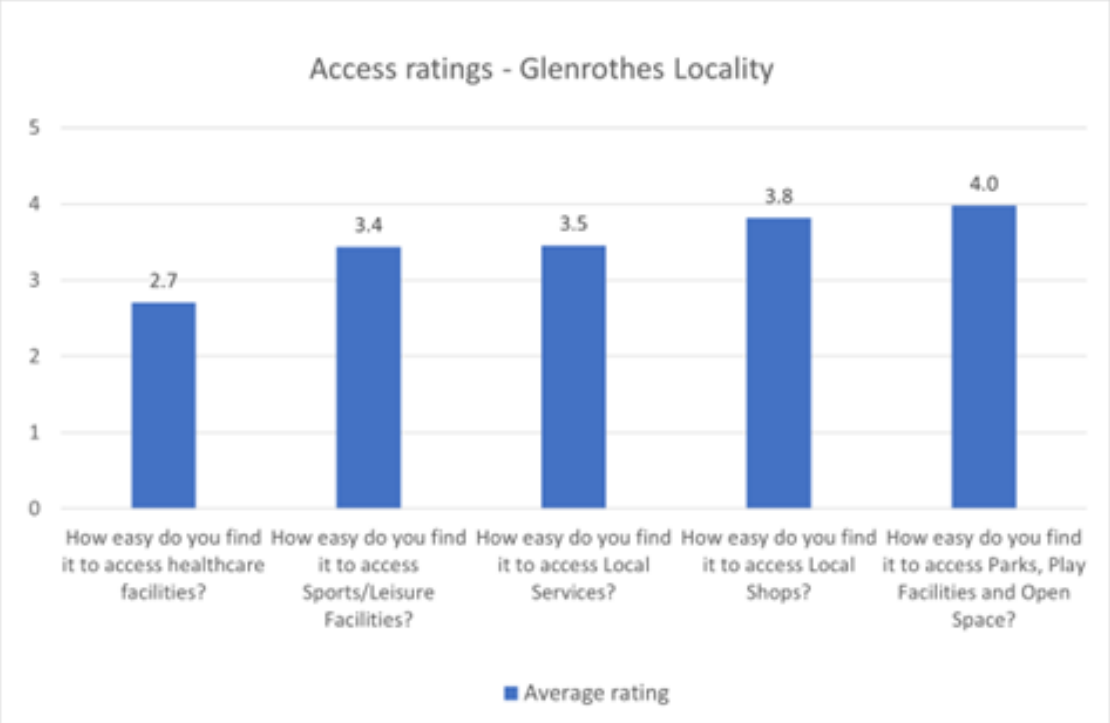
Figure 8.14: What respondents think is good about their area



Source: Fife Council

8.69 Respondents also said that the proximity of parks and the nearby regional park is good for dog walks and there are plenty of footpaths around Glenrothes itself with minimal disruption from traffic and noise.

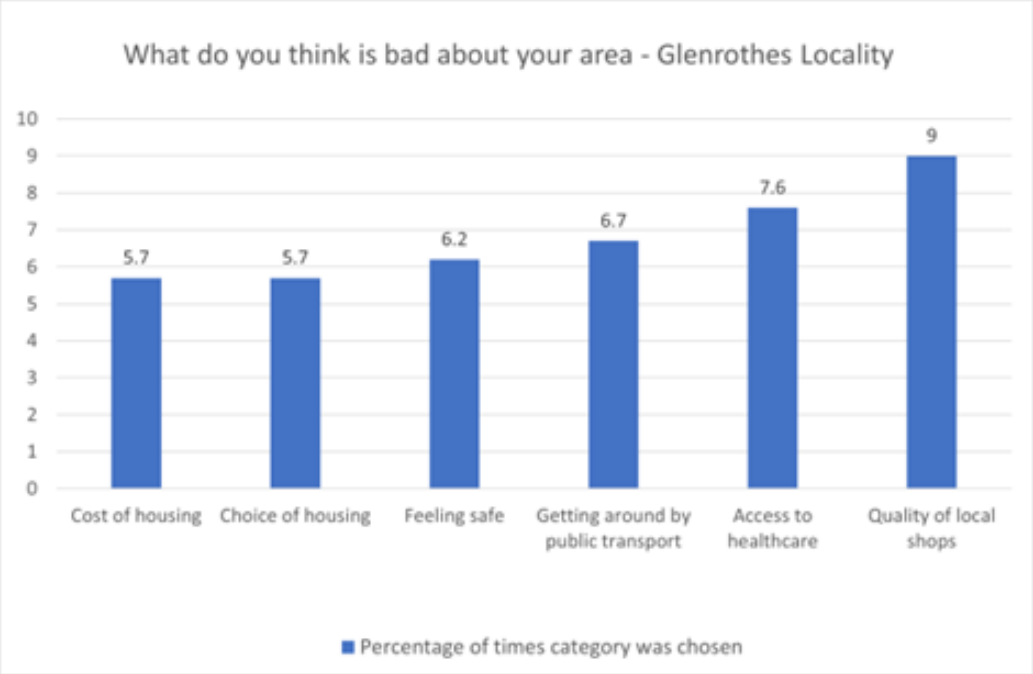
Figure 8.15: Average ratings for access



Source: Fife Council

8.70 As highlighted above, access to parks, play facilities and open space is seen to be good, as is the ability to access to local shops.

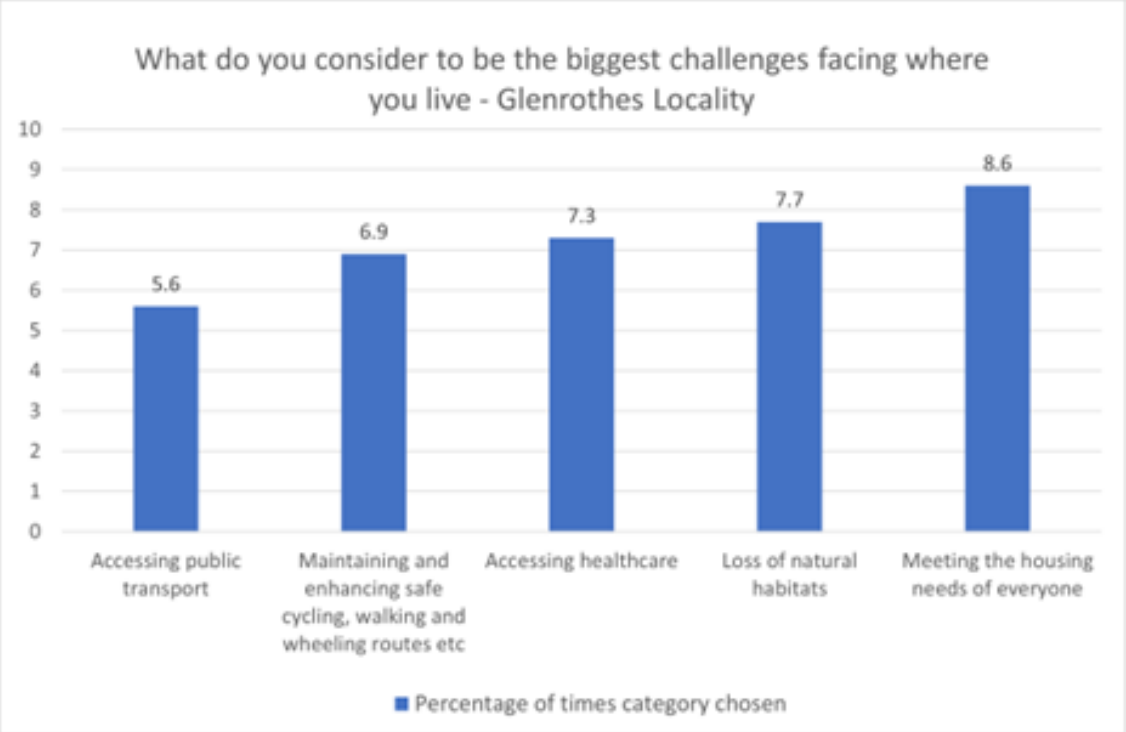
Figure 8.16: What respondents think is bad about their area



Source: Fife Council

8.71 However, the ability to access healthcare facilities is seen as being poor. Feedback highlighted that dental appointments are difficult to get while the availability of GPs is also poor. In addition, while access to local shops is regarded as good, the quality is poor.

Figure 8.17: What respondents think the biggest challenges facing their area are



Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Glenrothes summary of survey (residents)

Healthcare in the Glenrothes locality

8.72 The Glenrothes locality has a range of health and care facilities across the town and surrounding area. However, planned growth and demographic changes (in particular, an aging population) are likely to put increased pressure on these facilities. NHS Fife are moving towards health and wellbeing hubs which provide multi-disciplinary care. There is a particular need for new or replacement premises.

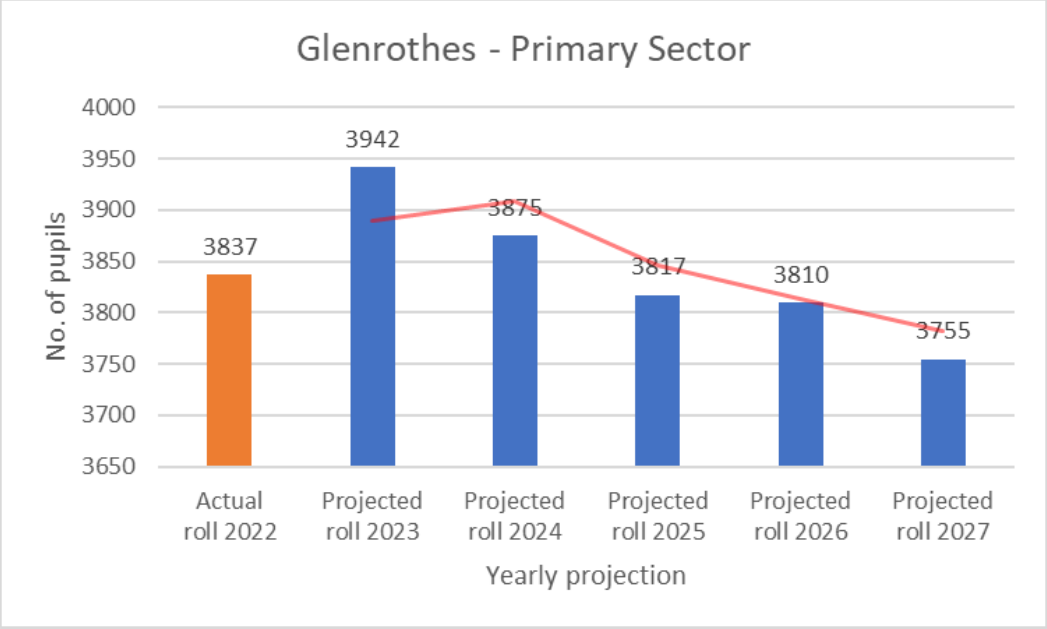
Links to evidence

- NHS Fife Estates Strategy

School places in the Glenrothes locality

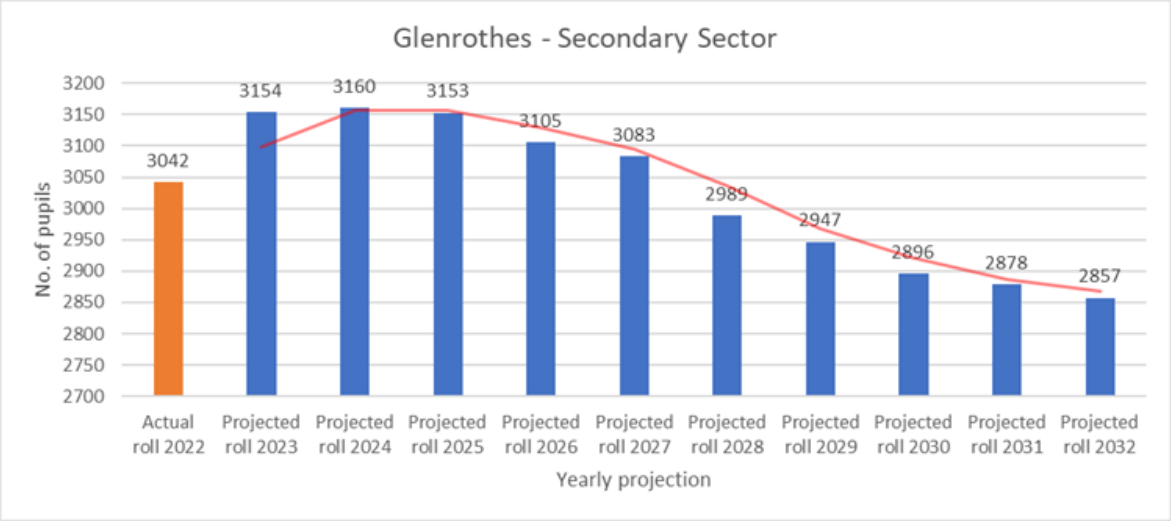
8.73 In education, there is projected pupil capacity across the whole of the existing and planned primary and secondary school estates to accommodate some further growth over the next ten years. However, individual schools do have capacity constraints. Further capacity will be required at Auchmuty High School.

Figure 8.18 Projected pupil numbers in primary schools in the Glenrothes locality (2023 - 2027)



Source: Fife Council

Figure 8.19 Projected pupil numbers in secondary schools in the Glenrothes locality (2023 - 2032)



Source: Fife Council

8.74 In addition, a new or extended primary school is required to accommodate development in Thornton, as allocated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017.

8.75 There has been significant investment in the education estate across the Glenrothes locality in recent years.

8.76 Fife College has a higher education campus in Glenrothes.

Links to evidence

- School Roll Projections by Area Committee September 2023

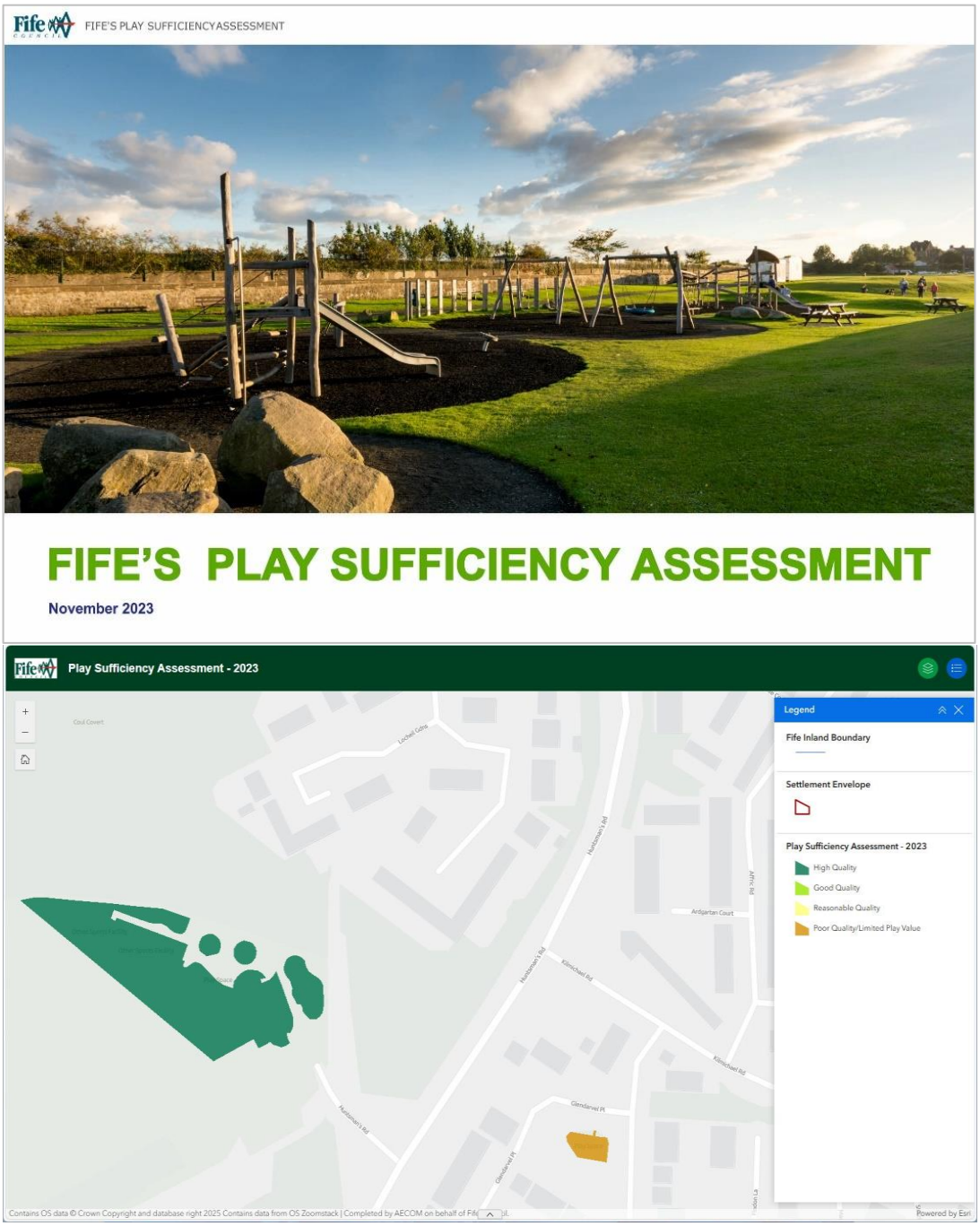
Open space, play space and sports facilities in the Glenrothes locality

8.77 Open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, and outdoor places to play and socialise are key to successful placemaking. The outdoor spaces, including public parks and access to the Lomonds, in the Glenrothes locality have helped to make communities more pleasant, liveable, healthy, and resilient. Glenrothes, Leslie, Markinch and Thornton all have high quality play parks but there are also a number of facilities with very limited play value in Glenrothes. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment provides more information.

8.78 Work is underway to update Fife Open Space Audit and Strategy which will be finalised in late 2025. Site visits to update the quality audit have been completed. These visits found that Glenrothes, Markinch, Kinglassie and Thornton all had high quality open spaces including the larger parks Riverside and Balbirnie Park in Glenrothes. There were only four spaces which were classed as poor quality, these were all in Glenrothes. Almost half of the sites were classed as reasonable quality. Kinglassie Park has shown an improvement since the 2009 audit but Gallowbank Plantation, Caskieberran Drive and Warout Wood in Glenrothes have all deteriorated. The updated audit has found there is around a 12% decline in the quality of greenspaces in the Glenrothes area. There has been a slight increase in the amount of publicly useable greenspace in Glenrothes and the town has the highest provision of greenspace per head of population in Fife. Thornton and Leslie both have above the Fife average provision of greenspace but Coaltown of Balgonie and Markinch have below average provision.

8.79 A Play Sufficiency Assessment for Fife was carried out in 2023. It identifies that there are high quality play facilities at Gilvenbank and Magnus Drive in Glenrothes, John Dixon Park in Markinch and Memorial park in Thornton. However, out of 95 sites assessed in the area, over two thirds were classed as poorer quality facilities including the only play provision in Milton of Balgonie. Milton of Balgonie and Glenrothes were both classed as having insufficient play provision mainly due to the poor quality of play spaces. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment provides more information.

Figure 8.20 Indicative image from Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment (showing part of the Glenrothes locality)



Source: Fife Council

8.80 Sports facilities are mainly focused in Glenrothes in this locality. The key facilities in the area are the Michael Woods Sports and leisure Centre, the High Schools in Glenrothes and the and Glenrothes Community Sport Hub at Gilvenbank Park. There are a number of golf courses in the locality in different settlements. The smaller settlements in the area all have sports pitches and many of them have bowling greens.

8.81 A Facility Planning Model developed by SportScotland predicts patterns of demand for sports facilities (but not actual usage). The model outputs suggest that Michael Woods Sport and Leisure Centre will have a decrease in use of its sports hall facilities by 2033 whilst the three nearby community use schools will have an increase in the use of their sports halls – this is attributed to facility age and attractiveness. The model also suggests that the use of synthetic pitches at Auchmuty High School will be high in 2033.

Links to evidence

- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Fife Greenspace Audit 2010
- Open space quality audit – examples of good quality sites Jan 25
- Open space quality audit – examples of poor quality sites Jan 25
- Draft Fife Greenspace Audit 2024 – key changes since 2009
- SportScotland – Facility Planning Model Fife Council 2023
- SportScotland – Community sports hubs map

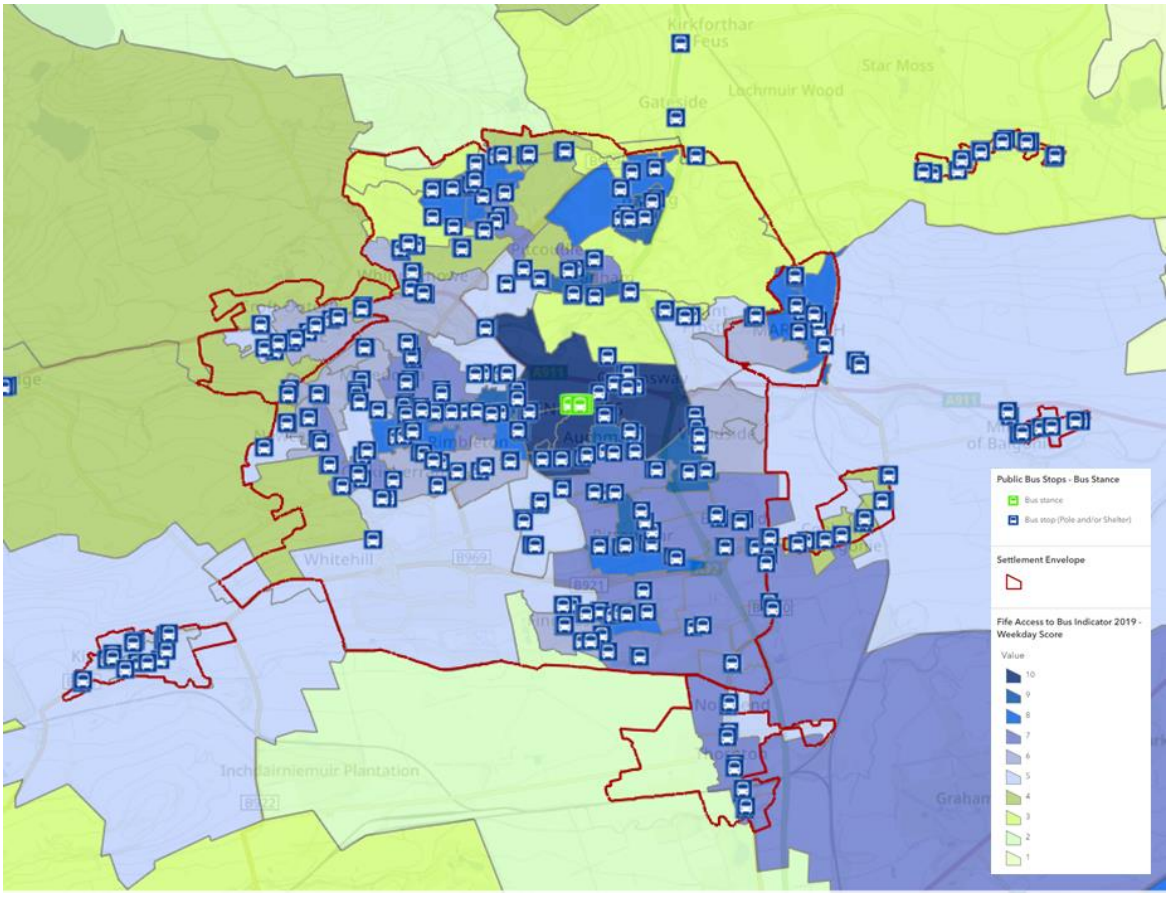
Accessibility of public transport in the Glenrothes locality

8.82 Many areas in central Glenrothes and Markinch have good access to bus services. However, there are some areas particularly to the north east and south west of Glenrothes, Thornton, Kinglassie and the smaller villages which have much poorer access to public transport.

8.83 Glenrothes Bus Station, one of Fife's five main bus station hubs, is located in the heart of the town centre providing connections to Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow amongst others.

8.84 There are also two train stations serving the Glenrothes locality; Glenrothes with Thornton, which is on the Fife Circle and Markinch which is designed as a transport interchange. Markinch train station is located along the East Coast Mainline and has fairly frequent services north and south.

Figure 8.21 Weekday access to buses in the Glenrothes locality with bus stops (1= poor access, 10 = good access)

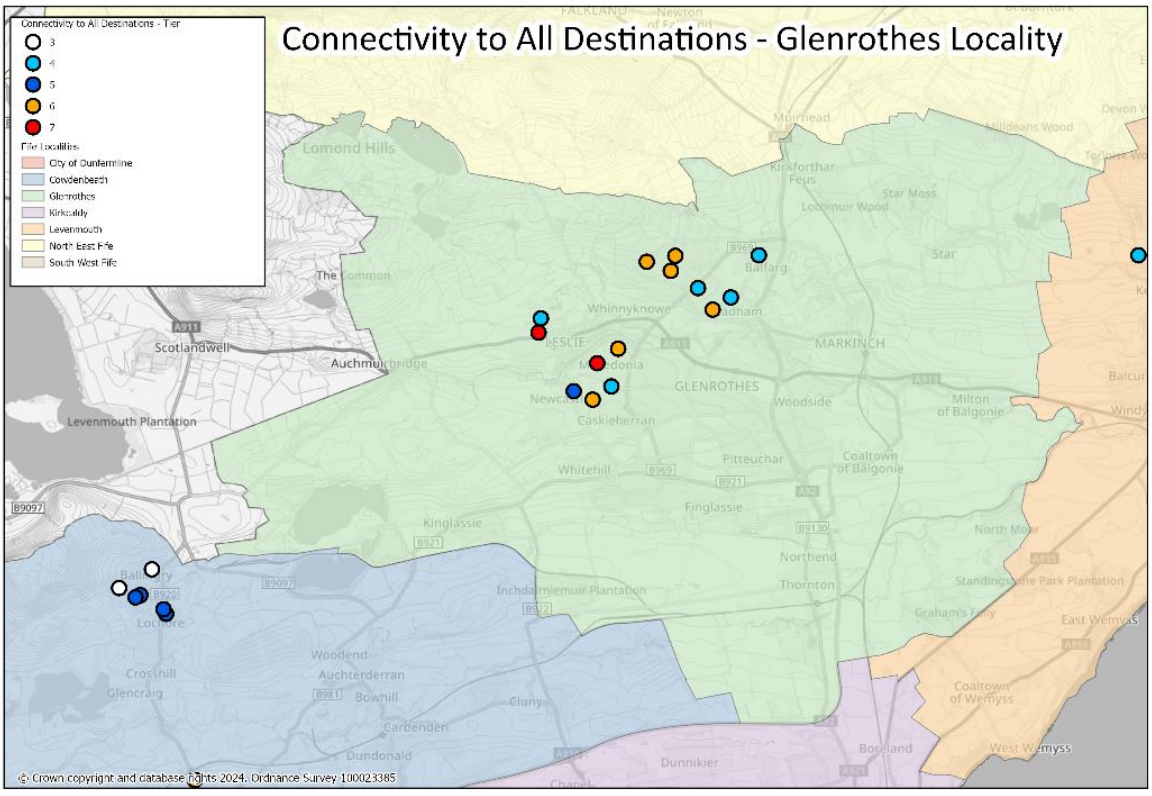


Source: Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)

8.85 The figure below highlights overall levels of access to destinations such as employment and further education from areas within the locality. Tiers 1 and 2 are not shown on the map as they are considered to be good access scores. Tiers 3 and above indicate access issues. Public transport access to regional and local employment destinations from the Glenrothes locality is variable. There is good access from many parts of the area but areas in the west and north of Glenrothes, including Leslie have poorer access.

8.86 A similar picture exists for public transport accessibility of further and higher education, community health, strategic health and retailing. More commentary on public transport accessibility is contained in Annex 10 (Transport).

Figure 8.22: Connectivity to All Destinations from Glenrothes Locality



Source: LTS/LDP Modelling and Options Report

Links to evidence

- LTS & LDP Strategic Transport Modelling and option Development Report 2022
- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- Glenrothes Area Surveys Analysis 2022

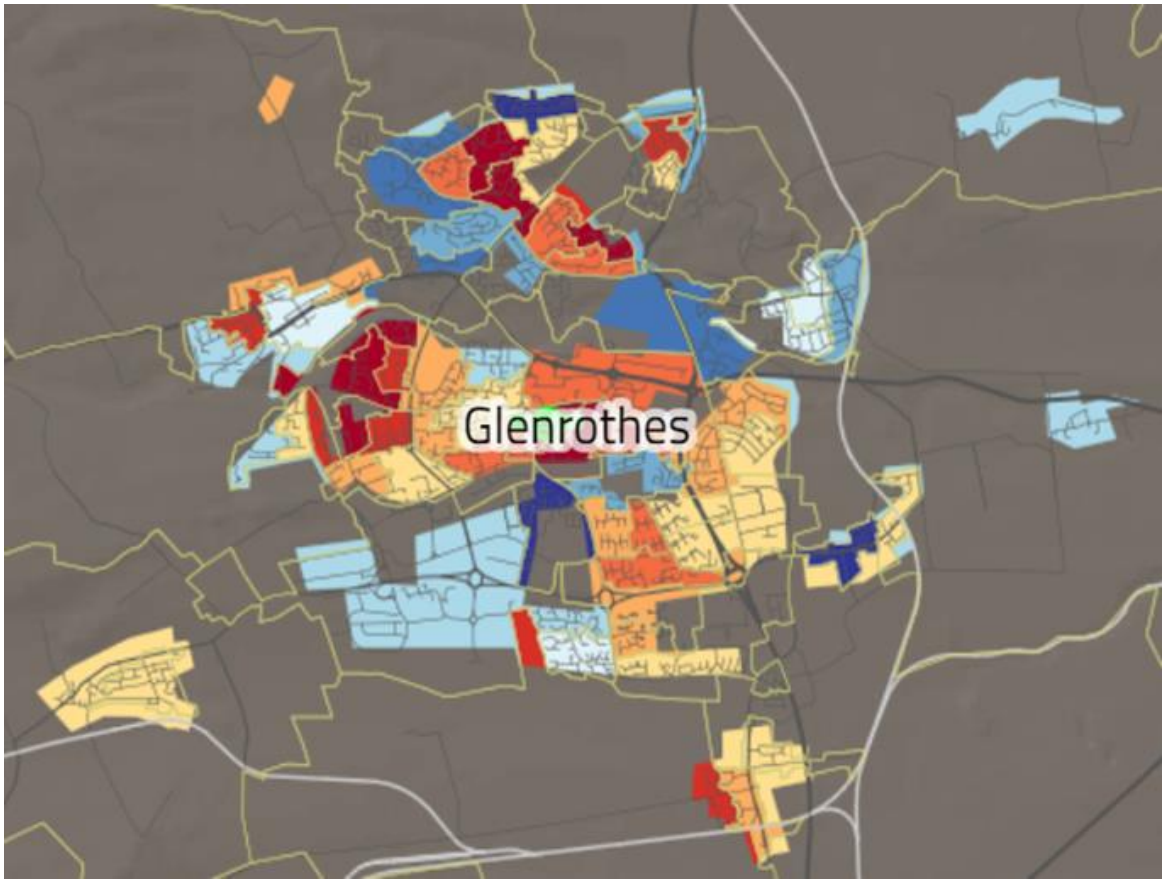
How the Glenrothes locality's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

8.87 The Glenrothes locality is the least deprived locality in Mid-Fife. The locality has a slightly lower percentage of working age people qualified to NVQ4 or above than Fife and Scottish averages; but also, a lower percentage of people who have no qualifications.

8.88 The Glenrothes locality has slightly higher percentages of children who live in relative poverty and working age people who are employment and income deprived when compared to Fife averages. However, claimant counts in the locality are slightly below the Fife average.

8.89 The Macedonia, Tanshall, Auchmuty, Cadham and Collydean areas of Glenrothes are in the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland.

Figure 8.23: Deprivation in the Glenrothes locality



Source: Scottish Government

8.90 The areas with least deprivation are around Pitteuchar, Pitcairn and Balfarg in Glenrothes, and the west of Coaltown of Balgonie which are in the 10% least deprived.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 18-10-04-Talk-of-the-Town.pdf (centreforcities.org)
- Wellbeing Index (coop.co.uk)
- Local Economic Profile 2021-2022

Employment in the Glenrothes locality

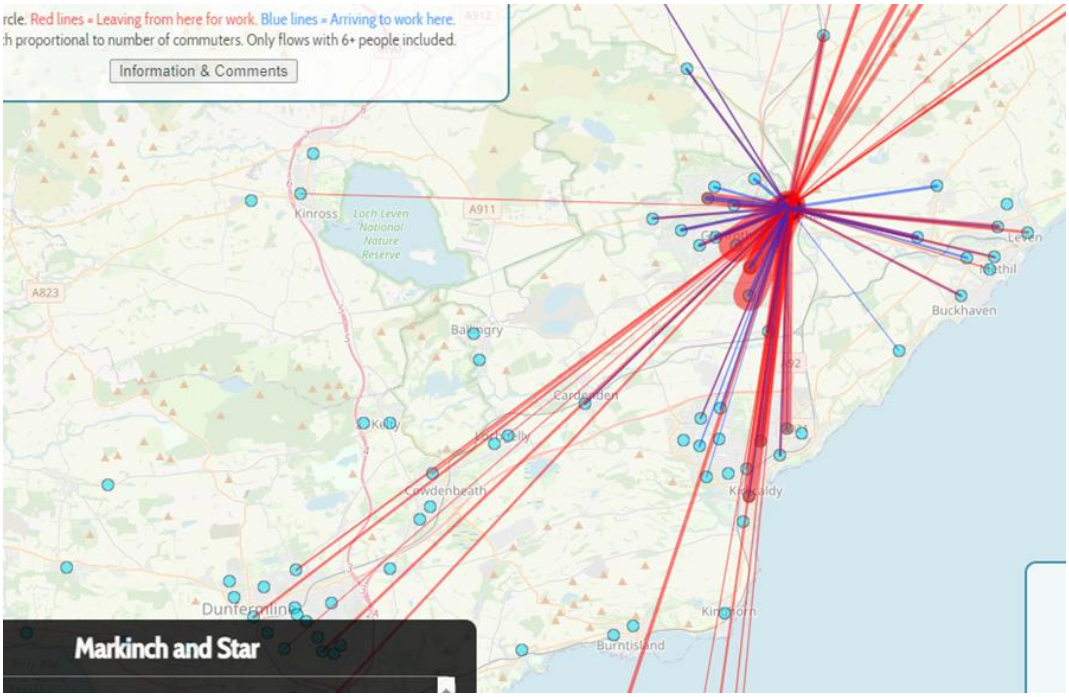
Travel to Work

8.91 The majority of people living within the Glenrothes locality travel to work within the area with a sizable number travelling to Kirkcaldy. A relatively large number of people come from the Kirkcaldy locality, Levenmouth and Cupar.

8.92 Glenrothes is the administration centre for Fife Council and so many the employees are based there. It also has a significant amount of land for employment uses in the form of industrial estates and business parks.

8.93 A number of people travel to Dunfermline and Edinburgh from Glenrothes.

Figure 8.24: Example of journeys to work to and from part of the Glenrothes locality



Source: Datashine

Key Sectors

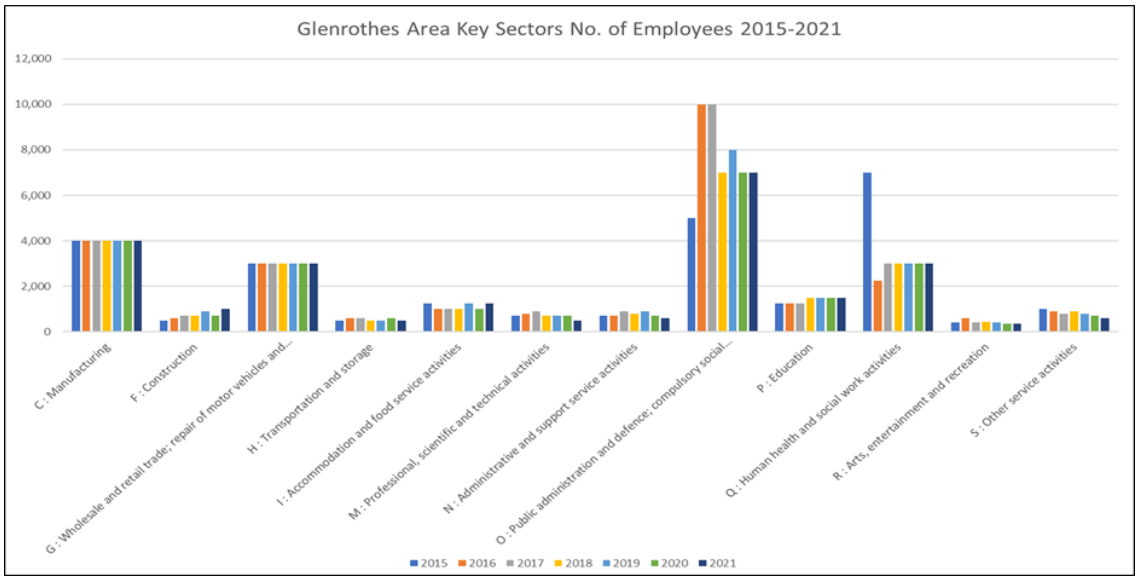
8.94 The sectors employing the largest numbers of people in the Glenrothes locality are Public Administration; and Manufacturing.

8.95 The Glenrothes locality has nearly two-thirds of public administration jobs in Fife (reflecting the fact that Fife Council is based in Glenrothes).

8.96 The area also has nearly a third of all manufacturing jobs in Fife. Glenrothes is arguably the driving force of the Mid-Fife economy, due largely to its strong manufacturing sector.

8.97 Growth Sector data is only available at a Fife-level and so cannot be included for Glenrothes. This is being considered as part of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy.

Figure 8.25: The Glenrothes locality's key employment sectors (number of people employed each year from 2015 to 2021)

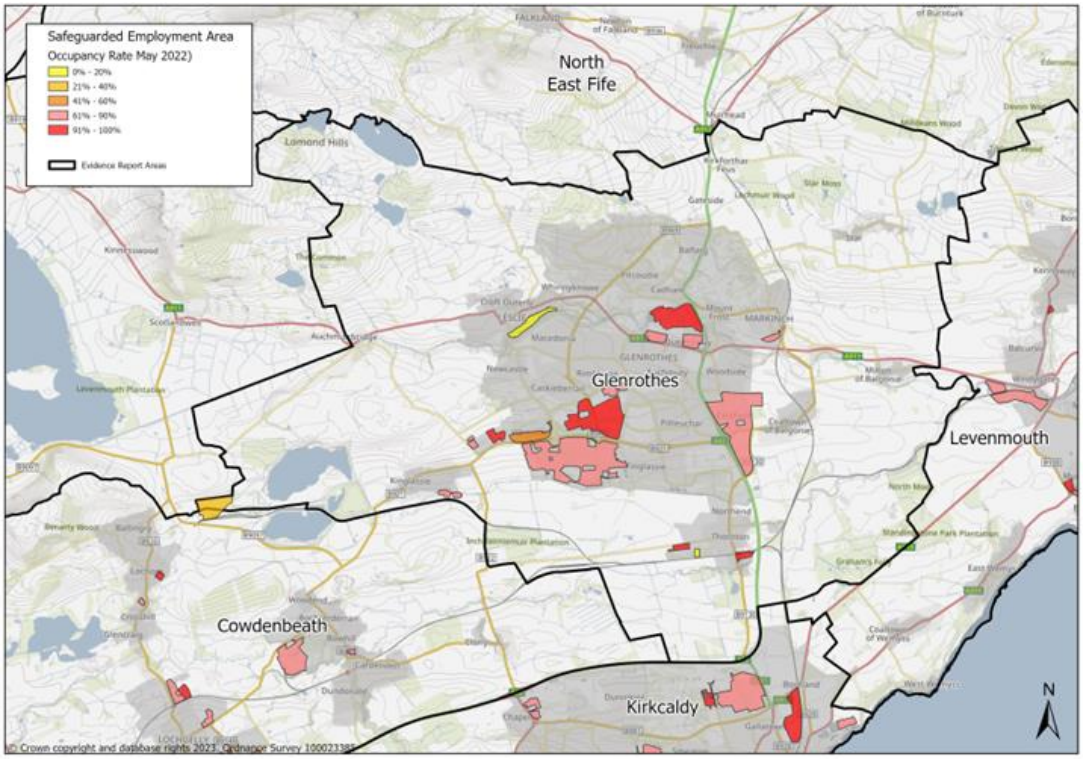


Source: NOMIS Key Sectors Data

Safeguarded Employment Area Occupancy Rates

8.98 The occupancy rates of Safeguarded Employment Areas i.e. industrial estates and business parks in the Glenrothes locality range from 59% at Whitehill Industrial Estate to 100% at Strathmore Road 2 in Thornton. The majority of employment areas have at least 80% occupancy indicating a need for more available employment land in the LDP.

Figure 8.26: Occupancy rates in Safeguarded Employment Areas in the Glenrothes locality



Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

Availability of Employment Land in the Glenrothes Locality

8.99 The key settlement of Glenrothes does not currently meet the requirement for available employment land as set out in the Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021) and monitored through the Employment Land Audit, sitting at 79% of the requirement figure.

8.100 The emerging Employment Land Strategy and LDP will ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. For more information see the Fife-wide section of the Evidence Report.

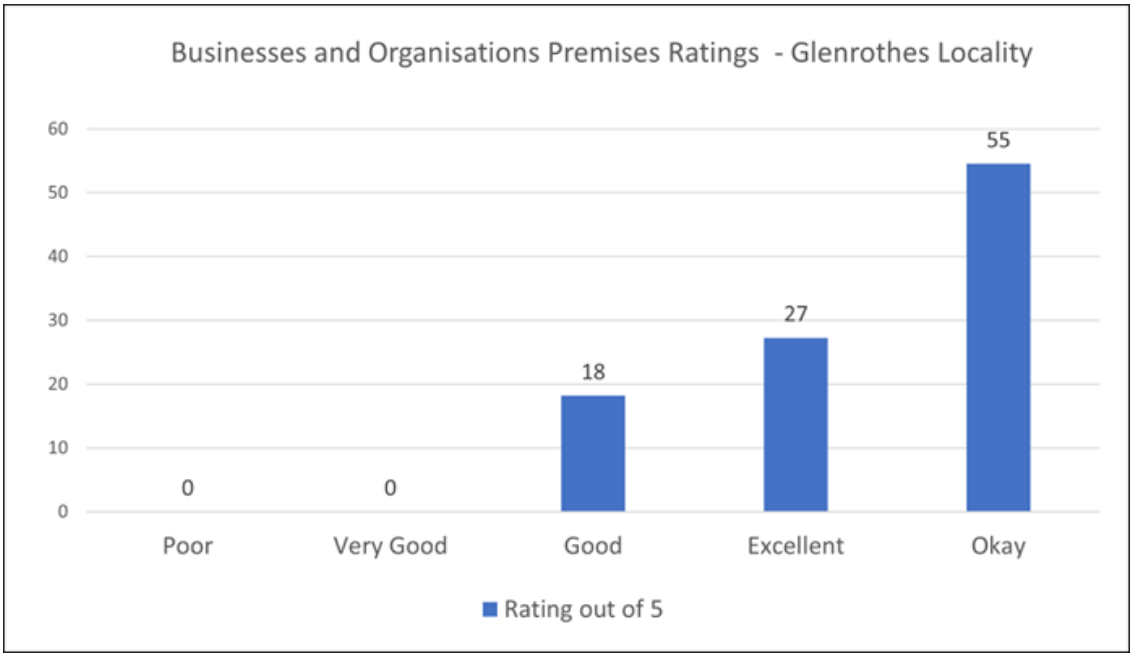
Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022

8.101 In 2022 Fife Council consulted businesses and organisations in the Glenrothes locality about their premises, their places, and the issues the next Local Development Plan should address.

8.102 Issues with old building stock that is costly to upgrade to modern standards was highlighted. It was suggested that old stock is an issue in Southfield Industrial Estate located in Glenrothes. That being said premises across the locality were rated as either okay, good or excellent.

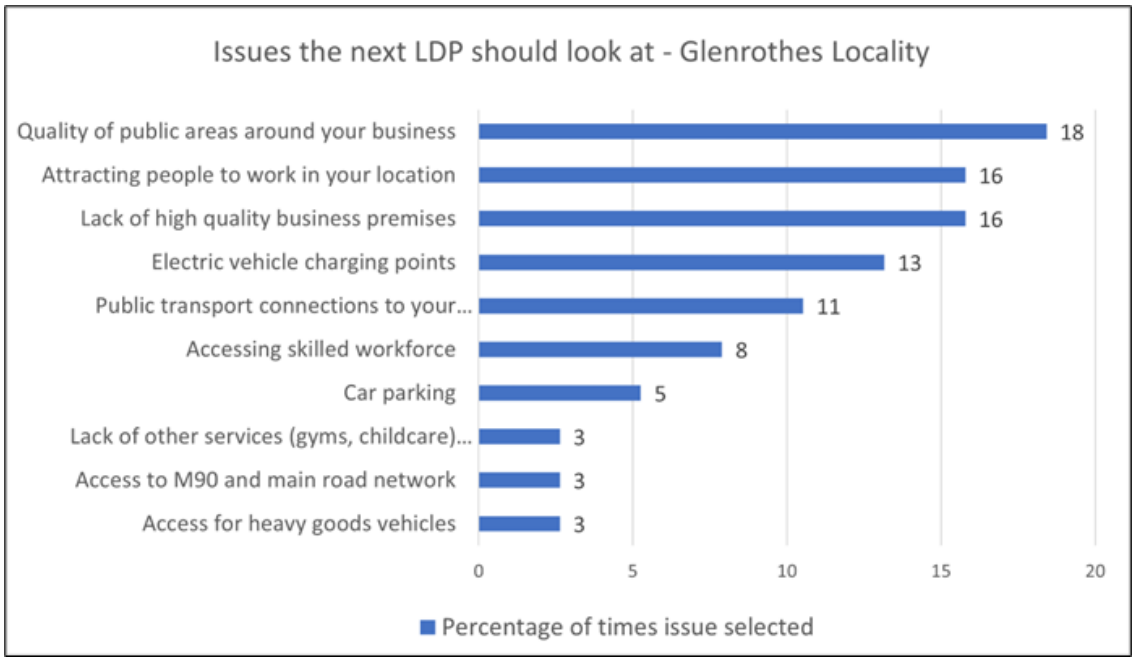
8.103 Poor signage indicating which businesses and organisations are located at Pentland Park was specifically mentioned.

Figure 8.27: Premises ratings by local businesses and organisations in the Glenrothes locality



Source: Fife Council

Figure 8.28: Feedback about issues the LDP should look at in the Glenrothes locality



Source: Fife Council

8.104 The deteriorating condition of several industrial estates and business parks needs to be a focus of investment.

8.105 The five biggest issues facing business and organisations in the Glenrothes locality are the quality of public areas around businesses and organisations, attracting people to work, the lack of high-quality business

premises, the provision for electric vehicle charging points and public transport connections to employment locations.

8.106 It was suggested that providing affordable land would help with business expansion opportunities.

Links to evidence

- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Economic Policy and Baseline Context April 22
- Key sectors Number of Employed 15-22
- Review of safeguarded employment areas
- Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022
- Employment Land Audit 2023
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Review (Ryden)

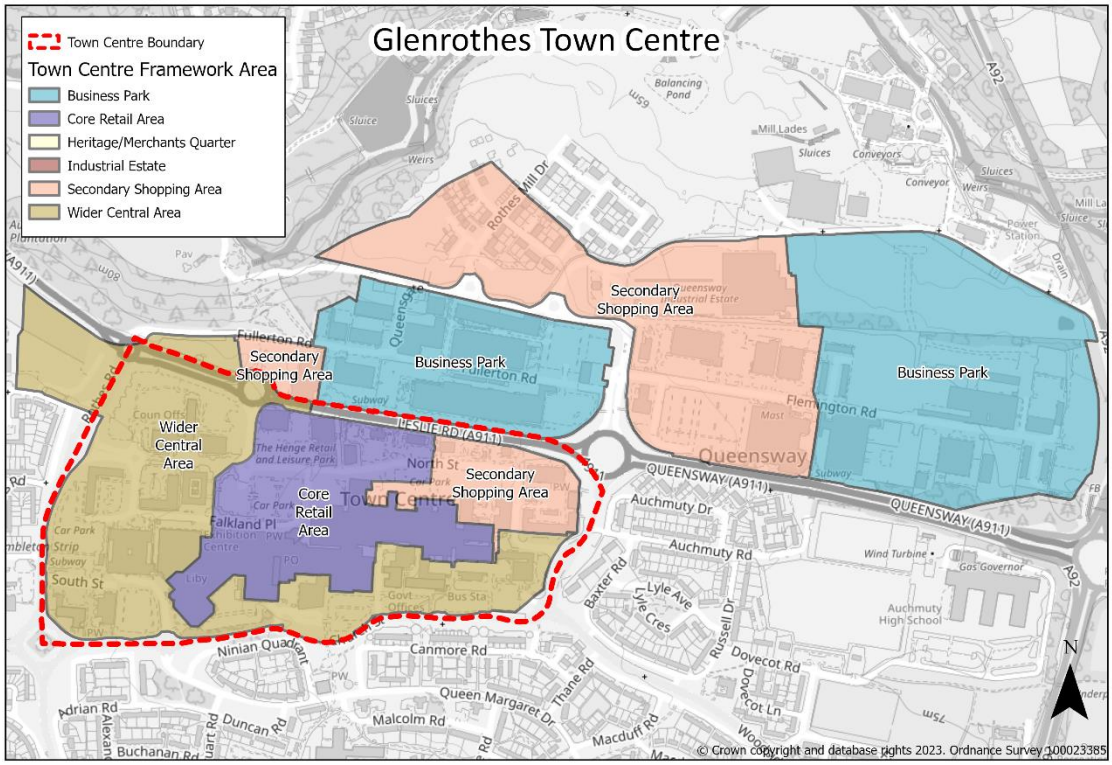
Glenrothes Town Centre

8.107 Glenrothes Town is one of three main town centres in Fife along with Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. Of these centres it is the only one that has not seen a marked increase in vacancies.

8.108 In addition to Glenrothes Town Centre there are seven Local Shopping Centres serving the locality including the villages of Leslie, Thornton and Markinch. Occupancy rates are good with all being above 90%.

8.109 The recently demolished Glenwood Shopping Centre (a Local Shopping Centre that was located in West Glenrothes) is currently subject to consultation with regard to its future uses and wider place making outcomes.

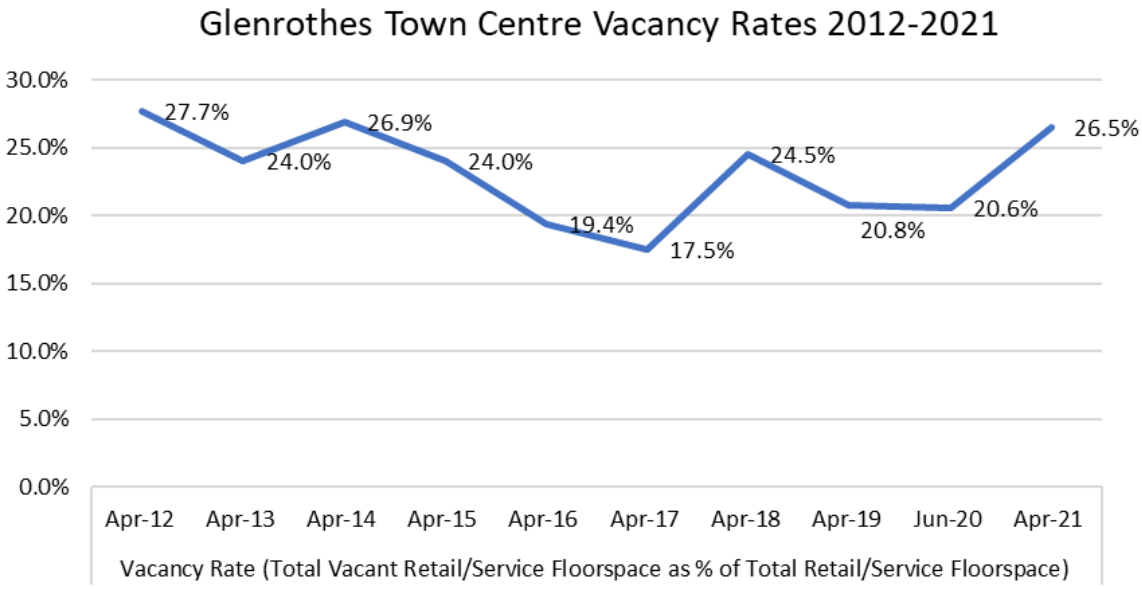
Figure 8.29: Glenrothes Town Centre



Source: Fife Council

8.110 Vacancy rates in Glenrothes Town Centre have remained stable but high since 2012 falling from 28% to 27% in 2021. Vacancy rates are lower than in Kirkcaldy and about the same as in Dunfermline.

Figure 8.30: Vacancy rates in Glenrothes Town Centre (2012-2021)



Source: Experian GOAD

8.111 Like Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline, there has been a loss of comparison floorspace in Glenrothes Town Centre, but the fall has been less marked (falling from 17,490m^2 in 2012 to 15,880m^2 in 2021.

Table 8.2: Glenrothes Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) and Difference between 2012 and 2021		
Use Type	**Glenrothes April 2012**	**Glenrothes April 2021**	**Glenrothes Change**
Assembly	390	0	-390
Comparison	17,490	15,880	-1,610
Convenience	3,210	3,870	660
Convenience/Comparison	2,350	2,210	-140
Food and Drink	1,910	1,710	-200
Hotel/Hostel	1,020	1,020	0
Leisure	4,990	6,730	1,740
Medical	250	380	130
Office	1,120	1,010	-110
Service	5,390	5,670	280
Vacant	8,220	10,740	2,520

Source: Experian GOAD

8.112 As a major employer in the town centre, changes to working practices at Fife Council since the COVID-19 pandemic will probably have had an impact on the town centre.

8.113 Although there has been a loss of retail floorspace there has been an increase in leisure floorspace in the town centre.

Quality of Town Centre

8.114 Glenrothes town centre is not considered to have a good quality of place, particularly outwith the Kingdom shopping centre. The shopping centre presents rear elevations to the surrounding streets which has a detrimental impact on the appearance of the town centre. Recent commercial developments around the Kingdom Centre have not managed to help to create quality of place or a civic centre to the town as they are mainly designed around access by car.

8.115 There are a mix of shop frontages within the Kingdom Centre, some are attractive, but many have standard corporate signage and closed off frontages which reduce the attractiveness of the street. Outwith the centre the shops tend to be larger format units which have large scale shop fronts rather than pedestrian scale frontages. There has been investment in the public realm along North Street but it is already starting to look old due to the materials and street furniture used.

8.116 Two Town Centre Building Improvement grants totalling nearly £17,000 were awarded in the Glenrothes locality in 2022/23.

8.117 Austerity measures over the last 15 years have had an impact on the level of funding which can be accessed for town centre public realm and building improvement.

Figure 8.31: Kingdom Centre, Glenrothes

Source: Fife Council

8.118 Although most of the buildings within the town centre are modern and new town buildings which are of average to poor quality, some of the public art sculptures have been recognised and listed for their cultural significance and contribution to the character of the town centre.

8.119 There is some green infrastructure around the centre although most of it is landscaping planting rather than usable greenspace. A couple of small grassed areas with seating have been created in the last few years on sites where buildings have been demolished, for example the site of the former Kingdom House. These sites vary in quality although they are being utilised which indicates a demand.

8.120 The demolition of Rothesay House also presents future opportunity for redevelopment within the town centre.

8.121 A consideration of the comparative value of retail and service businesses found that Glenrothes is towards the lower end of town centre performance in Fife.

8.122 A masterplan has been developed for Glenrothes town centre which focuses on improving connectivity in and around the centre and work has begun to implement actions in the plan. Some businesses such as the Bridge Café have helped to provide greater animation to the outward facing elevations of the centre.

Figure 8.32: Glenrothes Town Centre - looking across North Street to the Kingdom Centre and new temporary locality of greenspace created on the site of a demolished office building

Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Glenrothes Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- GOAD data
- Fife Retail Capacity Study 2022
- Assessment of local shopping centres
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries
- Town centre Masterplan Glenrothes 2020-2030
- Historic Environment Scotland Listing: The Birds
- Historic Environment Scotland Listing: Ex Terra
- Rothesay House Demolition

Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of evidence specific to the Glenrothes locality

- Glenrothes was one of Scotland's first new town areas and although established to house mainly mining workers and their families, it transformed into a centre for electronics and technical industries. Much of the locality is well connected given its location in the centre of Fife, and the original new town was designed around principles of Living Well Locally in the form of neighbourhood precincts.
- The Glenrothes locality is the least deprived of the four areas that make up Mid-Fife but does contain areas of high relative deprivation and overall child poverty levels and income deprivation are both higher in the area than across Fife as a whole.
- The area is the centre for manufacturing in Fife, as well as public administration. However, some of the industrial premises are starting to date and there is a need for more employment premises in the area.
- Flooding and water quality are issues in parts of the area, which will have implications for development under the new LDP.
- Sites allocated in the LDP should include information on priorities for the protection, enhancement and extension of blue and green networks on the site. This will include improvements to the condition of water bodies such as the River Leven and Lochty Burn; and opportunities to extend and enhance active travel routes such as through the former Westfield open cast mine.
- Planned growth and demographic changes across the locality mean there is a need for additional capacity in the primary care sector that will need to be planned for.
- There is some capacity in primary and secondary schools across the area although individual schools are more constrained.
- Consider allocating employment land in Glenrothes, which is within the Mid-Fife regeneration area, with a focus on the manufacturing sector and in particular advanced manufacturing and engineering. The continued contribution of manufacturing to the Fife economy will require an adequate supply of land use of class 5, to contribute to overall productivity growth.
- The town centre is one the four main centres in Fife, but unlike the other three (Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, and St Andrews), it has not seen the same marked increase in vacancies. However, vacancy levels are still high and the design of the town centre around a purpose built shopping centre makes re-configuration difficult. A masterplan has been prepared for the town centre to address some of the issues it faces.

9 Kirkcaldy locality evidence and issues

Introducing the Kirkcaldy locality

9.1 The Kirkcaldy locality sits in mid Fife. The town of Kirkcaldy is the second largest settlement in Fife and is located around 12 miles north of Edinburgh. The area has a long tradition of heavy industry, such as coal mining and manufacturing, in particular linoleum. The locality serves as a major hub for central Fife for both jobs and social and leisure facilities.

Figure 9.1: Plan showing the location of the Kirkcaldy locality within Fife

Source: Fife Council

9.2 A number of priorities were identified for the Kirkcaldy locality from an early LDP workshop carried out between Fife Council and the Key Agency Group:

- Health and education infrastructure provision for Kirkcaldy West;
- The Kirkcaldy Flood Risk Management Strategy; and
- Repurposing of the town centre

9.3 Addressing these priorities will require collaborative working across a number of organisations and partners.

9.4 An additional locality workshop was attended by representatives from Fife Council to collect place-based comments for the Kirkcaldy area.

9.5 With a population of 60,472, in 30,554 households, Kirkcaldy is the second most populated locality in Fife, after North East Fife. 61% of the population is made up of those aged 16-64 years. 58% of households are owner-occupied and 27% are social rented.

9.6 Kirkcaldy is one of the most deprived areas of Fife, after Levenmouth, with 11.4% employment deprived and 14.9% income deprived. Employment rate (63.6%) is lower than that of Fife, with a larger proportion of residents classed as economically inactive (33.3%). The claimant rate is 6.6%. 89% of 16-19 year olds are participating in education, employment or training which is below the Fife average.

9.7 In terms of health, in 2019 the average life expectancy for males living within the Kirkcaldy locality was 75.6 years which is just below the Fife and Scotland average, and 81 years for females which is consistent with the Fife and Scotland average.

9.8 In addition, 24% of the locality's population were registered as living with a long-term physical health condition during the period between 2019 and 2020.

Links to evidence

- Kirkcaldy Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- ScotPHO profiling tool
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary
- Fife Council: Support for place-based Local Development Planning – Kirkcaldy Area Workshop Report 18.05.2023

Implementation of FIFEplan in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.9 There are a number of place-specific proposals in the current FIFEplan in the Kirkcaldy locality. This section outlines the success of FIFEplan in delivering its outcomes including allocations.

9.10 There are two strategic development areas (SDA) in the Kirkcaldy locality.

9.11 Development at Kirkcaldy West SDA has not yet been consented so has not commenced.

9.12 Development commenced on the Kirkcaldy East SDA in 2019 at Kingslaw with infrastructure and residential completions since then. Part of the Boreland area has been granted conditional approval for residential development. The rest of the locality has not progressed and will be considered for the new Local Development Plan. Mitchelston Industrial Estate has had little related planning activity.

9.13 FIFEplan plans for a hovercraft link from Kirkcaldy to Leith in Edinburgh. Temporary planning permission for a hovercraft terminal was granted in 2020. The proposal is included as an intervention in the proposed Local Transportation Strategy for Fife 2023-33 and will be considered for the new LDP.

How past development has shaped how the Kirkcaldy locality is today

Urban development and local living

9.14 How and why the settlements of the Kirkcaldy locality developed and changed over time heavily influences how they work today and the issues they face in reducing carbon emissions and tackling social and economic inequality.

9.15 Residential developments to the north and far west of Kirkcaldy are cut off by busy road infrastructure from the rest of the town reducing integration and making it less likely that people will walk or cycle to destinations in the town (see figures below). This in turn impacts on Kirkcaldy town centre as other destinations such as the Mid-Fife Retail Park become more attractive.

Figure 9.2: Chapel Level

Source: Fife Council

Figure 9.3: Map extract of Kirkcaldy showing the wide, busy Chapel Level creating a barrier between residential developments to the north

Source: Fife Council

9.16 Kirkcaldy Town Centre turns its back to the coast, resulting in many of the buildings on the seafront itself being the unattractive rear of buildings in the town centre, rather than the fronts of buildings overlooking the promenade. This reduces the vibrancy and attractiveness of both the town centre and the seafront.

9.17 Burntisland and Kinghorn both have historic centres which built up around their harbours. In both settlements the railway cuts off large parts of the settlement from the coast. This is most marked in Burntisland. Both settlements have had considerable expansion since the mid-20th Century much of which has poor internal connectivity and integration.

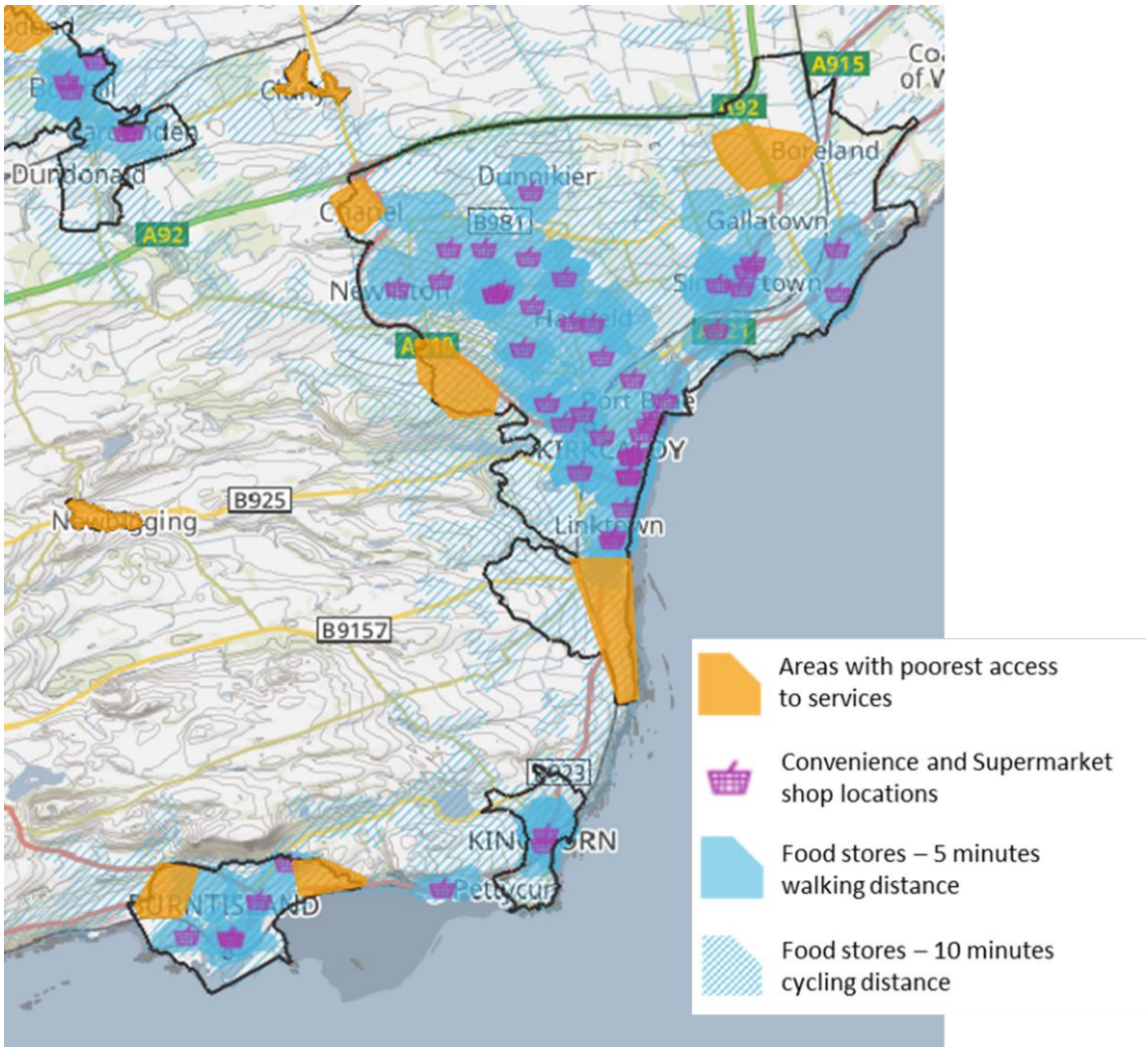
Figure 9.4: Burntisland beach showing how the railway embankment cuts off the town from the coast

Source: Fife Council

9.18 Auchtertool has expanded only very slightly since the mid-19th century but there are a series of small cul-de-sac developments along the Main Street which have poor connectivity between them.

9.19 The evolution of settlements in the Kirkcaldy locality has strongly influenced how easy it is to access services within a ten-minute walk or cycle.

Figure 9.5: Example extract from Local Living and 20 MN interactive mapping showing walking and cycling distances from convenience stores in the Kirkcaldy locality, and the areas which are least well served by services and facilities



Source: Fife Council

9.20 Much of Kirkcaldy, Burntisland and Kinghorn have reasonable access to key services and facilities within a 10-minute walk.

9.21 However, newer developments on the extremities of these settlements and in the former industrial area around Smeaton in Kirkcaldy are more poorly served. The extremities also have the lowest access to bus services.

9.22 Auchtertool has few services and facilities and poor access to bus services. Annex 7 provides more information on Living Well Locally and 20 minute Neighbourhoods in Fife.

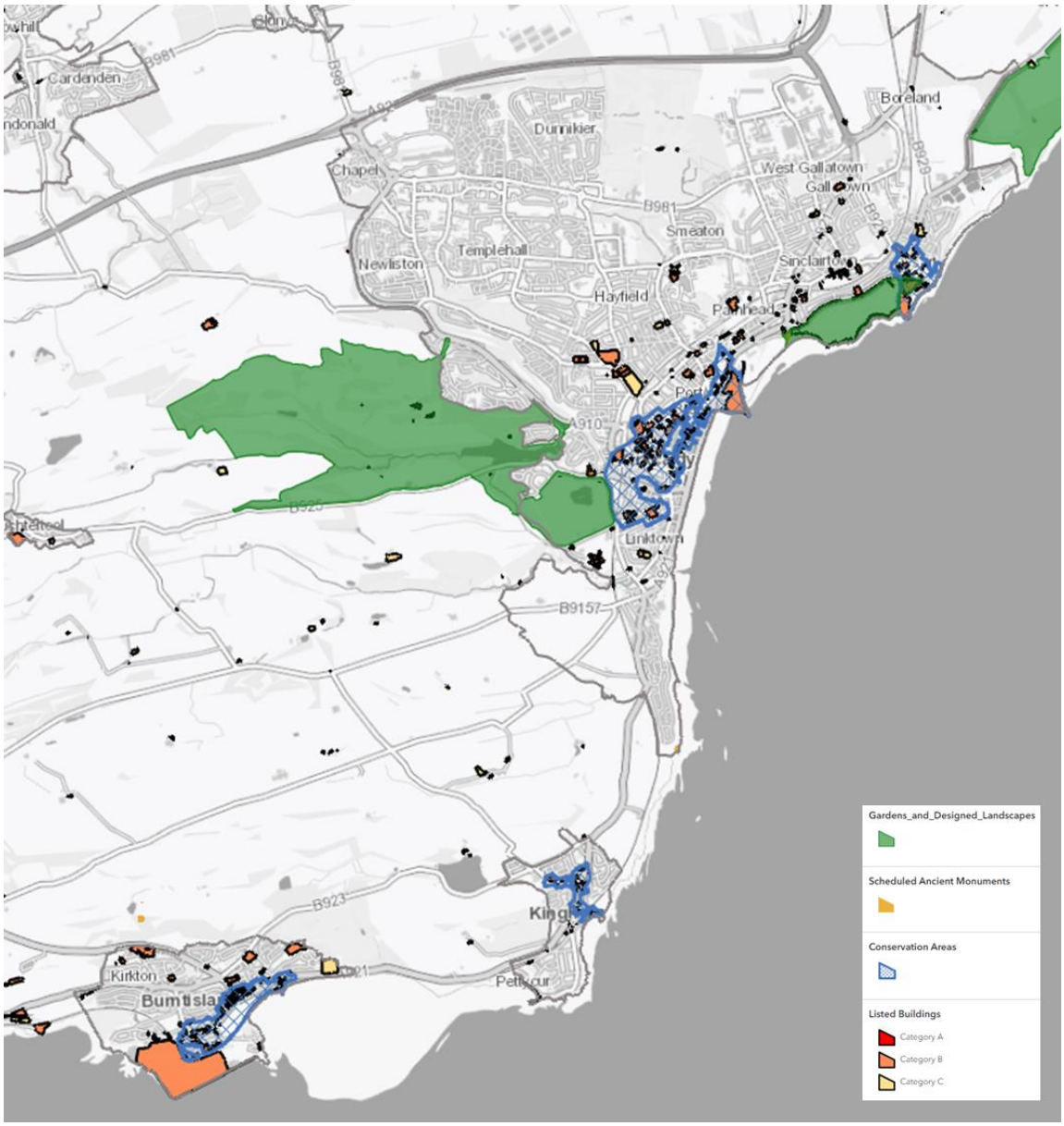
Links to evidence

- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Interactive Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods mapping

Historic environment in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.23 The Kirkcaldy locality has many historic environment assets, there are conservation areas in Kirkcaldy, Dysart, Kinghorn and Burntisland and a great many listed buildings. There are also considerable historic designed landscape assets at Raith, Beveridge and Ravenscraig Parks (see figure below). Scheduled monuments in the area include Seafield Tower, St Serfs Kirk in Dysart, and cup marks on The Binn north of Burntisland.

Figure 9.6: Map extract showing historic environment assets in the Kirkcaldy locality



Source: Fife Council

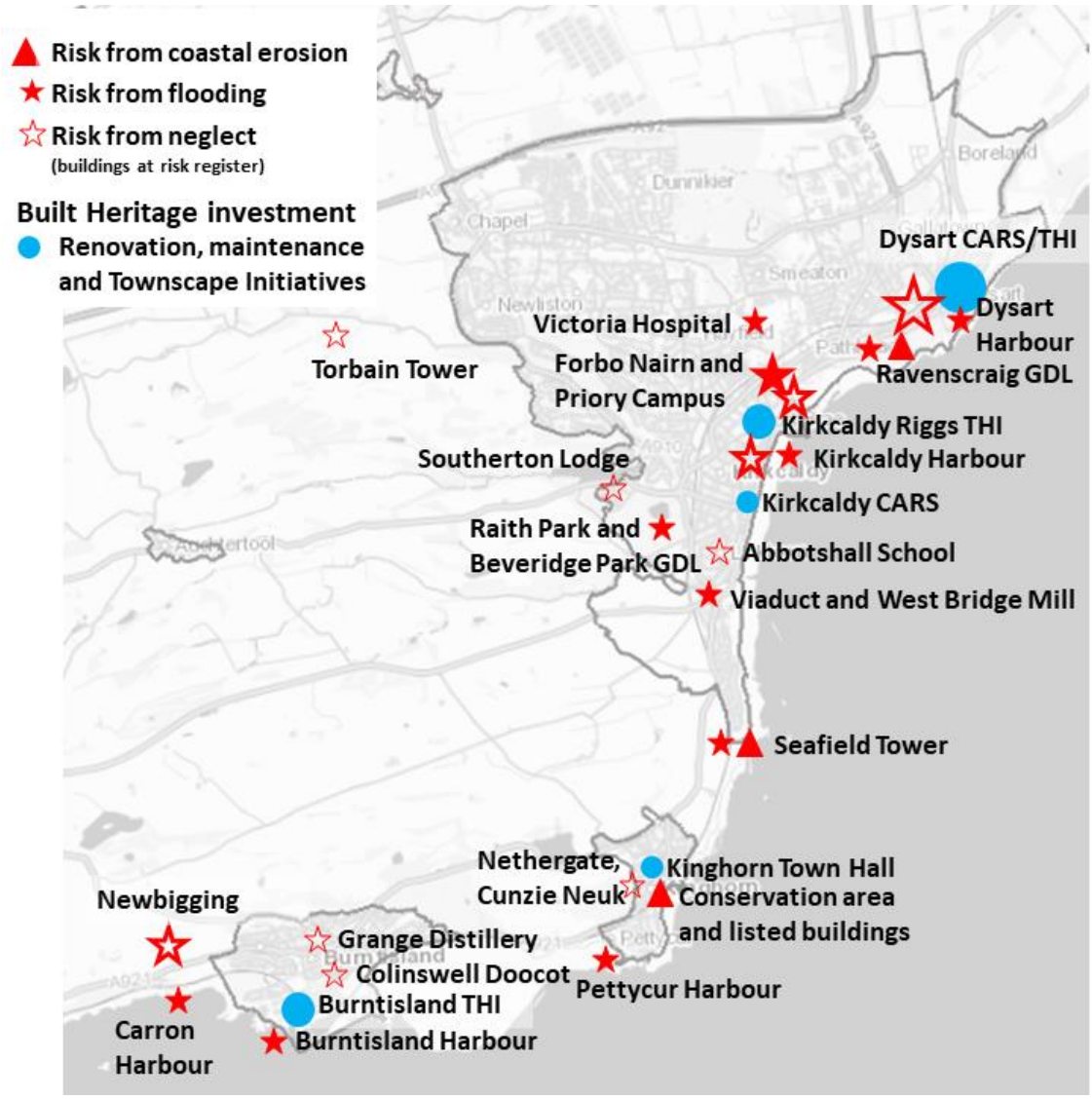
9.24 Kirkcaldy and Burntisland both have a great many high quality historic buildings in their centres. In Burntisland maintenance is generally good but in Kirkcaldy maintenance is more of an issue with many poorly maintained buildings.

9.25 There have been townscape initiatives in Kirkcaldy, Dysart, Kinghorn and Burntisland which have invested nearly £17 million in the built heritage of the locality.

Risks to the historic environment

9.26 Parts of the Dysart and Kirkcaldy Harbour and Port Brae Conservation areas are predicted to be at risk of coastal flooding on the SEPA floodmaps. This mainly affects the listed harbours (see figure below), Dysart House and Ravenscraig Park Garden and Designed Landscape. Seafield Tower Scheduled Ancient Monument and other listed harbour and slipway structures in the area are also predicted to be at risk of coastal flooding.

Figure 9.7: Map of the Kirkcaldy locality showing built heritage at risk from flooding and neglect; and some built heritage investment initiatives



Sources: Fife Council, HES & SEPA

Note: This map was created by visually comparing HES built heritage designations with the SEPA flood maps, the Dynamic Coast 2 webmap, the Buildings at Risk register and some areas which have received funding for townscape and heritage initiatives.

9.27 Listed buildings in the Smeaton and Pathhead areas, and the Linktown area in Kirkcaldy are predicted to be at risk of flooding from the Den Burn and Tiel Burn. The Raith Park and Beveridge Park Garden and designed landscape and listed bridges are predicted to be at risk of surface water flooding and flooding from the Dronnachy Burn.

9.28 Dysart House and Ravenscraig Park Garden and Designed Landscape, Ravenscraig Castle, Kinghorn Conservation Area (including some listed buildings) and Seafield Tower are predicted to be at risk from coastal erosion on the Dynamic Coast 2 webmap.

9.29 There are 31 buildings at risk identified in the locality, ten of which are in Dysart. One building has recently been restored and has been taken off the

register. At least two listed buildings in the locality have been lost following fires, and two others have been demolished after being found to be unviable to redevelop: the category A listed Linoleum Factory building and B listed Victoria Road Power Station both in Kirkcaldy.

Figure 9.8: B Listed Victoria Road Power Station, Kirkcaldy – now demolished

Source: Fife Council

9.30 In the last 10 years listed building consent has been granted for the demolition of four buildings, two in Kirkcaldy (including one of the fire damaged buildings) and two in Burntisland.

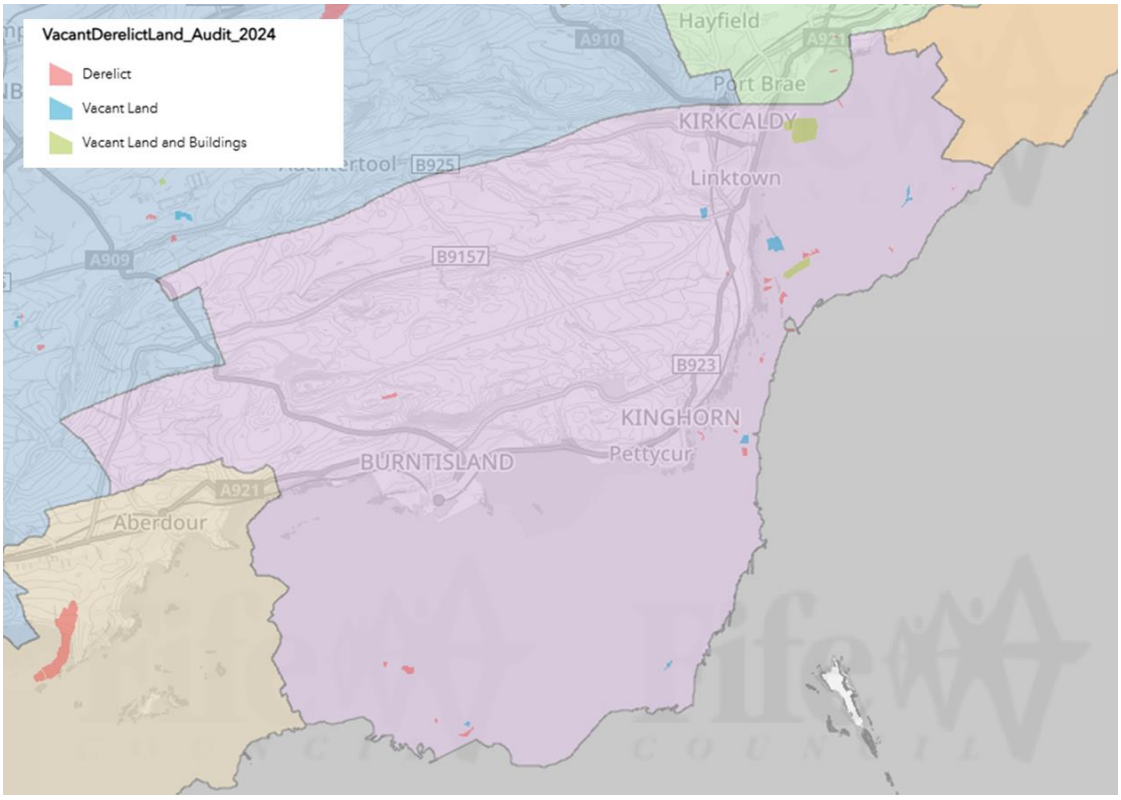
Links to evidence

- Conservation Locality Appraisals
- Historic Environment Scotland Interactive map showing built heritage, landscape character designations
- Fife Historic Buildings Trust
- Buildings at Risk register
- SEPA flood maps
- Dynamic Coast 2 webmap

Vacant and derelict land and environmental hazards in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.31 The Kirkcaldy locality has 31 vacant and derelict sites many of which relate to former industrial, mining and quarrying activities. The largest sites are Goat Quarry and the Old Strand Factory in Kirkcaldy.

Figure 9.9: Extract from the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2022 showing the Kirkcaldy locality



Source: Fife Council

9.32 Between 2021-22 the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit identified that one vacant and derelict site in the Kirkcaldy locality was taken off the vacant and derelict land register – Seaforth Place in Burntisland, and one additional site was identified – Ravenscraig Gardens East Lodge. Funding from the Vacant and Derelict land fund has been allocated to support the acquisition and remediation of a former waste transfer site in Kirkcaldy.

9.33 The Auchmuirbridge/Kirkcaldy Scotland Gas Network pipeline passes along the west of Kirkcaldy, parts of the pipelines to Mossmorran also pass through the Kirkcaldy locality. Development close to these pipes and within associated zones is subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. There are also consultation zones associated with the operations at Mossmorran within the Kirkcaldy locality. The Health and Safety Executive consultation zones can be viewed on the adopted FIFEplan proposals map (advice/consultation information). The Health and Safety Executive have

advice on the type and scale of development within the pipeline consultation zones.

9.34 There are no air quality management areas in the Kirkcaldy locality but there are three smoke control zones to the north west and south of Kirkcaldy and two in Burntisland, (it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney in these areas). Air quality is monitored by Fife Council on St Clair Street (which was close to being designated as an air quality management area), and a few other locations across Kirkcaldy.

Links to evidence

- Fife Vacant and Derelict land audit 2022
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning Methodology
- Fife Council – Smoke Control Zones
- Fife Council – pollution mapping

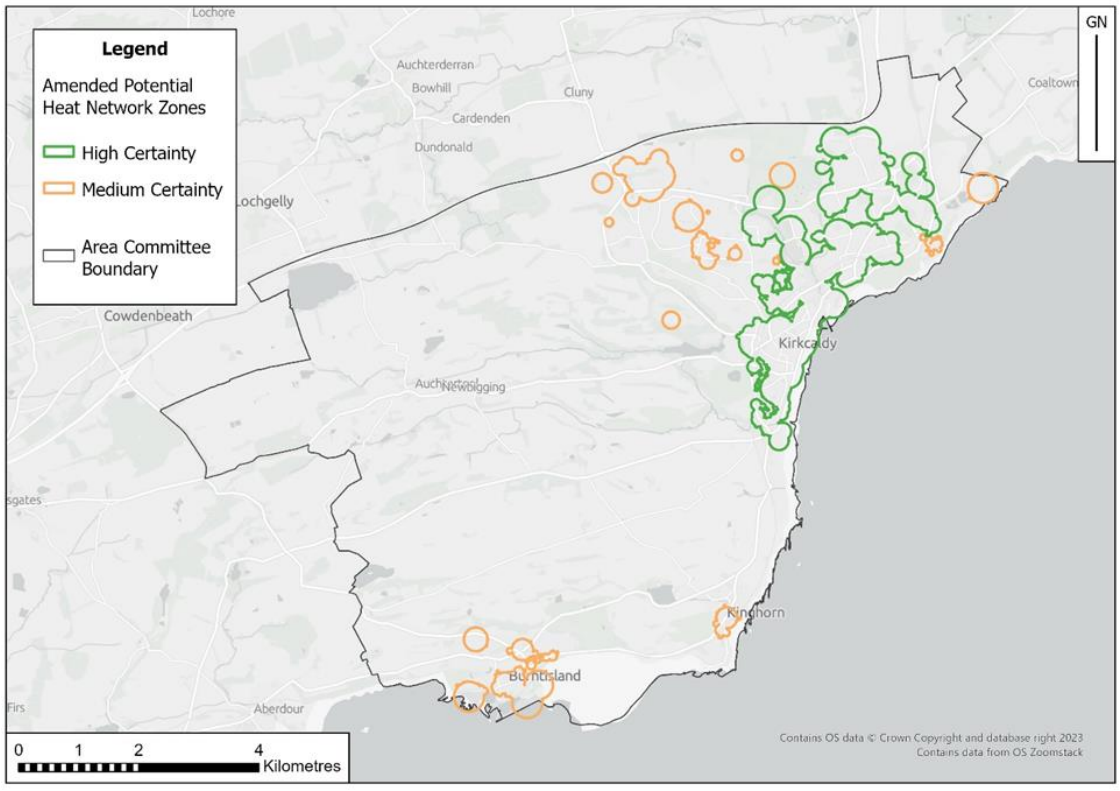
How the Kirkcaldy locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

9.35 In common with other coastal areas of Fife, the Kirkcaldy locality faces challenges arising from the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Opportunities will need to be taken to decarbonise heating in the area to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding, and rising sea levels increase the threat from coastal erosion. Both of these issues will affect how development is planned in the future.

Decarbonising heating in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.36 Decarbonising heating will be important in helping Fife tackle the climate emergency and meeting net zero commitments. Potential Heat Network Zones in the Kirkcaldy locality are being identified as part of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Fife. The potential heat network zones are shown on the figure below. Further work to identify Heat Network Zones will be undertaken in 2024-25.

Figure 9.10: Amended Potential heat network zones in the Kirkcaldy locality



source: Local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan | Fife Council

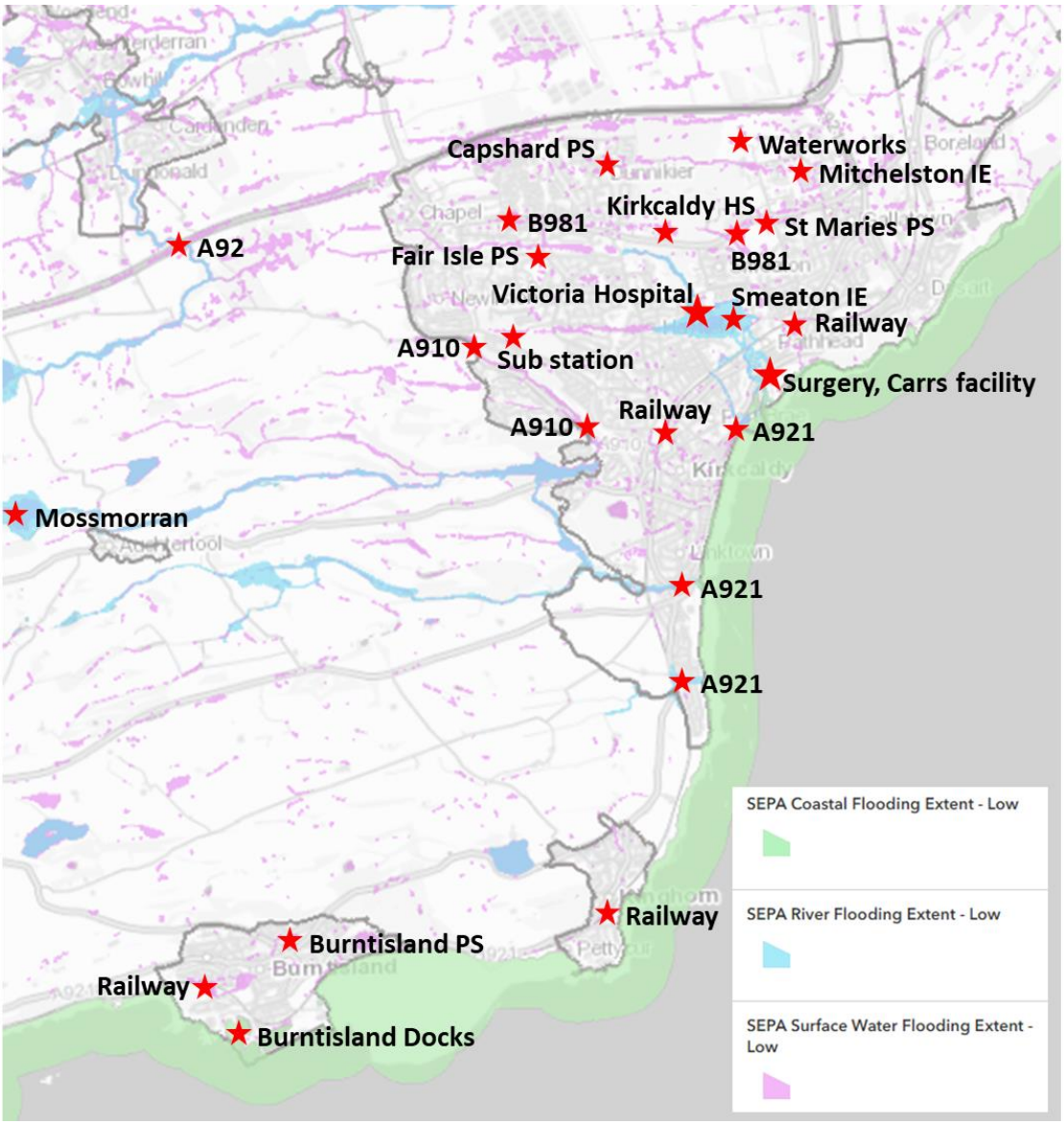
Links to evidence

- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Flood risk in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.37 Parts of the Kirkcaldy locality including the town itself and Dysart are identified by SEPA as predicted to be at risk of flooding, a risk that is increasing because of climate change. The risk is mainly from surface water flooding, although there is also some risk from river and coastal flooding.

Figure 9.11: Plan showing key assets predicted to be at risk of flooding in Kirkcaldy locality.



Sources: Fife Council & SEPA

Notes: This map was created by visually comparing: Fife Council data on schools, healthcare facilities and key employment areas (see Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood interactive map) and Mastermap and OS Base mapping with SEPA flood maps and Dynamic Coast 2 webmaps.

Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data

is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

9.38 There have been repeated incidents of flooding in the Kirkcaldy locality with Victoria hospital. Kirkcaldy being particularly badly affected in August 2020.

9.39 There are no existing or proposed formal flood protection schemes in the locality. A Flood Study produced for Linktown, Kirkcaldy in 2019 recommended that there is no economically viable flood scheme to protect against low frequency floods in the area. A Surface Water Management Plan is proposed for the Kirkcaldy locality.

9.40 SEPA has predicted that there is a risk of geomorphic change (change to the river channel) along stretches of the Teil and Dronnachy Burns in the Kirkcaldy locality.

Links to evidence

- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- SEPA Flood Risk Maps
- SEPA – Geomorphic Risk data
- Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife

Water quality in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.41 The ecological condition of surface water quality in the Kirkcaldy locality is not a significant issue. The SEPA water classification hub classifies the Dronachy Burn and Tiel Burn are classed as moderate ecological condition (see figure below). Pressures on the ecological condition are identified as modification by farming activities and invasive North American Crayfish on the Tiel Burn (identified on the SEPA water environment hub).

Figure 9.12: Extract from SEPA water classification hub showing quality of surface waters in the Kirkcaldy locality

Source: SEPA

9.42 Bathing water quality at Kinghorn Harbour Beach is as classed as poor by SEPA as it is at risk of short term pollution from sewer overflows and surface water discharges after heavy rains.

9.43 SEPA classify groundwater condition across the Kirkcaldy and Dysart area as poor due to legacy pollution from mining and quarrying activities. Water flows are also low due to business abstraction.

Links to evidence

- SEPA water classification hub
- SEPA water environment hub
- SEPA Kinghorn Harbour beach bathing water profile

Coastal erosion in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.44 The climate emergency is also increasing the risk of coastal erosion within the Kirkcaldy Area. Dynamic Coast 2 mapping identifies areas all along the coast in the Kirkcaldy locality as predicted to be at risk from coastal erosion.

Figure 9.13: Map showing areas in the Kirkcaldy locality which are predicted to be at risk of coastal erosion (in red) – 2050 high emission scenario

Source: Dynamic Coast mapping (DC2)

Note: Caveat for use of Dynamic Coast maps. The Dynamic Coast maps should not be used to assess coastal risk to individual properties.

9.45 There are extensive artificial coastal defences protecting the coastal settlements in the Kirkcaldy locality. The seawall along the Esplanade Kirkcaldy was upgraded in 2014 with the intention of reducing the risk of flooding from the sea for the next 50 years.

9.46 Storms in October 2023 caused damage to the Pathhead Sands area in Kirkcaldy washing away a section of sand dunes. These dunes had been planted to protect the car park following damage from a previous storm.

9.47 Under the Coastal Change Adaptation programme, Fife will review its Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) in line with new Guidance on creating

Coastal Change Adaptation Plans. It is anticipated the revised plan will be ready for publication in 2027/28.

9.48 The new Local Development Plan will have to consider how future development should manage the risk of coastal erosion. There is a strong presumption by Scottish Government that engineering solutions to protect areas at risk are no longer appropriate.

Links to evidence

- Dynamic Coast mapping
- Fife Shoreline Management Plan (2011)
- Fife Coastal Formal Defences Register Dec 2023
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity

Green and blue networks in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.49 This locality is within the Central Scotland Green Network – one of the eighteen national developments recognised within NPF4 and is one of Europe's largest green infrastructure projects. Key assets in the area include the coast, the Binn north of Burntisland, Kinghorn Loch, Pannie and Middle Den, Raith Estate and Beveridge, Ravenscraig and Dunnikier Parks in Kirkcaldy.

9.50 Some of the main active travel routes within the Kirkcaldy locality include the Fife Coastal Path and National Cycle Network Route 76 which provides connections to Dalgety Bay.

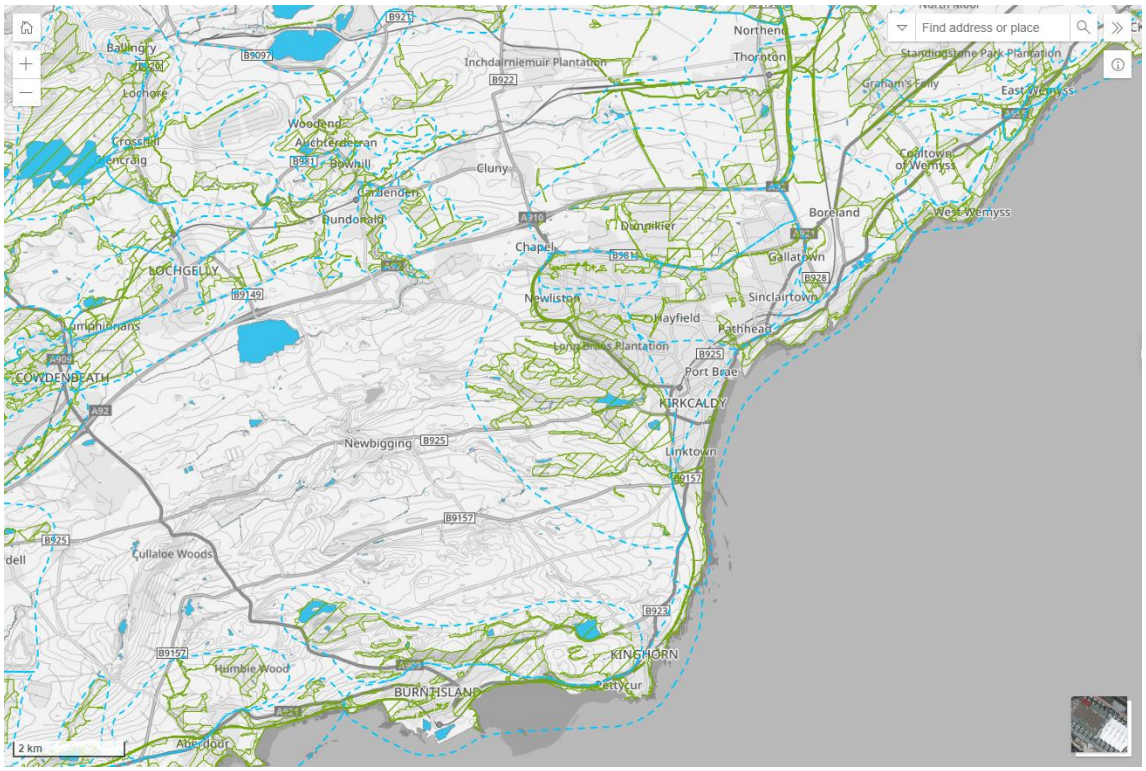
9.51 The green and blue networks within Kirkcaldy itself are quite fragmented and most assets would benefit from investment. For example, the dens that run through the middle of Kirkcaldy are not accessible and north south linkages through the town are not continuous. Green and blue network opportunities in the area include biodiversity and greenspace enhancements in the Victoria hospital site, Red Mud Pond and Seamill in Burntisland, and as part of the Templehall masterplan area, and development of the East Neuk 50 cycle route.

9.52 The Fife green and blue network audit reports for the area are:

- Kirkcaldy Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Aberdour Burntisland Kinghorn Green and blue networks report 2023 update

9.53 Green and blue networks are mapped on an interactive map (see figure below) and a storymap explains how the assets and opportunities were identified.

Figure 9.14: Extract from Green and Blue Network interactive map illustrating key assets and existing blue and green network policy areas



Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Kirkcaldy Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Aberdour Burntisland Kinghorn Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Central Scotland Green Network
- Fife Coastal Path
- Sustrans National Cycle Network Routes in the East of Scotland
- East Neuk 50 cycle route
- NHS Fife 2030 Greenspace Strategy
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystem services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap

Biodiversity in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.54 Priority habitats within the Kirkcaldy locality include maritime cliffs and slopes, species rich grasslands, and a mix of ancient, semi-natural and long-established woodland.

Table 9.1: Summary of the priority habitats found within the Kirkcaldy locality including key sites

Freshwater & Wetland Habitats	Lowland & Farmland Habitats	Woodland Habitats	Marine & Coastal Habitats
Inland freshwater, such as **Stenhouse Reservoir (LWS)** Rivers, such as **Den Burn** Ponds	Species-rich grassland, such as **Burntisland Binn (LWS)** Field margins and boundaries Parks and areas with veteran trees, such as **Beveridge Park**	Ancient, semi-natural & long-established woodland, such as **Chapel Moss** Mixed lowland woodland Urban woodland	Intertidal communities: the Firth of Forth (SPA, RAMSAR, SSSI) Maritime cliffs & slopes Coastal Vegetated Shingle

Source: Fife's Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Fife Council

9.55 These habitats support a wealth of wildlife including bottle-nosed dolphins (European Protected Species), common porpoise (EPS), grey seals (EPS), red squirrels (UK protected species) and bluebells (UK PS). The Fife Biodiversity Action Plan states the destruction of habitats is the number one cause of species extinction, so safeguarding priority habitats is important for the new LDP

9.56 Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan balsam, and Rhododendron also pose a threat to the various ecosystems within the Kirkcaldy locality.

9.57 Other invasive non-native species which can be found within the Kirkcaldy locality are the grey squirrel which poses a threat to the native red squirrel population and has negative implications for commercial forestry operations and North American signal crayfish (in the Teil Burn) which are very resilient, compete for space with native species, and undermine riverbanks.

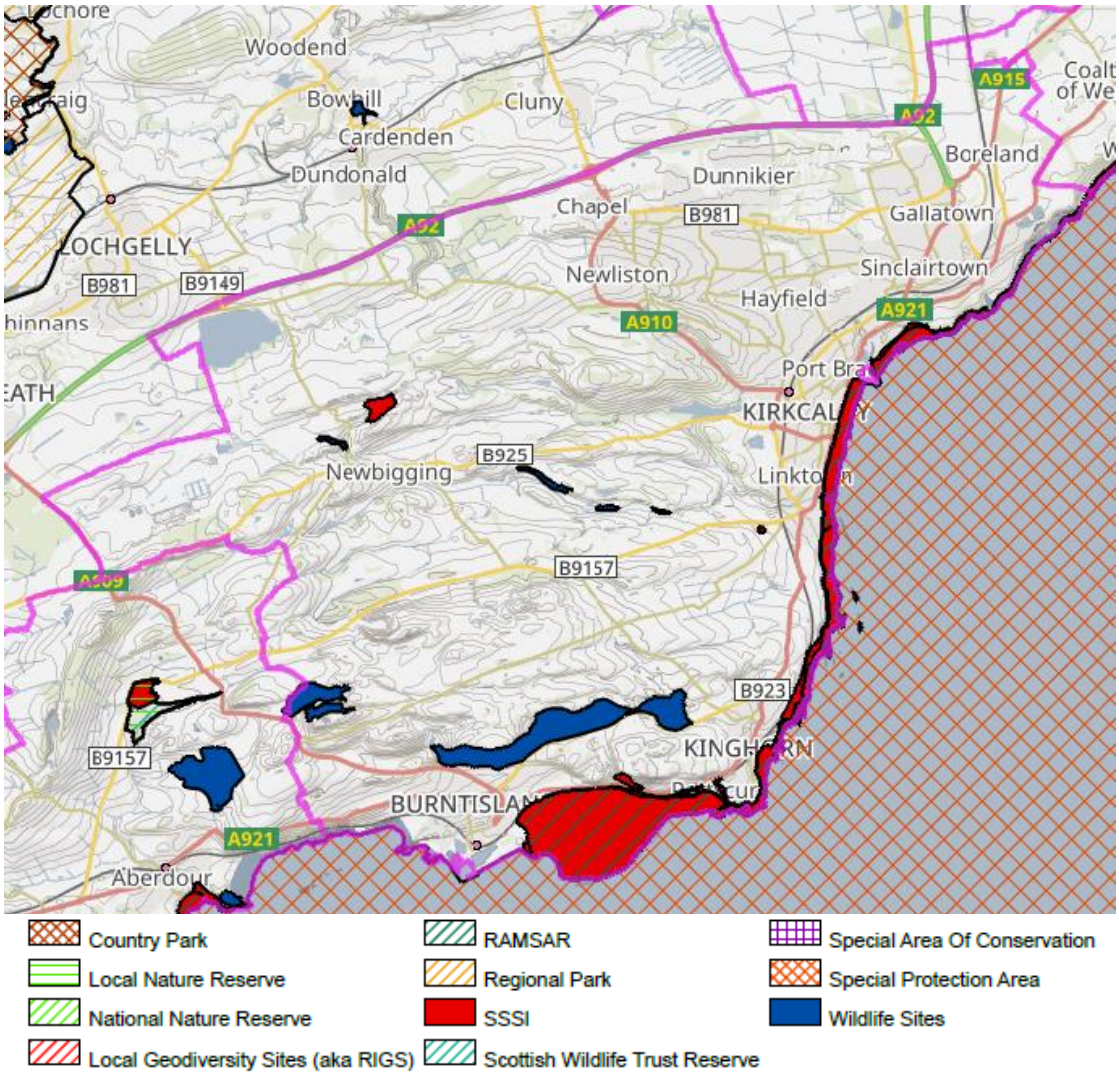
Links to evidence

- NBN Atlas
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Nature Scot- Invasive non-native plants
- Nature Scot- Protected species A-Z guide
- Selected Key Bluebell sites in Fife – Fife Nature
- Indicative Red Squirrel Sites – Fife Nature

Natural Heritage Designations in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.58 There are a number of sites designated for natural heritage in the Kirkcaldy locality (see figure below). There are internationally designated natural heritage sites along the coast: the Firth of Forth Ramsar, Special Protection Area and SSSI; and the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex Special Protection Area, these have primarily been designated for their importance for marine birds, waders and waterfowl.

Figure 9.15: Natural heritage designations in the Kirkcaldy locality.



Source: Fife Council

Note: These can be viewed on the Green and Blue network interactive map

9.59 Camilla Loch and Invertiel Quarry are SSSIs. There are large locally designated Local Nature Conservation Sites, (formerly called wildlife sites), at Burntisland Binn, and Stenhouse Reservoir (a managed fishery) and a smaller site Auchtertool Linn. These were resurveyed around five years ago

and have been found to be in an OK[10] condition. Two other wildlife sites at Balwearie Braes and Dunearn Hill Wood have not yet been resurveyed.

9.60 More detail on why these sites have been designated for natural heritage in Fife is provided on the Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Government – Natural Heritage Designations
- NatureScot– local designations
- Fife Designated Natural Heritage sites list
- Fife Local Nature Conservation Sites tracker Dec 2023

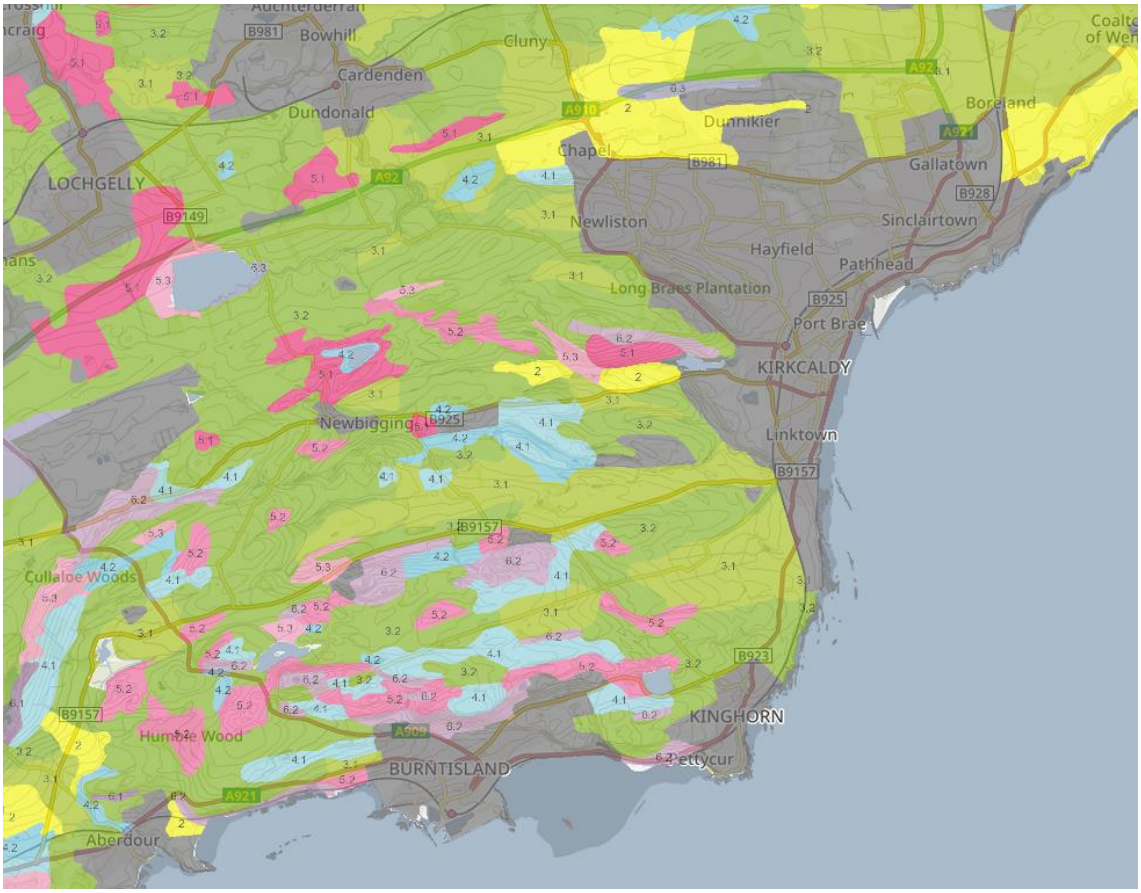
[10] "OK" is the site status designation used in the sites survey.

Landscape character and soils in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.61 The landscape of the Kirkcaldy locality is predominately characterised by pronounced hills and crags and coastal hills (as identified on NatureScot Landscape Character types (2019) mapping). Most of the land to the west of Kirkcaldy is covered by the Cullaloe Hills and Coast Local Landscape Area, and the east of Kirkcaldy is framed by the Wemyss Coast Local landscape Area as designated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017. There are no green belts in the Kirkcaldy locality.

9.62 Outwith the built-up areas there are several areas of prime agricultural land (classes 1 to 3.1 in the Scottish Land Capability for agriculture map).

Figure 9.16: Extract from the land capability map for Scotland for the Kirkcaldy locality



Land capability for agriculture (partial cover)

- 1 - Land capable of producing a very wide range of crops.
- 2 - Land capable of producing a wide range of crops.
- 3.1 - Land capable of producing consistently high yields of a narrow range of crops and/ or moderate yields of a wider range. Short grass leys are common.
- 3.2 - Land capable of average production though high yields of barley, oats and grass can be obtained. Grass leys are common.
- 4.1 - Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops and cereal.
- 4.2 - Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily on grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops.
- 5.1 - Land capable of use as improved grassland. Few problems with pasture establishment and maintenance and potential high yields.
- 5.2 - Land capable of use as improved grassland. Few problems with pasture establishment but may be difficult to maintain.
- 5.3 - Land capable of use as improved grassland. Pasture deteriorates quickly.
- 6.1 - Land capable of use as rough grazings with a high proportion of palatable plants.
- 6.2 - Land capable of use as rough grazings with moderate quality plants.
- 6.3 - Land capable of use as rough grazings with low quality plants.
- 7 - Land of very limited agricultural value.
- Urban

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9.63 There are a few areas of peatland and carbon rich soils to the west of Kirkcaldy, in particular around Mossmorran and Dunearn Hill. An area to the north of Kirkcaldy (Chapel Moss) is classed as a nationally important carbon rich soil on the 2016 Carbon and Peatland Map.

9.64 There is one active quarry within the Kirkcaldy locality; Orrock Quarry which extracts hard rock.

Links to evidence

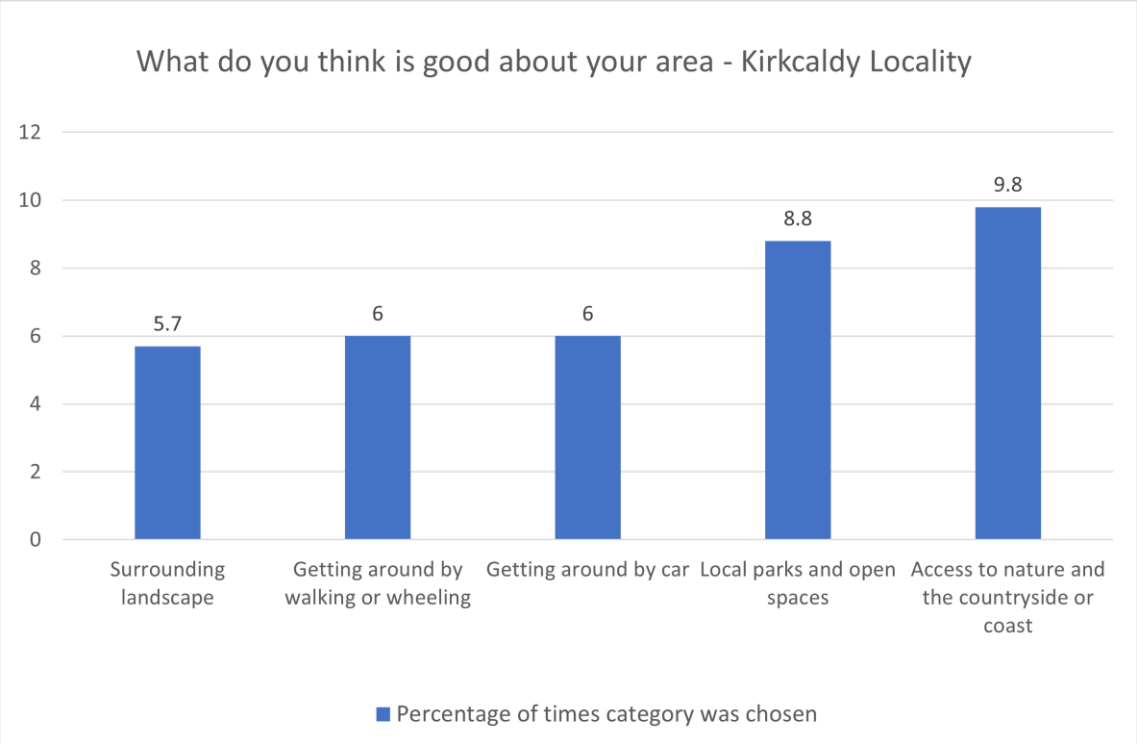
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Types 2019
- Adopted FIFEplan (2017) interactive map
- Scotland's Soils – Land Capability for agriculture
- Carbon and Peatland Map 2016
- List of Fife's Quarries

The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the Kirkcaldy locality within the lifetime of the Plan

9.65 At a local level the main infrastructure issue facing the Kirkcaldy locality is access to healthcare.

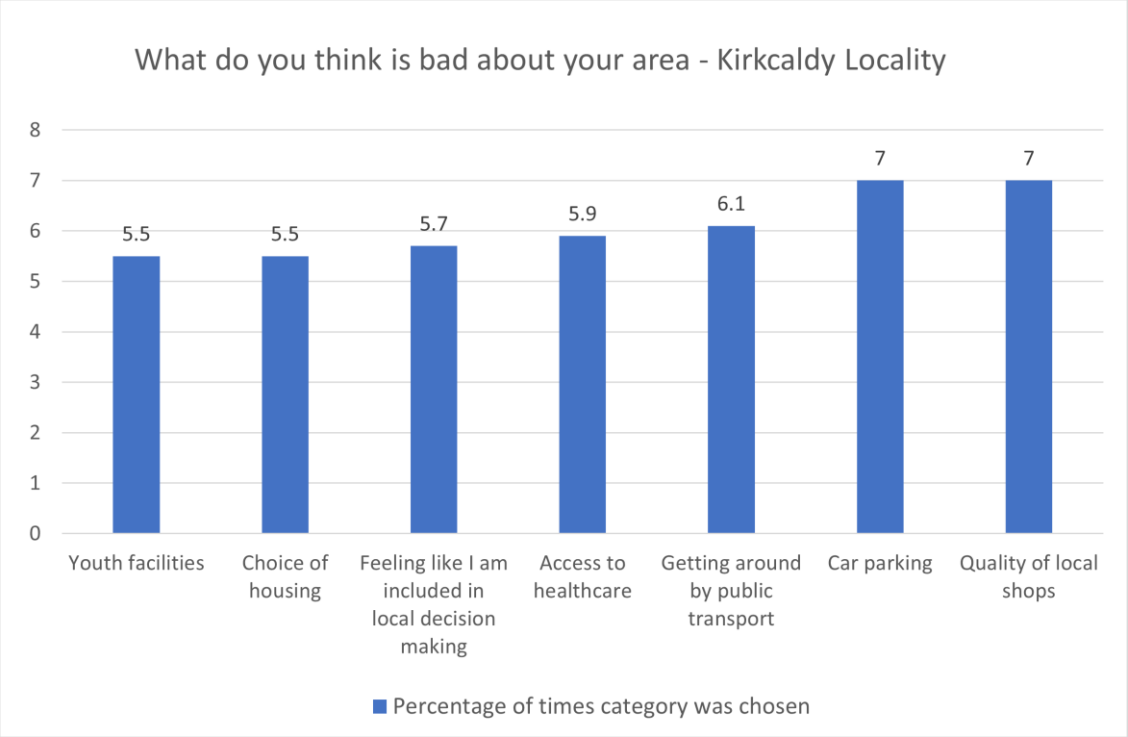
9.66 In the autumn of 2022, Fife Council asked residents what they felt was good about the Kirkcaldy locality, what wasn't so good, and what the key issues were that they felt needed to be tackled.

Figure 9.17: What respondents think is good about their area



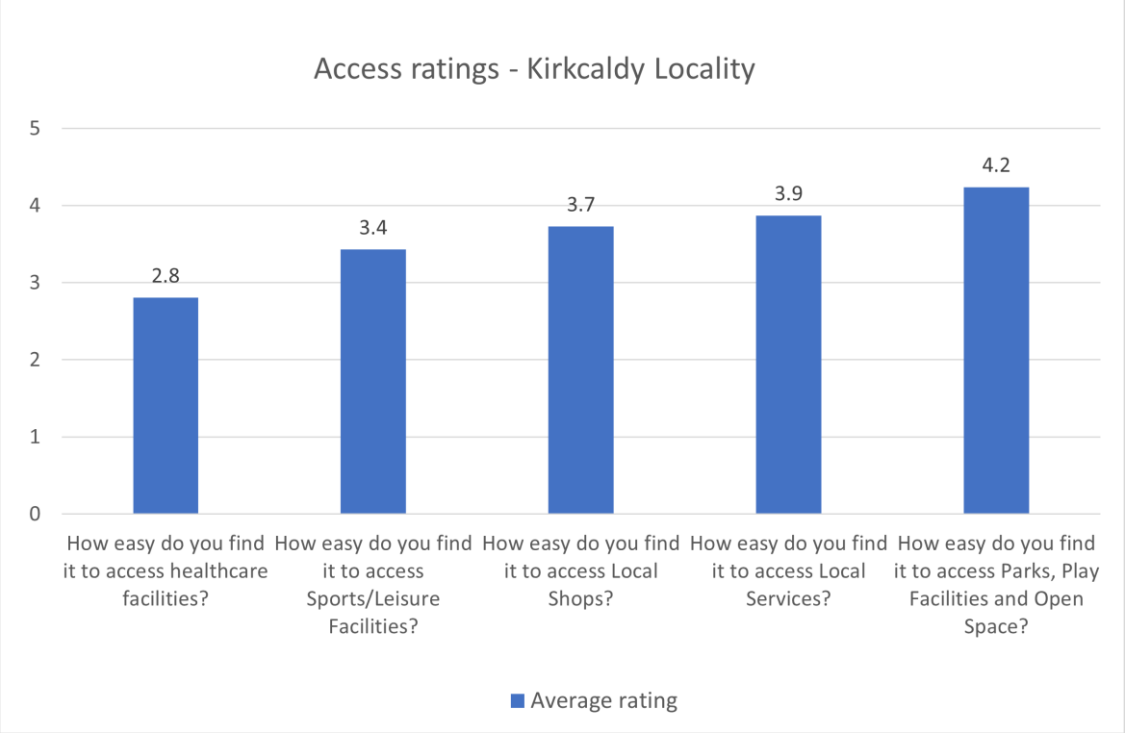
Source: Fife Council

Figure 9.18: What respondents think is bad about their area



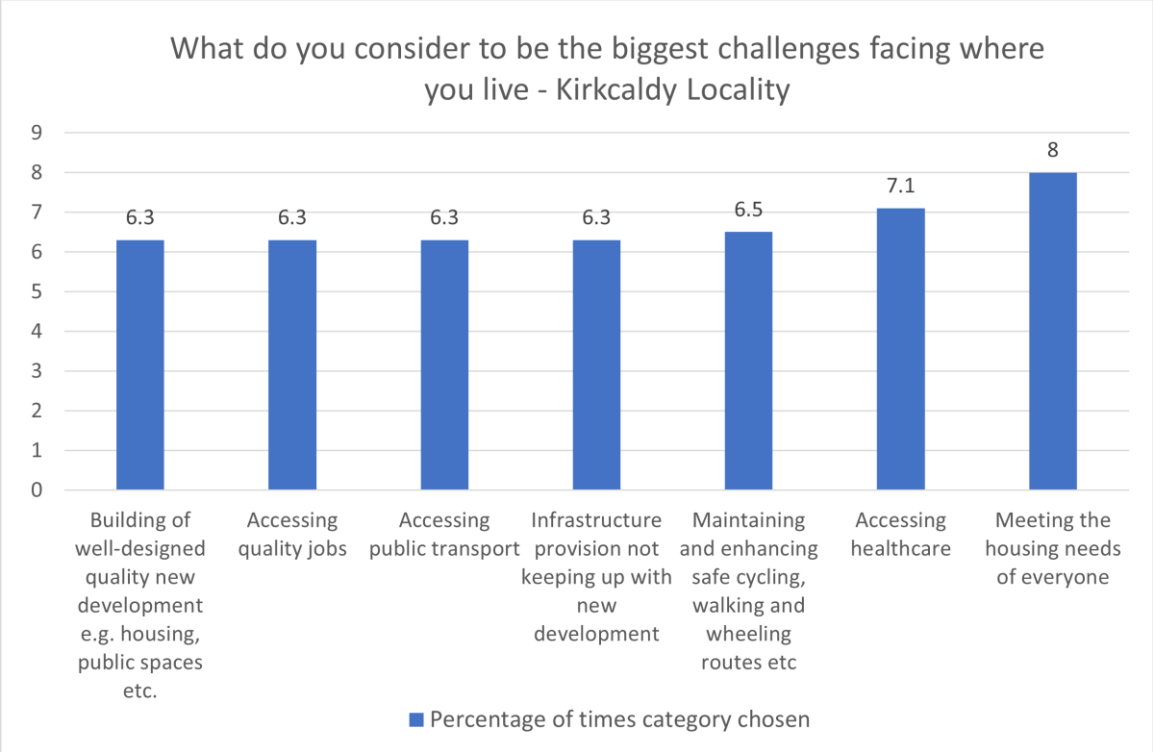
Source: Fife Council

Figure 9.19: Average ratings for access



Source: Fife Council

Figure 9.20: What respondents think the biggest challenges facing their area are



Source: Fife Council

9.67 Some people said that there is not enough free car parking around Kirkcaldy town centre to access the services they desire. The leisure centre on the promenade is considered 'shocking' and described as 'a monstrosity'. Respondents stated that they find it easier to go to other towns such as Glenrothes where they feel it is easier to access due to availability of car parking. Poor public transport links to local services and amenities, particularly for leisure centres and swimming pools were highlighted. Respondents were supportive of the Kirkcaldy Library.

9.68 Meeting the housing needs of everyone was seen as the biggest challenge the area faces. Access to GPs and Healthcare was frequently described as poor due to lack of parking, GP availability and poor public transport links. Some respondents from Burntisland stated that the range of local shops is good and meets most day-to-day needs.

Links to evidence

- Kirkcaldy summary of survey (residents)

Healthcare in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.69 The Kirkcaldy locality has a range of health and care facilities across the town and surrounding area, including the Victoria Hospital. However, planned growth and demographic changes (in particular, an aging population) are likely to put increased pressure on these facilities. NHS Fife are moving towards health and wellbeing hubs which provide multi-disciplinary care. There is a particular need for new or replacement premises.

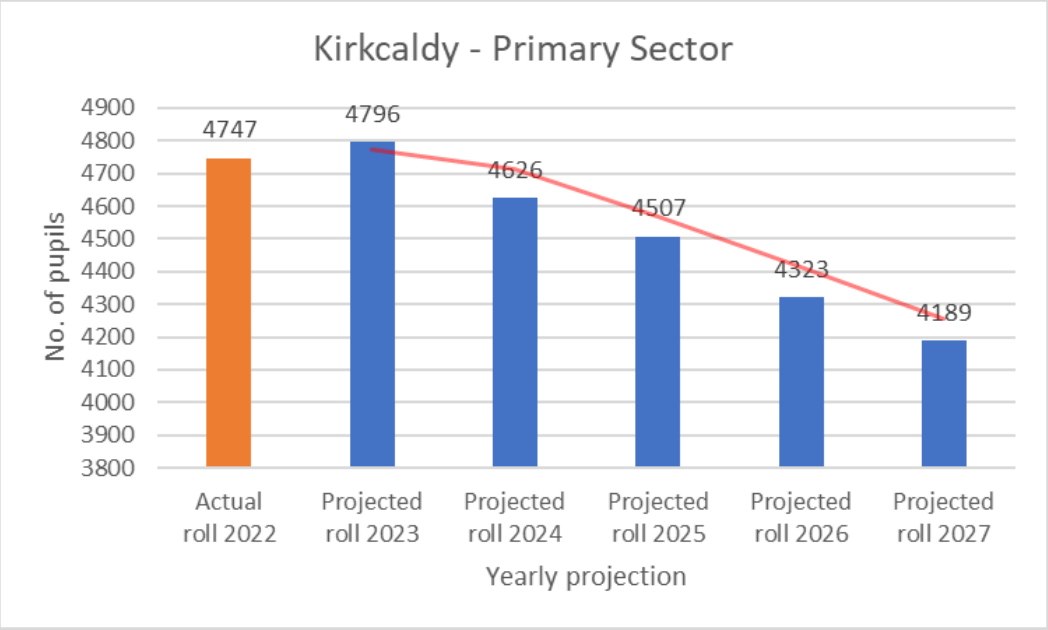
Links to evidence

- NHS Fife Estates Strategy

School places in the Kirkcaldy locality

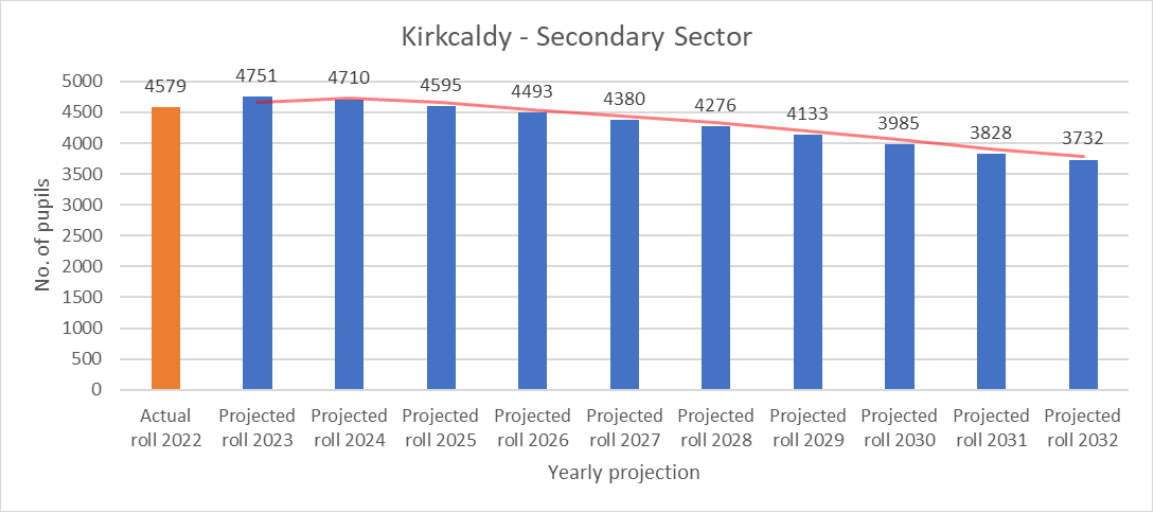
9.70 In education, there is projected pupil capacity across the whole of the existing and planned primary and secondary school estates to accommodate some further growth over the next ten years. However, individual schools do have capacity constraints. An extension is required for Viewforth High School.

Figure 9.21: Projected pupil numbers in primary schools in the Kirkcaldy locality (2023 - 2027)



Source: Fife Council

Figure 9.22: Projected pupil numbers in secondary schools in the Kirkcaldy locality (2023 - 2032)



Source: Fife Council

9.71 In addition, there are 2 new primary schools (Kingslaw and Invertiel) planned in the locality to accommodate pupils from new housing growth in Kirkcaldy, as allocated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017.

9.72 Fife College has a higher education campus in Kirkcaldy.

Links to evidence

- School Roll Projections by Area Committee

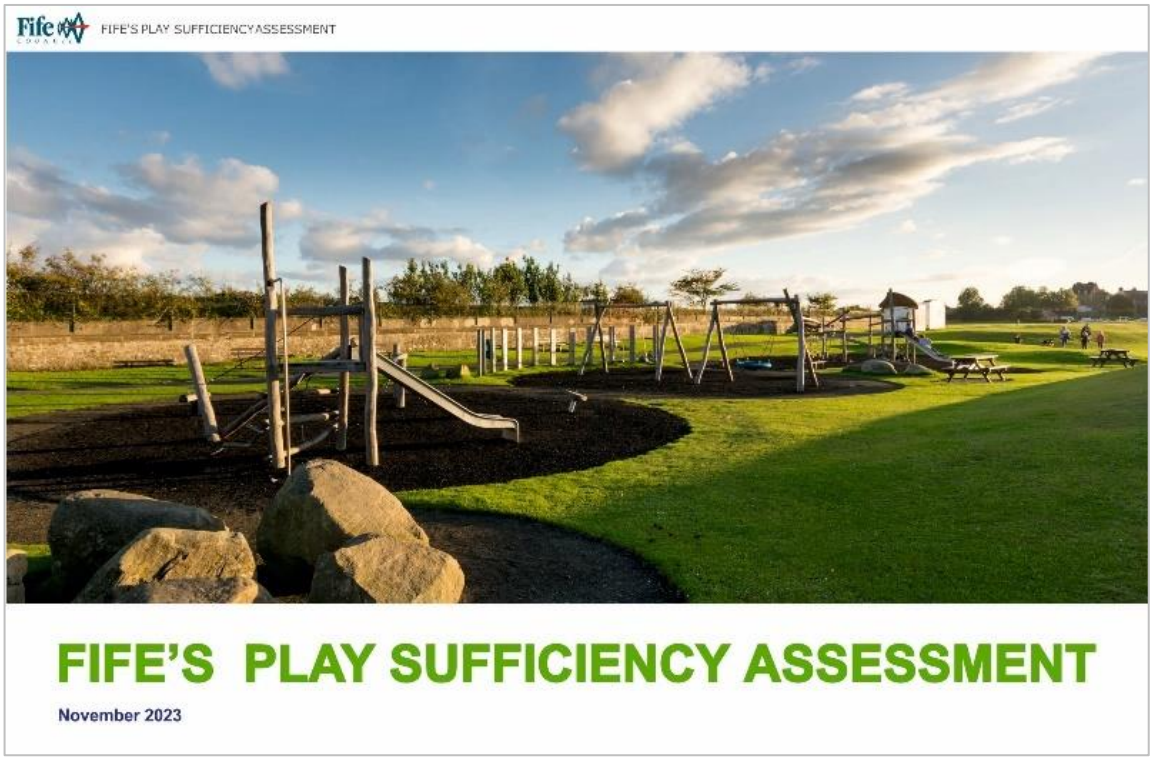
Open space, play space and sports facilities in the Kirkcaldy locality

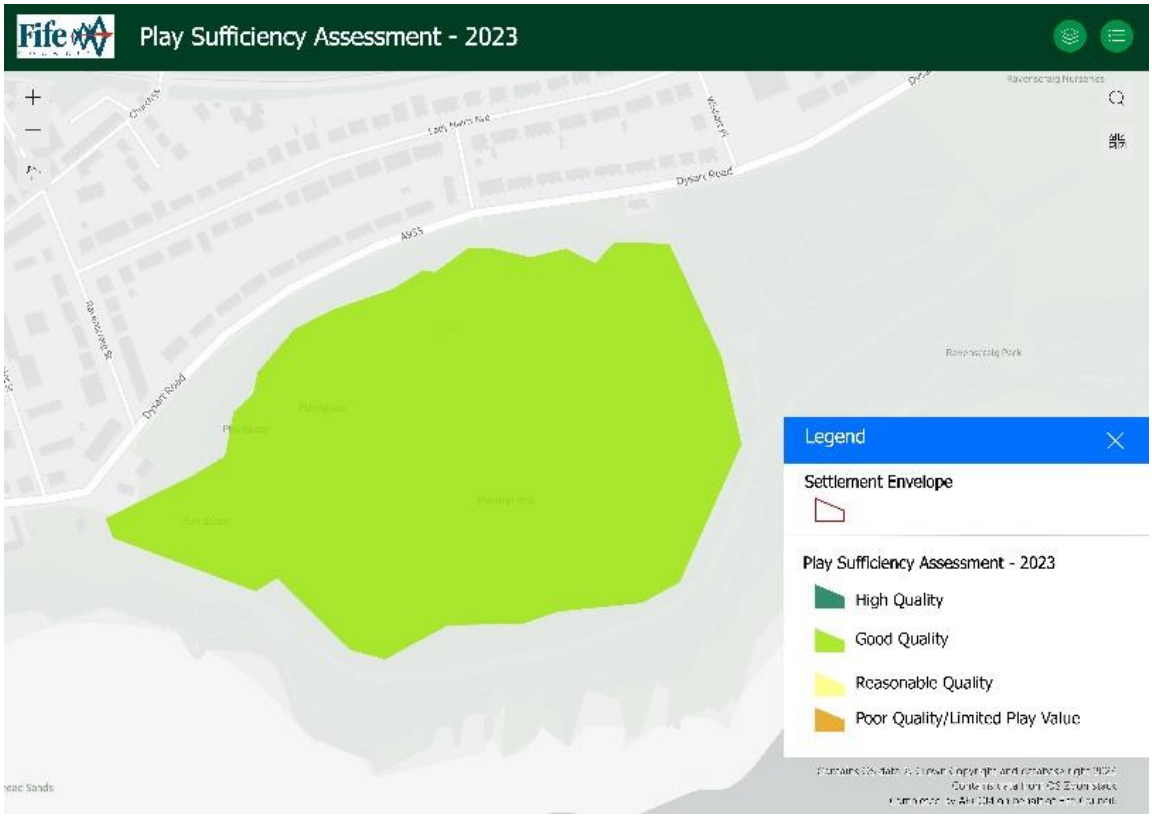
9.73 Open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, and outdoor places to play and socialise are key to successful placemaking. The outdoor spaces, including public parks and access to the coast, in the Kirkcaldy locality have helped to make communities more pleasant, liveable, healthy, and resilient.

9.74 Work is underway to update the Fife open space audit and strategy which will be finalised in late 2025. Site visits to update the quality audit have been completed. These visits found that Beveridge and Ravenscraig parks scored highly along with greenspaces around Kinghorn Loch. Burntisland Links and Toll Park were classified as good quality. However, The Kirkcaldy locality had the highest number of greenspaces which were classified as poor quality, with almost a third of the poor quality sites in Fife being within the area and many have deteriorated in quality since the 2009 audit. Overall the updated audit work has found there is around a 14% decline in the quality of greenspaces in the Kirkcaldy area. There has been a 7% decline in the amount of publicly useable greenspace in Kirkcaldy and Dysart but the town still has an above average amount of greenspace per head of population. Burntisland has a below average and Kinghorn has a poor provision of greenspace although this does not take into account access to the coast. There are plans for improvements to greenspaces in Templehall as part of their neighbourhood masterplan.

9.75 The Fife Play Sufficiency Assessment identifies that there are high quality play facilities at Beveridge Park, Kirkcaldy, East Links in Burntisland and King Georges Field in Auchtertool. However, out of 65 sites assessed in the area, almost two thirds were classed as poorer quality facilities. Kirkcaldy and Dysart and Burntisland were found to have an insufficient play provision partly due to the large number of poor quality play spaces in the locality. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment provides more information.

Figure 9.23: Indicative image from Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment (showing part of the Kirkcaldy locality)





Source: Fife Council

9.76 Sports facilities in the area are mainly focused in Kirkcaldy, but Burntisland and Kinghorn also have a range of facilities. The key facilities in the area are

the Kirkcaldy and Beacon Leisure Centres, Kirkcaldy Community Sport Hub at Balwearie High School and Kirkcaldy High School, Kirkcaldy Ice Rink and sports pitches and courts at Beveridge and Ravenscraig Park in Kirkcaldy and Toll Park in Burntisland. There are golf courses in Kirkcaldy, Burntisland and Kinghorn and boat and sailing clubs in Dysart, Burntisland and Kinghorn. Auchtertool has a sports pitch.

9.77 A Facility Planning Model developed by SportScotland predicts patterns of demand for sports facilities (but not actual usage). The model outputs suggest that Kirkcaldy High School and Kirkcaldy Leisure Centre have the busiest sports hall facilities in Fife and Balwaerie High School the least busy.

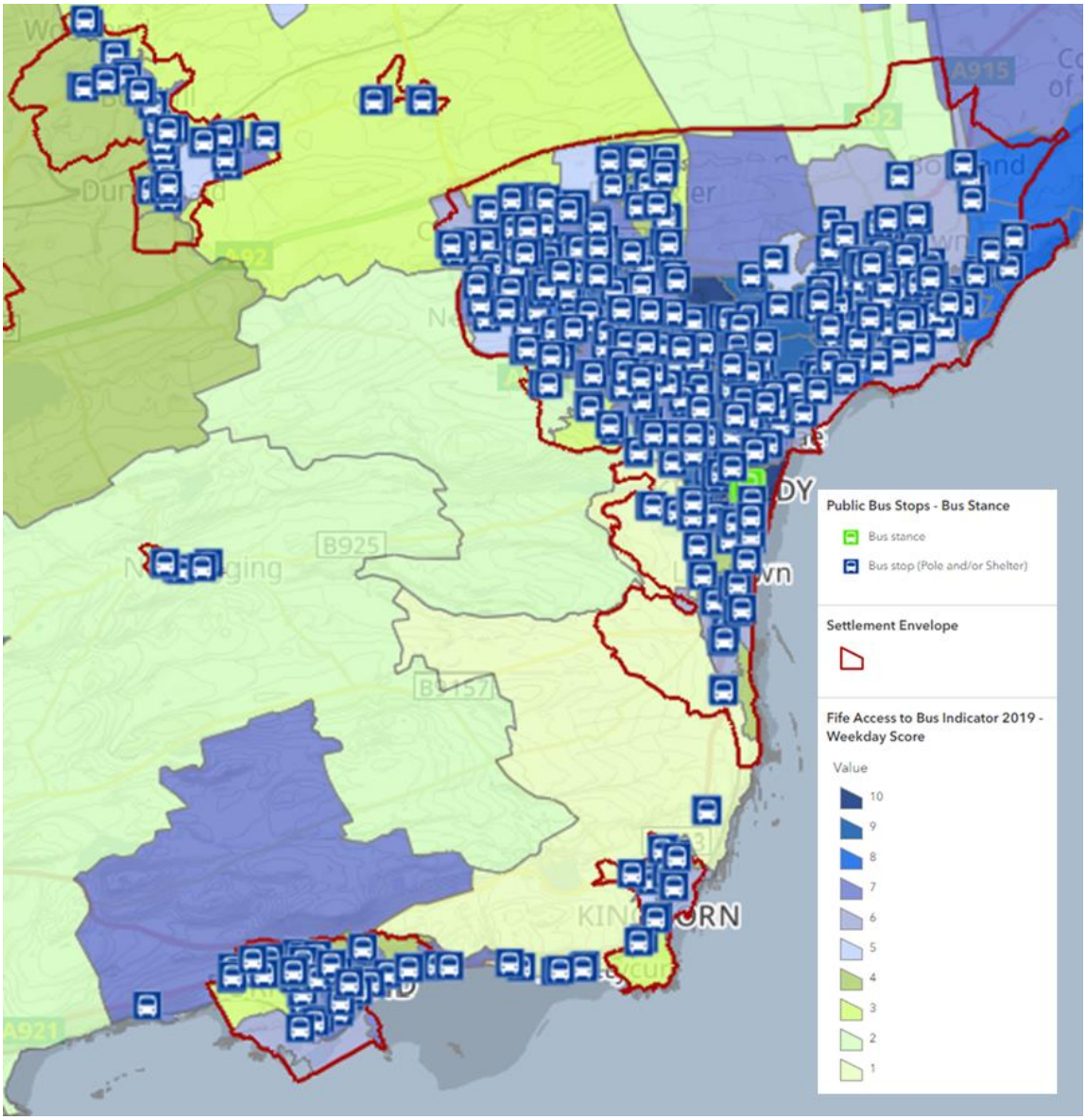
Links to evidence

- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Fife Greenspace Audit 2010
- Templehall neighbourhood masterplan – a local place plan
- Open space quality audit – examples of good quality sites Jan 25
- Open space quality audit – examples of poor quality sites Jan 25
- Draft Fife Greenspace Audit 2024 – key changes since 2009
- sportScotland – Facility Planning Model Fife Council 2023
- Sportscotland – Community sports hubs map

Accessibility of public transport in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.78 Much of Kirkcaldy has good access to bus services and the centre of Kinghorn and Burntisland have reasonable access. However, peripheral areas to the north and west of Kirkcaldy, parts of Kinghorn and Burntisland and Auchtertool are more poorly served.

Figure 9.24: Weekday access to buses in the Kirkcaldy locality with bus stops (1= poor access, 10 = good access)



Source: Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)

9.79 Kirkcaldy, Kinghorn and Burntisland have train stations and are located along the East Coast main line and have fairly regular services north and south.

9.80 The figure below shows overall levels of access to destinations such as employment and further education from areas within the locality. Tiers 1 and

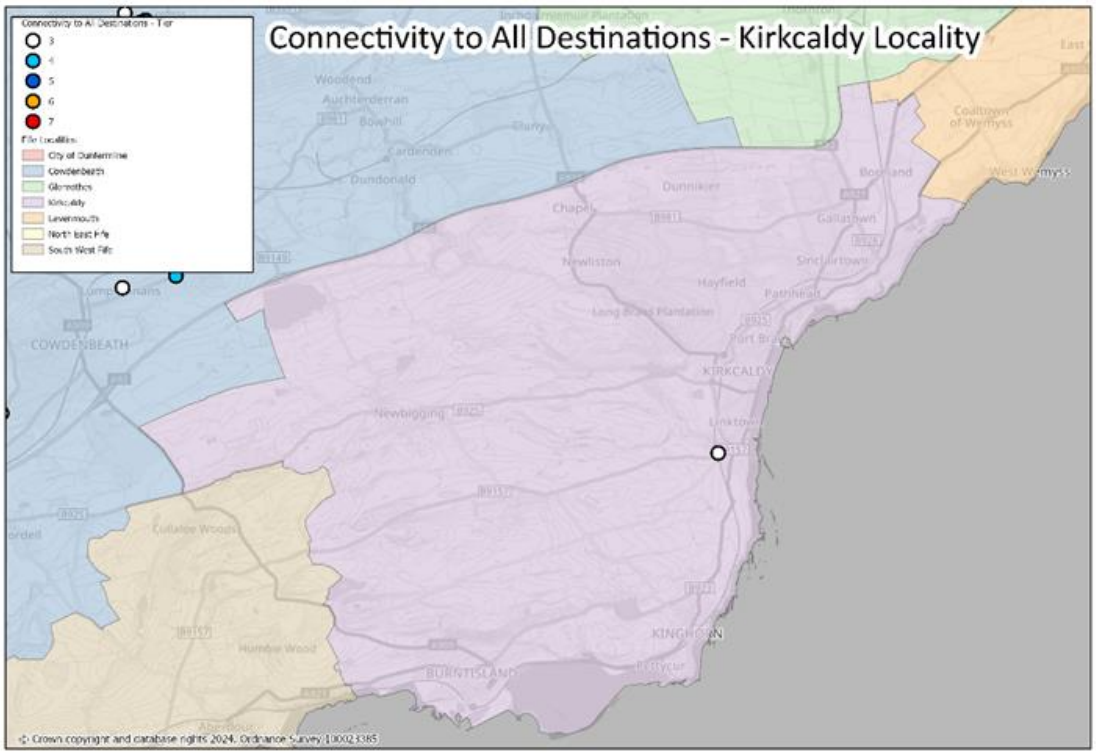
2 are not show on the map as they are considered good access scores. Tiers 3 and above indicate access issues. Public transport access to regional and local employment destinations from the Kirkcaldy locality is amongst the best in Fife. However, there are a few pockets in the north west of Kirkcaldy itself with poorer quality access.

9.81 Access to further and higher education is good from significant parts of the Kirkcaldy locality with the exception of Burntisland and the north-western area of Kirkcaldy town itself.

9.82 The locality has good connectivity to community and strategic health destinations using public transport, with the exception of some parts of Burntisland.

9.83 Connectivity to retail destinations by public transport is also generally good across the area with the exception of some pockets in Kirkcaldy and Burntisland.

Figure 9.25: Connectivity to All Destinations from Kirkcaldy Locality



Source: LDP/LTS Modelling and Options Report

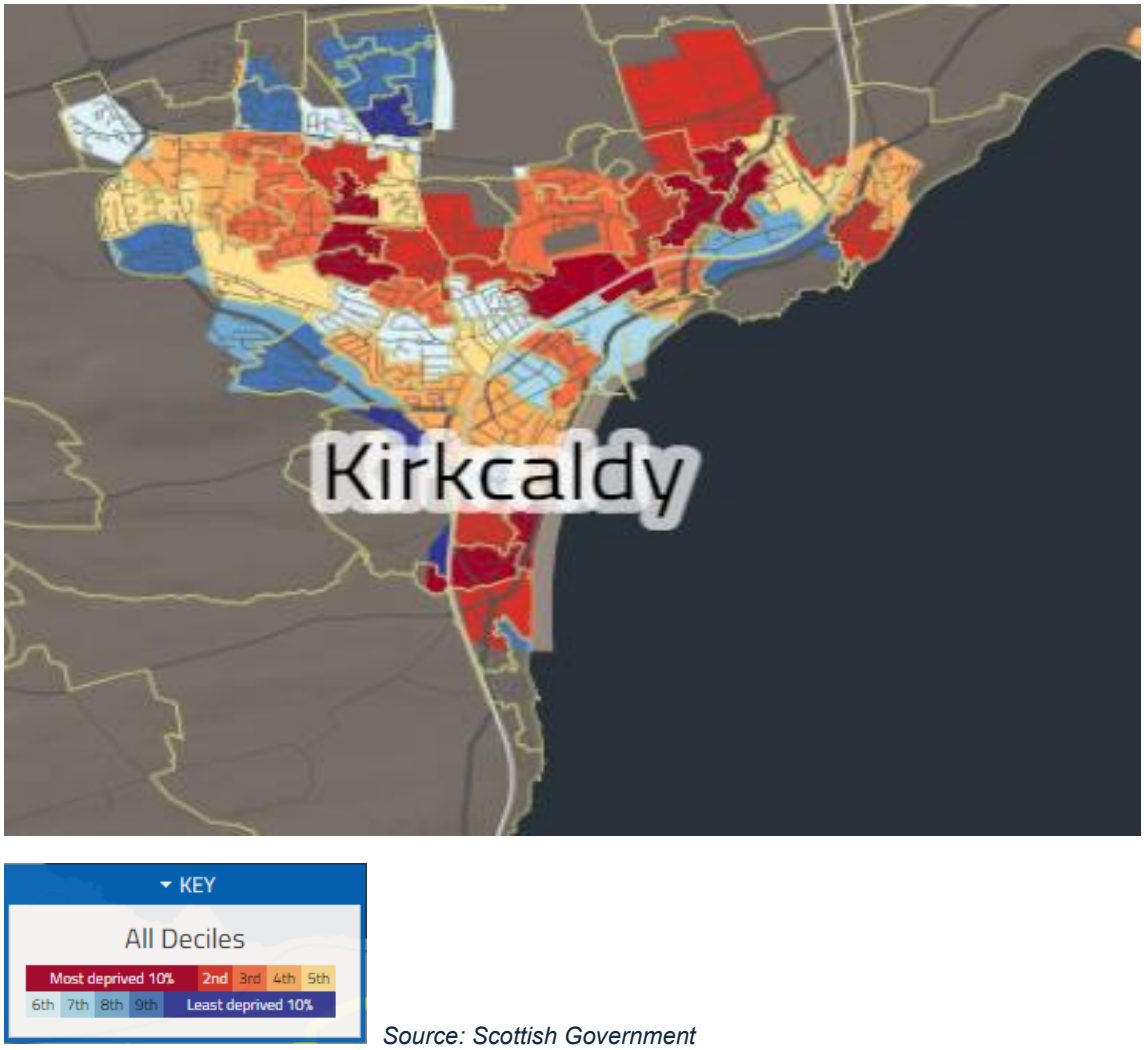
Links to evidence

- LTS & LDP Strategic Transport Modelling and option Development Report 2022
- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- Kirkcaldy Area Surveys Analysis 2022

How the Kirkcaldy locality's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

9.84 The Kirkcaldy locality is second-most deprived locality in Fife.

Figure 9.26: Deprivation in the Kirkcaldy locality



Source: Scottish Government

9.85 The locality has higher percentages of children who live in relative poverty and working age people who are employment and income deprived when compared to Fife averages. Claimant counts in the locality are also above the Fife average.

9.86 The Kirkcaldy locality has a slightly lower percentage of working age people qualified to NVQ4 or above than Fife and Scottish averages; and it has a higher percentage of working age people who have no qualifications.

9.87 Linktown, Gallatown, Smeaton and Templehall in Kirkcaldy and around the docks in Burntisland are in the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland.

9.88 The areas with least deprivation are around Beveridge Park and the Dunnikier Estate in Kirkcaldy and Colinswell in Burntisland which are in the 10% least deprived.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 18-10-04-Talk-of-the-Town.pdf (centreforcities.org)
- Wellbeing Index (coop.co.uk)
- Local Economic Profile 2021-2022

Employment in the Kirkcaldy locality

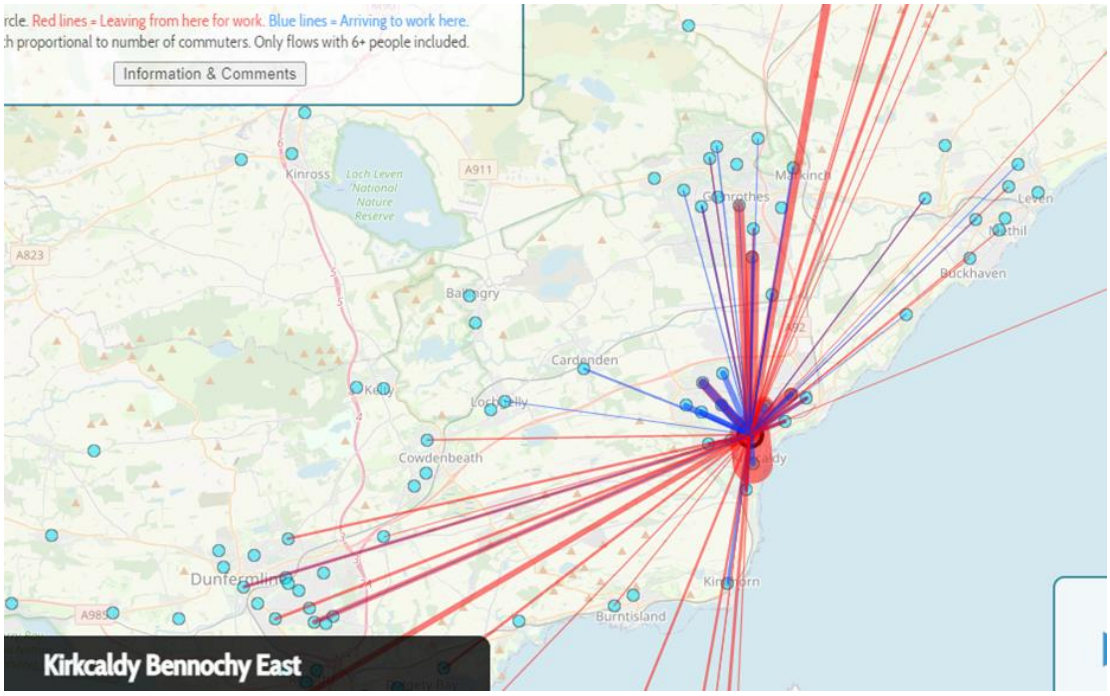
Travel to Work

9.89 The majority of people living in the Kirkcaldy locality travel to work within the area, however a significant number travel further afield to Glenrothes, Dunfermline or Rosyth. Edinburgh is also a destination for some people.

9.90 People from Burntisland tend to travel to Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, Glenrothes or Edinburgh to work. A significant number of people travel into the locality, with many of the employment areas such as Mitchelston Industrial Estate in Kirkcaldy the destination.

9.91 More commentary on public transport accessibility is contained in Annex 10 (Transport).

Figure 9.27: Example of journeys to work to and from part of the Kirkcaldy locality



Source: Datashine

Key Sectors

9.92 The three sectors employing the largest numbers of people in the Kirkcaldy locality are Human health & social work activities; Wholesale & Retail Trade; and Education.

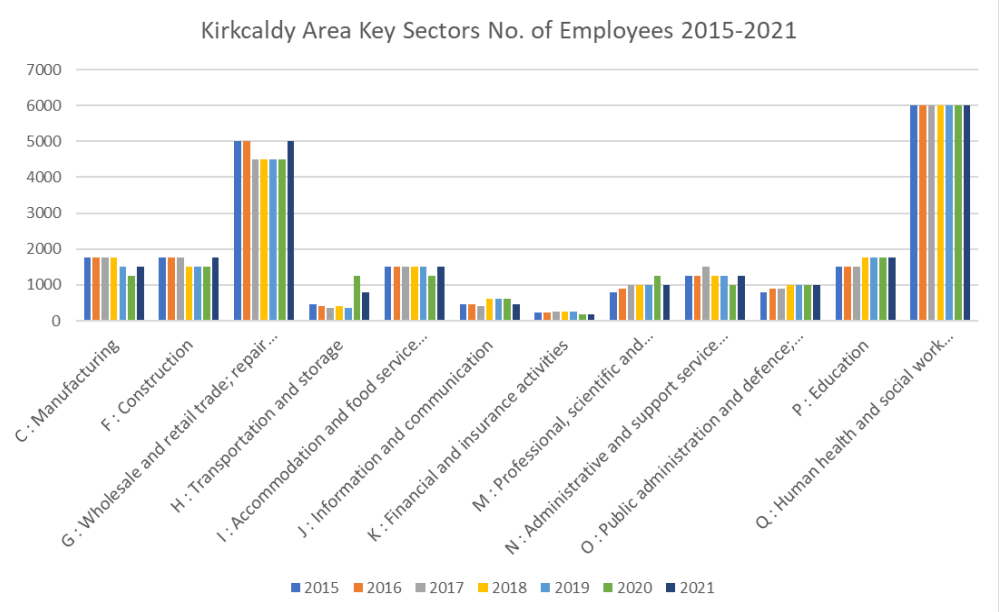
9.93 Nearly a third (30%) of people in Fife working in the Human Health & Social Work Activities sector are employed in the Kirkcaldy locality, probably due to Fife's main hospital, the Victoria Hospital, being in Kirkcaldy itself.

9.94 Manufacturing is also well represented in the area with approximately 1,500 employed.

9.95 Burntisland Port is part of the Forth Green Freeport initiative with opportunities for a range of economic activities and investment to be developed.

9.96 Growth Sectors data is only available at a Fife-level and so cannot be included here. This is being considered as part of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy.

Figure 9.28: The Kirkcaldy locality's key employment sectors (number of people employed each year from 2015 to 2021).

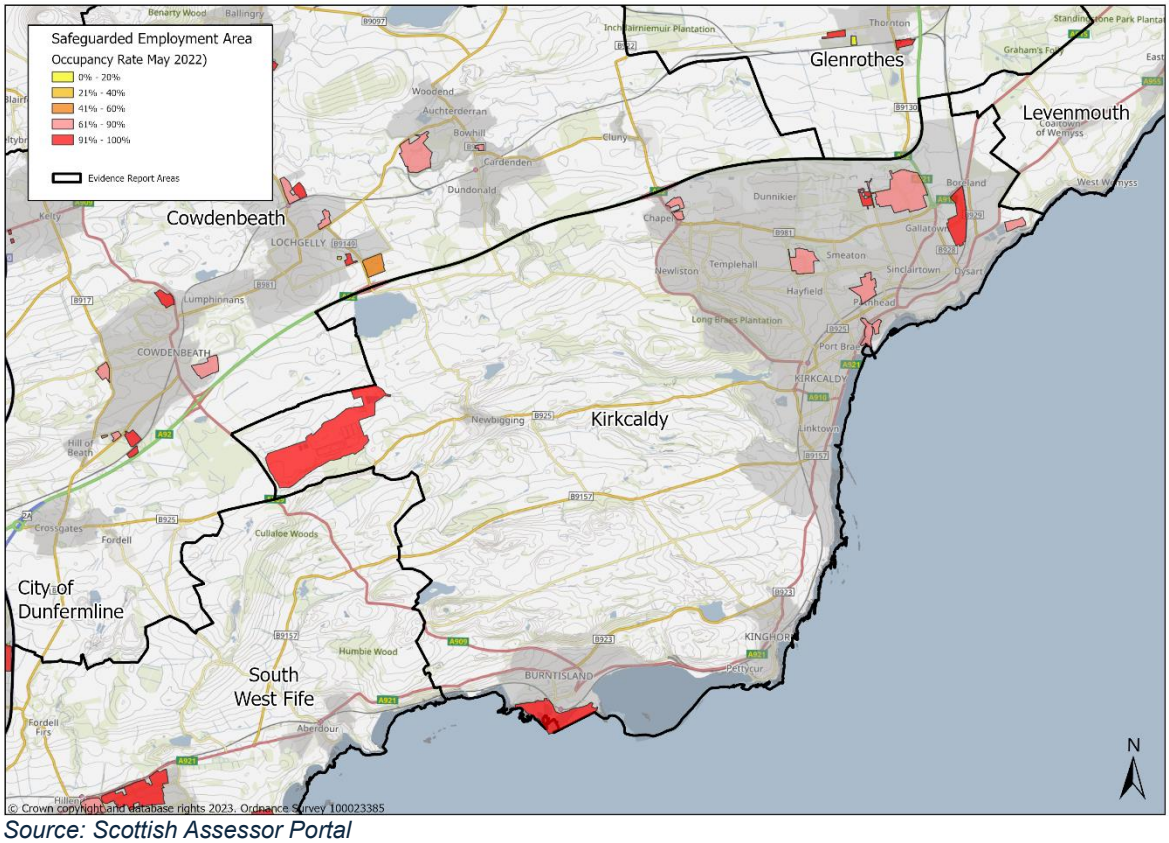


Source: NOMIS Key Sector Data

Safeguarded Employment Area Occupancy Rates

9.97 The occupancy rates of Safeguarded Employment Areas i.e. industrial estates and business parks etc in the Kirkcaldy locality range from 70% at Frances Industrial Park to 100% at Dunnikier Business Park. The data shows the need for premises, as there might be land, but it is often uneconomic across Fife to build new premises for speculative use.

Figure 9.29: Occupancy rates in Safeguarded Employment Areas in the Kirkcaldy locality



Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

Availability of employment land in the Kirkcaldy locality

9.98 Within the Kirkcaldy Locality lies Kirkcaldy itself, Burntisland and Kinghorn. Both Kirkcaldy and Burntisland are considered a key settlement in the Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021) and monitored using the Employment Land Audit. Kirkcaldy and Burntisland, as at 2023, only meet 21% and 33% respectively of their available employment land requirements as set out in the Fife Employment Land Strategy 2014-2021.

Table 9.2: 20 Key Settlements Availability of employment land by traffic light (RAG) status

Key Settlement	Audit Year	RAG Status	Percent Requirement Met	Total Requirement (hectares)
Burntisland	2023	Red	33%	1.7
Kirkcaldy	2023	Red	21%	29.4

Source: Fife Employment Land Audit 2023

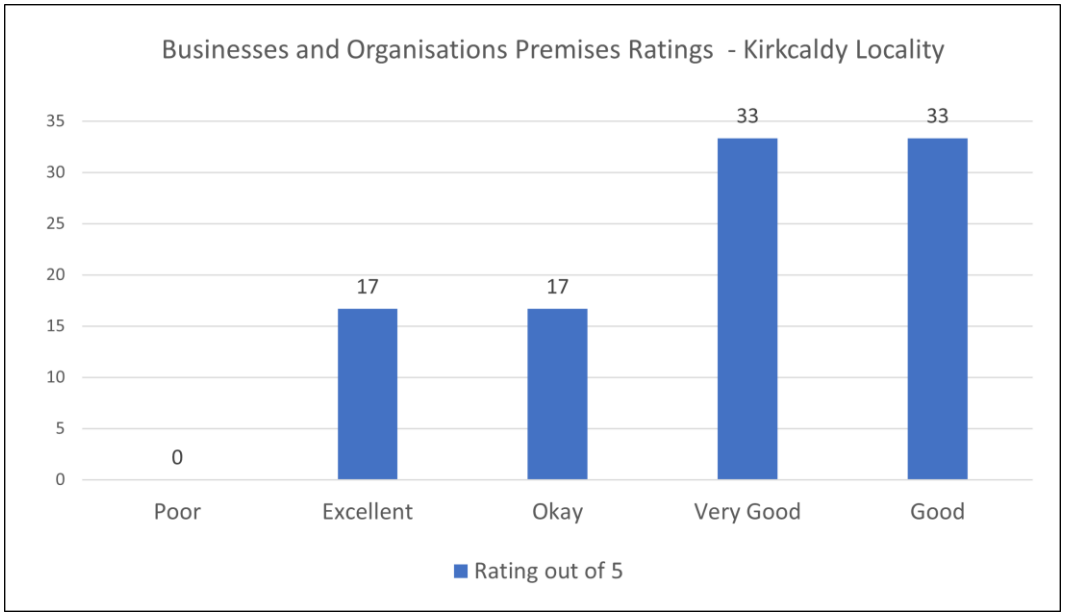
9.99 The emerging Employment Land Strategy and LDP will ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through

promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. For more information see the Fife-wide section of the Evidence Report.

Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022

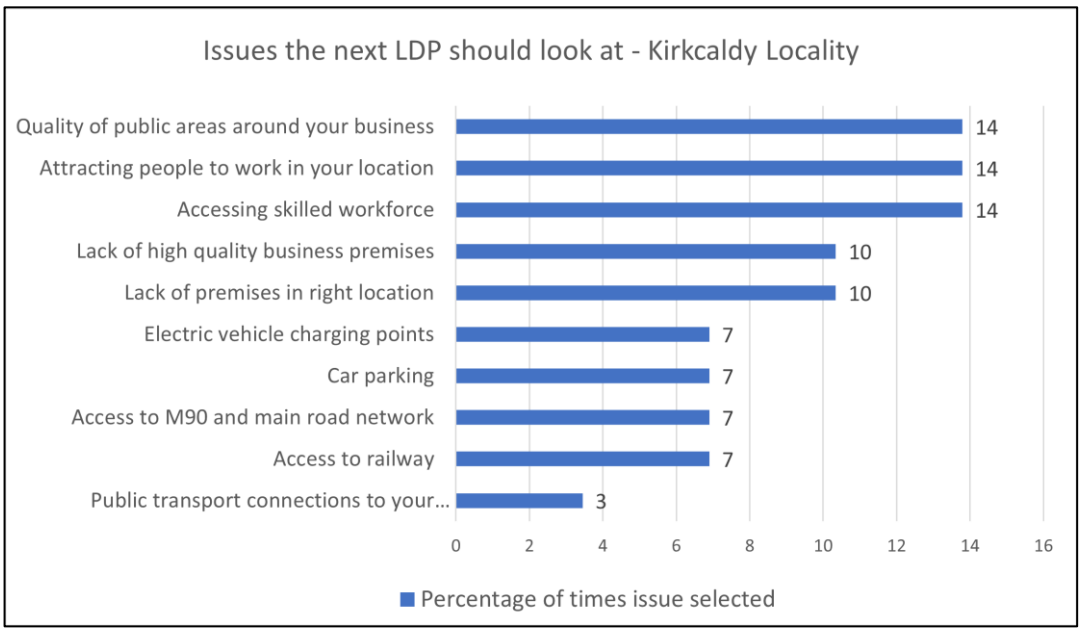
9.100 In 2022 Fife Council undertook a survey of businesses and organisations on what works as well as the issues that they face operating in the Kirkcaldy locality. All respondents rated their premises as either okay, good, very good or excellent.

Figure 9.30: Premises ratings by local businesses and organisations in the Kirkcaldy locality



Source: Fife Council

Figure 9.31: Feedback about issues the LDP should look at in the Kirkcaldy locality



Source: Fife Council

9.101 Respondents located in Mitchelston Industrial Estate feel being there is good for their growth, however it could do with some improvements in appearance. The location of Mitchelston Industrial Estate is considered convenient as it is sited just off the A92 trunk road. While it is in a good location, that is offset by congestion at Redhouse Roundabout at peak times.

9.102 The three main issues respondents want the next local development plan to look at are the quality of public areas around businesses, attracting people to their work, accessing a skilled workforce, providing high-quality premises and premises in the right locations.

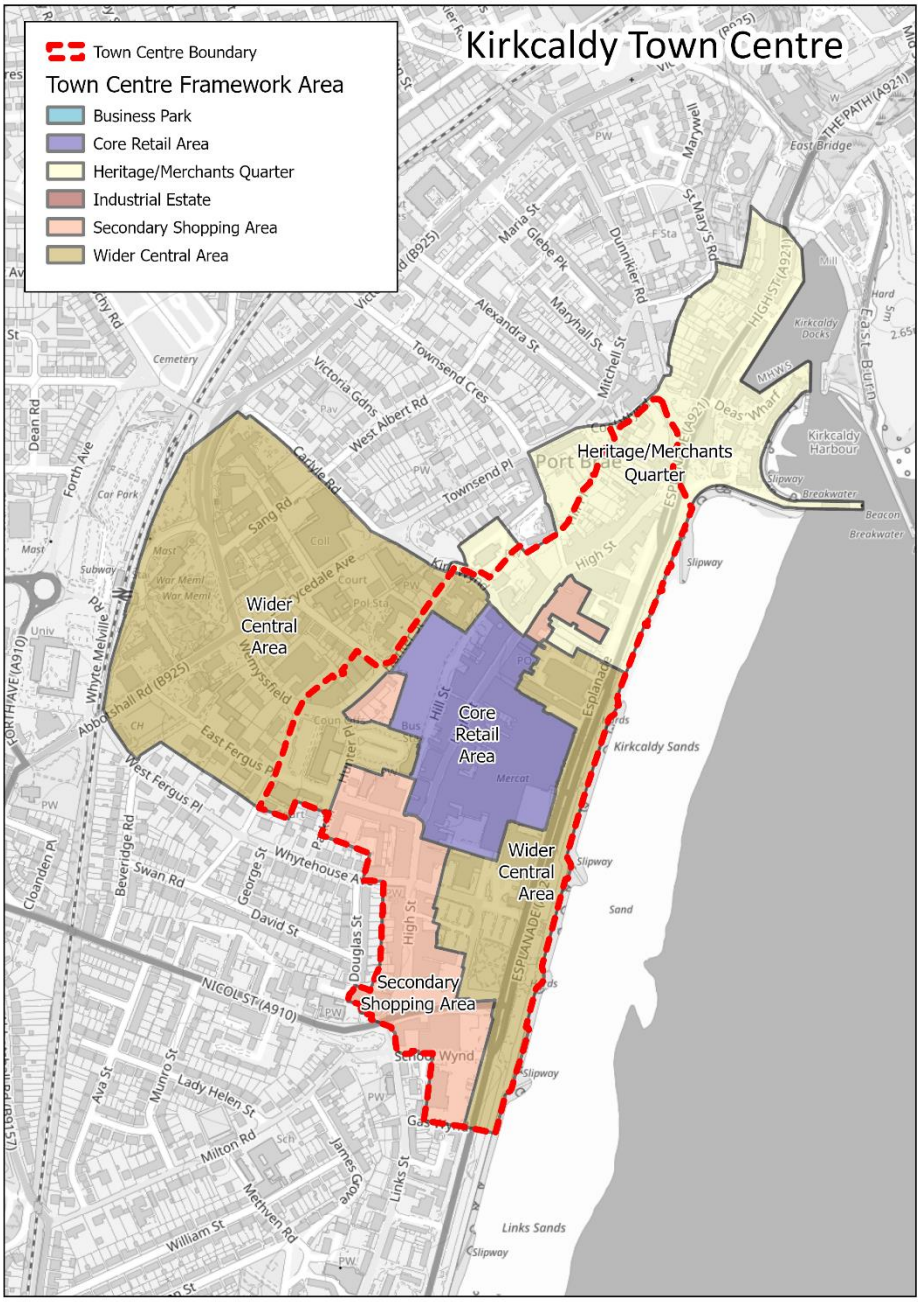
Links to Evidence

- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Economic Policy and Baseline Context April 22
- Key sectors Number of Employed 15-22
- Review of safeguarded employment areas
- Businesses & Organisations Consultation 2022
- Employment Land Audit 2023
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Review

Kirkcaldy Town Centre

9.103 Kirkcaldy Town Centre is a regional centre that is facing many challenges, not least the changing nature of retail shopping and competition from the out of town Fife Central Retail Park. It is one of three main town centres in Fife along with Dunfermline and Glenrothes.

Figure 9.32: Kirkcaldy Town Centre



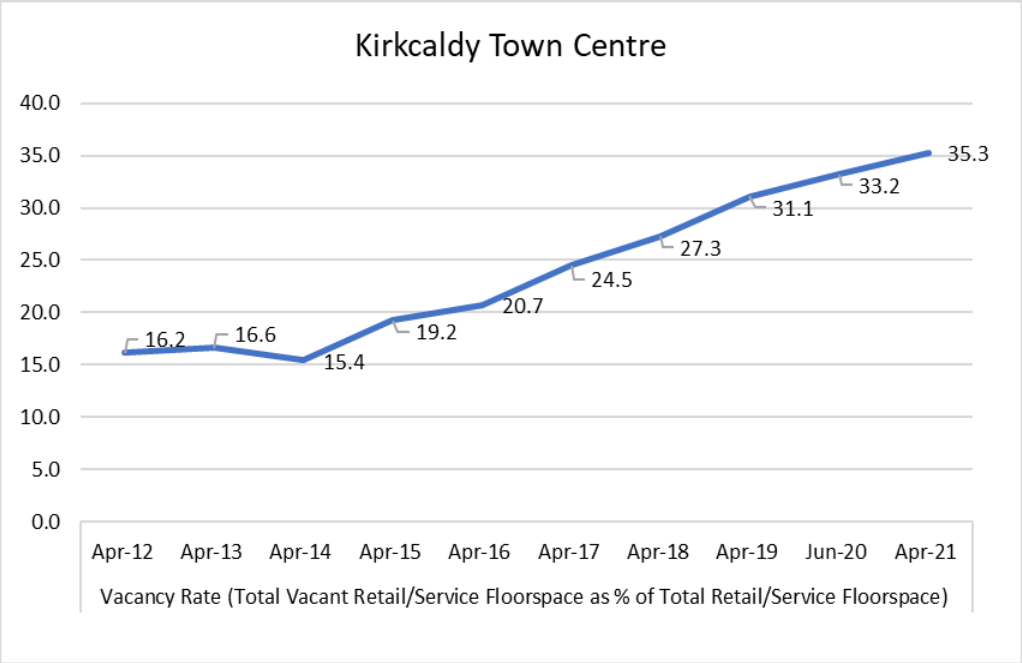
Source: Fife Council

9.104 In addition to Kirkcaldy Town Centre there are six Local Shopping Centres serving the locality including the villages of Burntisland and Kinghorn. Occupancy rates in the Local Shopping Centres are generally good ranging between 90% and 100%.

9.105 A consideration of the comparative value of retail and service businesses found that Kirkcaldy is one of the poorest performing town centres in Fife, whilst Burntisland is the best performing local centre.

9.106 Vacancy rates in Kirkcaldy Town Centre have risen markedly since 2012 from 16% to 35% in 2021, the highest levels of vacancy in Fife. This is despite the demolition of the Postings Shopping Centre and the former Co-op building.

Figure 9.33: Vacancy rates in Kirkcaldy town centre (2012-2021)



Source: Experian GOAD

9.107 Kirkcaldy Town Centre's total vacant floorspace has increased by 11,930m^2 since 2012 going from 14,460m^2 to 26,390m^2 in 2021 with its largest reduction being in comparison floorspace, a reduction from 39,840m^2 in 2012 to 26,610m^2 in 2021.

Table 9.3: Kirkcaldy Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

Use Type	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) and Difference between 2012 and 2021		
	Kirkcaldy April 2012	**Kirkcaldy April 2021**	**Kirkcaldy Change**
Assembly	1,200	1,100	-100
Comparison	39,840	26,610	-13,230
Convenience	2,790	3,000	210
Convenience/ Comparison	4,420	1,380	-3,040
Food and Drink	5,880	7,820	1,940
Hotel/Hostel	1,440	0	-1,440
Leisure	3,960	5,070	1,110
Medical	170	340	170
Office	1,850	2,450	600
Service	11,450	9,260	-2,190
Vacant	14,460	26,390	11,930

Source: Experian GOAD

9.108 A significant number of vacant units are large and not suitable for modern needs. Many of these are located within the Core Retail Area of Kirkcaldy Town Centre.

9.109 Although there has been a loss of retail floorspace there has been an increase in leisure, and food and drink floorspaces in the town centre indicating that the way town centres are being used is changing.

9.110 The Local Development Plan will look at a range of uses for Fife's town centres including residential and community uses where appropriate. It will identify opportunity sites and provide the policy framework to enable change of uses to help create better places.

Quality of Town Centres

9.111 The quality of place in Kirkcaldy town centre is mixed. There are a lot of distinctive and high-quality historic buildings, but many would benefit from investment and most inserts from the mid 20th century have been undistinguished. The quality of shop frontages is also mixed, some are attractive, but too many are ordinary and offer little to the quality of place.

9.112 There has been significant investment in the public realm which is attractive and well maintained, but the quality of the central pedestrian space is degraded by the amount of cars which now park along it.

9.113 There is relatively little green infrastructure within the centre of Kirkcaldy and the many vacant (and some derelict properties), impact on the attractiveness of the locality.

Figure 9.34: Kirkcaldy High Street

Source: Fife Council

9.114 A town centre design and development framework was developed for Kirkcaldy in 2015, this has since guided interventions along the Esplanade and within the town centre. Nine Town Centre Building Improvement grants totalling just under £77,500 were awarded in 2022/23 in the Kirkcaldy locality.

9.115 Budget constraints over the last 15 years have had an impact on the level of funding which can be accessed for town centre public realm and building improvements.

9.116 The quality of place in the centre of Burntisland is generally good. There are many high quality historic buildings which are in good repair, although there are some poor 20th century inserts which degrade the look of the place. There has been investment in the public realm which is attractive and well maintained and designed to make pedestrian movement easier. Most of the shop frontages are attractive and there is a good amount of green infrastructure along the High Street. All these contribute positively to the quality of place.

Figure 9.35: Burntisland High Street

Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Kirkcaldy Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- GOAD data
- Fife Retail Capacity Study 2022
- Assessment of local shopping centres
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries
- Kirkcaldy Town centre design and development framework

Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of evidence specific to the Kirkcaldy locality

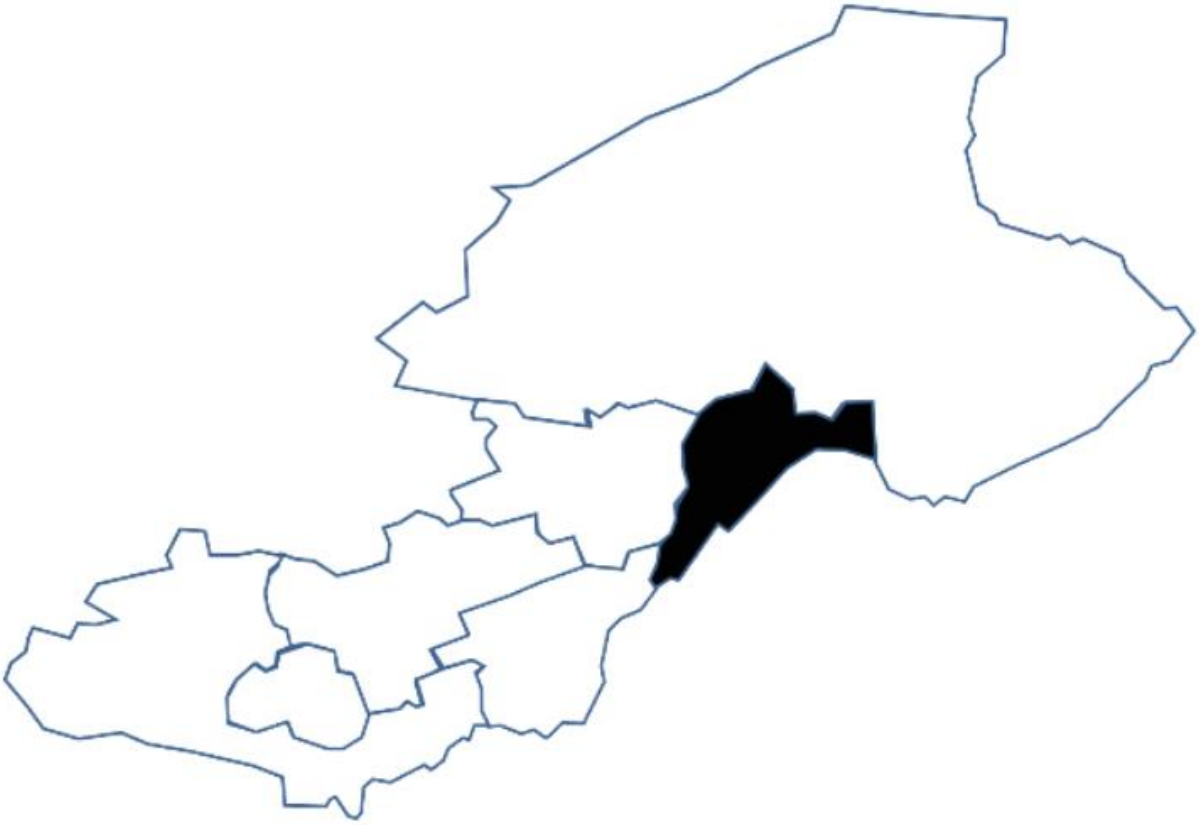
- The Kirkcaldy locality is one of the most accessible in Fife, yet it has the second highest relative deprivation (after Levenmouth). Much of the area has good access to services within walking or cycling distance. There is potential to promote and reposition Kirkcaldy as a place to invest as a destination and thriving town.
- As with other coastal areas, coastal erosion is potentially a significant issue facing the locality. The LDP has a role in identifying areas where nature based solutions could help with adaption to coastal change such as along the shore at Kirkcaldy.
- Planned growth and demographic changes across the locality mean there is a need for additional capacity in the primary care sector that will need to be planned for. There is some capacity in primary and secondary schools across the area although individual schools are more constrained.
- Kirkcaldy has a significant shortage of land for industry and warehousing uses which is a matter for the LDP to review.
- Kirkcaldy town centre has the highest levels of vacancy of any town centre in Fife, as well as the most marked increase in vacancy levels since 2012. There is a surplus of commercial floorspace in the town centre and much of it is in an obsolete configuration. The role of the town centre is becoming as much about social transactions as it is a place to shop.
- The new Local Development Plan may need to consider if additional policies or support is needed in addition to national policy. Considerations are likely to include where additional scope exists for town centre living for different age needs in places where local access to neighbourhood and social facilities are readily available.
- The Esplanade is a key asset for Kirkcaldy, yet the town centre turns its back on it, making the seafront and beach difficult to access, made worse by the road itself which is a barrier. This issue has been the subject of various studies and initiatives to improve connectivity between the waterfront and town centre.
- Green and blue networks within Kirkcaldy are fragmented in places - in particular north/south linkages, there is a role for the LDP to identify specific areas where the network needs to be protected or where it could be restored and reinforced.
- Sites allocated in the LDP should include information on priorities for the protection, enhancement and extension of blue and green networks on the site. This will include improvements to the condition of water bodies such as the Dronachy and Teil Burns; opportunities to extend and enhance active travel routes such as through the Kirkcaldy SDAs; and promoting and supporting the East Neuk 50 cycle route.
- Allocate employment land in Kirkcaldy, which is within the Mid-Fife regeneration area, with a focus on the manufacturing sector and in particular advanced manufacturing and engineering. The continued contribution of manufacturing to the Fife economy will require an adequate supply of land use of class 5 to contribute to overall productivity growth.
- Support Burntisland as an integral part of the Forth Green Freeport initiative.

10 Levenmouth locality evidence and issues

Introducing the Levenmouth locality

10.1 The Levenmouth locality is made up of three main coastal towns (Leven, Buckhaven, and Methil) and a number of smaller towns and villages. These sit on the north side of the Firth of Forth in the south east of Fife. The locality is characterised by heavy and traditional industries, such as coal mining and the docks, which have steadily declined over recent decades.

Figure 10.1: Plan showing the location of the Levenmouth locality within Fife



Source: Fife Council

10.2 A number of priorities were identified for the Levenmouth locality from an early LDP workshop carried out between Fife Council and the Key Agency Group:

- SMART energy for Levenmouth to support development;
- Transportation and decarbonisation programmes, and
- Coastal and flood defences for the rail station and the River Leven programme.

10.3 Addressing these priorities will require collaborative working across a number of organisations and partners.

10.4 An additional locality workshop was attended by representatives from Fife Council and Key Agencies to collect place-based comments for the Levenmouth area.

10.5 According to the 2022 Local Strategic Assessment, Levenmouth has the smallest population of Fife's seven localities, with 37,722 people living in 19,672 households, a higher proportion of which are older people (22.6%). The locality has a lower level of owner-occupied (54.2%) and a higher rate of social rented housing (31.3%).

10.6 It has the highest proportion of deprived data zones, and the highest levels of income (19.5%) and employment deprivation (15.9%) of all areas. The locality has the lowest employment rate (59.9%), and the highest claimant rate (6.9%). It also has the lowest levels of 16-19 year olds participating in education, employment, or training (85.8%) with only 65.5% continuing in education.

10.7 In terms of health, in 2019 the average life expectancy for males living within the Levenmouth locality was 73.9 years and 78.7 years for females which is below the Fife and Scotland average.

Links to evidence

- Levenmouth Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- ScotPHO profiling tool
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary
- Key Agencies and Fife Council: Support for place-based Local Development Planning - Levenmouth Area Workshop Report 7-9.02.2022

Implementation of FIFEplan in the Levenmouth locality

10.8 The current FIFEplan contains a number of place-specific proposals in the Levenmouth locality. These include proposals identified in the Bawbee Bridge charrette projects, with these proposals having largely been implemented.

10.9 FIFEplan contains one strategic development area in the Levenmouth locality. Until recently there had been no development activity but a new planning application for permission in principle was submitted in 2023.

10.10 The restoration and re-opening of the railway line to Leven is a key infrastructure and regeneration project in FIFEplan for the Levenmouth locality. It will help to improve access to employment and training for local residents and help to bring people to the coastline in the Leven area.

10.11 There is also a significant programme of environment, active travel and heritage-based projects being implemented as part of the River Leven and Levenmouth Reconnected programmes.

10.12 FIFEplan also designates Methil Energy Park as a key infrastructure and employment location with potential for future expansion.

How past development has shaped how the Levenmouth locality is today

Urban development and local living

10.13 How and why the settlements of Levenmouth developed and changed over time heavily influences how they work today and the issues they face in reducing carbon emissions and tackling social and economic inequality.

10.14 Most of the Levenmouth conurbation began as small historic villages with Leven being the largest settlement (see figure below). Coal mining led to the rapid expansion of the built-up area (including Kennoway, Windygates, and East Wemyss) in the late 19th and throughout the 20th century.

Figure 10.2: 1890's map of the Levenmouth locality showing the historic villages

Source: National Library of Scotland (maps.nls.uk)

10.15 Today the Levenmouth locality has developed into a series of small towns, Leven, Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill, and Kennoway many of which are conjoined. As these settlements are relatively small in scale, many parts of them retain reasonable access to key services and facilities within a 10-minute walk in line with the principles of living well locally.

10.16 The closure of the railway line in the 1960s led to the locality being perceived as remote, and the poorer accessibility of the area in general from other parts of Fife has contributed to it becoming one of the most deprived areas in Fife.

10.17 The railway line, which reopened in June 2024 with two new stations in Leven and Cameronbridge near Windygates, should help to address some of these issues.

10.18 The railway, which runs alongside the River Leven creates a barrier between Leven and the Buckhaven, Methil and Methilhill areas (see figure below). There are currently relatively few bridges over the river and railway and these are often in poor condition. This has led to poor integration between these different parts of Levenmouth and considerably reduces the connectivity of the Kirkland area in Methil in particular.

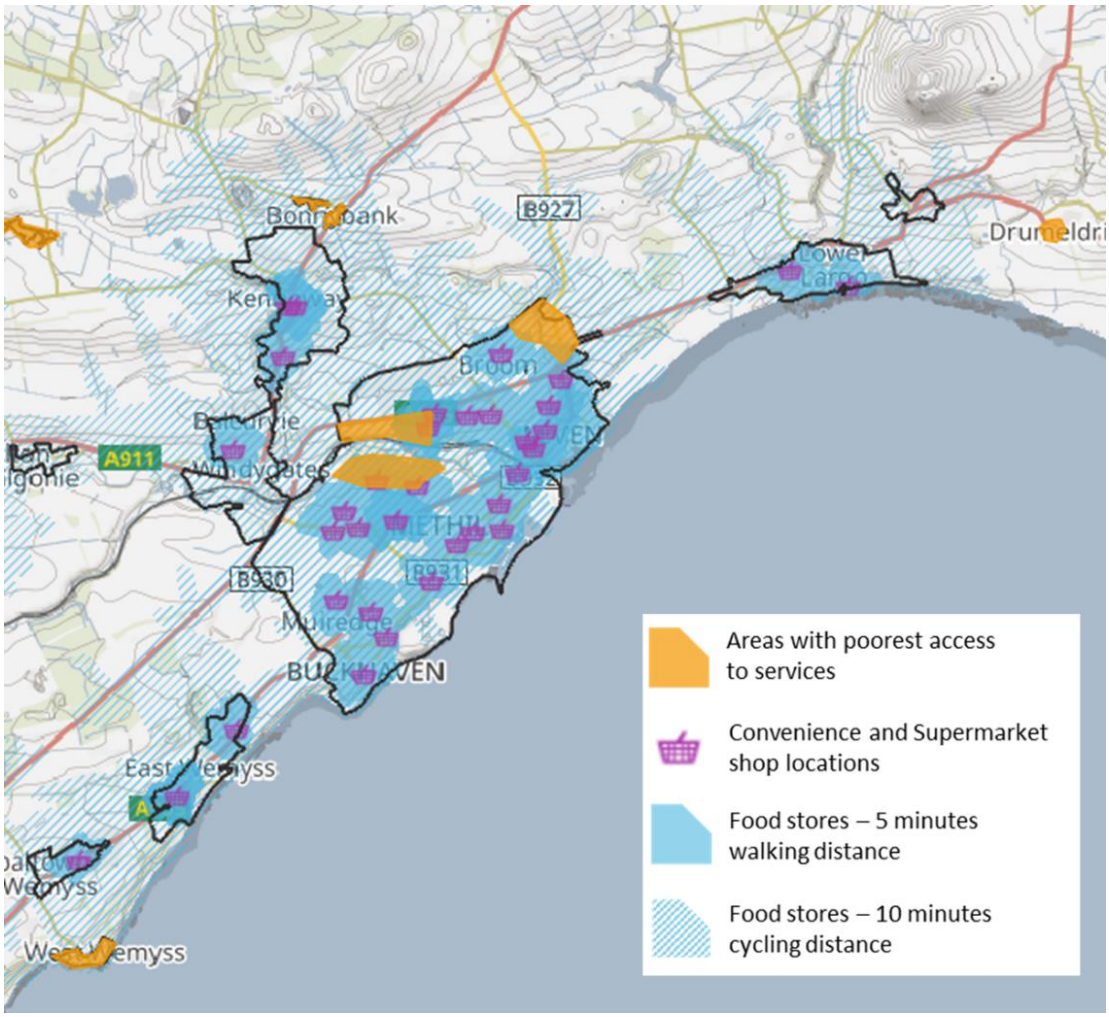
Figure 10.3: Map extract showing the barrier between communities in Levenmouth formed by the River Leven and the railway

Source: Fife Council

10.19 As part of the reconnection of the rail link and the Levenmouth Connectivity Project many of the bridges have been upgraded and replaced. There has also been significant investment in the Bawbee Bridge and provision of an additional bridge to the new rail station at Cameronbridge which are strengthening linkages.

10.20 More recent development in the 21st century has extended the built-up area in north Leven, Kennoway and Windygates. These areas of expansion are mixed in terms of how permeable they are. Some areas have relatively good connectivity whilst others are much less well connected and many of them have poor accessibility to services and facilities.

Figure 10.4: Example extract from Local Living and 20 MN interactive mapping showing walking and cycling distances from convenience stores in the Levenmouth locality, and the areas which are least well served by services and facilities.



Source: Fife Council

10.21 The low density of housing built in these locations impacts on the viability of providing new local services; in addition, there is often a lack of permeability in the development layouts which increases travel distances. Less frequent bus services to these areas exacerbates the issue.

10.22 Some areas in Denbeath, Muiredge, Kirkland, and Scoonie also have poor accessibility. Many of the smaller settlements in the Levenmouth locality (including Windygates) have limited services and facilities and rely on nearby larger settlements to access these.

10.23 The smaller villages in the area have historic cores and tend to be more permeable. Coaltown of Wemyss was a designed village and has a very attractive and distinctive character.

10.24 Annex 7 provides more information on Living Well Locally and 20 minute Neighbourhoods in Fife.

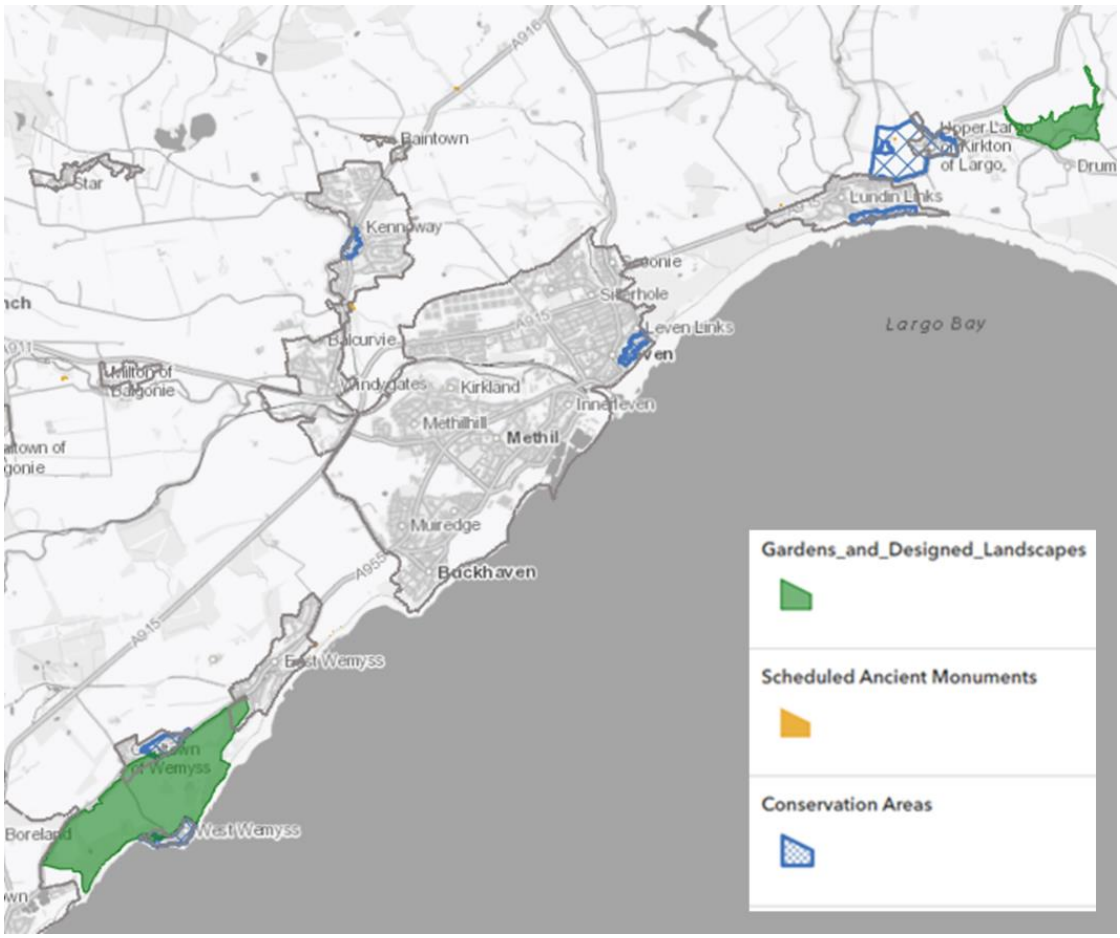
Links to evidence

- Scotrail – The railway has returned to Levenmouth
- Levenmouth Connectivity Project
- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Interactive Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods mapping

Historic environment in the Levenmouth locality

10.25 The Levenmouth locality has six conservation areas and 254 listed buildings including four category A buildings (see figure below). Scheduled monuments in the area include the Wemyss Caves which contain nationally important rock art carvings including pictish symbols.

Figure 10.5: Map extract showing historic environment assets in the Levenmouth locality



Source: Fife Council

10.26 Leven town centre has a historic core but many of the buildings have been substantially altered in ways that are detrimental to the overall quality of place.

10.27 There is a project underway to regenerate the historic flaxmill at Silverburn Park investing around £8 million into the built heritage. Funding has also been secured to develop a project to regenerate the historic town centre in Buckhaven including monies from the Levenmouth Reconnected Fund. The of the Buckhaven project may require local policies or designations in the LDP to support its aims.

10.28 The villages of Lundin Links, Lower Largo and Upper Largo retain much of their traditional layout and buildings. Coaltown of Wemyss is a designed village that was developed to provide housing for those working in the coal mines. It is designed in a traditional Fife vernacular style. There was an extensive programme of investment in West Wemyss in the early 2000s to restore many of the buildings along the seafront.

10.29 A heritage framework has been developed as part of the Leven programme which aims to involve people with heritage, develop heritage-based skills, and work with existing groups to promote the heritage of the locality.

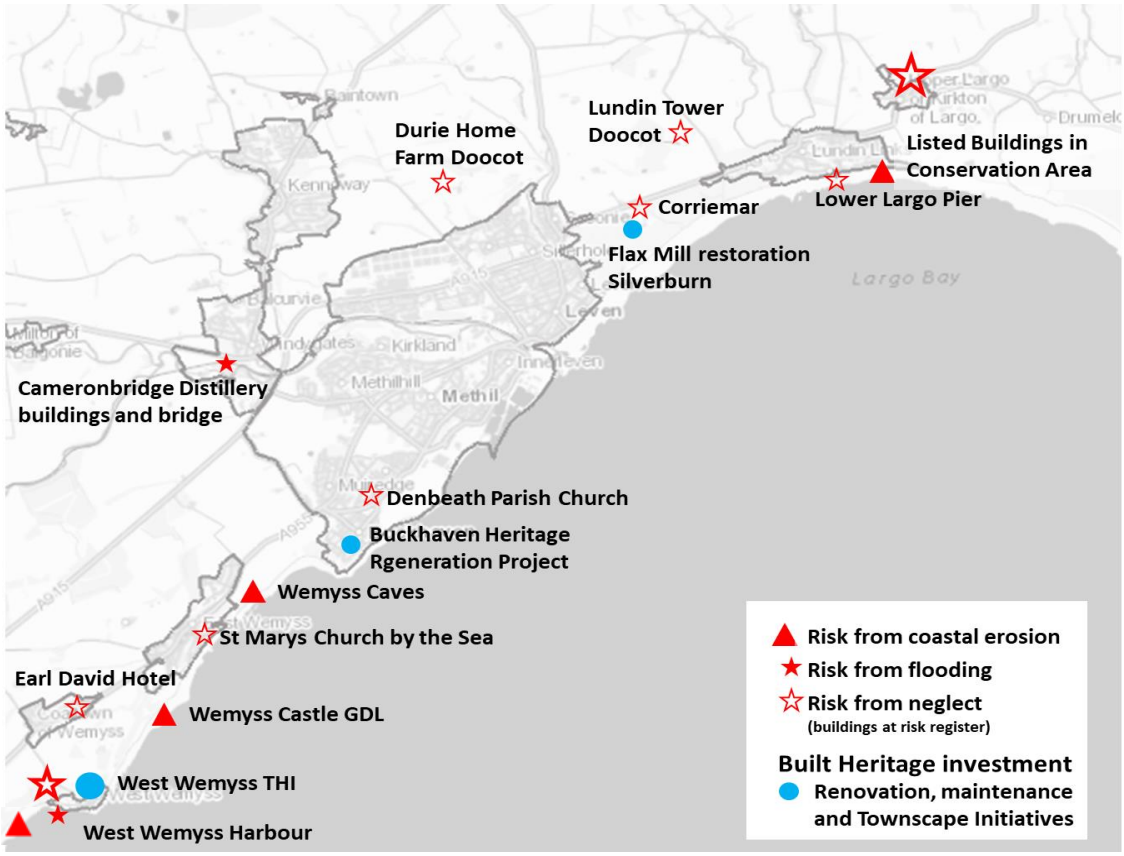
Risks to the historic environment

10.30 There are currently 18 buildings on the Buildings at Risk register in the Levenmouth locality, with clusters in West Wemyss and Upper Largo. There have been a number of fires affecting listed and historic buildings in the locality including the Lundin Links Hotel and Denbeath Institute both of which have led to complete demolition.

10.31 Climate change also poses a significant threat to the area's heritage. West Wemyss harbour is predicted to be at risk from coastal flooding on the SEPA floodmaps. There are also some listed buildings at Cameronbridge and Windygates which are predicted to be at risk from surface water and river flooding from the River Leven and Kennoway Burn.

10.32 The A listed Wemyss Castle and part of the associated designed landscape, Wemyss Chapel Garden, the Wemyss Caves and the Lower Largo Conservation Area and some listed buildings are within areas predicted to be at risk from coastal erosion on the Dynamic Coast 2 webmap.

Figure 10.6: Levenmouth locality built heritage at risk and investment initiatives



Source: Fife Council, HES & SEPA

This map was created by visually comparing HES built heritage designations with the SEPA flood maps, the Dynamic Coast 2 webmap, the Buildings at Risk register and some areas which have received funding for townscape and heritage initiatives.

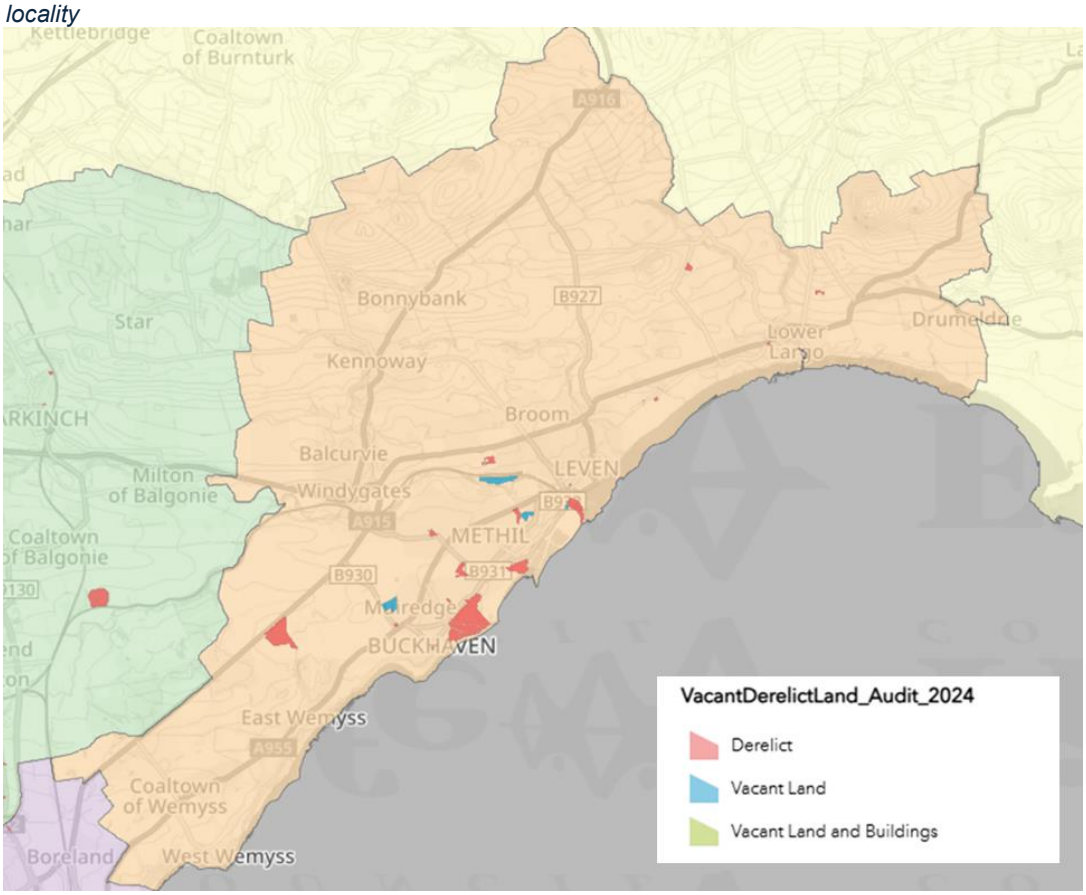
Links to evidence

- Conservation Area Appraisals
- The Leven Programme Heritage framework 2022-2032
- Historic Environment Scotland Interactive map showing built heritage, landscape character designations
- Historic Environment Scotland – Scheduled Monument – Wemyss Caves
- Fife Historic Buildings Trust – West Wemyss
- Fife Historic Buildings Trust - Leven
- Buildings at Risk register
- SEPA flood maps
- Dynamic Coast 2 webmap

Vacant and derelict land and environmental hazards in the Levenmouth locality

10.33 The Levenmouth locality has substantial areas of vacant and derelict land many of which relate to former mining or other industrial operations. There are particularly large areas derelict land along the coast in Buckhaven and Methil.

Figure 10.7: Extract from the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2022 showing the Levenmouth locality



Source: Fife Council

10.34 Between 2021-22 the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit identified that no vacant and derelict land sites in Levenmouth were brought back into use, but one additional site was identified – the Lundin Links Hotel.

10.35 Funding from the Vacant and Derelict land fund has been allocated to the restoration of the former Flax Mill at Silverburn Park (currently underway) and money has previously been allocated to aid regeneration at Fife Energy Park and Muiredge, and Mountfleurie industrial estates. Money has also been ringfenced to support remediation works as part of the Leven Programme (in particular the former creosote works at Methil Brae).

10.36 The Balfarg/Leven Scotland Gas Network pipeline passes through the north of the Levenmouth locality. Development close to this pipe and within

associated zones is subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. The Health and Safety Executive consultation zones can be viewed on the adopted FIFEplan proposals map (advice/consultation information). The Health and Safety Executive have advice on the type and scale of development within the pipeline consultation zones.

10.37 There are no air quality management areas or smoke control zones in Levenmouth. Air quality is monitored by Fife Council at the junction of the A915 and B933 in Leven.

Links to evidence

- Fife Vacant and Derelict land audit 2022
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning Methodology
- Fife Council – Smoke Control Zones
- Fife Council – pollution mapping

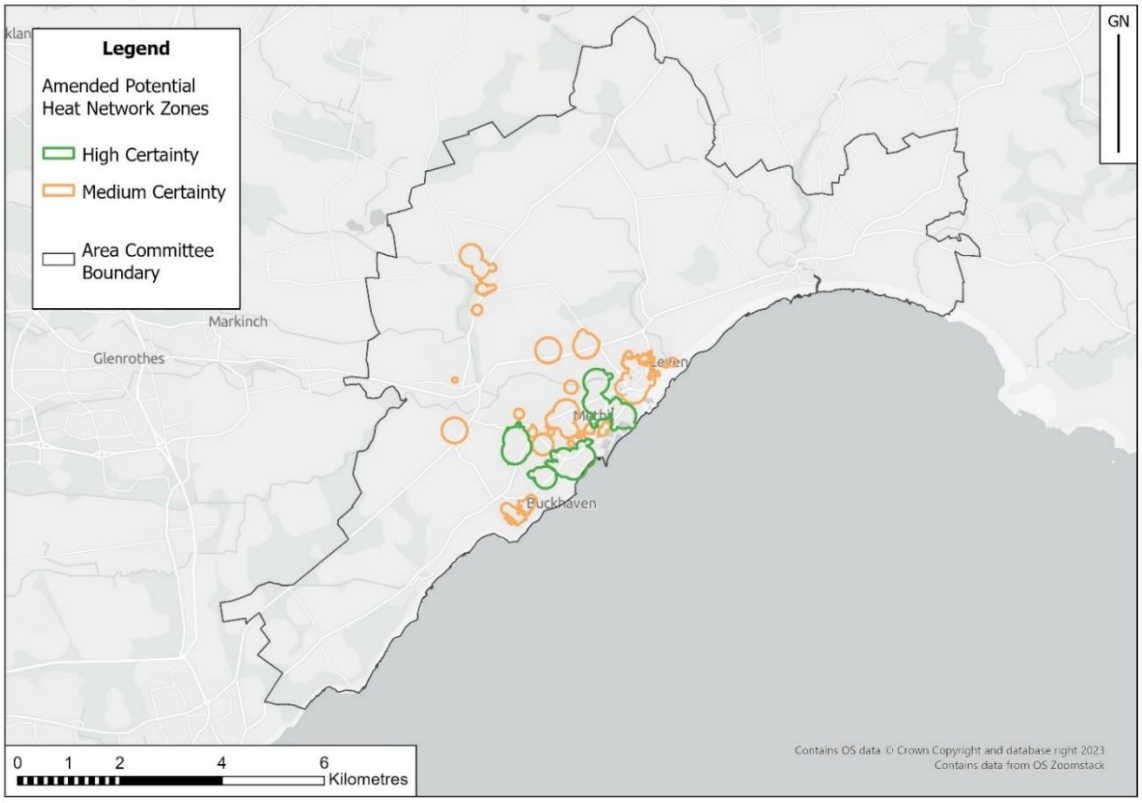
How the Levenmouth locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

10.38 In common with other coastal areas of Fife, the Levenmouth locality faces challenges arising from the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Opportunities will need to be taken to decarbonise heating in the locality to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding, and rising sea levels increase the threat from coastal erosion. Both of these issues will affect how development is planned in the future. Water quality and protecting important habitats are also key issues in the Levenmouth locality.

Decarbonising heating in the Levenmouth locality

10.39 Decarbonising heating will be important in helping Fife tackle the climate emergency and meeting net zero commitments. Potential Heat Network Zones in the Levenmouth locality are being identified as part of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Fife. The potential heat network zones are shown on the figure below. Further work to identify Heat Network Zones will be undertaken in 2024-25.

Figure 10.8: Potential heat network zones in the Levenmouth locality



Source: [Local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan | Fife Council]

10.40 Mine water also provides a possible decarbonised heat source in the Levenmouth locality.

10.41 The H100 Fife hydrogen project is the world's first project aimed at decarbonising heating and energy. This project plans to use wind energy at Fife Energy Park to supply approximately 300 homes with renewable hydrogen for heating and cooking in a trial first phase.

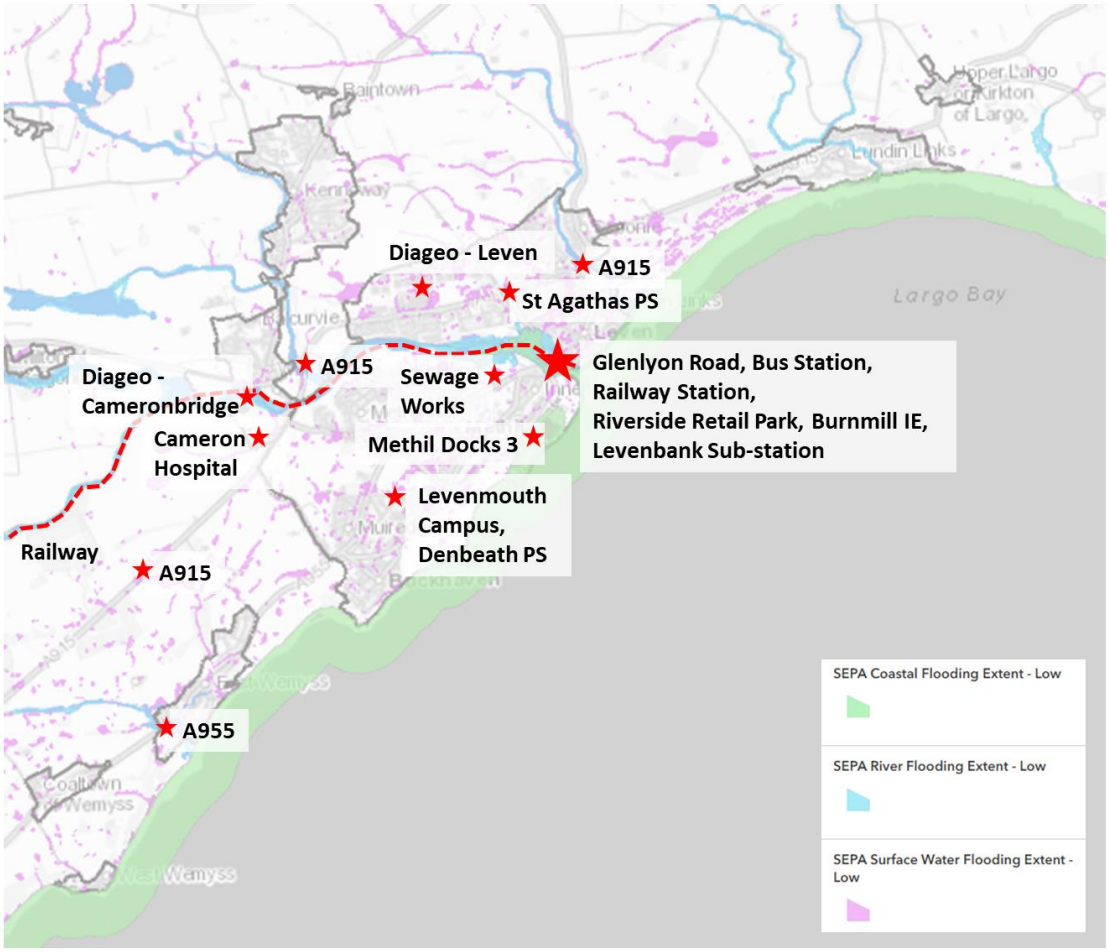
Links to evidence

- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy
- https://www.h100fife.co.uk/

Flood risk in the Levenmouth locality

10.42 Parts of the Levenmouth locality are identified by SEPA as predicted to be at risk of flooding, a risk that is increasing because of climate change. The risk is mainly from river flooding from the River Leven and Scoonie Burn and surface water flooding particularly in Leven. There is also some risk from coastal flooding. The map has further details of areas and features at risk.

Figure 10.9: Plan showing key assets predicted to be at risk of flooding in Levenmouth locality



Source: Fife Council & SEPA

Notes: This map was created by visually comparing: Fife Council data on schools, healthcare facilities and key employment areas (see Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood interactive map) and Mastermap and OS Base mapping with SEPA flood maps and Dynamic Coast 2 webmaps.

Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

10.43 There have been repeated incidents of flooding in the Levenmouth locality over the last few years, with parts of Leven, Methil, and Buckhaven being particularly badly affected. There are no existing or proposed flood defence

schemes in the area. East Wemyss and Leven are identified as in need of detailed flood studies in the River Basin Management Plan for the area. This work is underway for East Wemyss.

10.44 SEPA has predicted that there is a risk of geomorphic change (change to the river channel) along stretches of the River Leven through the Levenmouth locality.

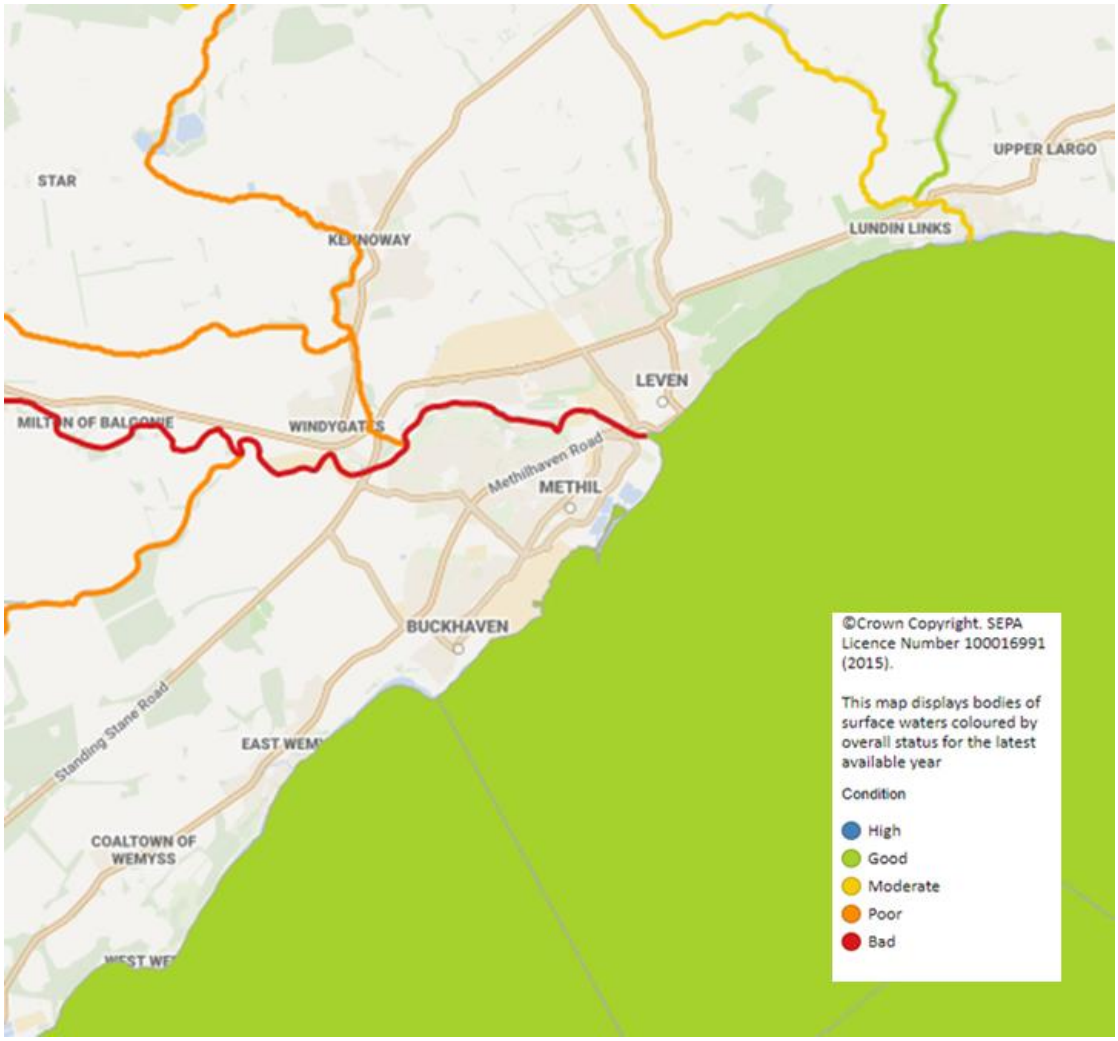
Links to evidence

- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- SEPA Flood Risk Maps
- SEPA – Geomorphic Risk data
- Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife

Water quality in the Levenmouth locality

10.45 Alongside flooding, there are also issues with the ecological condition of surface water in Levenmouth. The SEPA water classification hub classifies the River Leven between Markinch and Leven as in bad ecological condition. This is due to legacy barriers to fish migration, modification of the channel by urban development and water abstraction by agriculture, business and hydroelectric generation (identified on the SEPA water environment hub). Many of the connecting burns are classed as in poor ecological condition. The Keil Burn is identified as in good ecological condition.

Figure 10.10: Extract from SEPA water classification hub showing quality of surface waters in the Levenmouth locality



Source: SEPA

10.46 Groundwater quality in the locality has been identified as poor due to legacy from mining and quarrying activities.

10.47 Bathing water at Lower Largo is identified as poor particularly after heavy rain. However, bathing water at Leven is on target.

10.48 The River Leven Programme has a major project underway to restore the River Leven at its eastern end, which will improve the quality of the water, creating new areas of wetland habitat, removing barriers to fish migration, and reprofiling and naturalising the river channel.

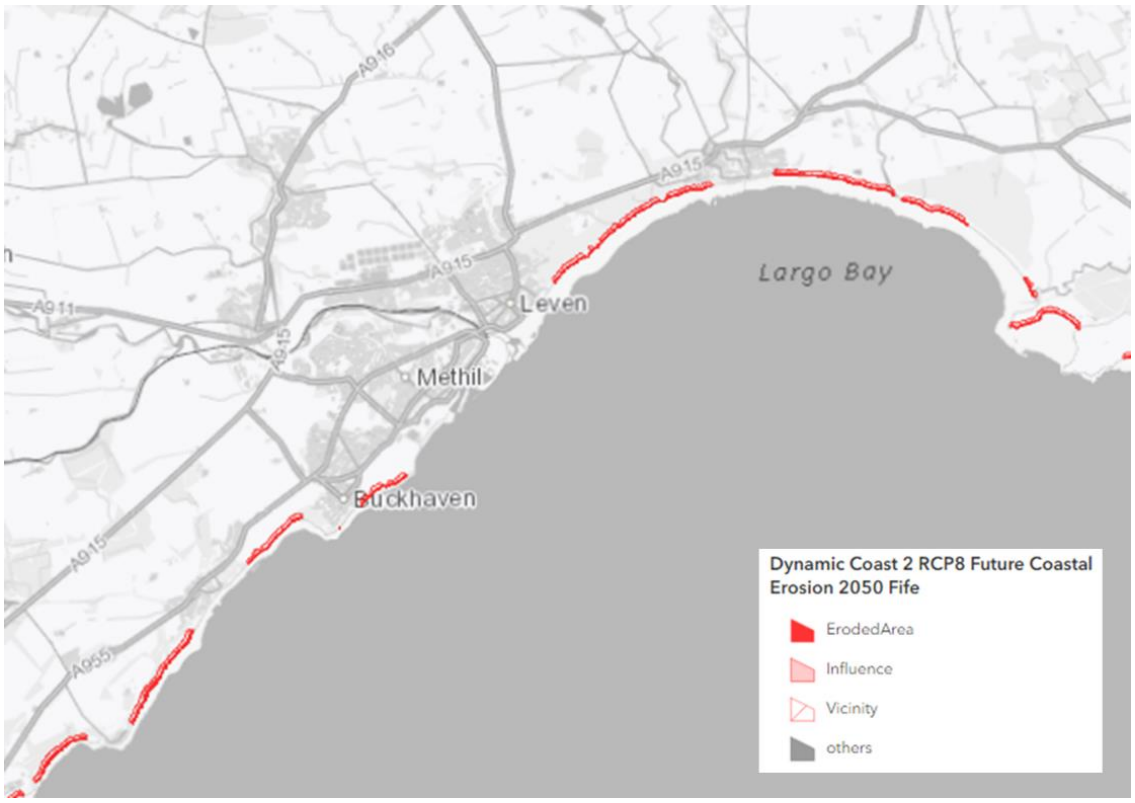
Links to evidence

- SEPA water classification hub
- SEPA water environment hub
- SEPA – Bathing water profile – Lower Largo
- River Leven restoration project

Coastal erosion in the Levenmouth locality

10.49 The climate emergency is also increasing the risk of coastal erosion all along the coast within the Levenmouth locality. Dynamic Coast 2 mapping identifies areas around Largo Bay and the Wemyss villages as predicted to be at risk from coastal erosion.

Figure 10.11: Map showing areas in the Levenmouth locality which are predicted to be at risk of coastal erosion (in red) – 2050 high emission scenario



Source: Dynamic Coast mapping (DC2)

Note: Caveat for use of Dynamic Coast maps. The Dynamic Coast maps should not be used to assess coastal risk to individual properties.

10.50 There are extensive artificial coastal defences protecting the coastal settlements in the Levenmouth locality. Storms in 2023 caused damage to the sea wall in Leven.

10.51 Under the Coastal Change Adaptation programme, Fife will review its Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) in line with new Guidance on creating Coastal Change Adaptation Plans. It is anticipated the revised plan will be ready for publication in 2027/28.

10.52 The new Local Development Plan will have to consider how future development should manage the risk of coastal erosion. There is a strong presumption by Scottish Government that engineering solutions to protect areas at risk are no longer appropriate.

Links to evidence

- Dynamic Coast mapping
- Fife Shoreline Management Plan (2011)
- Fife Coastal Formal Defences Register Dec 2023
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity

Green and blue networks in the Levenmouth locality

10.53 This locality is within the Central Scotland Green Network- one of the eighteen national developments recognised within NPF4 and is one of Europe's largest green infrastructure projects. Key assets in the area include the coast including coastal woodlands by the Wemyss villages and the shore, Silverburn Park, Scoonie and Lundin golf courses, the River Leven and Kennoway Den.

10.54 There are some gaps in the existing green and blue networks, particularly in the built-up areas of Buckhaven, Methil, Methilhill and Leven, and in the active travel routes across the locality, for example there is currently no cycleway provision within Coaltown of Wemyss although there is an aspiration for a cycle route along the A955. There are also some perceived safety issues on paths along the River Leven.

10.55 The Leven Programme and active community groups such as CLEAR are working to address the gaps, delivering many of the green and blue network opportunities identified, such as connections for people, habitat creation, river restoration and improving the quality of the green and blue infrastructure in Methil, Buckhaven, Methilhill and Leven for both wildlife and people. Grant funding has been awarded to CLEAR from the Levenmouth Reconnected Fund for enhancement to the green and blue network in Buckhaven including greenspace improvements and food growing.

10.56 There is also an extensive programme of active travel routes being progressed across Levenmouth as part of the Levenmouth Connectivity Project. The new routes will run through the town and along the River Leven and the Promenade in Leven.

10.57 The Fife green and blue network audit reports for the area are:

- Largo Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Levenmouth Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Wemyss Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update

10.58 Green and blue networks are mapped on an interactive map and a storymap explains how the assets and opportunities were identified.

Figure 10.12: Extract from Green and Blue Network interactive map illustrating key assets and existing blue and green network policy areas

Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Largo Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Levenmouth Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Wemyss Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- The Leven Programme
- Leven Connectivity Project
- Central Scotland Green Network
- Levenmouth reconnected gives CLEAR Buckhaven and Methil a major cash boost.
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystem services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap

Biodiversity in the Levenmouth locality

10.59 Priority habitats within the Levenmouth locality include species rich grassland, the coastal sand dunes at East Wemyss and Largo Bay, and a mix of ancient, semi-natural and long-established woodland.

Table 10.1: Summary of the priority habitats found within the Levenmouth locality including key sites

Upland Habitats	Freshwater & Wetland Habitats	Lowland & Farmland Habitats	Woodland Habitats	Marine & Coastal Habitats
Upland heathland Upland flush fen and swamp Key site: Largo Law (LWS)	Inland freshwater, such as **Carlhurlie Reservoir (LWS)** Rivers, such as the **River Leven** Ponds	Lowland meadow and upland hay meadow	Ancient, semi-natural & long-established woodland, such as **Keil's Den (LWS)** Mixed lowland woodland Urban woodland	Intertidal communities: the Firth of Forth (SPA, RAMSAR, SSSI) Strandline, sand dune & shingle community, such as **Drummochy (Massney Braes) (LWS)** Coastal sand dunes at **East Wemyss** and **Largo Bay**

Source: Fife's Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Fife Council

10.60 These habitats support a wealth of wildlife including otters (European Protected Species), badgers (UK Protected Species) and deer (Scottish Protected Species). There are also key bluebell sites in the locality (UK protected species).

10.61 The Fife Biodiversity Action Plan states that the destruction of habitats is the number one cause of species extinction. It is key these priority habitats are safeguarded.

10.62 Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan balsam, and Rhododendron also pose a threat to the various ecosystems within the Levenmouth locality.

10.63 Another invasive non-native species which can be found within the Levenmouth locality is the American mink which poses a threat to domestic ducks and poultry, gamebirds, and fish. This species has also been linked to the decrease of water voles in the UK and is considered to have negative implications for fisheries.

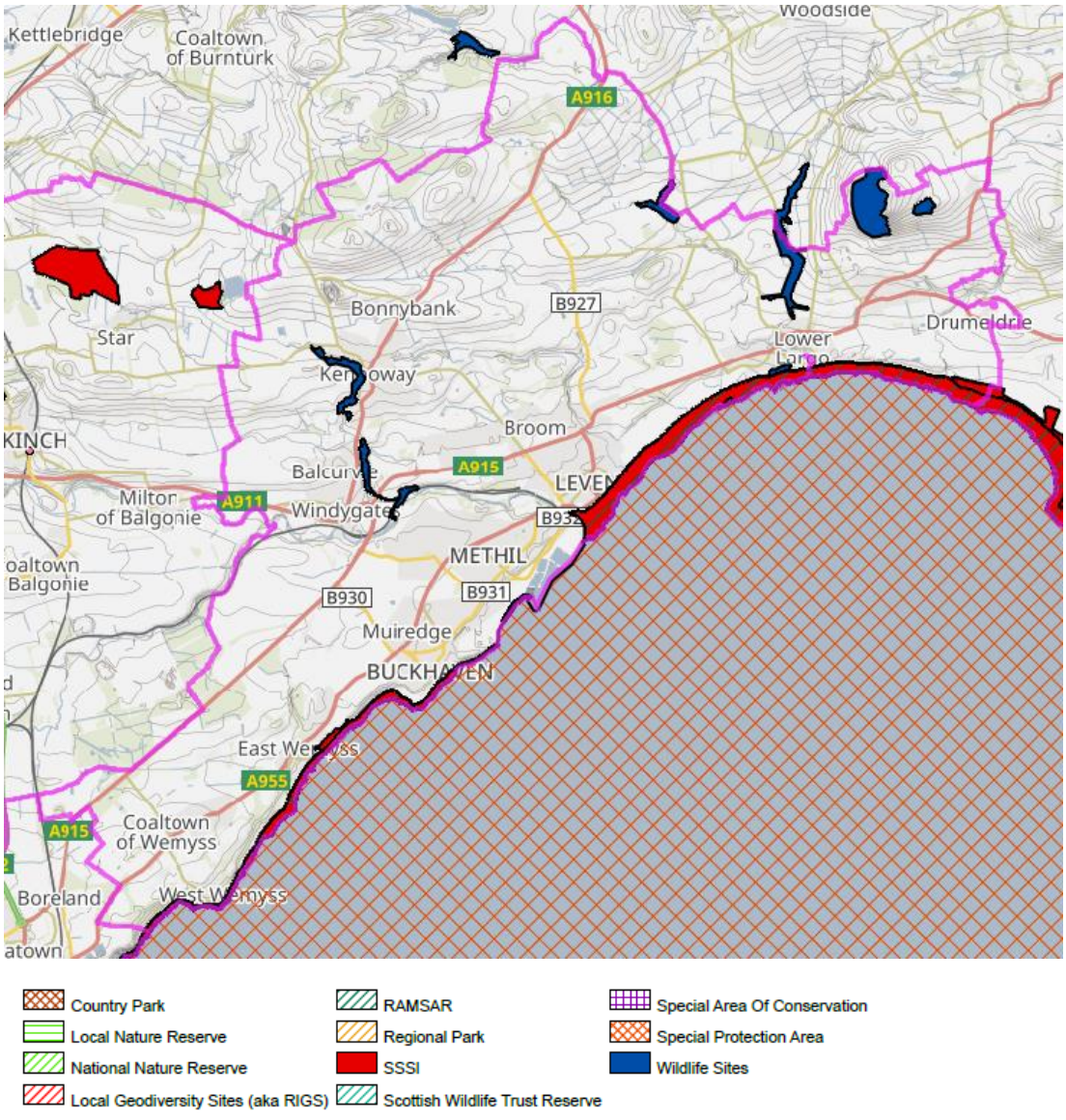
Links to evidence

- NBN Atlas
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Nature Scot- Invasive non-native plants
- Nature Scot- Protected species A-Z guide
- Selected Key Bluebell sites in Fife – Fife Nature
- Water Vole survey absence records – Fife Nature

Natural Heritage Designations in the Levenmouth locality

10.64 There are a number of sites designated for natural heritage in the Levenmouth locality (see figure below). There are internationally designated natural heritage sites along the coast, the Firth of Forth Ramsar, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex Special Protection area have primarily been designated for their importance for marine birds, waders and waterfowl.

Figure 10.13: Natural heritage designations in the Levenmouth locality



Source: Fife Council

Note: These can be viewed on the Green and Blue network interactive map.

10.65 There are six locally designated Local Nature Conservation Sites, (formerly called wildlife sites), in the Levenmouth locality. Three of these were resurveyed around five years ago and have been found to be in an satisfactory condition (Keil's Den, Largo Law and Lahill Craig). The other wildlife sites - Carlhurlie Reservoir, Kennoway Den and Windygates to Kennoway - have not yet been resurveyed.

10.66 More detail on why these sites have been designated for natural heritage in Fife is provided on the Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list.

Links to evidence

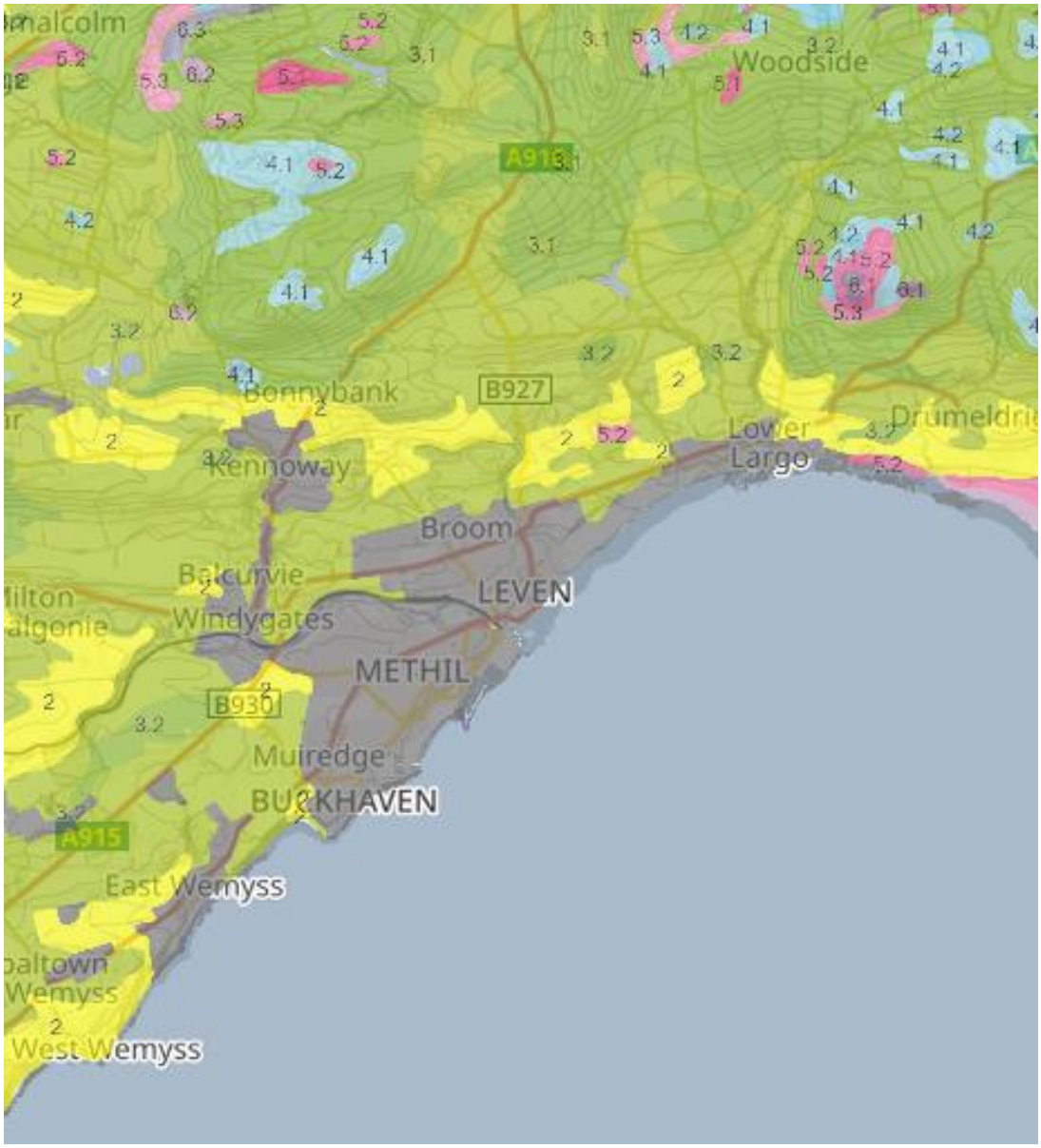
- Scottish Government – Natural Heritage Designations
- NatureScot– local designations
- Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites List
- Fife Local Nature Conservation Sites tracker Dec 2023

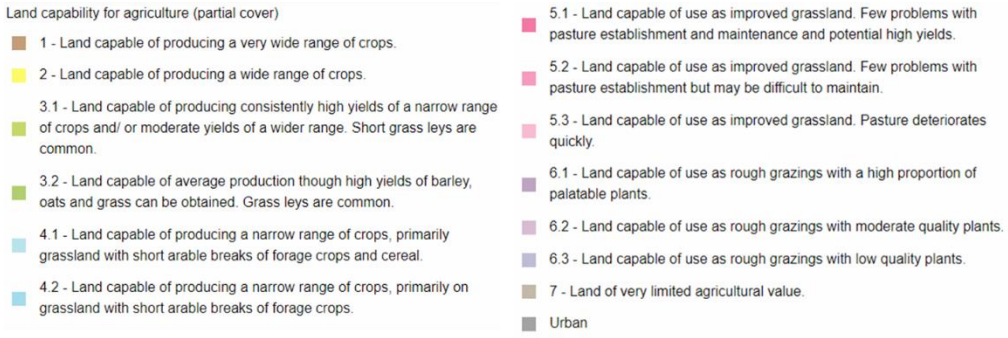
Landscape character and soils in the Levenmouth locality

10.67 The landscape of the Levenmouth locality is characterised by lowland dens, river basins and hills (as identified on NatureScot Landscape Character types (2019) mapping). The locality contains the designated Wemyss Coast and part of the Largo Law Local Landscape Areas as designated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017. There are no Green Belts identified in the Levenmouth locality.

10.68 Outwith the built-up areas there is a high proportion of prime agricultural land in the Levenmouth locality (classes 1 to 3.1 in the Scottish Land Capability for agriculture map).

Figure 10.14: Extract from the land capability map for Scotland for the Levenmouth locality





Source: Scottish Government - ©Crown Copyright. Scottish Government Licence Number 100020540. All Rights Reserved.

10.69 One small area at Lundin Wood is identified as being class 4 and 5 peatland in the 2016 Scottish Carbon and Peatland Map.

10.70 There is one working quarry in the area – Langside Quarry north of Kennoway which extracts hard rock. The Levenmouth locality has been extensively mined for coal but there are no mines which remain active and the last one at Earlseat has now been restored and now operates as a wind farm. The mining history does however leave a legacy of ground stability, contamination, and water quality issues in the locality.

Links and evidence

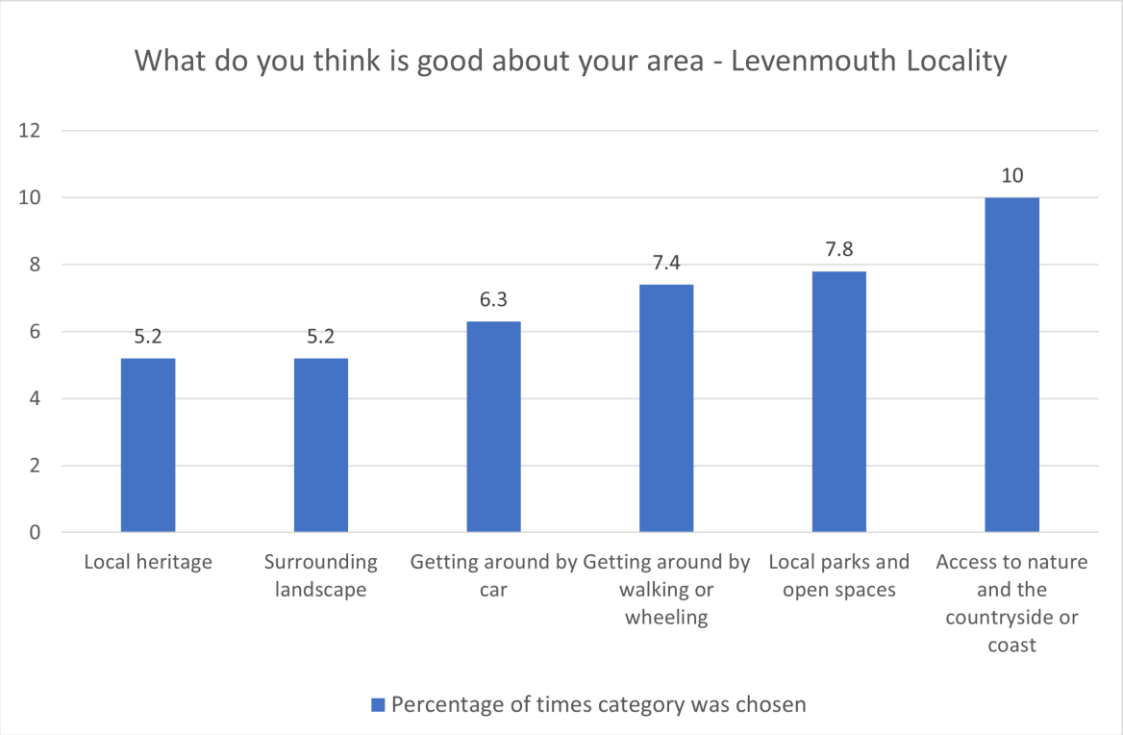
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Types 2019
- Adopted FIFEplan (2017) interactive map
- Scotland's Soils – Land Capability for agriculture
- Carbon and Peatland Map 2016
- Press coverage of sinkhole in Methilhill
- List of Fife's Quarries
- Earlseat Wind Farm

The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the Levenmouth locality within the lifetime of the Plan

10.71 The main infrastructure issues facing Levenmouth are access to healthcare, school capacity, quality and provision of open space, and accessibility of employment and education opportunities by public transport.

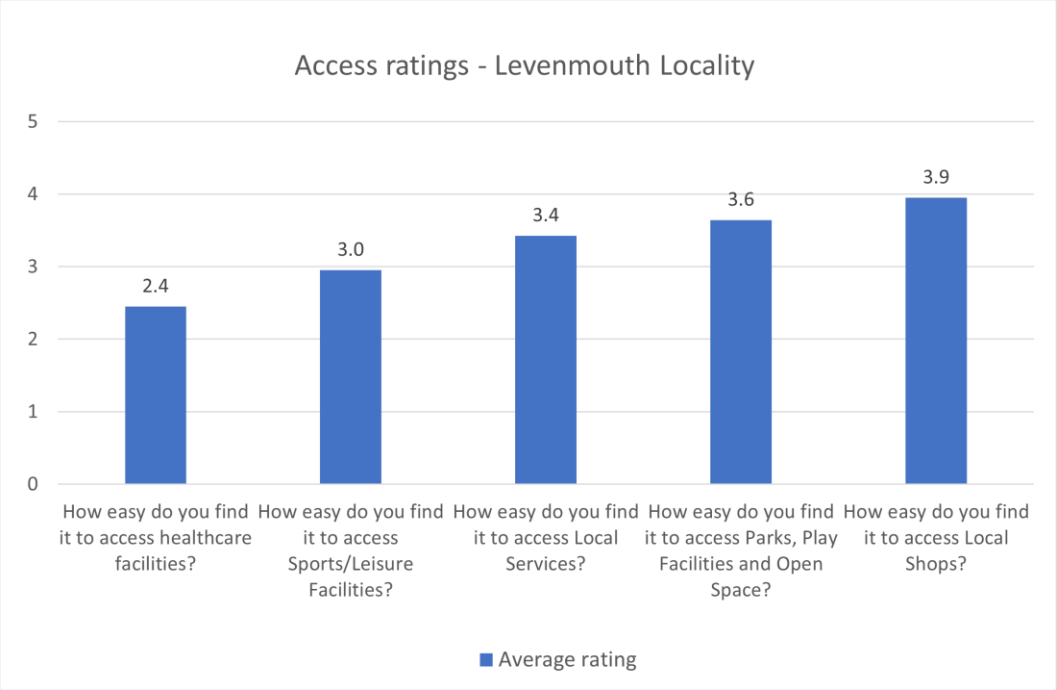
10.72 In the autumn of 2022, Fife Council asked residents what they felt was good about the Levenmouth locality, what was not so good, and what the key issues were that they felt needed to be tackled.

Figure 10.15: What respondents think is good about their area



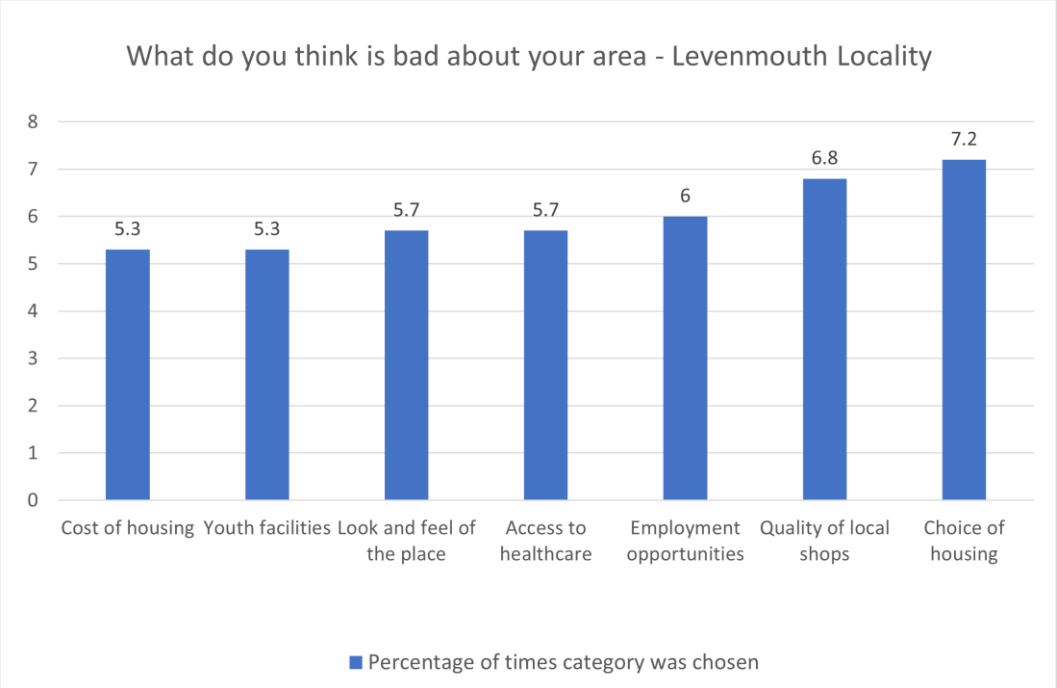
Source: Fife Council

Figure 10.16: Average ratings for access



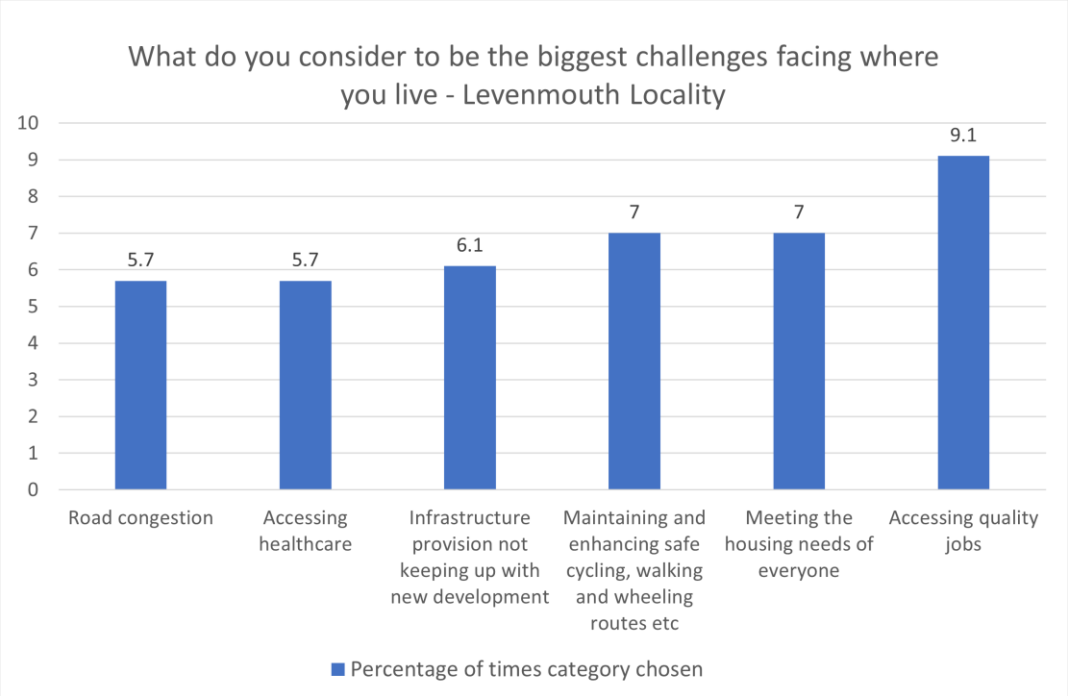
Source: Fife Council

Figure 10.17: What respondents think is bad about their area



Source: Fife Council

Figure 10.18: What respondents think the biggest challenges facing their area are



Source: Fife Council

10.73 The issues that were highlighted the most were the lack of housing choice, the poor quality of local shops, limited access to employment opportunities and the general look and feel of the locality. Access to healthcare facilities was also seen to be poor due to appointment availability and a lack of dentists. One good feature of the Levenmouth locality is the accessibility of local shops within a reasonable walking distance. However, the survey highlighted that for some extra services, residents had to go elsewhere e.g. clothes shopping.

10.74 Some respondents stated that they must go outside of the locality for sports and leisure facilities as the quality of those in Levenmouth is not great.

Links to evidence

- Levenmouth summary of survey (residents)

Healthcare in the Levenmouth locality

10.75 Levenmouth has a range of health and care facilities. These are concentrated around Leven, Buckhaven and Methil and not within walking distance for the more rural parts of the locality. However, planned growth and demographic changes (in particular, an aging population) over the lifetime of the new LDP are likely to put increased pressure on these facilities.

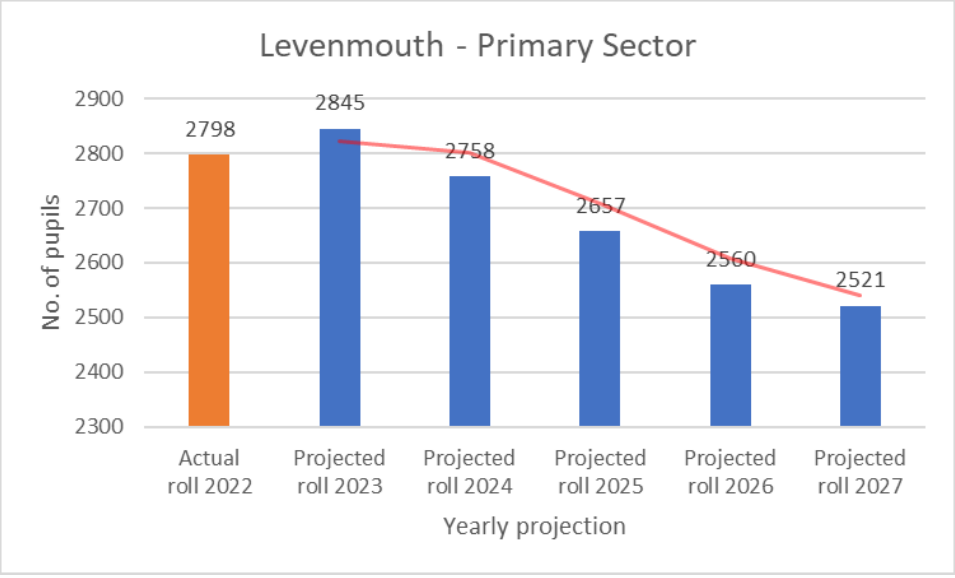
Links to evidence

- NHS Fife Estate Strategy

School places in the Levenmouth locality

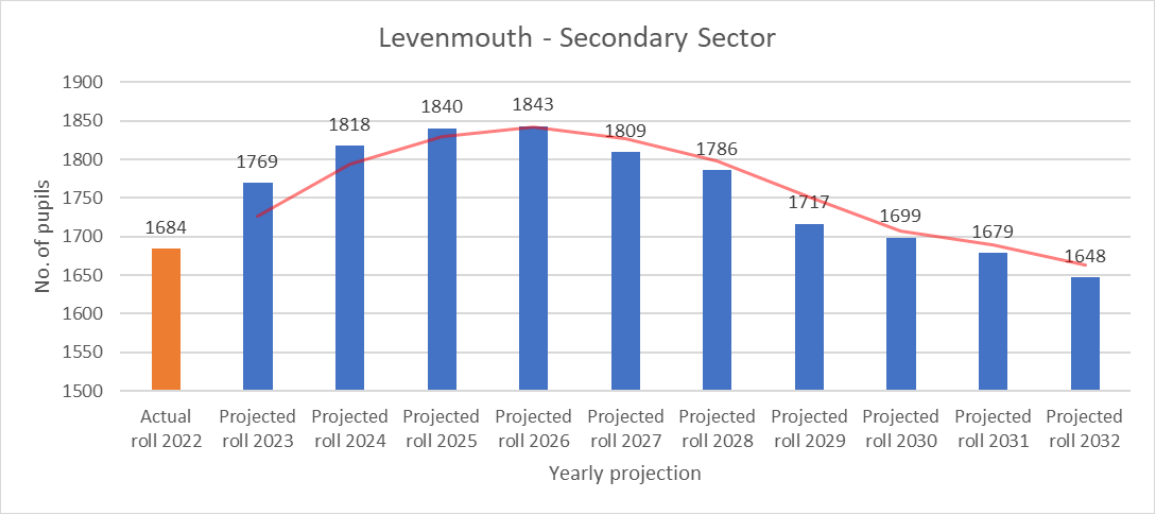
10.76 In education, there is projected pupil capacity across the whole of the existing and planned primary school estate to accommodate further growth (although that covers a range from some schools having falling pupil numbers and others having a potential shortage of space). Spare primary school capacity across localities does not mean there is capacity for new homes across all primary schools in the locality.

Figure 10.19: Projected pupil numbers in primary schools in the Levenmouth locality (2023 - 2027)



Source: Fife Council

Figure 10.20: Projected pupil numbers in secondary schools in the Levenmouth locality (2023 - 2032)



Source: Fife Council

10.77 At a secondary level, there is projected to be a very slight shortfall of places by 2027 across the locality.

Links to evidence

- School Roll Projections by Area Committee September 2023

Open space, play spaces and sports facilities in the Levenmouth locality

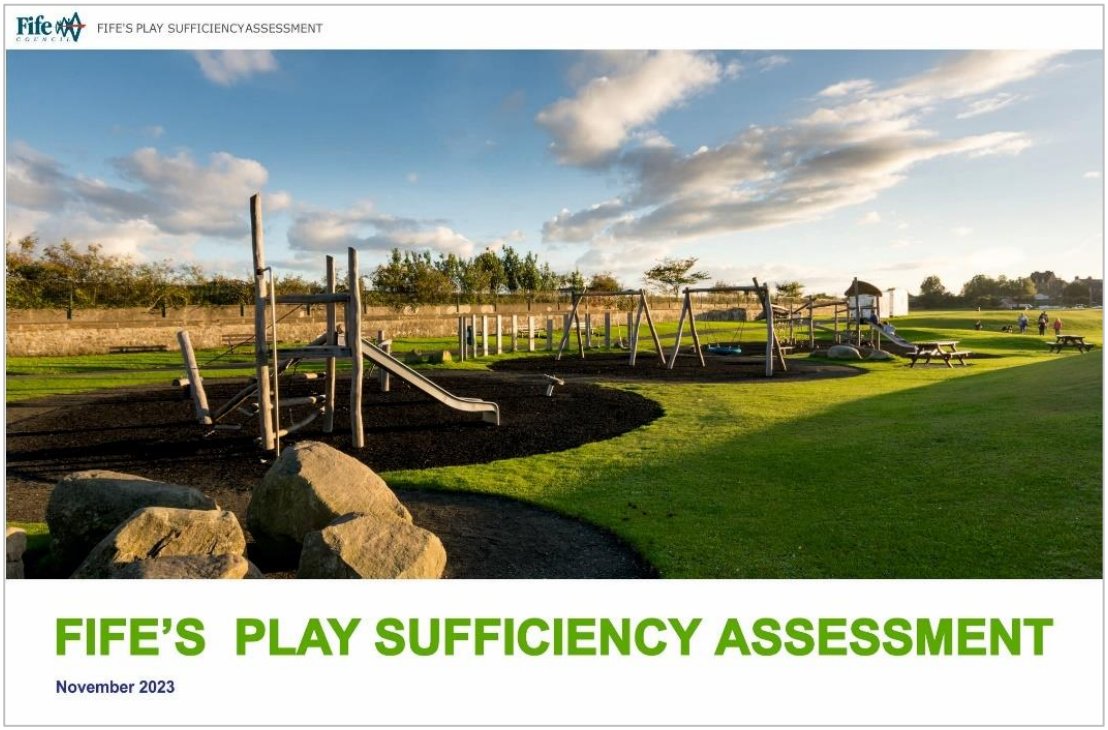
10.78 Open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, and outdoor places to play and socialise are key to successful placemaking. The outdoor spaces, including access to the coast, in the Levenmouth locality have helped to make communities more pleasant, liveable, healthy, and resilient.

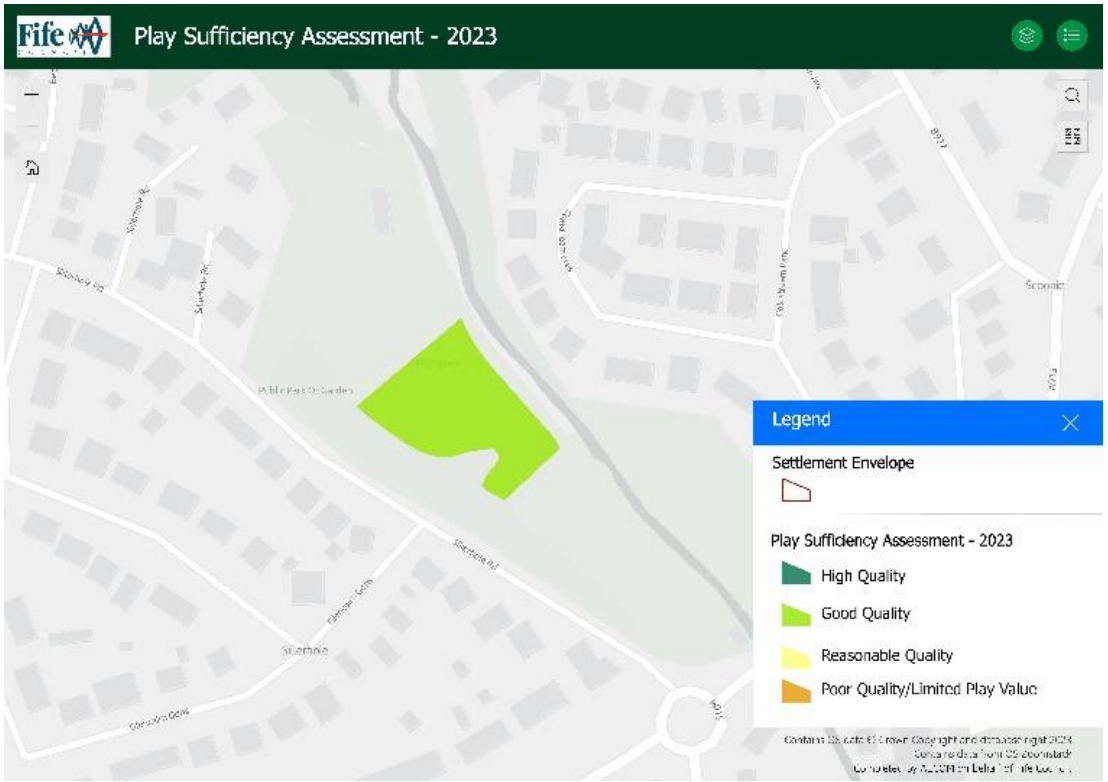
10.79 Work is underway to update the Fife Open Space audit and Strategy which will be finalised in late 2025. Site visits to update the quality audit have been completed. These visits found that most of the settlements had some high or good quality greenspaces such as Silverburn Park and Letham Glen in Leven and Drummochy Road in Lower Largo. Kingslaw Den in East Wemyss was one of the spaces which had shown a marked improvement since the last audit and there is evidence of good community involvement with this park. However, quite a few spaces which were classed as poor quality in the 2009 audit still have similar issues with some areas appearing derelict and feeling intimidating. The updated audit has found there is around a 7% decline in the quality of greenspaces in the Levenmouth area and many of the lowest scoring greenspaces in Fife were residential amenity spaces in the Levenmouth area. The investment and series of projects being carried out in the new River Park along the River Leven will provide a large scale high quality greenspace in the area.

10.80 There has been a 6% decline in the amount of publicly useable greenspace in Leven, Methil and Buckhaven and all the settlements in the Levenmouth area were found to have below the Fife average of greenspace apart from West Wemyss and Coaltown of Wemyss although this does not take into account access to the coast.

10.81 The Fife Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023 identifies that there is one high quality play park in the Levenmouth area (Toll Park in Buckhaven) and a number of good quality play parks such as Cotlands Park in Kennoway, Taylor Street in Methil and the Promenade in Leven. However out of 55 sites assessed in the area, well over half were classed as poorer quality facilities. East and West Wemyss were classed as having insufficient play provision due to the poor quality of the play provision in these areas. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment provides more information.

Figure 10.21: Indicative image from Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment (showing part of the Levenmouth locality





Source: Fife Council

10.82 Sports facilities are mainly focused in Leven, Methil, Methilhill and Buckhaven. The key facilities in the area are the Levenmouth Swimming Pool and Sports Centre and Levenmouth Community Sport Hub at Levenmouth Academy. There are a number of golf courses particularly along

the coast between Leven and Lundin Links and boat and sailing clubs in Lower Largo and Methil. The smaller settlements in the area have sports pitches and many of them have bowling greens.

10.83 A Facility Planning Model developed by SportScotland predicts patterns of demand for sports facilities (but not actual usage). The model outputs suggest that Levenmouth Swimming Pool is very busy at present and predicts it will continue to be in 2033.

Links to evidence

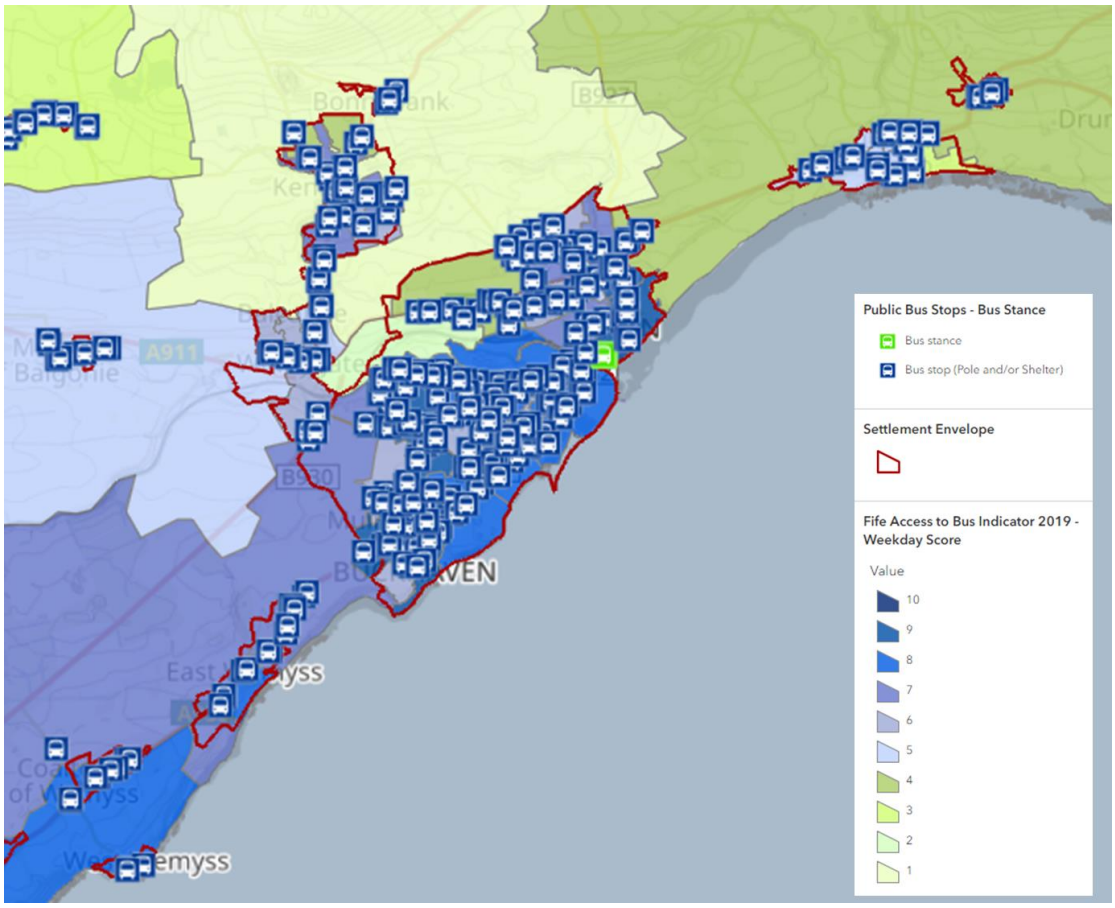
- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Fife Greenspace Audit 2010
- Open space quality audit – examples of good quality sites Jan 25
- Open space quality audit – examples of poor quality sites Jan 25
- Draft Fife Greenspace Audit 2024 – key changes since 2009
- sportScotland – Facility Planning Model Fife Council 2023
- Sportscotland – Community sports hubs map

Accessibility of public transport in the Levenmouth locality

10.84 Whilst most of the Levenmouth locality is well served by bus services and is home to one of Fife's 5 main bus stations, it is still one of the most deprived areas in Fife in terms of connectivity to strategic employment destination located within and outwith Fife.

10.85 Bus services are less frequent in North East Leven; North Kennoway; the Largo's and Lundin Links and bus services to Baintown and Bonnybank are poor, and public transport to newer developments on the edges of settlements also have less frequent services.

Figure 10.22: Weekday access to buses in the Levenmouth locality with bus stops (1= poor access, 10 = good access)



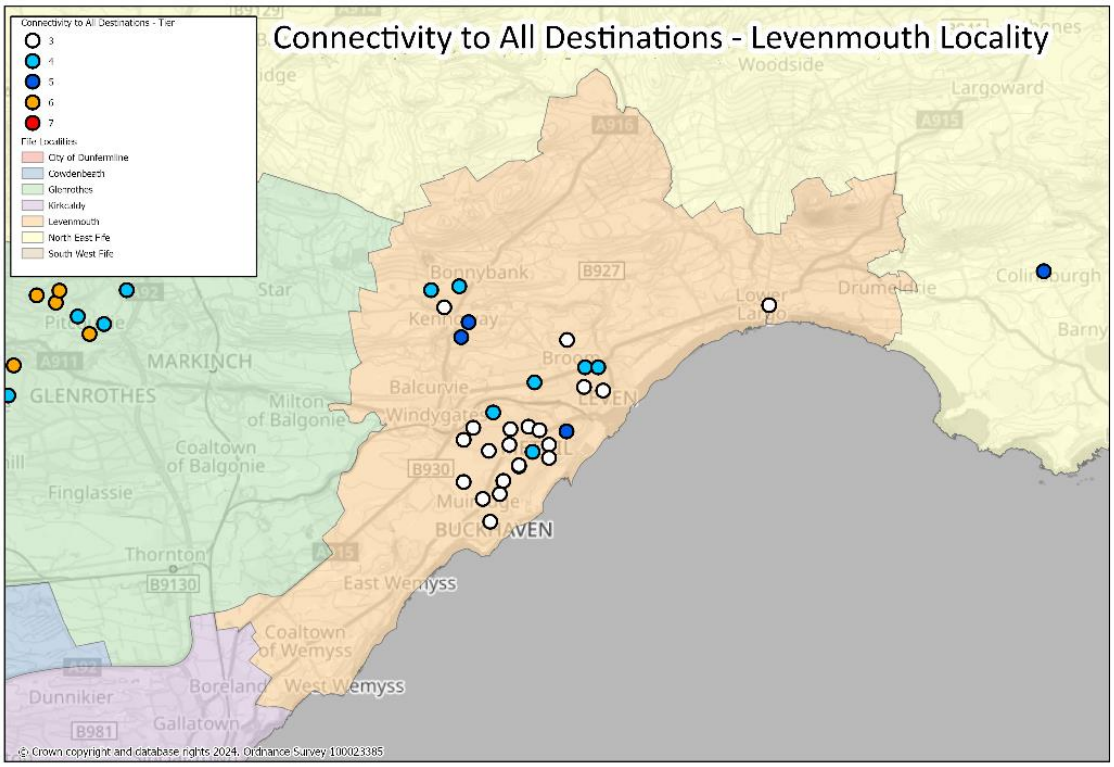
Source: Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)

10.86 The disconnection to the passenger rail network in the locality will be improved by the reopening of the railway with two new stations located at Cameronbridge and Leven.

10.87 The figure below highlights overall levels of access to destinations such as employment and further education from areas within the locality. Tiers 1 and 2 are not show on the map as they are considered to be good access

scores. Tiers 3 and above indicate access issues. Public transport access to employment destinations is relatively poor in Levenmouth when compared to areas close by like Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy.

Figure 10.23: Connectivity to All Destinations from Levenmouth Locality



Source: LTS/LDP Modelling and Options Report

10.88 Access to further and higher education, strategic health and retail locations is also poor across Levenmouth. The re-opening of the Leven rail line will improve access to employment and other destinations including further education and retail. The rail line will also provide an opportunity to support the growth of Levenmouth as a visitor destination.

10.89 More commentary on public transport accessibility is contained in Annex 10 (Transport).

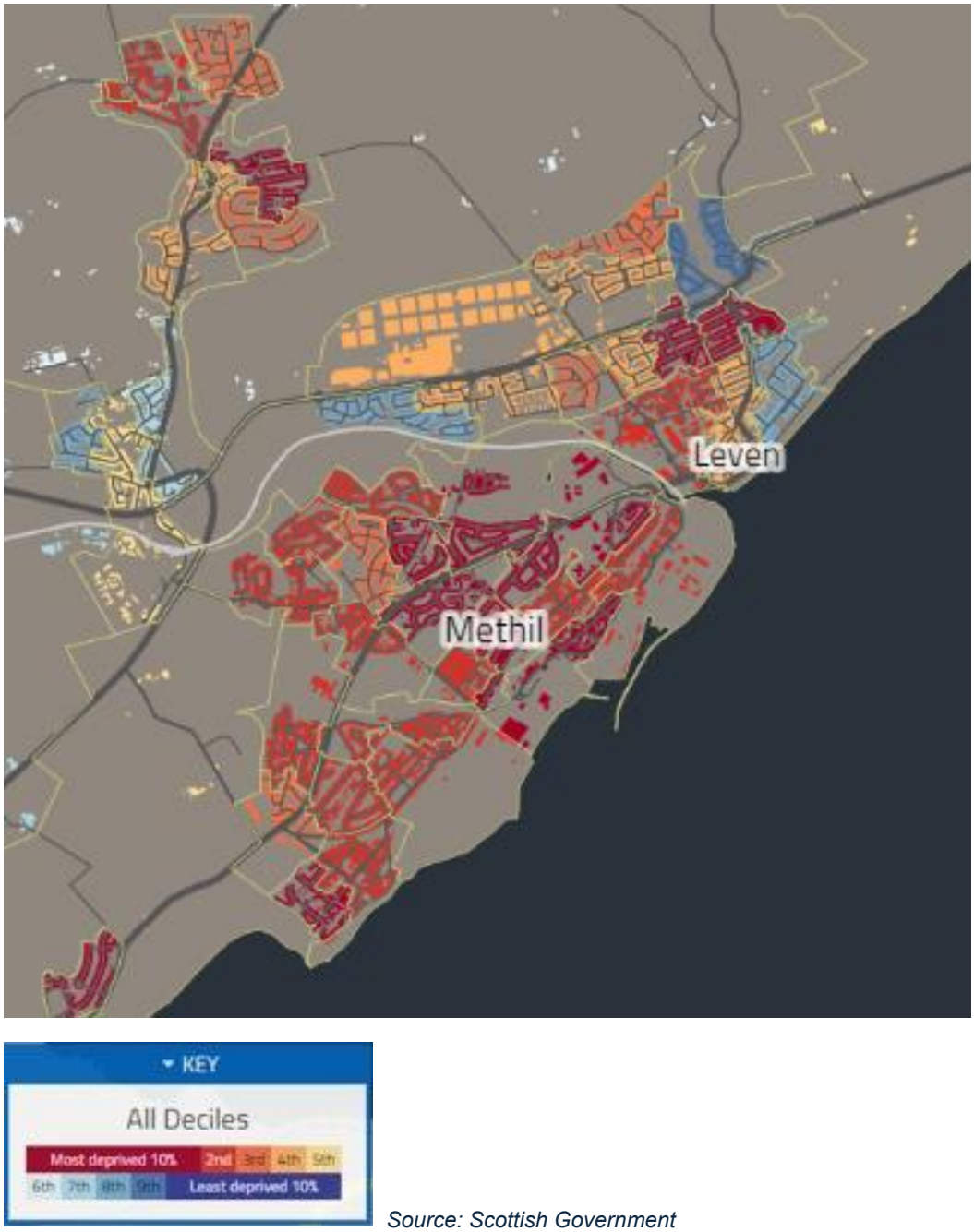
Links to evidence

- LTS & LDP Strategic Transport Modelling and option Development Report 2022
- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Levenmouth Rail link
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- Levenmouth Area Surveys Analysis 2022

How the Levenmouth locality's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

10.90 Levenmouth has the highest levels of deprivation in Fife (see figure below), as well as the highest claimant rates. Ensuring more equitable opportunities in the locality is a priority, with an aim to providing long-term sustainability in the local economy. The local economy struggles because of these long-term socio-economic problems, so creating circular economies where people work and spend locally would have a huge benefit.

Figure 10.24: Deprivation in the Levenmouth locality



Source: Scottish Government

10.91 Improved active travel throughout Levenmouth, combined with the new rail link should improve access and strengthen connections to cities like Dunfermline, Edinburgh and Dundee. Towns that have good connections to strong cities tend to have better economic outcomes, which will support the resilience of Levenmouth's local economy.

10.92 Levenmouth also performs very well in terms of education, and it should be a priority to ensure lifelong learning opportunities, keeping its industries on the cutting edge.

Links to Evidence

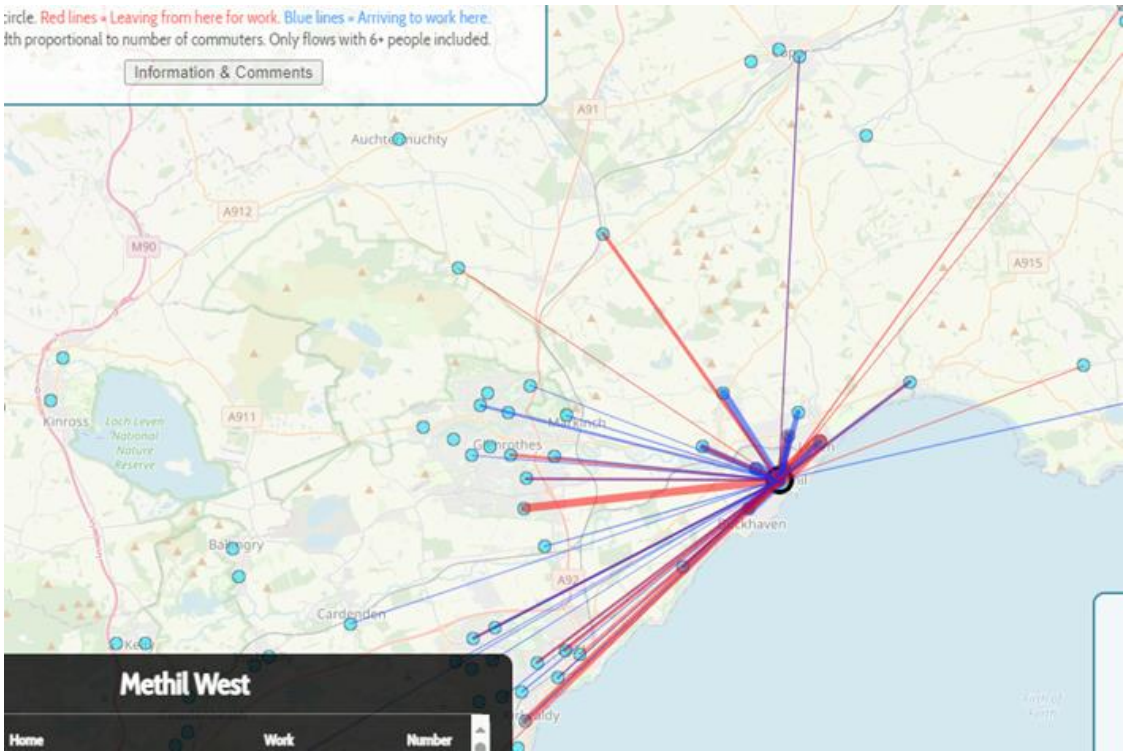
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 18-10-04-Talk-of-the-Town.pdf (centreforcities.org)
- Wellbeing Index (coop.co.uk)
- Local Economic Profile 2021-2022

Employment in the Levenmouth Locality

Travel to Work

10.93 The majority of people living in Levenmouth work within the locality or travel to Glenrothes or Kirkcaldy. Fewer people travel to Cupar, Dunfermline, Rosyth or beyond Fife.

Figure 10.25: Example of journeys to work to and from part of the Levenmouth locality



Source: Datashine

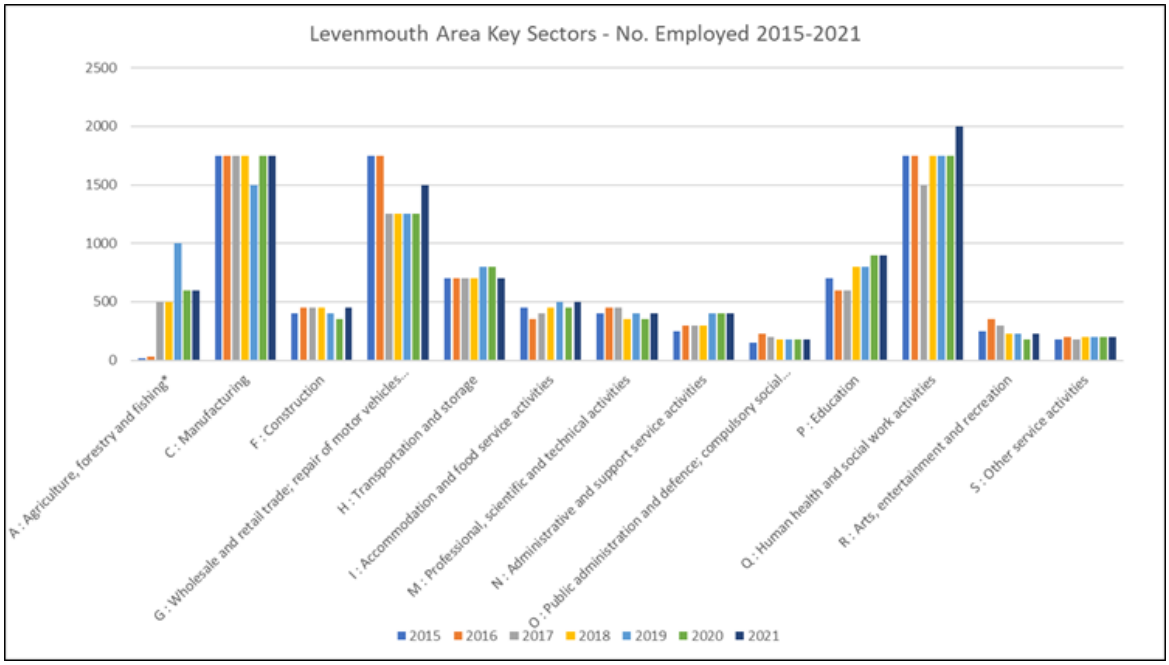
10.94 Those living in the Wemyss villages tend to travel to work in Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth in roughly the same numbers.

10.95 It is hoped that the reintroduction of the Levenmouth rail link will bring opportunities for residents to work in other places within and outwith Fife.

Key Sectors

10.96 Manufacturing is an important sector for Fife and is one of the Levenmouth locality's key sectors (see figure below). Levenmouth is one of Scotland's leading centres for energy, low carbon and renewables with a strong and growing profile of low carbon businesses, a range of site development locations and world-class facilities.

Figure 10.26: The Levenmouth locality's key employment sectors (number of people employed each year from 2015 to 2021)



Source: NOMIS Key Sectors Data

10.97 Energy Park Fife is a world leading engineering and research zone within the energy sector. As such the Local Development Plan will continue to support the sector.

10.98 The Health and Social Work Activities sector has roughly the same numbers employed as Manufacturing, around 1,750, with the two sectors having the highest employment numbers.

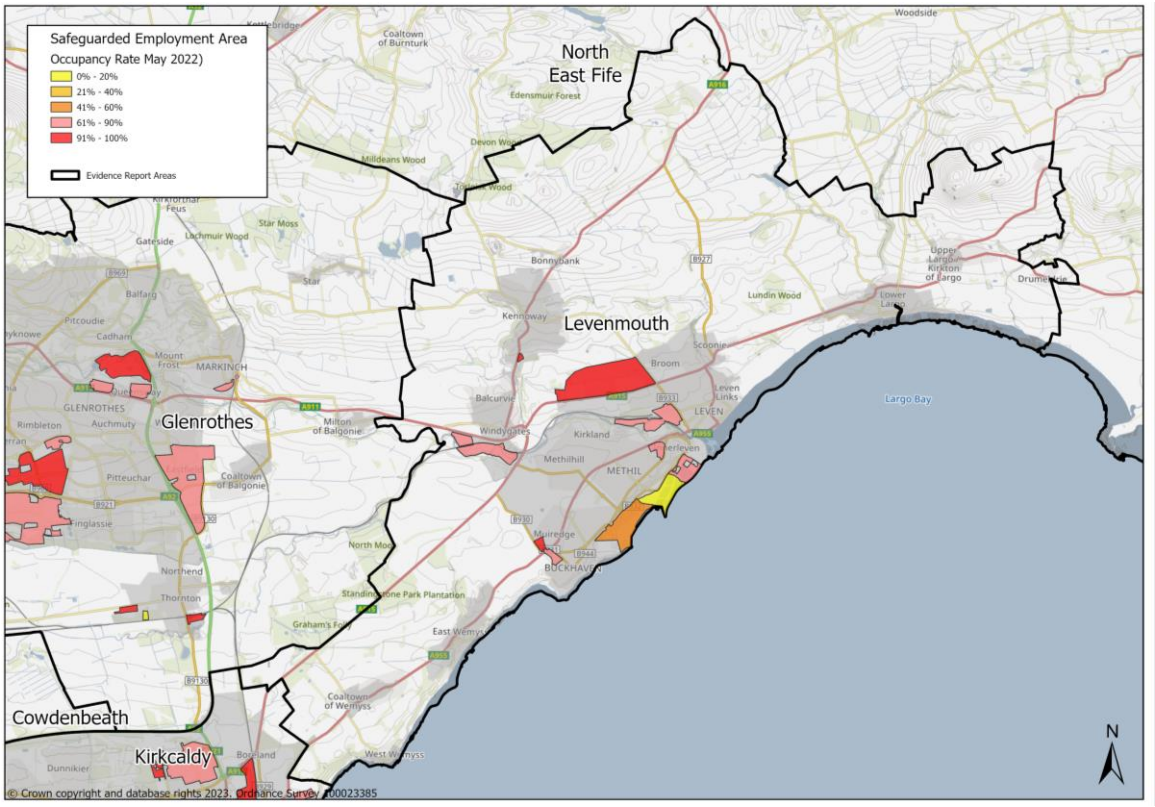
10.99 Almost a quarter of Fife's jobs in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing are located in the Levenmouth locality.

10.100 Growth Sector data is only available at Fife-level and so is not included here. This is being considered as part of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy.

Safeguarded Employment Area Occupancy Rates

10.101 The occupancy rates of safeguarded employment areas (industrial estates and business parks) in the Levenmouth locality range from 0% at Methil Docks to 100% at Muiredge Industrial Estate and Sandy Brae Industrial Estate in Kennoway. This indicates a need for more available employment land in the LDP.

Figure 10.27: Occupancy rates in Safeguarded Employment Areas in the Levenmouth



Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

Availability of employment land in the Levenmouth locality

10.102 Within the Levenmouth Locality, Leven, Methil, Methilhill and Buckhaven meet the available employment land requirement (147%) for the Key 20 settlements, as set out in the Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021) and monitored through the Employment Land Audit. Kennoway/Windygates is also within the Levenmouth Locality and do not currently have enough available employment land to meet the requirement, sitting at 0%.

10.103 The emerging Employment Land Strategy and LDP will ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. For more information, see the Fife-wide section of the Evidence Report.

Table 10.2 - Key Settlements availability of employment land by traffic light status (RAG)

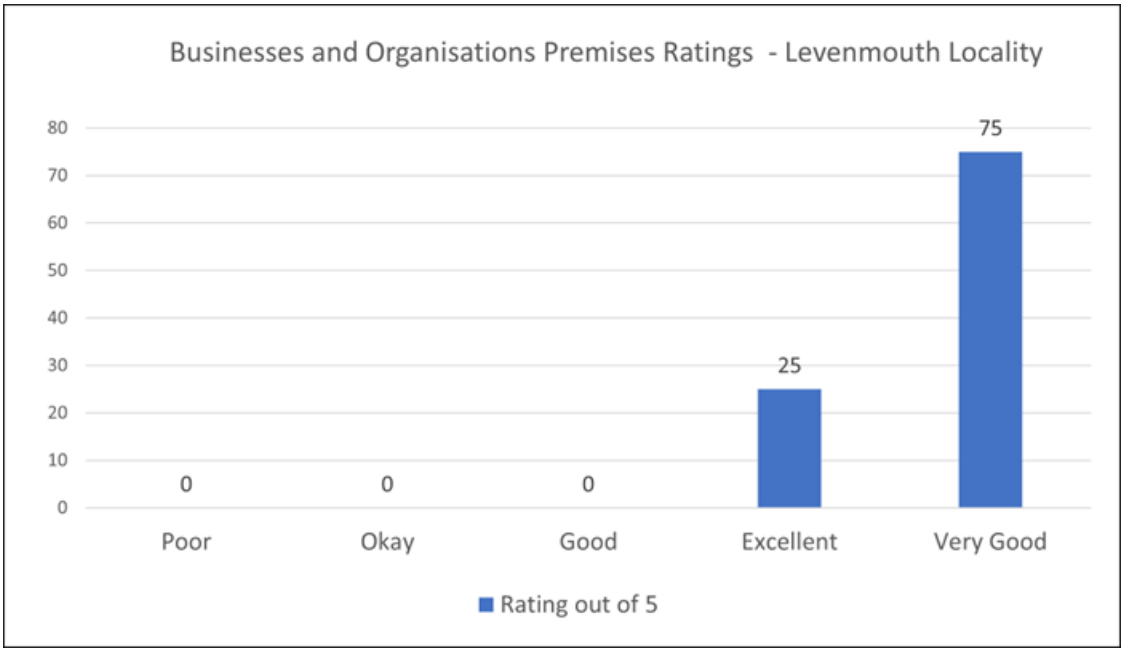
Key Settlement	Audit Year	RAG Status	Percent Requirement Met	Total Requirement (hectares)
Kennoway/Windygates	2023	Red	0%	1.4
Levenmouth	2023	Green	147%	24.4

Source: Employment Land Audit 2023

Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022

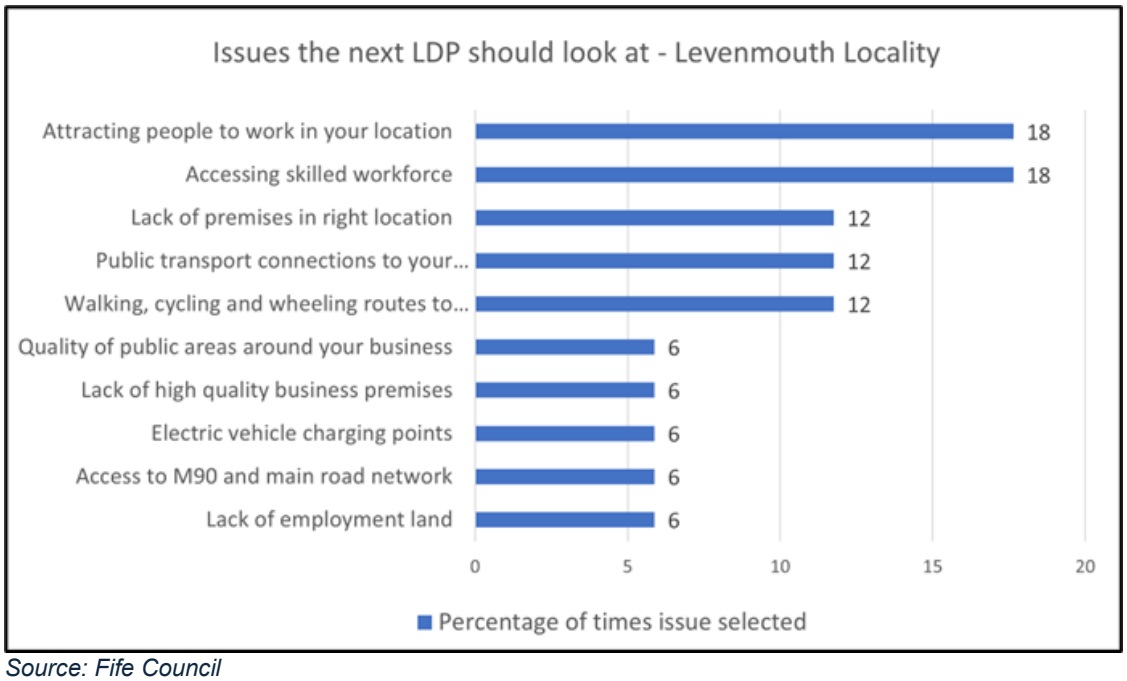
10.104 In 2022 Fife Council undertook a survey of businesses and organisations on what works as well as the issues that they face operating in the Levenmouth locality. All respondents rated their premises as either very good or excellent.

Figure 10.28: Premises ratings by local businesses and organisations in the Levenmouth locality



Source: Fife Council

Figure 10.29: Feedback about issues the LDP should look at in the Levenmouth locality



Source: Fife Council

10.105 It was suggested there is a lack of accountability, and a lack of communication about the process and timeframes with regard to stopping up roads and other road interventions.

10.106 The connecting of the Standing Stane Road to the A92 was suggested as an improvement as it would unchoke access to the towns in the Levenmouth locality.

10.107 Attracting people to work in the locality, accessing a skilled workforce, improving public transport links to employment areas, maintaining and improving walking, cycling and wheeling routes to employment areas and addressing the lack of premises in the right location are seen as the main issues that the next local development plan should look at.

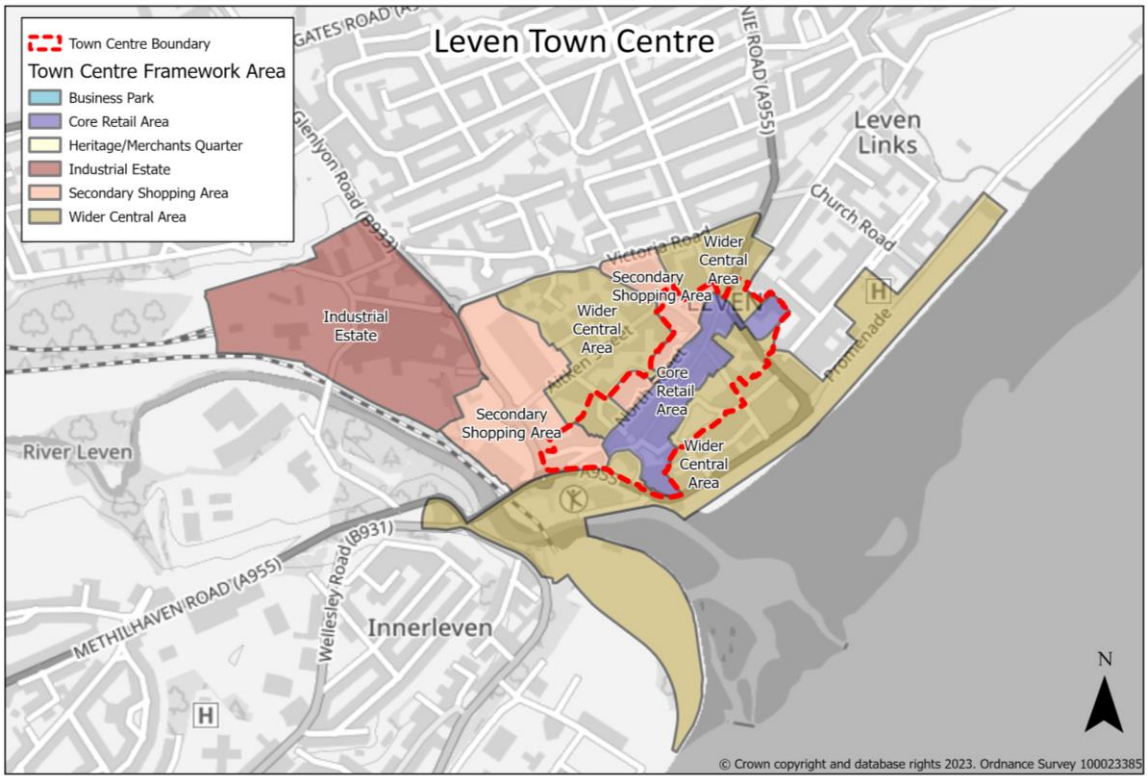
Links to Evidence

- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Economic Policy and Baseline Context April 22
- Key sectors Number of Employed 15-22
- Review of safeguarded employment areas
- Employment Land Audit 2023
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Review (Ryden)
- Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022

Leven Town Centre

10.108 Leven town centre is facing many challenges, not least the changing nature of retail shopping.

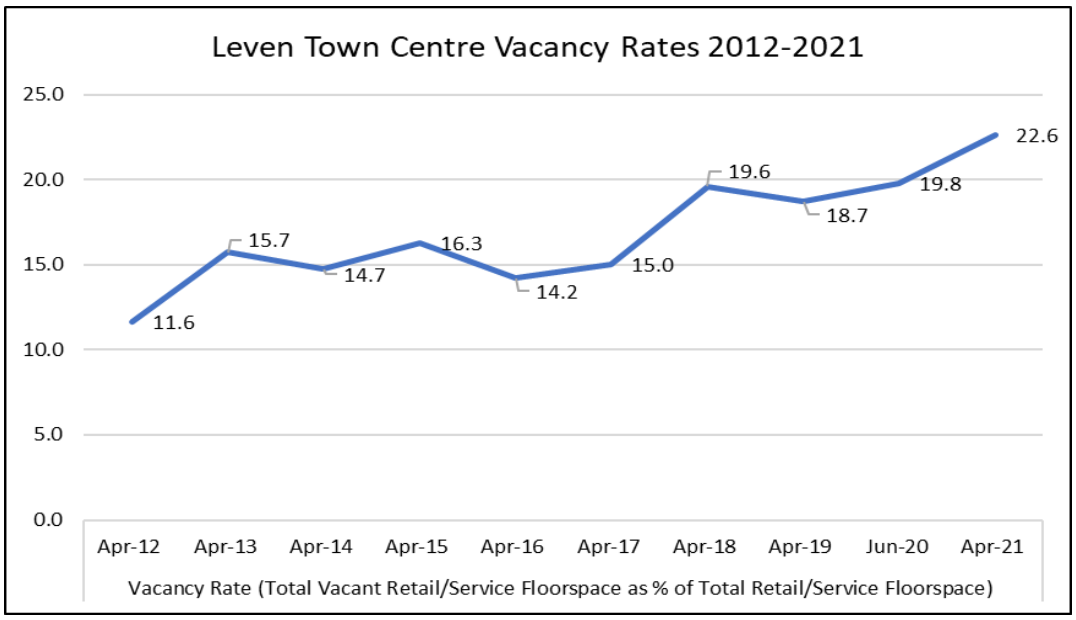
Figure 10.30: Map of Leven Town Centre



Source: Fife Council

10.109 Vacancy rates have risen steadily in Leven Town Centre since 2012 from 15% to 23% in 2021.

Figure 10.31: Vacancy rates in Leven town centre (2012-2021)



Source: Experian GOAD

10.110 A consideration of the comparative value of retail and service businesses in Leven found it performed relatively better than Glenrothes and Kirkcaldy; this could be result of the size of the relatively isolated population that it serves.

10.111 The total vacant floorspace in Leven town centre has increased by 3,210m^2 since 2012. This provides further evidence that there is a need for a review of town centre uses to enable a wider mix of uses including more housing, public and employment opportunities.

Table 10.3: Leven Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) and Difference between 2012 and 2021		
Use Type	Leven April 2012	Leven April 2021	Leven Change
Assembly	300	300	0
Comparison	7,730	5,600	-2,130
Convenience	2,340	2,160	-180
Convenience/Comparison	1,060	1,060	0
Food and Drink	2,750	1,870	-880
Hotel/Hostel	400	730	330
Leisure	2,350	2,860	510
Medical	60	110	50
Office	160	450	290
Service	4,730	4,370	-360
Vacant	1,230	4,440	3,210

Source: Experian GOAD

10.112 Comparison floorspace (products that people will compare between different sources such as white goods and clothes) has reduced the most since 2012 (2,130m^2). This reflects the trend that more and more people are shopping online and elsewhere rather than traditional locations like town centres.

10.113 Outwith Leven town centre there are six Local Shopping Centres serving Methilhill, Buckhaven, Kennoway and two in Methil. Occupancy rates are generally good between 90% and 100% with Buckhaven the exception at 67%.

Quality of Town Centre

10.114 Leven town centre would benefit from investment to improve the quality of place. The centre still has a good number of historic buildings and features, although lack of maintenance and unsympathetic alterations over time are an issue. Infill buildings from the mid-20th century onwards have been of mixed quality. There has been investment in the public realm at Shorehead by the bus station but overall the public realm is aged and in need of repair.

Figure 10.32: High Street, Leven

Source: Fife Council

10.115 Around the Shorehead there are a lot of attractive shopfronts but generally there are some lower quality shopfronts which have a detrimental impact on the overall quality of place.

10.116 There is very little green infrastructure in the town centre although there are a few well maintained planters.

10.117 Funds have recently been allocated to provide an upgrade to the town centre including replacing street furniture and planting and cleaning of the paving; and four Town Centre Building Improvement grants totalling just over £36,000 were awarded in 2022/23 in the Levenmouth locality. However, austerity measures over the last 15 years have had an impact on the level of

funding which can be accessed for town centre public realm and building improvements.

Links to evidence

- Leven Town Centres SWOT Analysis 2022
- GOAD data
- Fife Retail Capacity Study 2022
- Assessment of local shopping centres
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report Summer 2023
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets summer 2023
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries summer 2023

Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of evidence specific to the Levenmouth locality

- The Levenmouth locality is the most deprived and most poorly connected part of Fife. Together, the Levenmouth Reconnected programme and the River Leven programme are working to address some of the issues that the Levenmouth area faces. The new railway line to Leven will help to improve connectivity for some parts of the area. The LDP need to support improvement initiatives which have land use requirements.
- Within the locality, many services are accessible within a 10-minute walk or cycle for most residents.
- The current FIFEplan designates one Strategic Development Area in Levenmouth. Until 2023, there was no developer interest in the site but there is now a live planning application. Also indicative of some of the challenges faced by the Levenmouth area, it is the only part of Fife with a surplus of available employment land. The spatial strategy will take account of Council priorities.
- In common with many other town centres across Fife, Leven town centre has seen an increase in vacancies over the last decade and a reduction in the amount of retail floorspace. The role of the town centre is becoming as much about social transactions as it is a place to shop.
- The new Local Development Plan may need to consider if additional policies or support is needed in addition to national policy. Considerations are likely to include heritage policies or designations to support regeneration in Buckhaven, and where additional scope exists for town centre living for different age needs in places where local access to neighbourhood and social facilities are readily available.
- Flooding and water quality are issues in parts of the area, which will have implications for development under the new LDP.
- As with other coastal areas, coastal erosion is, potentially, a significant issue facing the Levenmouth area. The LDP has a role in identifying areas where nature-based solutions could help with adaption to coastal change such as along the promenade at Leven.

- Sites allocated in the LDP should include information on priorities for the protection, enhancement and extension of blue and green networks on the site. This will include improvements to the condition of water bodies such as the River Leven and Kennoway Burn; and opportunities to extend and enhance active travel routes such as through the Leven SDA.
- There is some capacity in primary schools across the area although individual schools are more constrained. The area's one secondary school is forecast to have a shortfall in places by 2027.
- Planned growth and demographic changes across the area mean there is a need for additional capacity in the primary care sector that will need to be planned for.
- There should be a continued focus on Energy Park Fife for renewables.
- Consider allocating employment land in Levenmouth, which is within the Mid-Fife regeneration area, with a focus on the manufacturing sector and in particular advanced manufacturing and engineering. The continued contribution of manufacturing to the Fife economy will require an adequate supply of land use of class 5 in particular, to contribute to overall productivity growth.

11 North East Fife locality evidence and issues

Introducing the North East Fife locality

11.1 The North East Fife locality is the largest of Fife's localities by area, and stretches from the River Tay in the North, to the Firth of Forth in the south east. St Andrews is the largest town, followed by other main settlements, including Cupar, Newburgh, Auchtermuchty, Newport-on-Tay, and Anstruther. The locality is much less reliant on manufacturing and heavy industry than other areas in Fife, and is characterised by rural, agricultural, and fishing industries, together with tourism in the East Neuk and St Andrews.

Figure 11.1: Plan showing the location of the North East Fife locality within Fife

Source: Fife Council

11.2 A number of priorities were identified for the North East Fife locality from an early LDP workshop carried out between Fife Council and the Key Agency Group:

- A co-ordinated approach to land use;
- Balanced, strong communities;
- Sustainable transport; and
- Connectivity.

11.3 Addressing these priorities will require collaborative working across a number of organisations and partners.

11.4 An additional locality workshop was attended by representatives from Fife Council to collect place-based comments for the North East Fife area.

11.5 According to the 2022 Local Strategic Assessment, with 75,557 people living in 35,809 households, North East Fife has the largest locality population in Fife. It also has a higher proportion of older people (22.8%), but the smallest proportion of children (13.5%). 60% of households are owner-occupied. Levels of private renting (15%) are higher than Fife, but social renting (14.5%) is below Fife.

11.6 It is the least deprived locality in terms of employment (5%) and income deprivation (6.4%), with only one datazone in the most deprived in Fife. North East Fife has the lowest claimant rate (2.2%), and a higher employment rate (72.8%). 93.4% of 16-19 year olds are participating in education, employment, or training, with 78% still in education.

11.7 In terms of health, in 2019 the average life expectancy for males living within the North East Fife locality was 79.8 years and 83.2 years for females which is higher than the Scottish average.

11.8 In addition, 19% of the North East Fife population were registered as living with a long-term physical health condition during the period between 2019 and 2020.

Links to evidence

- North East Fife Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- ScotPHO profiling tool
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary
- Fife Council: Support for place-based Local Development Planning - North East Fife Workshop Report 27.04.2023

Implementation of FIFEplan in the North East Fife Locality

11.9 There are several proposals in the current FIFEplan in the North East Fife locality. At the Cupar North strategic development area, a planning application is currently to be determined, with updated information due to be submitted to the planning authority for re-consideration. A S75 Legal Agreement has been concluded for Gilliesfauld.

11.10 A green belt for St Andrews is designated through FIFEplan. When the green belt was designated in 2012, it was established for the following 20 years. That plan stated that it will be subject to review in 2028. It has been subject to some development pressures since the plan was adopted. However, a review of planning applications received within the green belt indicates the current designation is still effective. The Strategic Development Area at St Andrews West still provides significant scope for the long-term growth of the town. It is therefore not considered necessary to revisit the boundary of the St Andrews green belt as part of the next local development plan (see section on St Andrews Green Belt for more detail).

11.11 Planning permissions have been granted across the sites in the St Andrews West strategic development area and development has commenced there. The new Madras High School and related link road has been built and operational at the northern end.

11.12 Elsewhere, development activity continues at the University of St Andrews town and Guardbridge campuses. Long allocated housing development sites at Wormit and Guardbridge are also being developed and the Council's affordable housing programme has led to the development of new homes in the locality.

11.13 Proposals for rail halts at Wormit and Newburgh have been through the transport appraisal process but are not supported by the national Strategic Transport Projects Review, so there is currently no commitment or approval for it from Transport Scotland.

How past development has shaped how the North East Fife locality is today

Urban development and local living

11.14 How and why the settlements of North East Fife developed and changed over time heavily influences how they work today and the issues they face in reducing carbon emissions.

11.15 The locality includes the historic university town of St Andrews, the former County and market town of Cupar, and the fishing villages of the East Neuk (which developed around their harbours and which remain picturesque, now attracting tourists and second home owners). Villages have developed around agriculture in other parts of North East Fife. The Tay Coast and the Tay bridgehead areas have expanded slowly over time.

11.16 The consequence of this relatively slow growth over time is that the historic network of streets still exists in the centre of most settlements. The towns in the locality are relatively small in scale retaining reasonable access to key services and facilities within a 10-minute walk in line with the principles of living well locally in most areas.

11.17 The historic centre of the university town of St Andrews is well preserved and is located to the north-eastern edge of the settlement. The town started to expand at the end of the 19th Century along Hepburn Gardens and Southfield. More rapid expansion happened towards the end of the 20th and early 21st centuries with the town growing to the south and west. Some of these areas are better connected than others with later and more peripheral developments being most poorly connected.

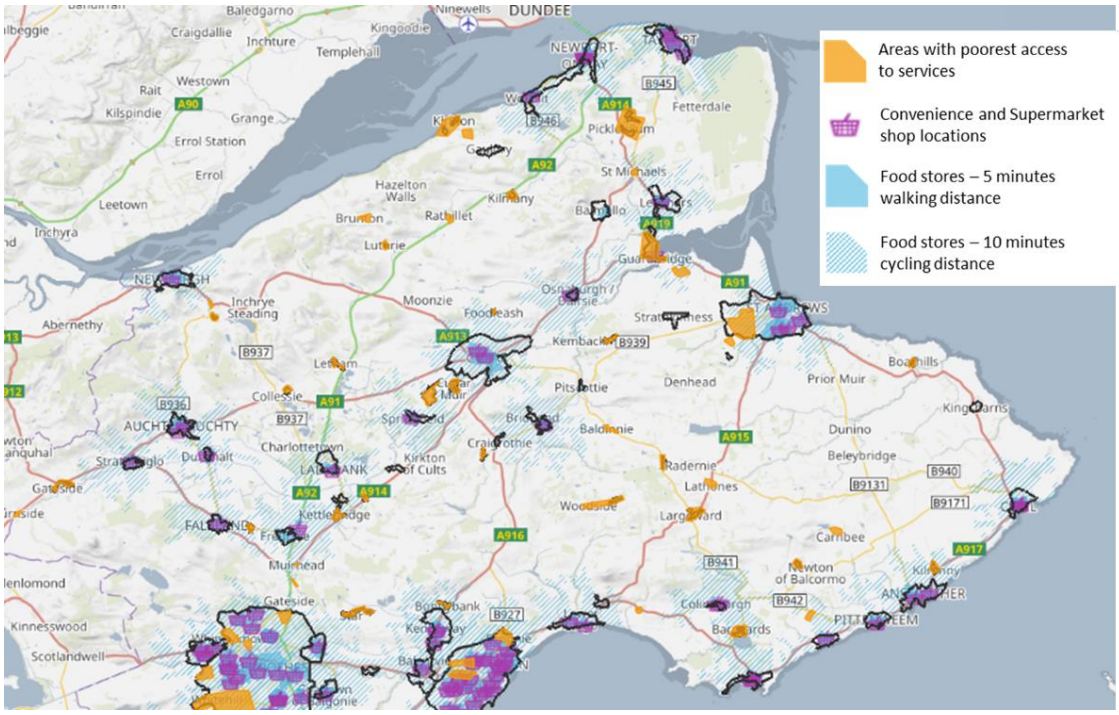
11.18 The historic market town of Cupar remains relatively compact despite development on its outskirts being less well connected. Residential areas to the north and south of East Road are quite separate with no interaction (see figure below), whilst residential areas to the southeast of Cupar are cut off by the railway and busy South Road, which impacts on the connectivity to the town centre.

Figure 11.2: Map extract of Cupar showing residential areas along East Road facing away from each other

Source: Fife Council

11.19 As the figure below illustrates, North East Fife is rural in nature, with numerous small settlements which have limited services and facilities. The viability of providing additional services and facilities in these areas is challenging and locating services strategically to serve a number of settlements will be important. Away from the main towns it will often not be possible to provide easy walking or cycling distances to all everyday services.

Figure 11.3: Example extract from Local Living and 20 MN interactive mapping showing walking and cycling distances from convenience stores in the North East Fife locality, and the areas which are least well served by services and facilities.



Source: Fife Council

11.20 In some areas, such as the Howe of Fife, clusters of medium sized villages can share services between them. However, in the hills south of the Tay Coast and inland from the East Neuk there are many very small village and hamlets which have few if any services and facilities between them; and which are not close to larger settlements with services.

11.21 Fife Council carried out a detailed assessment of how people accessed services in the West Howe area as a case study to inform the local living work for the LDP. The study found that:

- The area has a good range of services and facilities between the villages;
- People tend to use their nearest facility for convenience shopping even if another store would be cheaper. People access other services such as dentist and supermarkets in a range of places;
- Public transport is fairly infrequent and slow and doesn't provide the flexibility required by people for day-to-day use. This is reflected in the low use of public transport;
- Walking and cycling between the settlements is not perceived to be safe or particularly pleasant; and
- The communities have shown a willingness to pick up services and facilities which have been withdrawn by the market or public bodies

11.22 Many settlements in North East Fife (including Cupar and St Andrews) have late 20th and early 21st century culs-de-sac residential developments surrounding a historic core. These tend to be less well connected for

pedestrians and often the distance to town or local centres make walking and cycling less attractive travel choices from these residential areas.

11.23 Annex 7 provides more information on Living Well Locally and 20 minute Neighbourhoods in Fife.

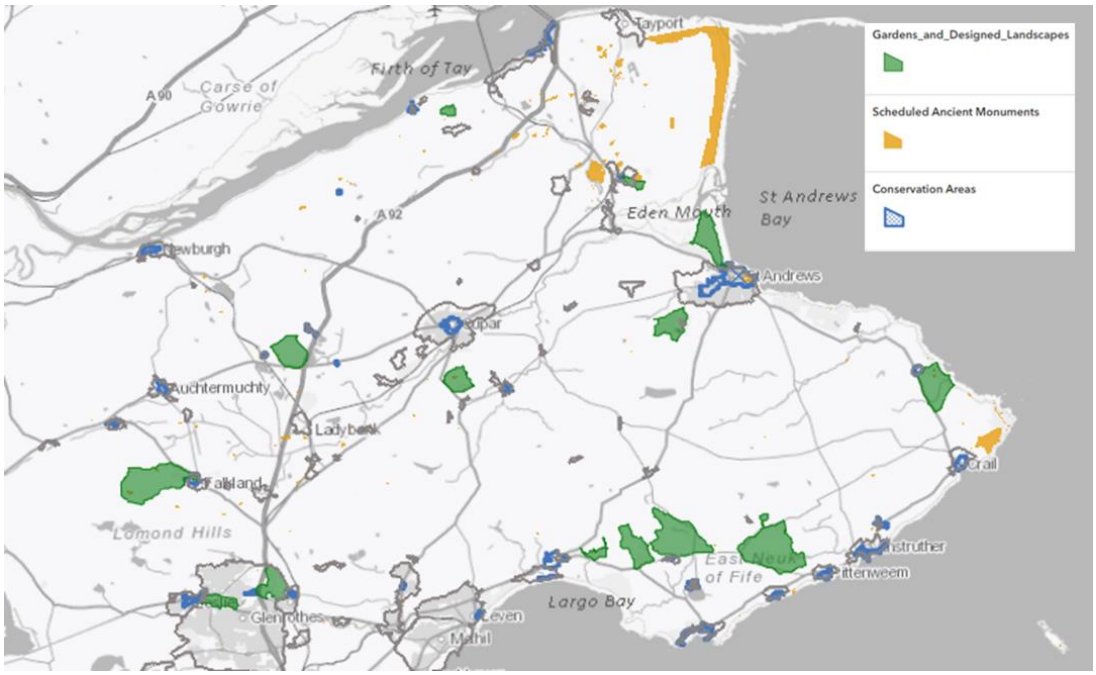
Links to evidence

- Living Well Locally case study – West Howe Area
- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Interactive Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods mapping

Historic environment in the North East Fife locality

11.24 North East Fife is rich in built heritage assets with a great many conservation areas and listed buildings (see figure below). The historic environment gives the towns and villages their distinctive character and makes many of them attractive to visitors such as St Andrews, the East Neuk Villages and Falkland. There are a great many designated Gardens and Designed Landscapes including Cambo, Hill of Tarvit and St Andrews Links. The area is also rich in Scheduled monuments including coastal defences at Tentsmuir, St Monans windmill and saltpans and Normans Law fort.

Figure 11.4: Map extract showing historic environment assets in the North East Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

11.25 The town centres in North East Fife have historic cores with many high quality buildings. These are generally well maintained although there are some exceptions.

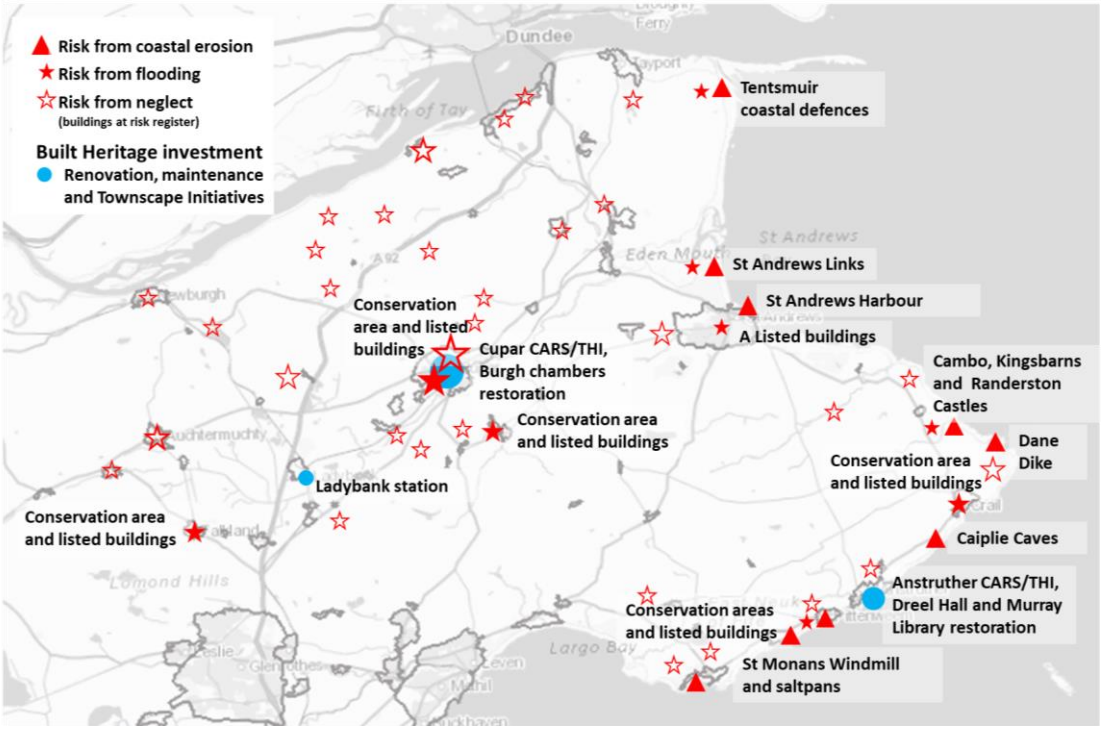
11.26 Cupar, Anstruther, and Ladybank have had investment of over £11.5 million in the built heritage over the last few years with projects overseen by Fife Historic Buildings Trust.

Risks to the historic environment

11.27 There are currently over 70 buildings on the Buildings at Risk register in North East Fife. Nine buildings have recently been taken off the register as they have been renovated. But permission has been granted for the demolition of seven listed buildings in the area over the last 10 years.

11.28 Coastal flooding is predicted by SEPA to be a risk for many conservation areas, listed buildings and historic harbours in North East Fife including some category A listed buildings in Pittenweem and St Andrews. Cambo and St Andrews Links Gardens and Designed landscapes and the Scheduled Ancient Monuments at Fife Ness and Tentsmuir coastal defences are also predicted to be at risk from coastal flooding.

Figure 11.5: Map of the North East Fife locality showing built heritage at risk from flooding and neglect; and some built heritage investment initiatives



Sources: Fife Council, HES, SEPA

This map was created by visually comparing HES built heritage designations with the SEPA flood maps, the Dynamic Coast 2 webmap, the Buildings at Risk register and some areas which have received funding for townscape and heritage initiatives

11.29 Many settlements have their conservation areas and some listed buildings predicted to be at risk of flooding from watercourses. The most widespread prediction of risk to built heritage from fluvial flooding is in Cupar, Crail, Ceres, and Falkland. Flooding from surface water is also predicted to be a significant risk to built heritage in Cupar.

11.30 Cambo and St Andrews Links Gardens and Designed landscapes and Tentsmuir coastal defences, Danes Dike, Kingsbarns Castle, St Monans windmill and saltpans and Caiplie Caves Scheduled Ancient Monuments are predicted to be at risk from coastal erosion on the Dynamic Coast2 webmap. The conservation areas and some listed buildings in Elie and Earlsferry, Pittenweem and the A listed St Andrews Harbour are also predicted to be at risk. The reality of this risk was demonstrated when storms in October 2023 damaged the listed St Andrews Harbour and the seawall of listed buildings in Pittenweem.

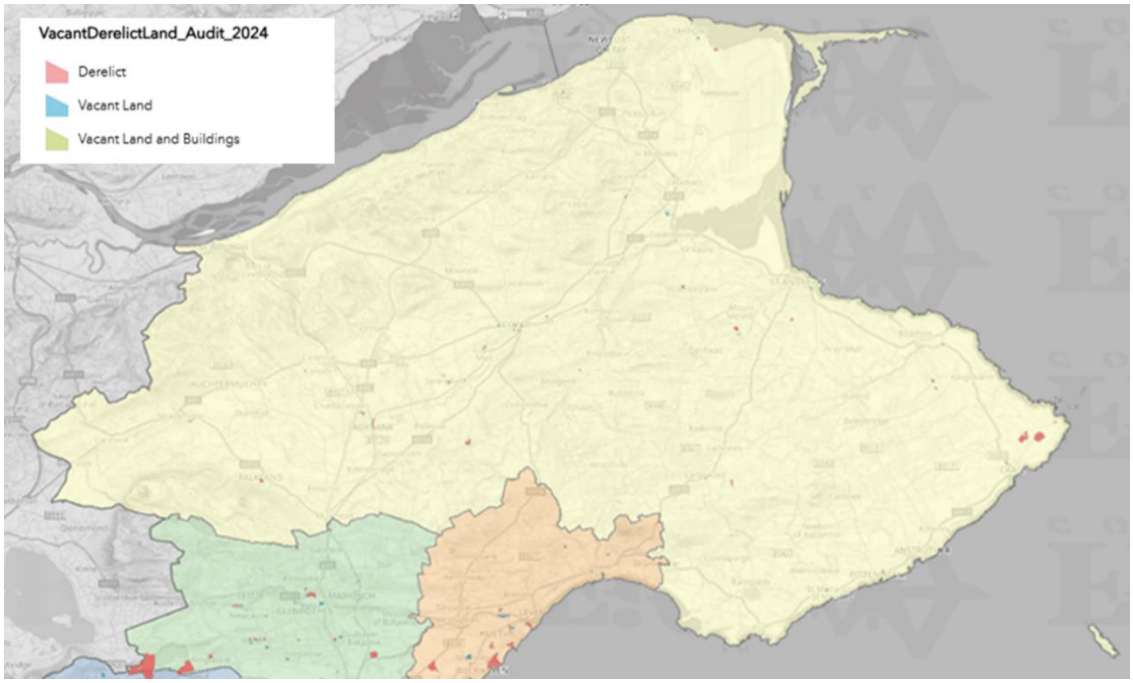
Links to evidence

- Conservation Area Appraisals
- Historic Environment Scotland Interactive map showing built heritage, landscape character designations
- Fife Historic Buildings Trust
- Buildings at Risk register
- SEPA flood maps
- Dynamic Coast 2 webmap
- BBC news – Repairs begin on storm-damaged St Andrews Pier
- The Courier – Fears for Pittenweem Homes

Vacant and derelict land and environmental hazards in the North East Fife locality

11.31 There are 46 sites on the vacant and derelict land register in the North East Fife locality, the largest of these are at Crail Airfield.

Figure 11.6: Extract from the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2022 showing the North East Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

11.32 Between 2021 and 2022 the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit identified that four vacant and derelict sites were brought back into use in the North East Fife locality: In Wormit, Cupar, Ladybank, and Guardbridge; and one additional site was identified in the locality - land at the rail station in Ladybank.

11.33 Funding from the Vacant and Derelict land fund has been allocated to fund ground remediation work at the former Steelworks in Tayport, the Eden campus and to support development of town centre sites in Cupar.

11.34 Five gas pipelines pas through the North East Fife locality, including the Kirriemuir/Charlestown and Arbroath/Drumeldrie feeder pipelines to the east and west of the locality. Development close to these pipelines and within associated zones is subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. The Health and Safety Executive consultation zones can be viewed on the adopted FIFEplan proposals map (advice/consultation information). The Health and Safety Executive have advice on the type and scale of development within the pipeline consultation zones.

11.35 There are currently no air quality management areas in the North East Fife locality as the Bonnygate Air Quality Management Area was revoked in 2023. There are no smoke control zones in North East Fife. Air quality is monitored by Fife Council along Bonnygate in Cupar, and various points in St Andrews

Links to evidence

- Fife Vacant and Derelict land audit 2022
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning methodology
- Fife Air Quality Annual Progress Report 2024
- Fife Council – pollution mapping

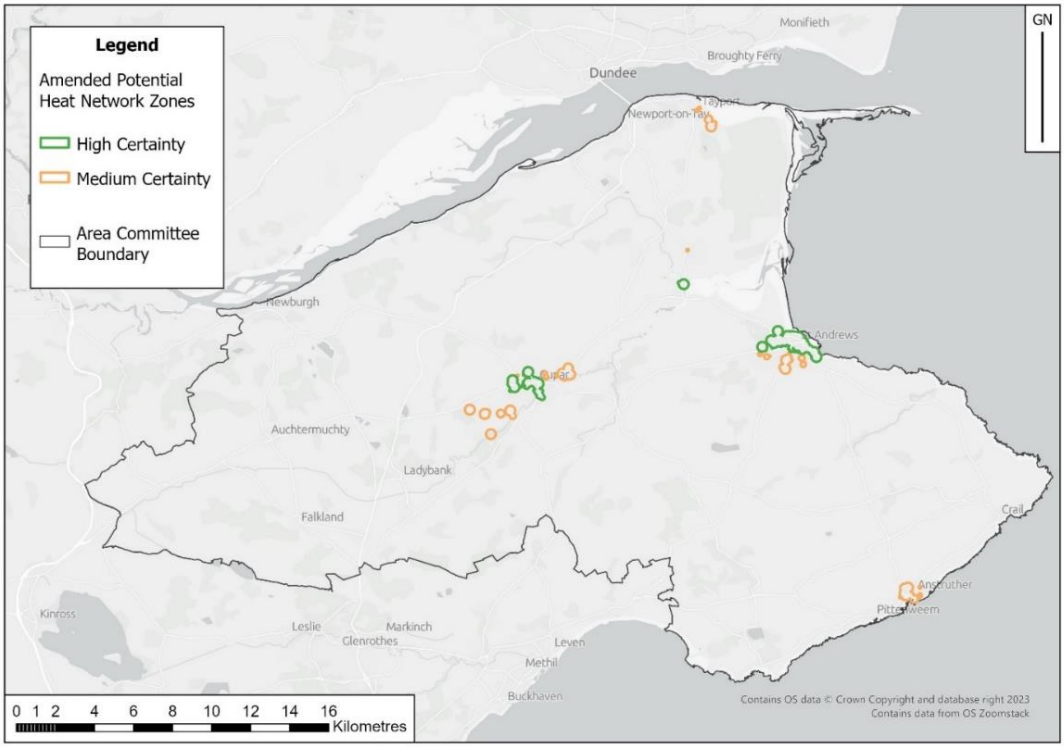
How the North East Fife locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

11.36 In common with other coastal areas of Fife, North East Fife faces challenges arising from the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Opportunities will need to be taken to decarbonise heating in the locality to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding, and rising sea levels increase the threat from coastal erosion. Both issues will affect how development is planned in the future. Water quality and protecting important habitats are also key issues in North East Fife.

Decarbonising heating in the North East Fife locality

11.37 Decarbonising heating will be important in helping Fife tackle the climate emergency and meeting net zero commitments. Potential Heat Network Zones in North East Fife are being identified as part of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Fife. The potential heat network zones are shown in the figure below. Further work to identify Heat Network Zones will be undertaken in 2024-25.

Figure 11.7: Potential heat network zones in the North East Fife locality



source: Local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan, Fife Council

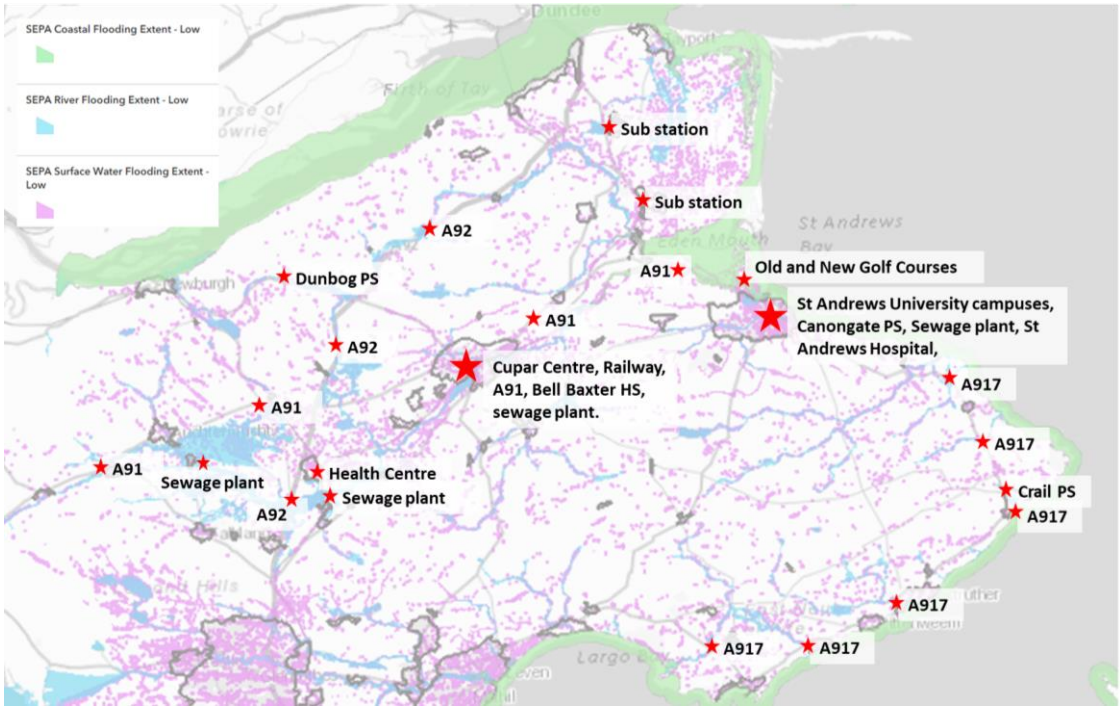
Links to evidence

- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Flood risk in the North East Fife locality

11.38 Parts of North East Fife are identified by SEPA as predicted to be at risk of flooding, a risk that is increasing because of climate change.

Figure 11.8: Plan showing key assets predicted to be at risk of flooding in North East Fife locality



Sources: Fife Council & SEPA

Notes: This map was created by visually comparing: Fife Council data on schools, healthcare facilities and key employment areas (see Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood interactive map) and Mastermap and OS Base mapping with SEPA flood maps and Dynamic Coast 2 webmaps.

Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

11.39 There is significant risk from river, coastal, and surface water flooding affecting many settlements. Over the last few years there have been many flooding events in the locality with Cupar town centre being badly impacted in particular.

11.40 Progressing a flood protection scheme along the Kinness Burn is an action in the Tay and Montrose Basin Flood Risk Management Plan.

11.41 There are existing flood prevention schemes at Dunshalt, Auchtermuchty, Cupar, Ceres, and Pitscottie these are all around 30 years old (see additional detail on these under *Formal Flood Protection Schemes* in the *Flooding* section of this Evidence Report). A new flood protection scheme has been identified for the Kinness Burn in St Andrews in the Tay Estuary

and Montrose Basin Flood Risk Management Plan. Several detailed flood studies have been produced or are proposed for places in North East Fife in the Local Flood Risk Management Plan.

11.42 SEPA has predicted that there is a risk of geomorphic change (change to the river channel) along stretches of the River Eden through North East Fife.

Links to evidence

- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- SEPA Flood Risk Maps
- SEPA – Geomorphic Risk data
- Tay Estuary and Montrose Basin Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife
- West Sands Dune Restoration and Management Plan

Water quality in the North East Fife locality

11.43 Alongside flooding there are also issues with the ecological condition of surface water and water scarcity in parts of North East Fife. The SEPA water classification hub classifies many of the burns as poor or moderate ecological condition including St Monans Burn/Inverie Burn and Dreel Burn. Diffuse pollution from rural sources is the main pressure in the area (see figure below). The Tentsmuir Sands Burn/drain is classed as bad quality due to modifications from forestry and diffuse pollution from rural sources (identified on the SEPA water environment hub).

Figure 11.9: Extract from SEPA water classification hub showing quality of surface waters in the North East Fife locality

Source: SEPA

11.44 Groundwater quality across much of North East Fife is identified as in a poor overall condition due to legacy mining, quarrying, and rural activities; although around St Andrews and along to Crail, groundwater is classed as good quality. Water flows in many areas are low due to agricultural irrigation and business abstraction.

11.45 The bathing waters from St Andrews to the East Neuk are classed as excellent.

11.46 Water scarcity has been an issue for the North East Fife locality with abstraction from the River Eden being suspended by SEPA in August 2022.

Links to evidence

- SEPA water classification hub
- SEPA water environment hub
- BBC News article – Water scarcity: Fife farmers banned from using River Eden.

Coastal erosion in the North East Fife locality

11.47 Dynamic Coast 2 mapping identifies many points along the coast in the North East Fife Area locality, including Tentsmuir and St Andrews West Sands, as predicted to be at risk from coastal erosion.

Figure 11.10: Map showing areas in the North East Fife locality which are predicted to be at risk of coastal erosion (in red) – 2050 high emission scenario

Source: Dynamic Coast mapping (DC2)

Note: Caveat for use of Dynamic Coast maps. The Dynamic Coast maps should not be used to assess coastal risk to individual properties.

11.48 Artificial coastal defences are located around the North East Fife coast which protect many coastal settlements. Storms in 2023 caused damage to a number of coastal defences around the North East Fife coast including St Andrews and Pittenweem.

11.49 There are also natural coastal protection systems in place around the coast including the West Sands Dune Management project in St Andrews which began in 2010.

11.50 Under the Coastal Change Adaptation programme, Fife will review its Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) in line with new Guidance on creating

Coastal Change Adaptation Plans. It is anticipated the revised plan will be ready for publication in 2027/28.

11.51 The new Local Development Plan will have to consider how future development should manage the risk of coastal erosion. There is a strong presumption by Scottish Government that engineering solutions to protect areas at risk are no longer appropriate.

Links to evidence

- Dynamic Coast mapping
- West Sands Dune Management project
- Fife Shoreline Management Plan (2011)
- Fife Coastal Formal Defences Register Dec 2023
- Background paper on water and coastal erosion issues in Fife

Green and blue networks in the North East Fife locality

11.52 North East Fife's green and blue networks are integral to supporting the movement of wildlife, protecting species and habitats but also providing recreation for people, and improving pedestrian and cycle links across the locality.

11.53 Key assets in the area include the coast, the River Eden corridor, various golf courses, Craigtoun Country Park, Tentsmuir and Edenmuir Forest, landscaped estates such as Falkland and Cambo, part of the Lomond Hills Regional Park, and Normans Law.

11.54 Some of the key active travel routes within the North East Fife locality include the Fife Coastal Path and Fife Pilgrim Way. National Cycle routes 1 and 777 also run through North East Fife providing connections to Dundee and Aberdeen.

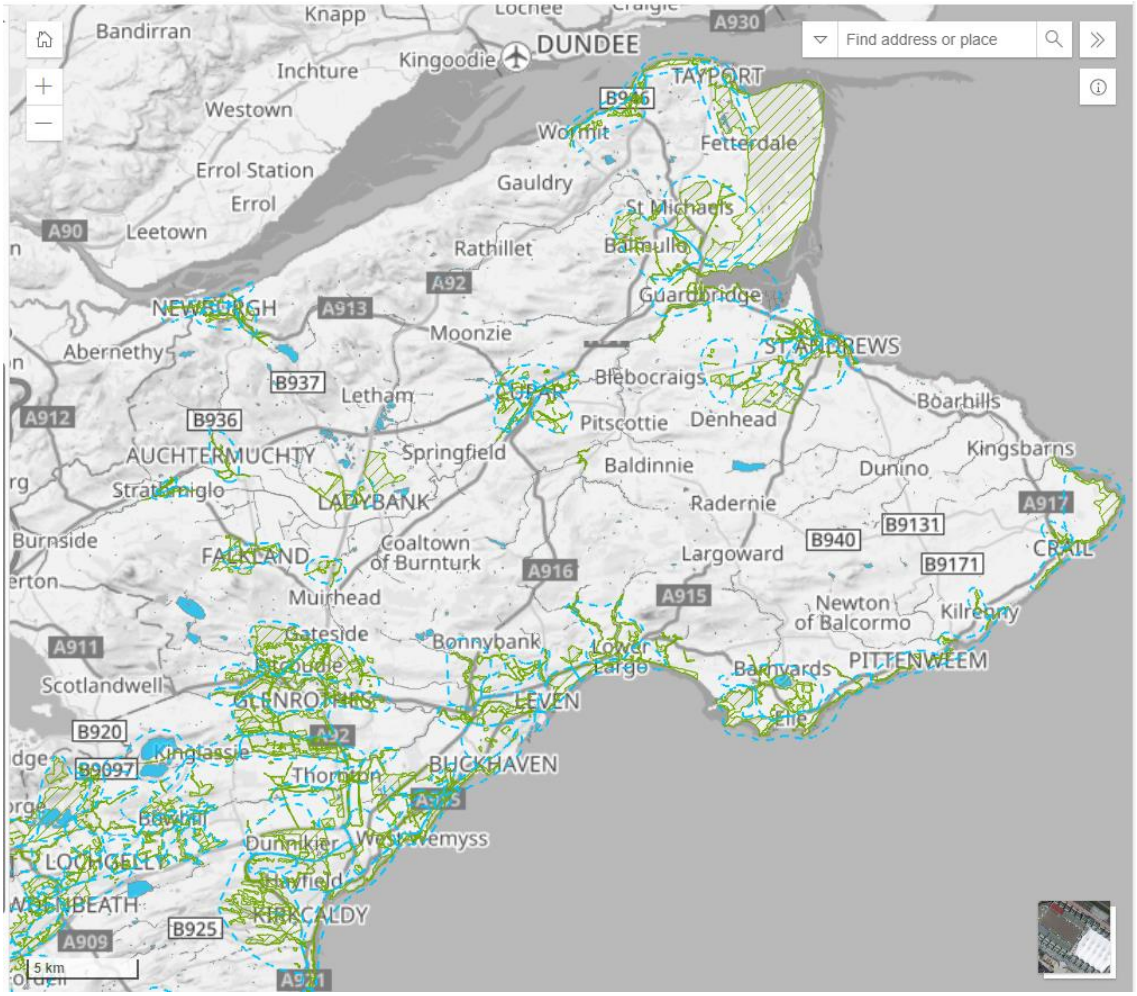
11.55 Green and blue network opportunities in the area include biodiversity and greenspace improvements at the St Andrews, Stratheden and Adamson Hospitals, redevelopment proposals at Crail Airfield, Balcaskie wetlands project and the community led restoration of the Dreel Burn; and the East Neuk 50 active travel route linking Kirkcaldy, St Andrews and Dundee.

11.56 The Fife green and blue network audit reports for the area are:

- Cupar Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Crail Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- East Neuk Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Elie and Earlsferry Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Howe of Fife Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Leuchars Guardbridge Balmullo & Strathkinness Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Newburgh Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- St Andrews Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Taybridgehead Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update

11.57 Green and blue networks are mapped on an interactive map and a storymap explains how the assets and opportunities were identified.

Figure 11.11: Extract from the Green and Blue Network interactive map illustrating key assets and existing blue and green network policy areas



Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Cupar Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Crail Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- East Neuk Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Elie and Earlsferry Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Howe of Fife Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Leuchars Guardbridge Balmullo & Strathkinness Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Newburgh Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- St Andrews Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Taybridgehead Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Sustrans National Cycle Network Routes in the East of Scotland
- Fife Coastal Path
- Fife Pilgrim Way
- Fife NHS 2030 Greenspace Strategy (May 2023)
- Dreel Burn – community vision
- Forth Rivers Trust - Balcaskie Wetlands Project
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystem services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap

Biodiversity in the North East Fife locality

11.58 There is a diverse mix of habitats within the North East Fife locality (see table below), including freshwater and wetland habitats which support a range of European Protected Species such as beavers, otters, polecats, bats and various newts. Other protected species found within North East Fife include red squirrels (UK Protected Species), Corn buntings (red status birds of conservation concern) and Bluebells (UK Protected Species). The shallow seas at St Andrews and Largo Bays also provide some of the richest feeding grounds for fish and seabirds in Scotland.

Table 11.1: Summary of the priority habitats found within the North East Fife locality including key sites

Upland Habitats	Freshwater & Wetland Habitats	Lowland & Farmland Habitats	Woodland Habitats	Marine & Coastal Habitats
Heath and moorland Blanket bog Upland flush fen and swamp Key site: Lomond Hills Regional Park	Inland freshwater, such as **Lindores Loch (SSSI)** Lowland fen Rivers, such as the **River Eden** Ponds Reedbed, such as Mugdrum Island within Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary (Special Area of Conservation, SPA, RAMSAR) and Inner Tay (SSSI)	Species-rich grassland, such as Fleecefaulds Meadow (SSSI) (Scottish Wildlife Trust Reserve) Field margins and boundaries Parks and areas with veteran trees, such as **Falkland** Golf courses, such as Annsmuir, Duke's and St Andrews Links (Old Course) (LWS) Traditional orchards of North Fife Lowland heathland, such as **Glenduckie Hill (LWS)**	Ancient, semi-natural & long-established woodland, such as **Craighall Den (SSSI)** Mixed lowland woodland Urban woodland	Intertidal communities: Firth of Forth (SPA, RAMSAR, SSSI), Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary (Special Area of Conservation, SPA, RAMSAR), and Inner Tay Estuary (SSSI) Maritime cliffs & islands such as the Isle of May (Special Area of Conservation, SSSI, National Nature Reserve), Forth Islands (SPA), and Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex (SPA) Saltmarsh, such as Barnsmuir Coast (SSSI) Strandline, sand dune & shingle communities such as **West Sands, St Andrews (Eden Estuary SSSI)**

Source: Fife's Local Biodiversity Action Plan

11.59 The Fife Biodiversity Action Plan states that the destruction of habitats is the number one cause of species extinction, so safeguarding priority habitats is important for the new LDP

11.60 Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, and Rhododendron also pose a threat to the various ecosystems within the North East Fife locality. For example, local wildlife site Dreel Meadow has become degraded as a result of the colonisation of Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam.

11.61 Other invasive non-native species which can be found within the North East Fife locality include the American mink and signal crayfish (along the River Eden) which cause harm to the aquatic ecosystems which they inhabit as well as commercial fisheries.

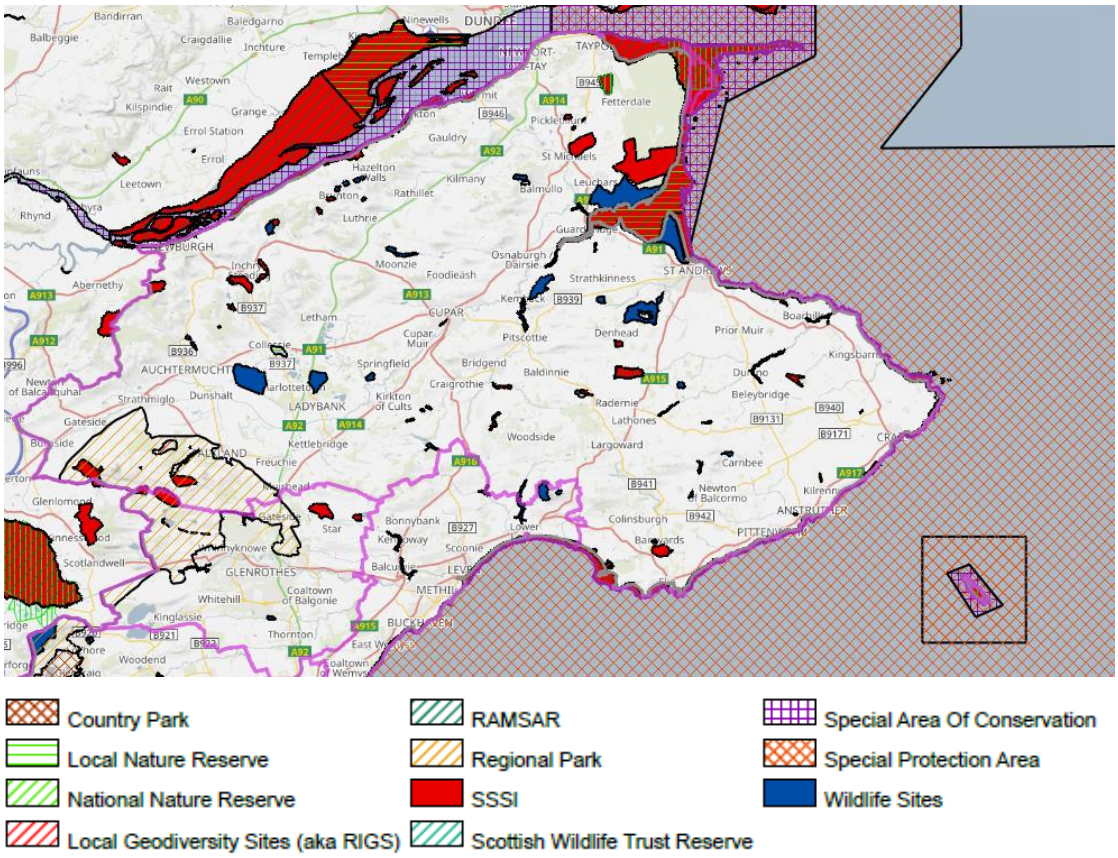
Links to evidence

- NBN Atlas
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Nature Scot- Invasive non-native plants
- Nature Scot- Protected species A-Z guide
- Selected Key Bluebell sites in Fife – Fife Nature
- Corn Bunting Breeding Status 2021 – Fife Nature
- Indicative Red Squirrel Sites – Fife Nature
- Great Crested Newt Records – Fife Amphibian & Reptile Group
- Fife Local Wildlife Site tracker Dec 2023

Natural Heritage designations in the North East Fife locality

11.62 There are a number of sites designated for natural heritage in the North East Fife locality (see figure below). There are internationally designated natural heritage sites along the coast: the Firth of Forth and Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex and the Forth Islands Special Protection Areas and the Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary and Isle of May Special Areas of Conservation. These have all been primarily designated for their importance for marine birds, waders, and waterfowl.

Figure 11.12: Natural heritage designations within the North East Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

Note: These can be viewed on the Green and Blue network interactive map

11.63 There are two National Nature Reserves at Tentsmuir and the Isle of May; four Local Nature Reserves; one Country Park (Craigtoun) and part of the Lomond Hills Regional Park sits within the locality. This area became Scotland's first Regional Park in 1986 due to its importance for recreation and conservation and comprises 25 square miles of moorland, lochs and farmland.

11.64 There are 37 locally designated wildlife sites in North East Fife – 24 of these were resurveyed around five years ago and most were found to be in an satisfactory condition although two are degraded in quality (Craigiehill Grassland and Dreel Meadow). The other wildlife sites have not yet been resurveyed. There is a community led project to carry out restoration of the Dreel Burn, including control of the invasive species which should improve the quality of the Dreel Meadow wildlife site. The Lucklaw Hill wildlife site near Balmullo is under pressure from quarrying operations.

11.65 More detail on why these sites have been designated for natural heritage in Fife is provided on the Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list.

Links to evidence

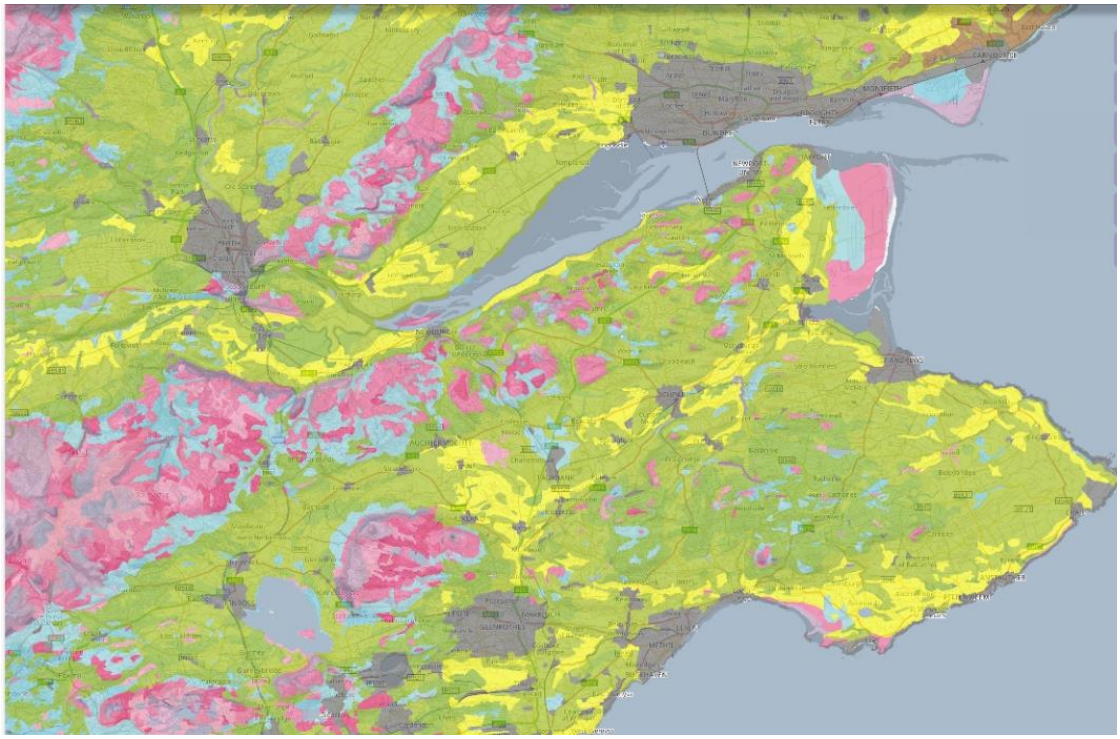
- Scottish Government – Natural Heritage Designations
- NatureScot– local designations
- Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list
- Fife Local Nature Conservation Sites tracker Dec 2023
- Dreel Burn: Invasive non-native species management: giant hogweed

Landscape character and soils in the North East Fife locality

11.66 The landscape character across North East Fife is very varied including vast areas of coastland (as identified on NatureScot Landscape Character types (2019) mapping). There are 10 Local Landscape Areas, including Lomond Hills, Tay Coast, St Andrews to Fife Ness and Tarvit to Ceres as designated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017, and a designated green belt which wraps round the landward side of St Andrews. The area includes most of the Lomond Hills Regional Park.

11.67 Outwith the built-up areas there is a high proportion of prime agricultural land in the North East Fife locality (classes 1 to 3.1 in the Scottish Land Capability for agriculture map) making North East Fife important for food production.

Figure 11.13: Extract from the land capability map for Scotland for the North East Fife locality



Land capability for agriculture (partial cover)

- 1 - Land capable of producing a very wide range of crops.
- 2 - Land capable of producing a wide range of crops.
- 3.1 - Land capable of producing consistently high yields of a narrow range of crops and/ or moderate yields of a wider range. Short grass leys are common.
- 3.2 - Land capable of average production though high yields of barley, oats and grass can be obtained. Grass leys are common.
- 4.1 - Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops and cereal.
- 4.2 - Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops, primarily on grassland with short arable breaks of forage crops.
- 5.1 - Land capable of use as improved grassland. Few problems with pasture establishment and maintenance and potential high yields.
- 5.2 - Land capable of use as improved grassland. Few problems with pasture establishment but may be difficult to maintain.
- 5.3 - Land capable of use as improved grassland. Pasture deteriorates quickly.
- 6.1 - Land capable of use as rough grazings with a high proportion of palatable plants.
- 6.2 - Land capable of use as rough grazings with moderate quality plants.
- 6.3 - Land capable of use as rough grazings with low quality plants.
- 7 - Land of very limited agricultural value.
- Urban

Source: Scottish Government - ©Crown Copyright. Scottish Government Licence Number 100020540. All Rights Reserved.

11.68 There are few places with peat or carbon rich soils in the North East Fife locality on the 2016 Scottish Carbon and Peatland Map; there are some pockets between Peat Inn and Woodside, and some at Moonzie, in the Howe of Fife and west of Lindores.

11.69 There are 8 working quarries within the North East Fife locality; 3 hard rock quarries and 5 sand and gravel quarries. There was an extensive history of mining in North East Fife from medieval times to the 20th Century.

Links to evidence

- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Types 2019
- Scotlands Soils – Land Capability for agriculture
- List of Fife's Quarries
- Lomond Hills Regional Park
- Carbon and Peatland Map 2016

The housing issues that need to be addressed in the North East Fife locality within the lifetime of the Plan

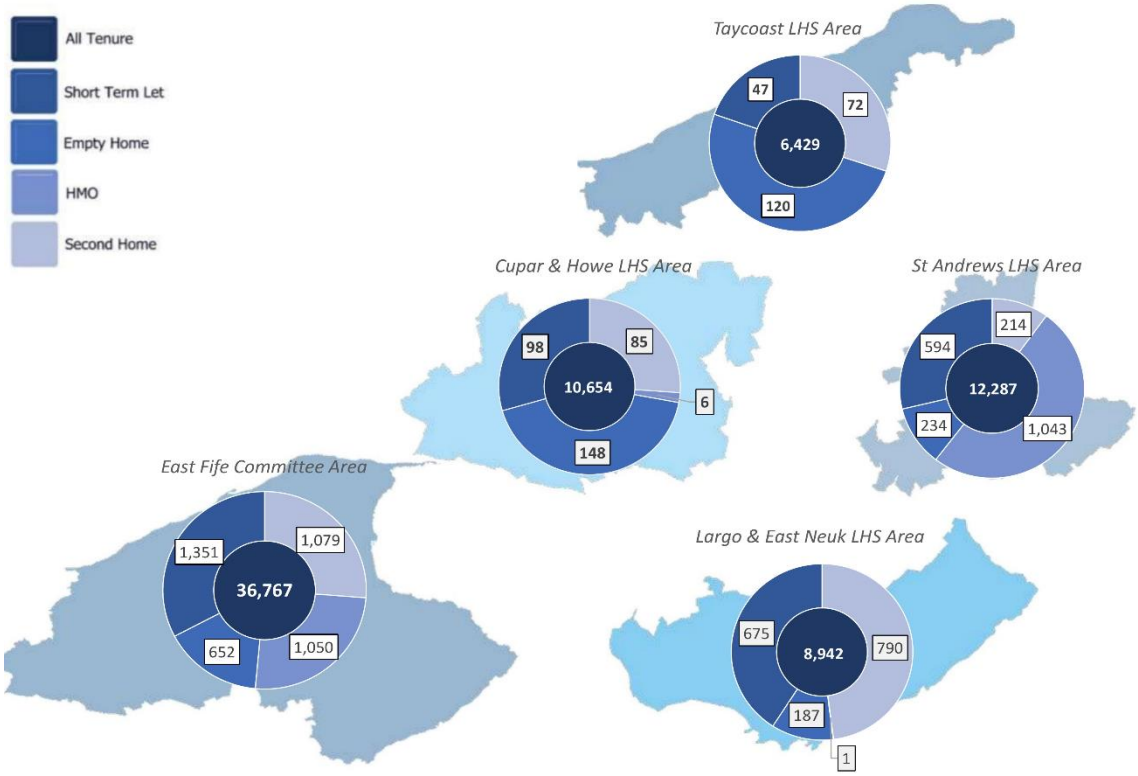
11.70 As the table below illustrates, St Andrews and the coastal villages of the East Neuk are key tourist destinations in Scotland. This results in parts of North East Fife facing unique (for Fife) pressures on local housing markets due to the concentration and number of second homes and short term holiday lets.

Table 11.2: Fife Council data on non-owner occupied housing in North East Fife

LHS Area	All Tenure	Short-term Let (STL)	Non-Domestic Rates (Self-Catering)	Second Homes	Empty Homes	HMO	Fife Council Stock	Private Registered
Cupar & Howe	10,654	98 *(0.92%)*	40 *(% n/a)*	85 *(0.8%)*	148 *(1.39%)*	6 *(0.06%)*	1,379 *(12.94%)*	1,188 *(11.15%)*
Largo & East Neuk	8,942	675 *(7.55%)*	294 *(% n/a)*	790 *(8.83%)*	187 *(2.09%)*	1 *(0.01%)*	764 *(8.54%)*	861 *(9.63%)*
St Andrews	12,287	594 *(4.83%*	160 *(% n/a)*	214 *(1.74%)*	234 *(1.9%)*	1,043 *(8.49%)*	1,078 *(8.77%)*	3,163 *(25.74%)*
Taycoast	6,429	47 *(0.73%)*	17 *(% n/a)*	72 *(1.87%)*	120 *(1.87%)*	0 *(0%)*	608 *(9.46%)*	680 *(10.58%)*
Grand Total	**38,312**	**1,414 *(3.69%)***	**511 *(% n/a)***	**1,161 *(3.03%)***	**689 *(1.8%)***	**1,050 *(2.74%)***	**3,829 *(9.99%)***	**5,892 *(15.38%)***

Sources: Fife Council (Assessors & Housing Services)

Figure 11.14: Short term lets, empty homes, houses in multiple occupation and second homes across North East Fife



Source: Fife Council (Assessors & Housing Services)

Figure 11.15: Crail Harbour

Source: © @welcome to fife

11.71 On average, second homes make up less than 1% of homes in Fife; in St Andrews they make up 1.7% of all homes and in the Largo and East Neuk area they represent 8.8% of all homes.

11.72 Short term holiday lets are also heavily concentrated in the same two parts of the locality. Overall, 77% of applications for short term let licences in Fife have been in North East Fife, with most being in St Andrews or the Largo and East Neuk area. The effect is that 7.55% of homes in Largo and the East Neuk area are short term holiday lets, with the equivalent figure for St Andrews being 4.83%. Short term holiday lets make up less than 1% of all housing elsewhere in North East Fife.

11.73 St Andrews' housing market is also impacted upon by the presence of the University (discussed below).

11.74 In the Largo and East Neuk area 16.3% of homes are either second homes or holiday lets. Communities are becoming increasingly concerned that the increase in short-term lets over recent years is impacting on the availability and affordability of housing locally, and is having a secondary impact on jobs, services, and business opportunity. However, short-term lets are also an important part of the visitor economy, encouraging local spending.

11.75 Funding received from second homes council tax has been committed to affordable housing projects to further enhance Scottish Government funding programmes. Since this was introduced, £23.977m has been collected between 2005/06 and 2021/22, with a further estimated £1.1m expected to be generated each year from 2022/23 – 2027/28. This issue continues to be explored by the Council.

11.76 Across Fife houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) – which are houses where for planning purposes, six or more unrelated people live in a house – represent less than 1% of all housing. However, in St Andrews, HMOs make up 8.5% of all homes (however 3.2% are purpose-built student halls of residence). Together with second homes and short-term holiday lets, this accounts for 15% of all homes in St Andrews impacting on the availability and affordability of homes for local residents.

11.77 St. Andrews University provides around 4,181 purpose-built student bedspaces in St Andrews for 10,360 students. The University has identified a need for around 1,000 additional bedspaces in St Andrews.

11.78 The University recognises the impact of this growth on the operation of the St Andrews housing market and the acute housing needs of low-income households not just in St Andrews but other areas of Fife. A Student Accommodation Masterplan is under development with a budget of around £140 million to improve and develop student accommodation in the town taking total residential capacity to around 5,000.

Links to evidence

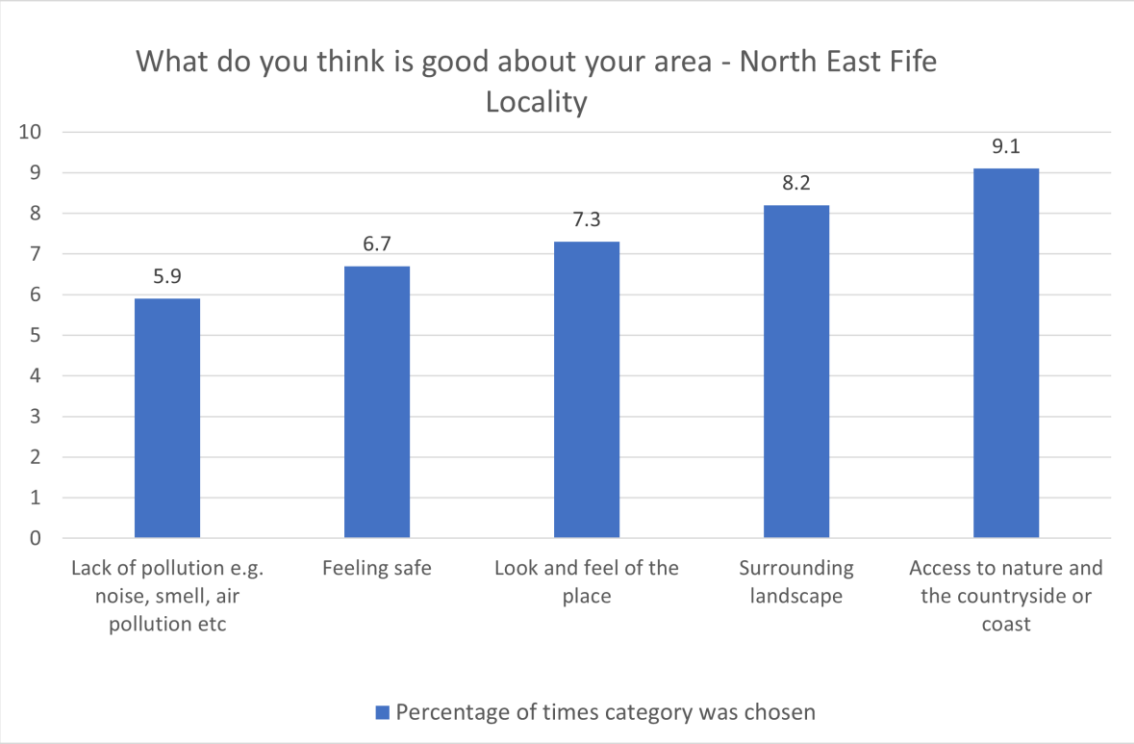
- Annex 9: Localised Housing Issues
- HMO Public Register | Fife Council
- Short-term Lets Licence | Fife Council
- Interactive HMO mapping

The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the North East Fife locality within the lifetime of the Plan

11.79 At a local level, the main infrastructure issue facing the North East Fife locality is access to healthcare. Access to employment and education opportunities by public transport is also an issue in some parts of the locality.

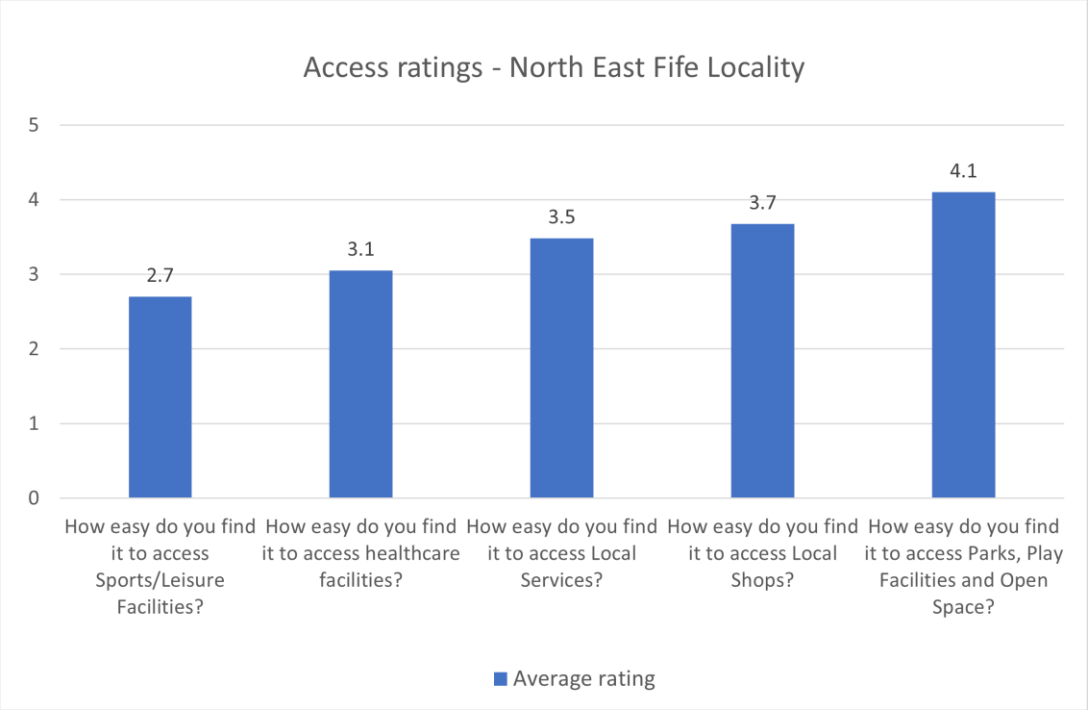
11.80 Fife Council asked communities in autumn 2022 what they felt was good about the North East Fife locality, what was not so good, and what the key issues were that they felt needed to be tackled.

Figure 11.16: What respondents think is good about their area



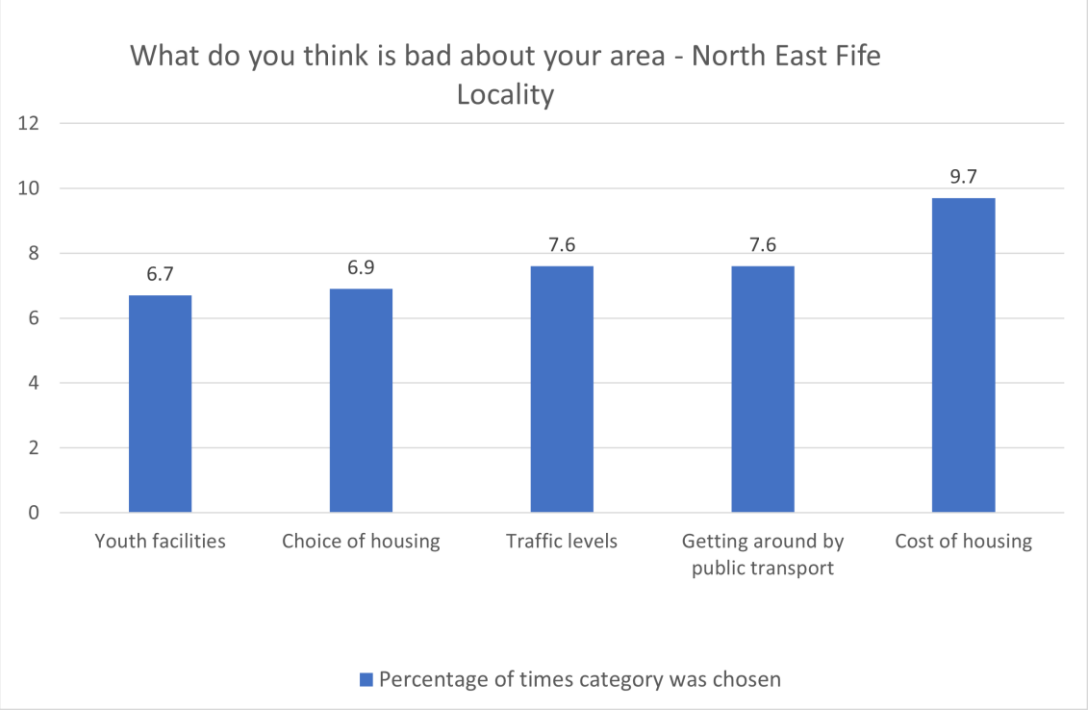
Source: Fife Council

Figure 11.17: Average ratings for access



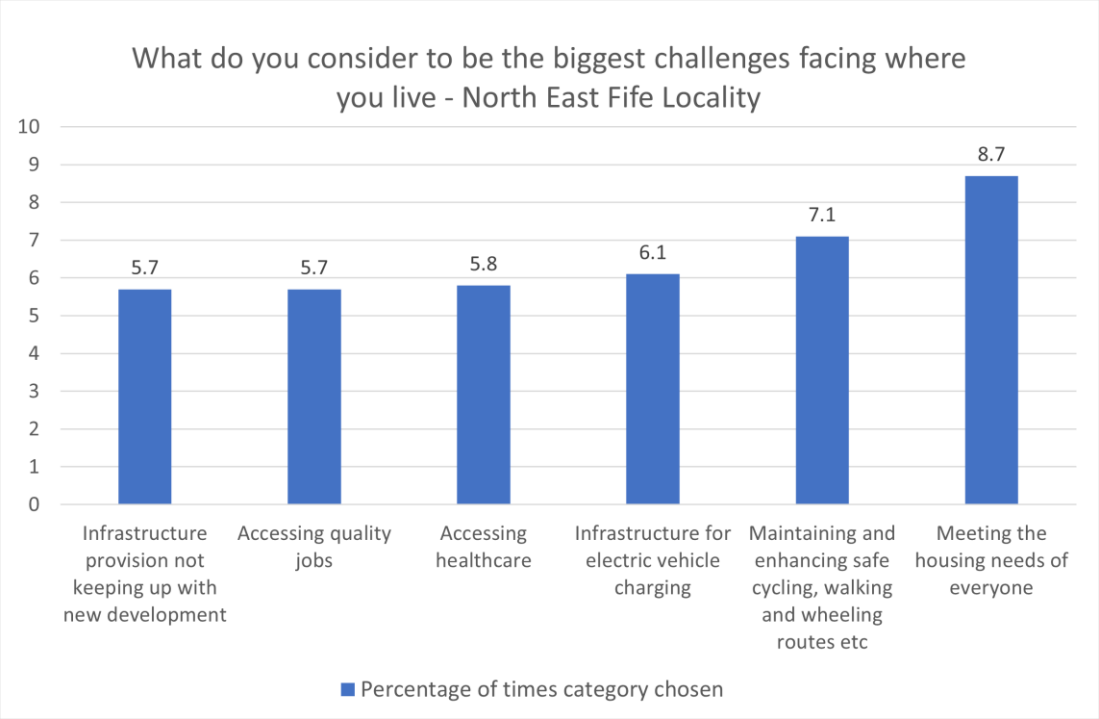
Source: Fife Council

Figure 11.18: What respondents think is bad about their area



Source: Fife Council

Figure 11.19: What respondents think the biggest challenges facing their area are



Source: Fife Council

11.81 The three poorest aspects of living in North East Fife are the cost of housing, high traffic levels, and getting around by public transport. Access to sports/leisure facilities is seen as limited as the only options are outdoor facilities such as golf clubs.

11.82 The survey highlighted that the three biggest challenges facing the locality are meeting the housing needs of everyone, maintaining and enhancing active travel routes, and ensuring the infrastructure is in place for electric vehicle charging.

Links to evidence

- North East Fife summary of survey (residents)

Healthcare in the North East Fife locality

11.83 North East Fife has a wide range of health and care facilities. However, planned growth and demographic changes (in particular, an ageing population) are likely to put increased pressure on these facilities. NHS Fife is moving towards health and wellbeing hubs which provide multi-disciplinary care. There is a particular need for new or replacement premises in Cupar.

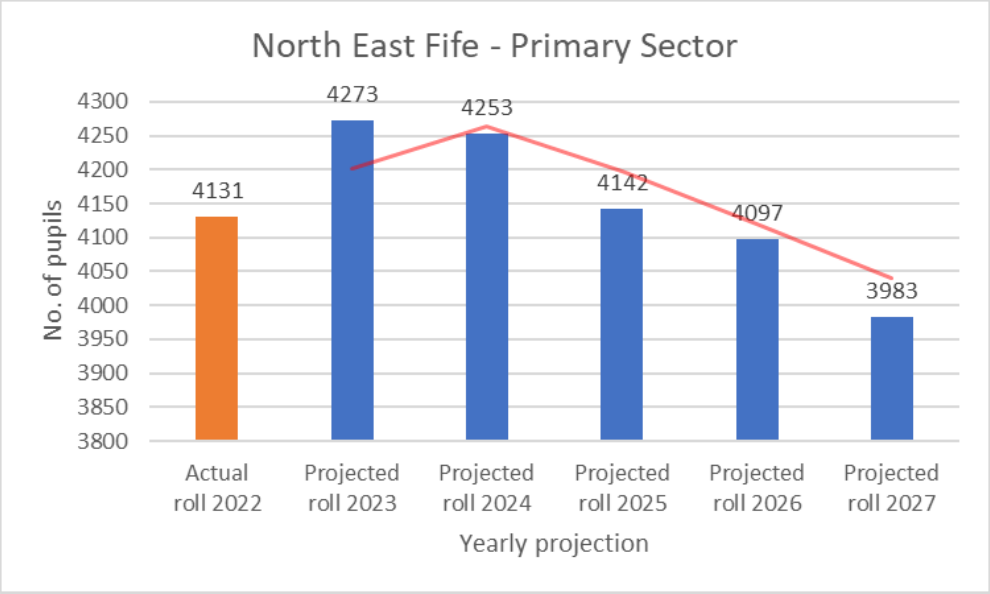
Links to evidence

- NHS Fife Estates Strategy

School places in the North East Fife locality

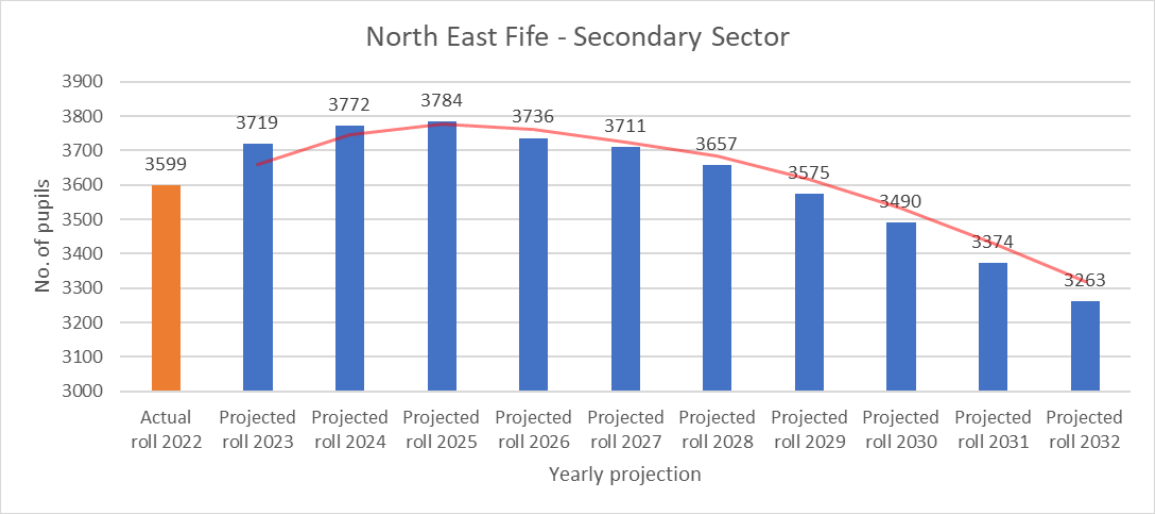
11.84 There is projected pupil capacity across the whole of the existing and planned primary and secondary school estates to accommodate further growth. However, individual schools do have capacity constraints. Spare primary school capacity across localities does not mean there is capacity for new homes across all primary schools in the locality.

Figure 11.20: Projected pupil numbers in primary schools in the North East Fife locality (2023 - 2027)



Source: Fife Council

Figure 11.21: Projected pupil numbers in secondary schools in the North East Fife locality (2023 - 2032)



Source: Fife Council

11.85 An extension is required to Madras College and one new primary school is planned n the locality to accommodate pupils from new housing in Cupar, as allocated in the adopted FIFEplan (2017).

11.86 St Andrews is also home to the private St Leonards School.

Links to evidence

- School Roll Projections by Area Committee September 2023

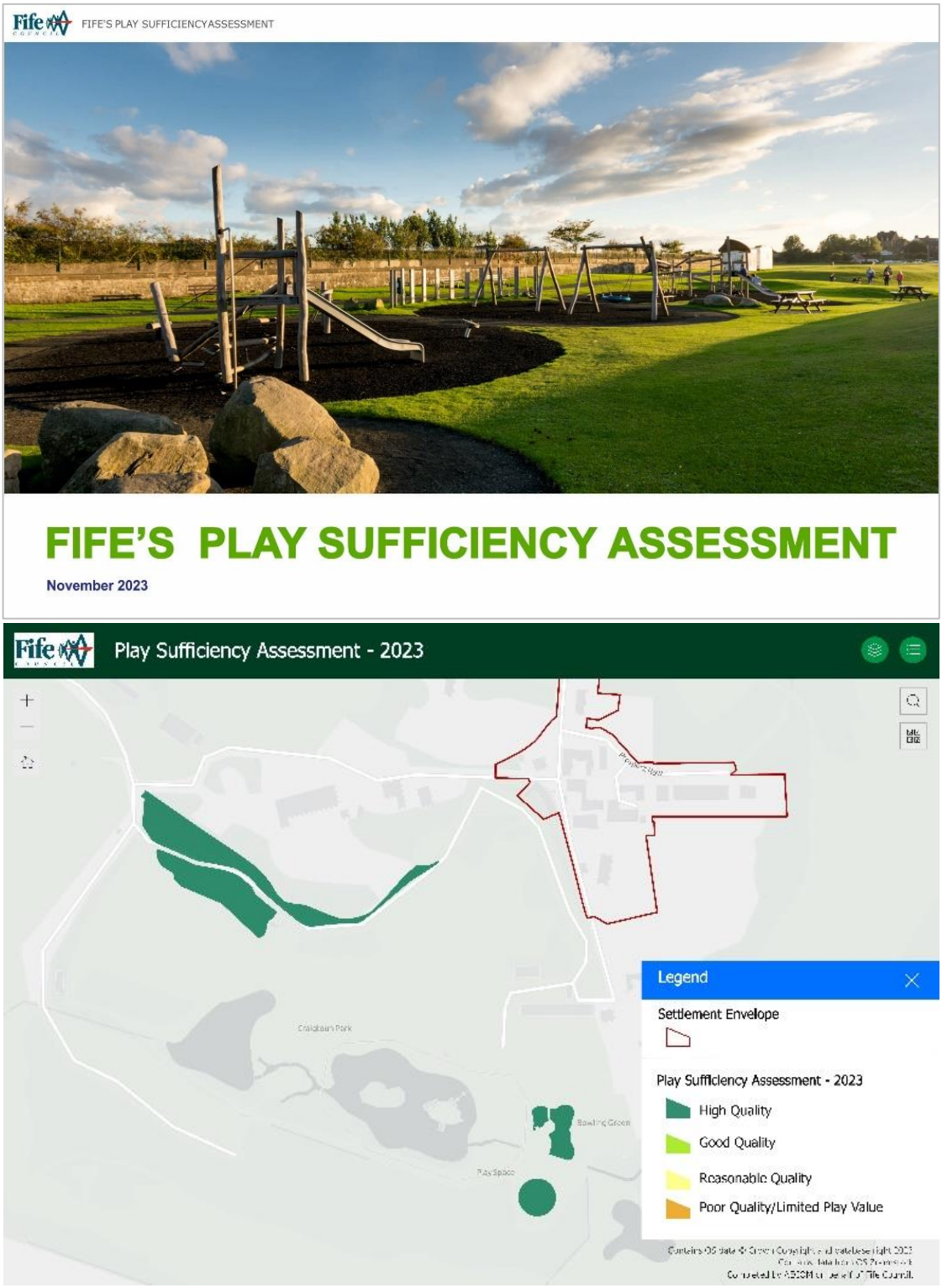
Open space, play space and sports facilities in the North East Fife locality

11.87 Open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, and outdoor places to play and socialise are key to successful placemaking. The outdoor spaces, including public parks and access to the coast, in parts of the locality, have helped to make communities more pleasant, liveable, healthy, and resilient..

11.88 Work is underway to update the Fife open space audit and strategy which will be finalised in late 2025. Site visits to update the quality audit have been completed. These visits found that almost half of the high quality greenspaces in Fife are in the North East Fife locality including Tarvit Drive, Cupar, Bankie Park, Anstruther and Pitcairn Park, Dairsie. Only two poor quality green spaces were identified in the area, Bowfield Park, Strathkinness and Hogarth Park, Cupar. The High Road Strathkinness, Dreelside, Anstruther and Kilrymont Place, St Andrews were among a number of spaces which had shown a marked improvement since the 2009 audit, with community involvement being a key factor. Overall the updated audit work has found there is around a 3% decline in the quality of greenspaces in the North East Fife area, and the area had some of the most improved scores for greenspaces in Fife. Publicly useable greenspace has increased in both St Andrews (14%) and Cupar (45%) but the provision of greenspace per head of population in both towns remains below the Fife average. Auchtermuchty has had a 10% increase and Anstruther a 6% decline in the amount of greenspace identified and both villages have poor levels of provision.

11.89 The Fife Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023 identified that St Andrews, Cupar and most of the smaller settlements in North East Fife tend to have access to at least one high quality play park but there are also some much poorer facilities with limited play value. Newburgh, Wormit, St Andrews, Craigrothie, Largoward, Cupar and Auchtermuchty were assessed as having insufficient play provision. This is often due to a lack of poor facilities or a lack of associated greenspace. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment provides more information.

Figure 11.22: Indicative image from Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment (showing part of the North East Fife locality)



Source: Fife Council

11.90 There are a range of sports facilities in this locality and it has a strong concentration of golf courses throughout the locality, including The Old Course in St Andrews. Key sports facilities in the area include Cupar Sports Centre, East Sands Leisure Centre, Waid Academy Community Use School, St Andrews and the University of St Andrews Leisure Centre. There are

community sports hubs at Duffus Park, Cupar, waterstone Crook, Newport on Tay and the East Neuk community sports hub in Crail. There are a number of boat and sailing clubs around the coast and the Blown Away surf school in St Andrews. Tidal pools in Pittenweem, Anstruther and Cellardyke have been refurbished by the community and now provide areas for outdoor swimming. Many of the villages have either halls suitable for sport, pitches and bowling greens. However, many of the very small villages on the north Tay Coast and in the more remote parts of the East Neuk do not have access to any sports facilities nearby.

11.91 Facility Planning Model developed by sportscotland predicts patterns of demand for sports facilities (but not actual usage). The model outputs suggest that the Elie to Crail area will have the highest level of unmet demand for sports halls and there is a lack of access to synthetic sports pitches in the area. However, Waid Academy is not included in the model and would address these issues. The area between Pittenweem and Elie is identified as not having access to a swimming pool within a 20 minute drive. The refurbishment of the tidal pools helps to partially address this.

Links to evidence

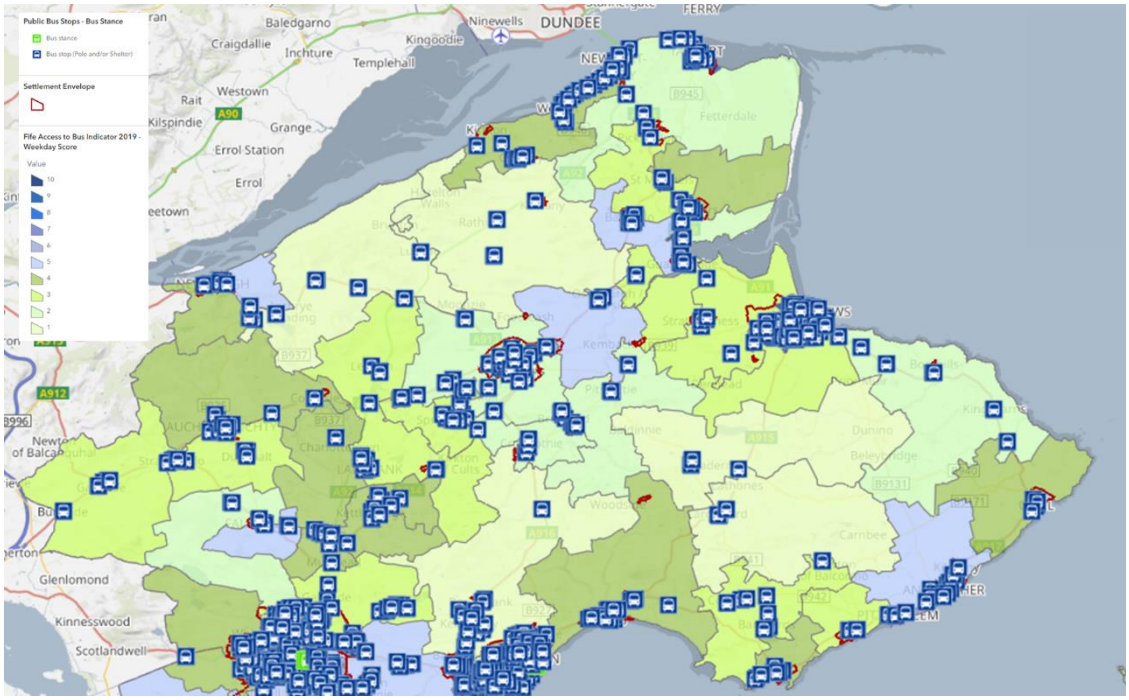
- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Fife Greenspace Audit 2010
- Open space quality audit – examples of good quality sites Jan 25
- Open space quality audit – examples of poor quality sites Jan 25
- Draft Fife Greenspace Audit 2024 – key changes since 2009

Accessibility of public transport in the North East Fife locality

11.92 St Andrews is well served by bus services and is one of Fife's five main bus station hubs. Cupar is less well served by buses but has a train station on the east coast mainline. However, the rural parts of the locality have much less frequent access to public transport services with some areas having very low frequency of buses.

11.93 There is a rail station at Leuchars which serves St Andrews and a rail station at Ladybank. This is also part of the east coast mainline and provides connections to Dundee and Aberdeen to the north and Edinburgh and the central belt to the south.

Figure 11.23: Weekday access to buses in the North East Fife locality with bus stops (1= poor access, 10 = good access)



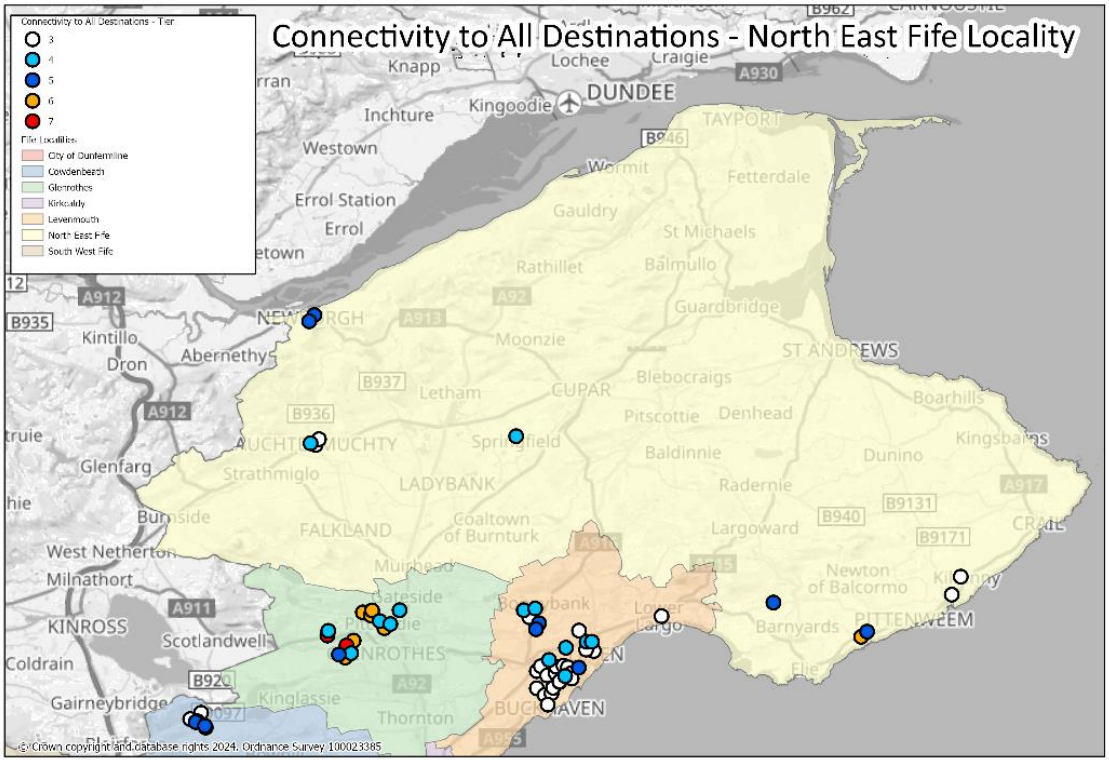
Source: [Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)]

11.94 Together this means that access to strategic destinations both inside and outside of Fife is relatively good for much of North East Fife with the East Neuk villages and Newburgh being the areas less well connected.

11.95 The figure below highlights overall levels of access to destinations such as employment and further education from areas within the locality. Tiers 1 and 2 are not shown on the map as they are considered to be good access scores. Tiers 3 and above indicate access issues. As a large rural area, the ability to access key services and employment by public transport varies considerably. Access to further education is poor across North East Fife apart from places along the St Andrews-Dundee bus transport corridor. More

commentary on public transport accessibility is contained in Annex 10 (Transport).

Figure 11.24: Connectivity to All Destinations from North East Fife Locality



Source: LTS/LDP Modelling and Options Report

11.96 Whilst access to community health services (primary care) is good across most of North East Fife, access to tertiary care is poor for much of the locality with only St Andrews, Tayport, and Newport-on-Tay having good access.

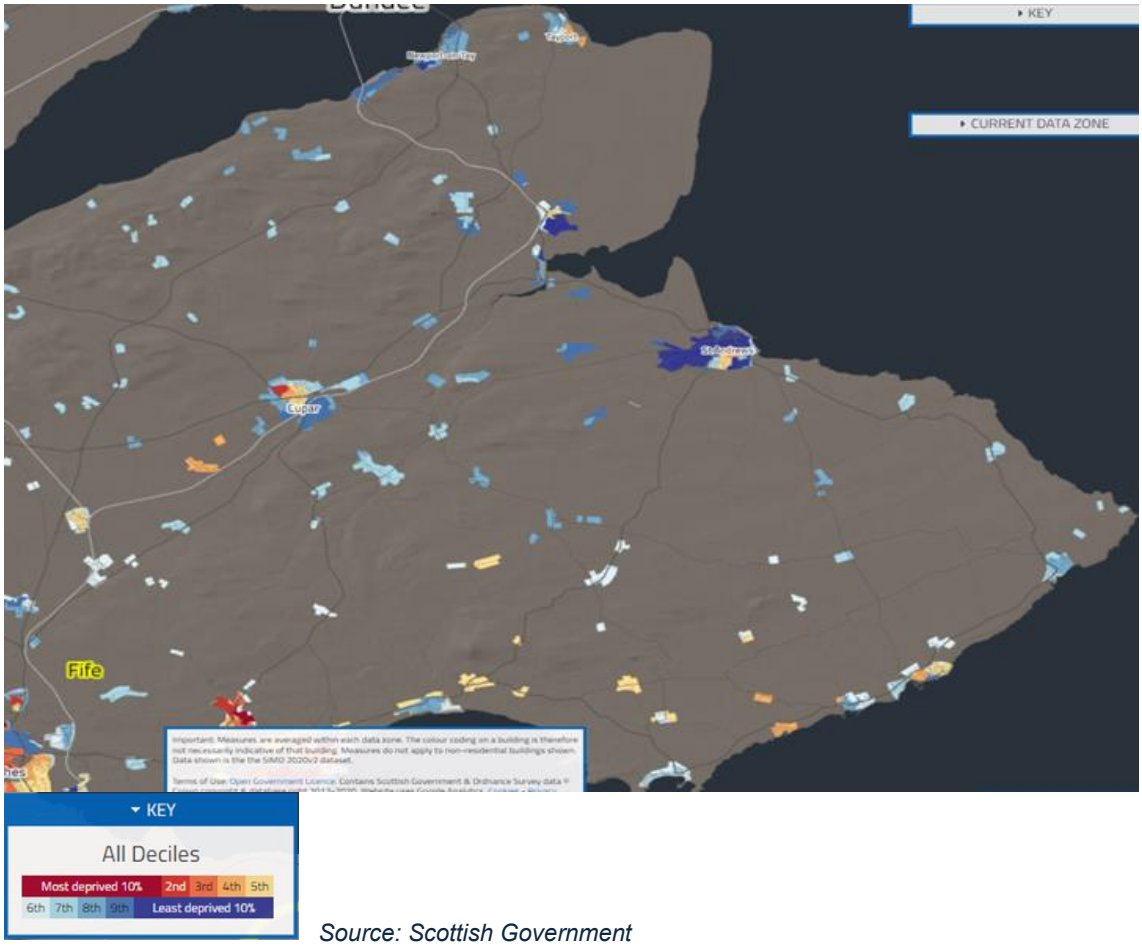
Links to evidence

- Scotrail route map
- LTS & LDP Strategic Transport Modelling and option Development Report 2022
- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- North East Fife Area Surveys Analysis 2022

How the North East Fife area's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

11.97 North East Fife has the lowest levels of deprivation in Fife, including the lowest percentage of children who live in relative poverty in Fife. The locality has the highest percentage of working age people qualified to NVQ4 or above in Fife, well above Scottish averages, and the lowest percentage in Fife of people who have no qualifications.

Figure 11.25: Deprivation in the North East Fife locality



Source: Scottish Government

11.98 There are no areas in North East Fife which are in the most deprived 10% in Scotland, although an area of Cupar is in the 20% most deprived. Most of St Andrews is in the 10% least deprived in Scotland.

11.99 The North East Fife economy is diverse with many distinct settlements including those that could be considered rural in nature. Each settlement has its own needs and aspirations. Guardbridge continues to be a focus of development for the St Andrews University. The establishment of the army base at Leuchars creates opportunities to employ local companies. This increase in the number of people will also bring its challenges and the LDP will assist where applicable.

Links to Evidence

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
- 18-10-04-Talk-of-the-Town.pdf (centreforcities.org)
- Wellbeing Index (coop.co.uk)
- Local Economic Profile 2021-2022

Employment in the North East Fife locality

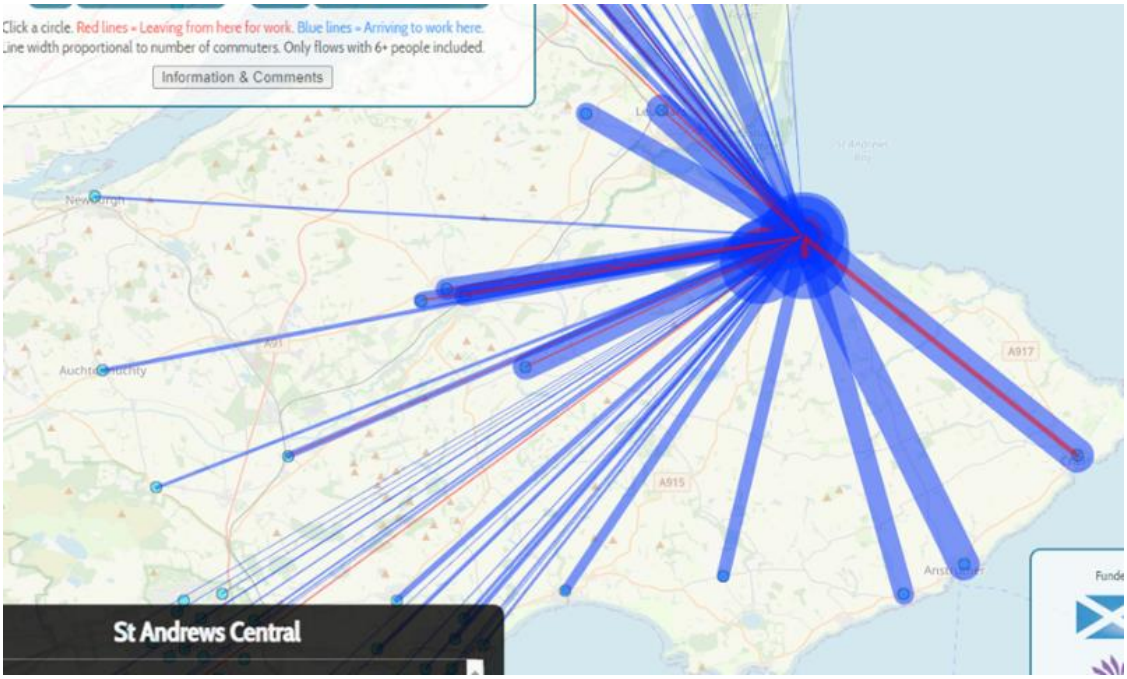
Travel to Work

11.100 St Andrews is the main destination for work for those who reside in the North East Fife locality except for the Newport and Tayport areas where Dundee is the main destination.

11.101 People living in Newburgh tend to travel to Perth, Glenrothes, or Cupar to work. Cupar attracts a significant number of people from the North East Fife locality. St Andrews is the main destination of those travelling outwith Cupar.

11.102 Those in Ladybank mainly travel to Glenrothes, Cupar, or Kirkcaldy. Anstruther attracts a relatively large number of people to work from the East Neuk area.

Figure 11.26: Example of journeys to work to and from part of the North East Fife locality



Source: Datashine

Key Sectors

11.103 Education; accommodation and food services; and arts, entertainment & recreation are key sectors in North East Fife – each has over a third of all jobs in Fife in these sectors (43%, 35%, and 36%, respectively).

11.104 The University of St Andrews continues to grow with recent developments in St Andrews and Guardbridge and will remain a major employer in the locality.

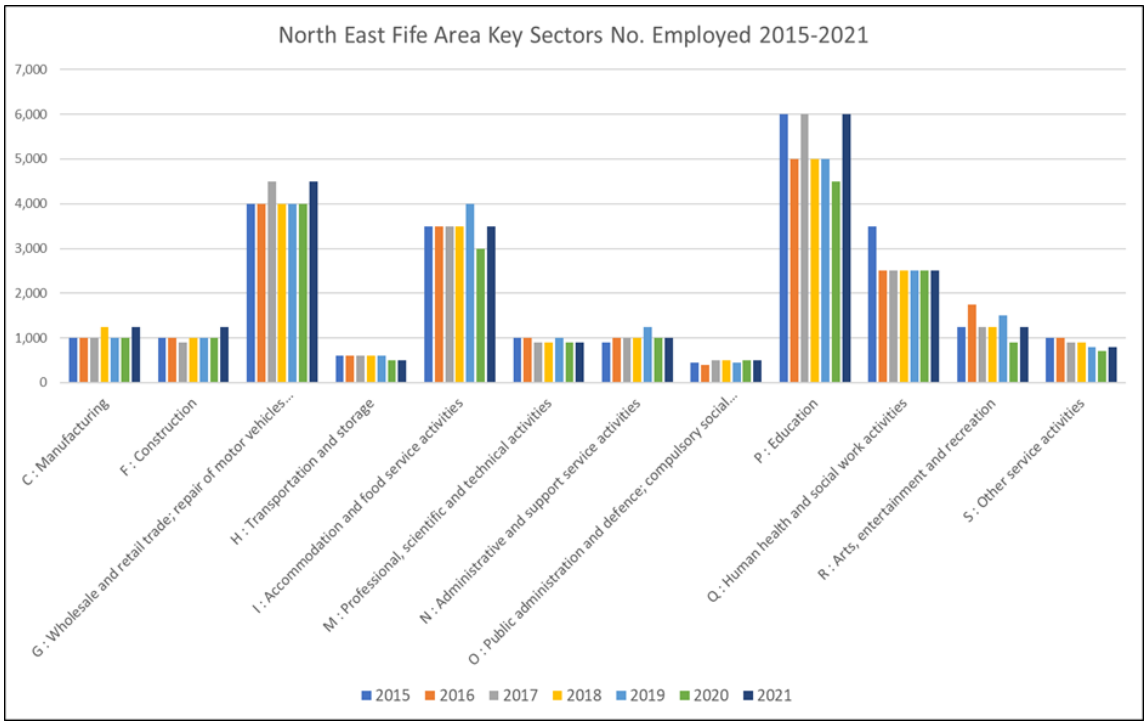
11.105 Tourism, including accommodation and food services, is a key sector within the locality and continues to be a focus of growth for the Council and its partners.

11.106 With much of North East Fife being rural in nature, farming is also a key sector within North East Fife and will be a key consideration for the next LDP with a focus on the preservation of prime agricultural land.

11.107 The wholesale and retail trade sector is also well represented (4,500 employed).

11.108 Growth Sector data is only available at a Fife-level and so is not included here. This is being considered as part of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy.

Figure 11.27: The North East Fife locality's key employment sectors (number of people employed each year from 2015 to 2021

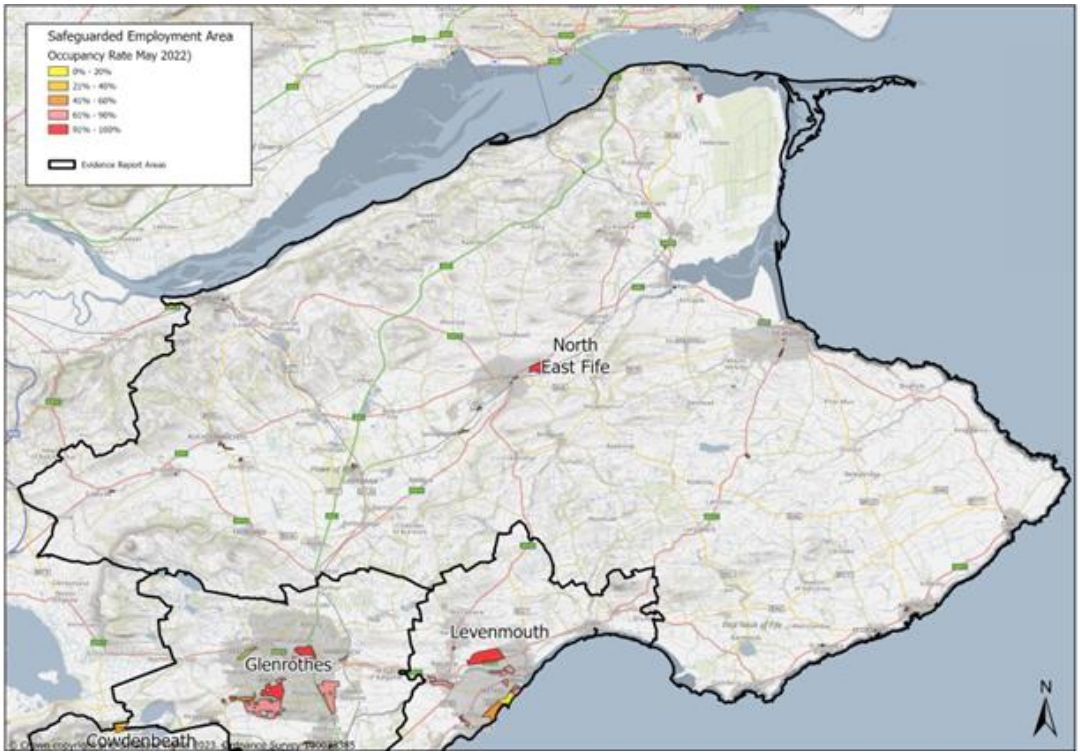


Source: NOMIS Key Sectors Data

Safeguarded employment area occupancy rates

11.109 The occupancy rates of Safeguarded Employment Areas (industrial estates and business parks) in North East Fife range from 74% to 100% on several estates indicating a need for more available employment land in the LDP.

Figure 11.28: Occupancy rates in Safeguarded Employment Areas in the North East Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

Availability of employment land in the Levenmouth locality

11.110 Within the North East Fife locality, the East Neuk and Howe of Fife key settlements, as set out in the Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021) and monitored through the Employment Land Audit 2023, exceed the set requirement for available employment land with both areas having over 200% of the requirement figure. St Andrews, Cupar and Tayport/Newport have insufficient available employment land with all having less than 30% of the requirement. Cupar and St Andrews sit at 0% and 2% respectively.

Table 11.3: 20 Key Settlements Availability of employment land by traffic light (RAG) status

Key Settlement	Audit Year	RAG Status	Percent Requirement Met	Total Requirement (hectares)
Cupar	2023	Red	0%	11.1
East Neuk	2023	Green	203%	1.5
Howe Of Fife	2023	Green	291%	1.1
St Andrews	2023	Red	2%	11.5
Tayport/Newport	2023	Red	28%	1.2

Source: Fife Employment Land Audit 2023

11.111 The emerging Employment Land Strategy and LDP will ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. For more information see the Fife-wide section of the Evidence Report.

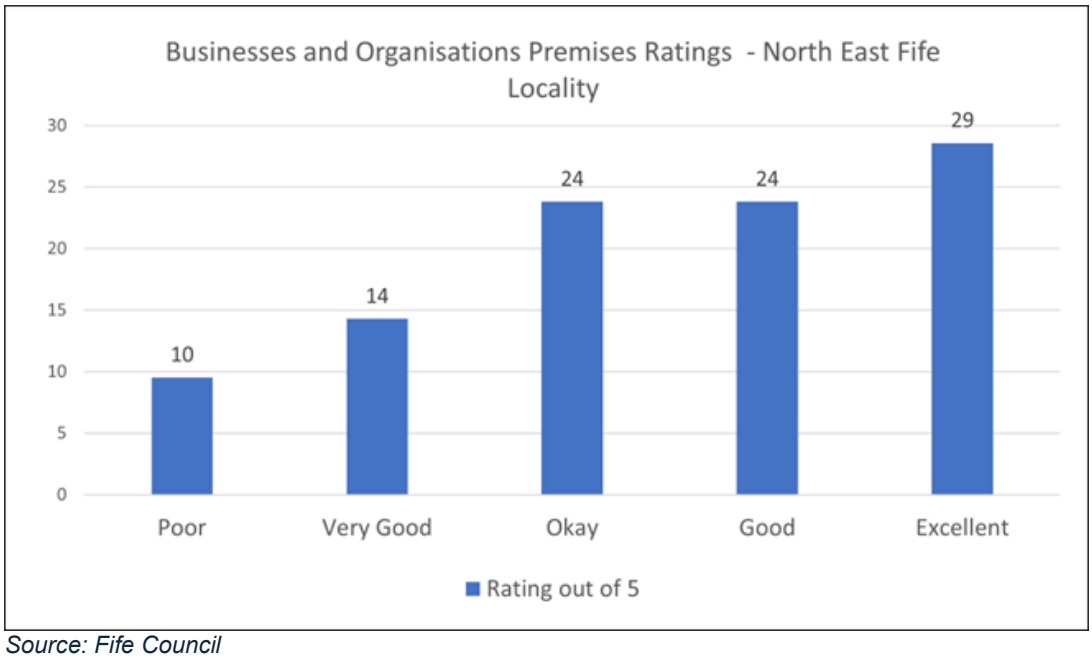
Businesses and organisations consultation 2022

11.112 Businesses and organisations were surveyed in 2022 on the issues that they face operating in North East Fife as well as what works well. Feedback suggests that there is a wide range in quality of employment, town centre, and other non-residential premises across the North East Fife locality with 10% of respondents rating their premises as poor.

11.113 Where premises were rated as poor, there was a common theme of substandard premises, poor maintenance and difficulty heating them. Some of the premises were described as not large enough and others described as ideal for what their business needs.

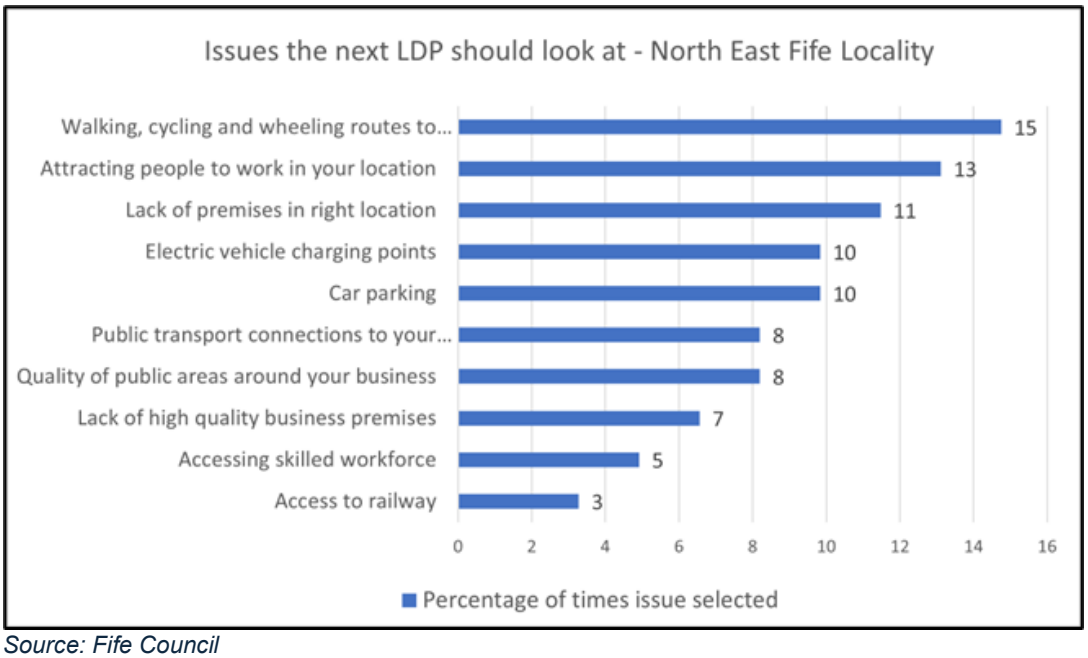
11.114 A few community organisations are renting old buildings and require their own dedicated place, especially in rural villages. The beauty of small villages was highlighted as good for the businesses. In general, the villages mentioned by respondents appear to do well in the tourism sector due to the natural beauty.

Figure 11.29: Premises ratings by local businesses and organisations in the North East Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

Figure 11.30: Feedback about issues the LDP should look at in the North East Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

11.115 Lack of footfall in town centres was raised as an issue in some places, particularly in Cupar.

11.116 Walking, cycling and wheeling routes to employment locations along with attracting people to work in the locality were the main issues that businesses and organisations want the next local development plan to look at.

11.117 Other issues include addressing the lack of premises in the right locations, improving public transport access to employment locations, and enhancing the quality of public places in and around them.

Links to Evidence

- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Economic Policy and Baseline Context April 22
- Key sectors Number of Employed 15-22
- Review of safeguarded employment areas
- Employment Land Audit 2023
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Review (Ryden)
- Businesses & Organisations Consultation 2022

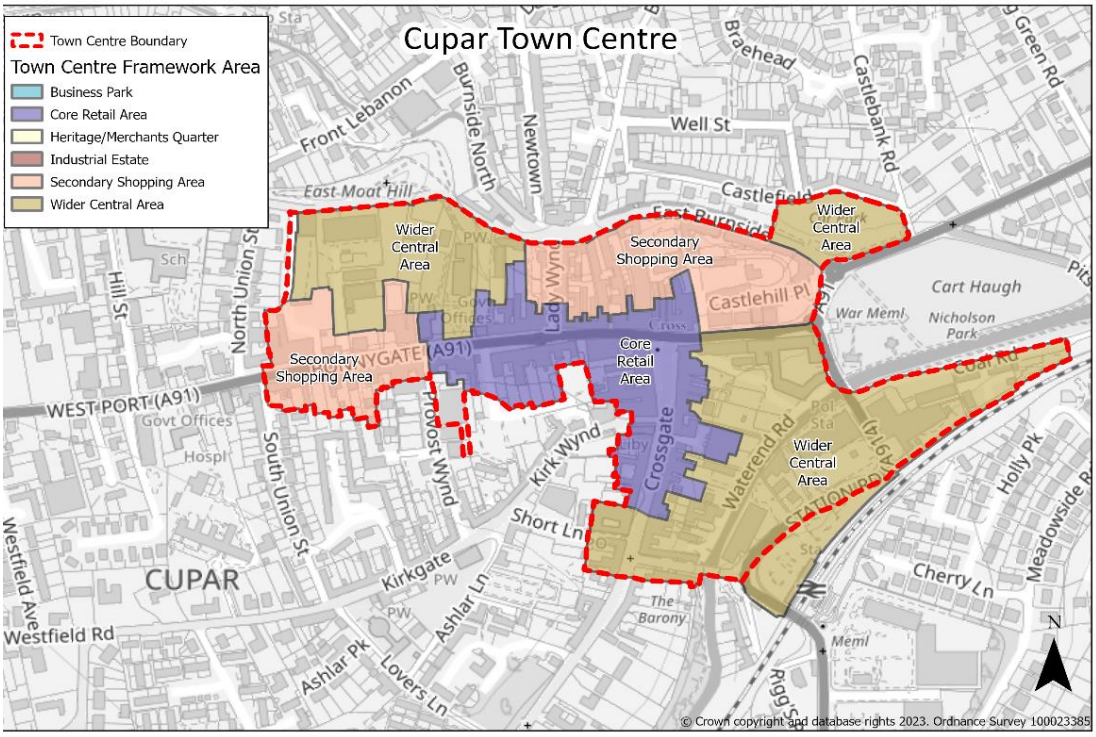
St Andrews, Cupar and Anstruther Town Centres

11.118 There are three town centres in North East Fife - St Andrews, Cupar, and Anstruther. All are facing the same challenges as many other town centres across the country in terms of responding to changes in shopping practices and economic impact.

Figure 11.31: Map of St Andrews town centre

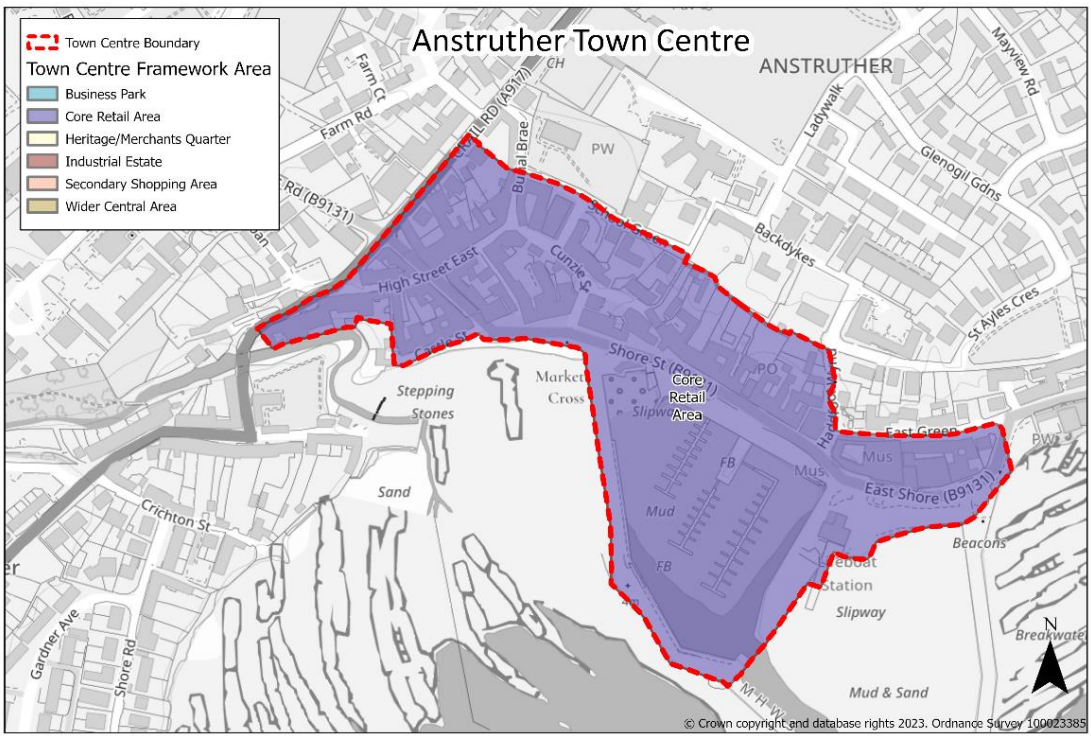
Source: Fife Council

Figure 11.32: Map of Cupar town centre



Source: Fife Council

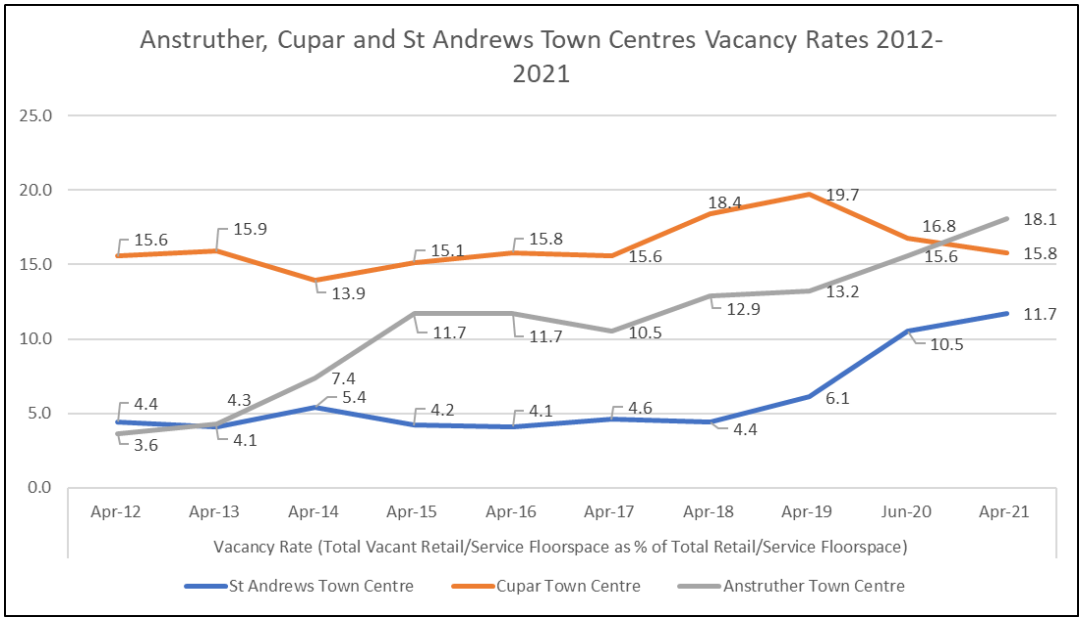
Figure 11.33: Map of Anstruther town centre



Source: Fife Council

11.119 Vacancy rates have risen in St Andrews town centre since 2012 from 4% to 12% in 2021. In Anstruther town centre, vacancy rates increased even more from 3.5% in 2012 to 18% in 2021. Alone among the locality's town centres, Cupar has only seen small fluctuations in vacancy rates, with approximately 16% of floorspace being vacant in both 2012 and 2021.

Figure 11.34: Vacancy rates in Anstruther, Cupar and St Andrews town centres (2012-2021)



Source: Experian GOAD

11.120 All the centres have high percentages of independent and specialist shops and service businesses. St Andrews has more 'high street' brands, (not including discount brands), than either Dunfermline or Kirkcaldy.

11.121 Outwith the three town centres there are sixteen local shopping centres serving smaller settlements across the locality. Occupancy rates vary from a low of 67% in Lower Largo to 100% occupancy in Falkland, Freuchie, Newport-on-Tay, Pittenweem, and Springfield.

Table 11.4: St Andrews Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) and Difference between 2012 and 2021		
Use Type	**St Andrews April 2012**	**St Andrews April 2021**	**St Andrews Change**
Assembly	5,020	4,880	-140
Comparison	17,410	11,670	-5,740
Convenience	3,730	2,600	-1,130
Convenience/ Comparison	1,560	1,350	-210
Food and Drink	6,660	7,230	570
Hotel/Hostel	0	0	0
Leisure	930	940	10
Medical	70	270	200
Office	1,000	1,010	10
Service	5,830	4,950	-880
Vacant	1,880	3,690	1,810

Source: Experian GOAD

Table 11.5: Cupar Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) and Difference between 2012 and 2021		
Use Type	Cupar April 2012	Cupar April 2021	Cupar Change
Assembly	2,250	2,050	-200
Comparison	8,420	9,230	810
Convenience	1,880	2,180	300
Convenience/ Comparison	3,480	3,200	-280
Food and Drink	2,280	2,460	180
Hotel/Hostel	520	630	110
Leisure	960	1,950	990
Medical	890	430	-460
Office	1,980	1,420	-560
Service	7,220	7,350	130
Vacant	4630	4620	-10

Source: Experian GOAD

Table 11.6: Anstruther Town Centre - Use Types by Total floorspace (m2) 2012 to 2021

	Town Centre - Use Types by Total F/space (m^2) Change between 2012 and 2021		
Use Type	Anstruther April 2012	Anstruther April 2021	Anstruther Change
Assembly	0	260	260
Comparison	2,060	2,020	-40
Convenience	720	500	-220
Convenience/ Comparison	0	0	0
Food and Drink	1,730	1,300	-430
Hotel/Hostel	510	970	460
Leisure	910	1,580	670
Medical	70	70	0
Office	150	150	0
Service	1,560	1,080	-480
Vacant	310	1,110	800

Source: Experian GOAD

Quality of Town Centres

11.122 The quality of place in Cupar, St Andrews, and Anstruther town centres is good to very good. They are each distinctive and reflect the history of the towns. All the centres have mainly historic buildings with some being high quality and particularly distinctive.

11.123 Maintenance of the buildings in the centres of St Andrews and Anstruther is considered good. All these town centres have had some investment in their public realm although Cupar and Anstruther would benefit from more investment in that locality. Day-to-day maintenance appears good.

11.124 Shop frontages in all the centres are generally attractive although Cupar has some less attractive discount store frontages which impact on the quality of place.

11.125 A consideration of the comparative value of retail and service businesses for quality of place found that St Andrews, Anstruther and Cupar had the highest values for town centres in Fife.

Figure 11.35: Shore Street, Anstruther

Source: Fife Council

11.126 Four Town Centre Improvement Grants totalling nearly £32,800 were awarded in the North East Fife locality in 2022/23.

11.127 Austerity measures over the last 15 years have had an impact on the level of funding which can be accessed for town centre public realm and building improvements.

Links to evidence

- Anstruther Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- Cupar Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- St Andrews Town Centre SWOT Analysis 2022
- GOAD data
- Fife Retail Capacity Study 2022
- Assessment of local shopping centres
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report summer 2023
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets summer 2023
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries summer 2023

Tourism

11.128 North East Fife is an area of great natural beauty. This mixture of coast and countryside and heritage and innovation characterises an area with much to offer residents and a wealth of attractions to draw tourists in.

11.129 The locality has a rich heritage and its coastal and rural villages, and the market town of Cupar, are key assets. Local food and drink, including the varied local produce and the growing number of distilleries in the area, are major attractions.

11.130 St Andrews is seen as one of the main drivers of tourism in Fife and contributes significantly to the Fife economy. St Andrews was the area within Fife linked to the largest number of tourist trips and the greatest total spend. In 2018 it was linked with 33% of trips in Fife, and 31% of total spend.

11.131 St Andrews, as the world renowned home of golf, also plays host to some major golf competitions, including recently the 150th Open Championship and the Dunhill championship.

Figure 11.36: Kingsbarns Golf Links

Source: © @welcome to fife

Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of evidence specific to the North East Fife locality:

- North East Fife records the least relative deprivation of Fife's seven localities. However, it still has pockets of deprivation and issues that the new local development plan will need to address.
- Many communities do not have access to day-to-day services within a 10-minute walk or cycle from their home. In this area, reducing the need to travel will need to focus on clustering of services in groups of communities.
- Flooding, water quality and water scarcity are issues in parts of the area, which will have implications for development under the new LDP.
- As with other coastal areas, coastal erosion is potentially a significant issue facing North East Fife. The area also has more heritage at risk from coastal erosion and the impacts of climate change than other parts of Fife. The LDP has a role to identify areas where nature based solutions could be used as part of adaptation and resilience measures responding to the risk of coastal erosion such as the West Sands Dune Management Project in St Andrews.
- Sites allocated in the LDP should include information on priorities for the protection, enhancement and extension of blue and green networks on the site. This will include improvements to the condition of water bodies such as the Dreel Burn; opportunities to extend and enhance active travel routes such as through the Cupar North and St Andrews West SDA's and promoting and supporting the East Fife 50 route.
- North East Fife has some unique housing challenges in Fife arising from the combination of the presence of the University of St Andrews in the area, and the tourist draw of St Andrews and the East Neuk. The concentration of houses in multiple occupation and short term holiday lets in the area puts pressure on the local housing market and makes access to housing for residents harder.
- There is some capacity in primary and secondary schools across the locality although individual schools are more constrained.
- As a rural area, the ability to access key services and employment by public transport varies considerably.
- There is a shortage of serviceable employment land in North East Fife. The LDP should consider allocating more employment land within the area.
- Although the town centres in North East Fife are seen as some of the most attractive in Fife, they have still been affected by changes in shopping patterns. Vacancy rates in St Andrews and Anstruther have both increased significantly since 2012.
- Recognise the significant agricultural land use in this locality and the need to protect prime agricultural land from development.
- Recognise the largely rural nature, albeit not at the scale of the Highlands and Islands, with many settlements being distinct and having their own challenges and opportunities.
- Recognise the relationship between North East Fife locality, including the Tay Bridgehead area, and Dundee.
- Work closely with the Ministry of Defence in relation to Leuchars Army Base.

- Recognise the importance of the tourism sector including in terms of issues and opportunities, whilst balancing against other priorities.

12 South and West Fife locality evidence and issues

Introducing the South and West Fife locality

12.1 The South and West Fife locality borders the City of Dunfermline. It stretches from Kincardine at the Clackmannanshire/Falkirk council borders in the west, to Aberdour in the east. In the south of the locality are the main towns of Inverkeithing, Rosyth, and Dalgety Bay, while the West Fife villages make up the main settlements in the west. The locality is characteristic of a history of declining heavy industry, such as coal mining and the dockyard at Rosyth, with the Kincardine and Forth bridgeheads providing links to opportunities outwith the locality.

Figure 12.1: Plan showing the location of the South and West Fife locality within Fife

Source: Fife Council

12.2 A number of priorities were identified for the South and West Fife locality from an early LDP workshop carried out between Fife Council and the Key Agency Group:

- Connectivity within settlements;
- Access to sustainable transport to Edinburgh and Glasgow;
- Understanding the impact of climate change in South and West Fife; and
- Working closely with key agencies to identify key projects and site requirements to tackle issues associated with climate change.

12.3 Addressing these priorities will require collaborative working across a number of organisations and partners.

12.4 An additional locality workshop was attended by representatives from Fife Council to collect place-based comments for the South and West Fife area.

12.5 According to the 2022 Local Strategic Assessment South and West Fife is the fourth largest populated locality in Fife, with 49,971 people in 23,491 households, and a similar population split to Fife. The locality has higher levels of owner occupation (68%) and lower levels of social rented accommodation (19%) than Fife as a whole.

12.6 The locality has the highest rate of those economically inactive (35.1%), and the second lowest employment rate (62.8%). However, the claimant rate is relatively low (3.4%). Levels of unemployment (7%) and income deprivation (8.1%) are below the Fife average. Compared with Fife, there are similar amounts of 16-19 year olds participating in education (73.2%), but slightly more in employment (18%).

12.7 In terms of health, in 2019 the average life expectancy for males living within the South and West Fife locality was 78.7 years and 81.9 years for females which is higher than the Fife and Scotland average.

12.8 23% of the locality's population were registered as living with a long-term physical health condition during the period between 2019 and 2020.

Links to evidence

- South & West Fife Local Strategic Assessment 2022
- ScotPHO profiling tool
- Fife Council 2nd Key Agency Group Workshop (Sept 21) – Executive Summary
- Fife Council: Support for place-based Local Development Planning – South & West Fife Area Workshop Report 02.05.2023

Implementation of FIFEplan in the South and West Fife locality

12.9 There are several place-specific proposals in the current FIFEplan in South and West Fife. This section outlines the success of FIFEplan in delivering its outcomes including allocations.

12.10 Longannet Power Station, a key infrastructure site in the locality has been demolished and has attracted investment interest given its strategic location on the Forth serving the Fife Council area in addition to that of Falkirk Council and Clackmannanshire Council areas. The Queensferry Crossing (a National Planning Framework proposal) is also now operational.

12.11 The strategically important employment site at Rosyth is now part of the multi-authority Forth Green-Freeport proposal.

How past development has shaped how the South and West Fife locality is today

Urban development and local living

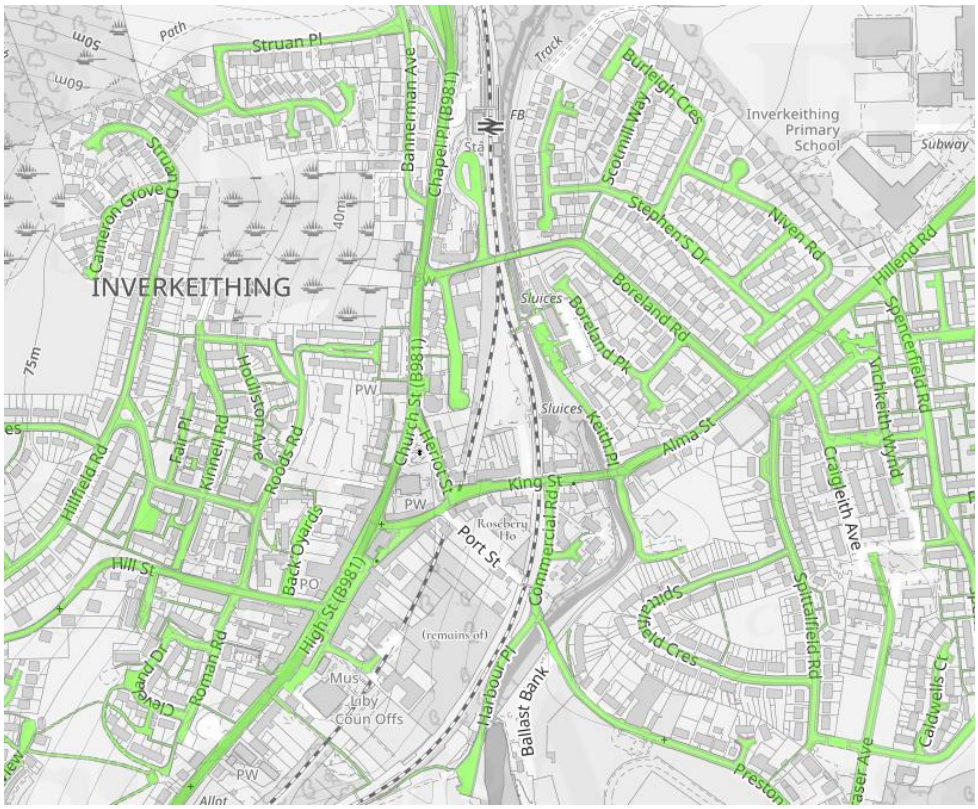
12.12 How and why the settlements of South and West Fife developed and changed over time heavily influences how they work today and the issues they face in reducing carbon emissions and tackling social and economic inequality.

12.13 Rosyth was originally developed using the principles of garden cities and consequently the centre is leafy and attractive for walking/cycling. However, the settlement has expanded with several busy roads acting as physical barriers to active travel and later housing developments are spread-out lengthening travel distances and reducing access to services.

12.14 Dalgety Bay has mainly been designed around car use and cul-de-sac developments (although there are path networks linking the culs-de-sac). Designing around the car being the primary form of transport means that there are areas, particularly in the south and west of the settlement, with limited access to services close to home. Walking and driving routes through the town are separated.

12.15 Inverkeithing has an historic core but connectivity to later development is quite poor with just a few key link roads and paths. The railway creates a barrier to good integration for the residential areas to the east of the town and the housing on the west is up a very steep hill.

Figure 12.2: Map extract showing the barrier created by the railway in Inverkeithing



Source: Fife Council

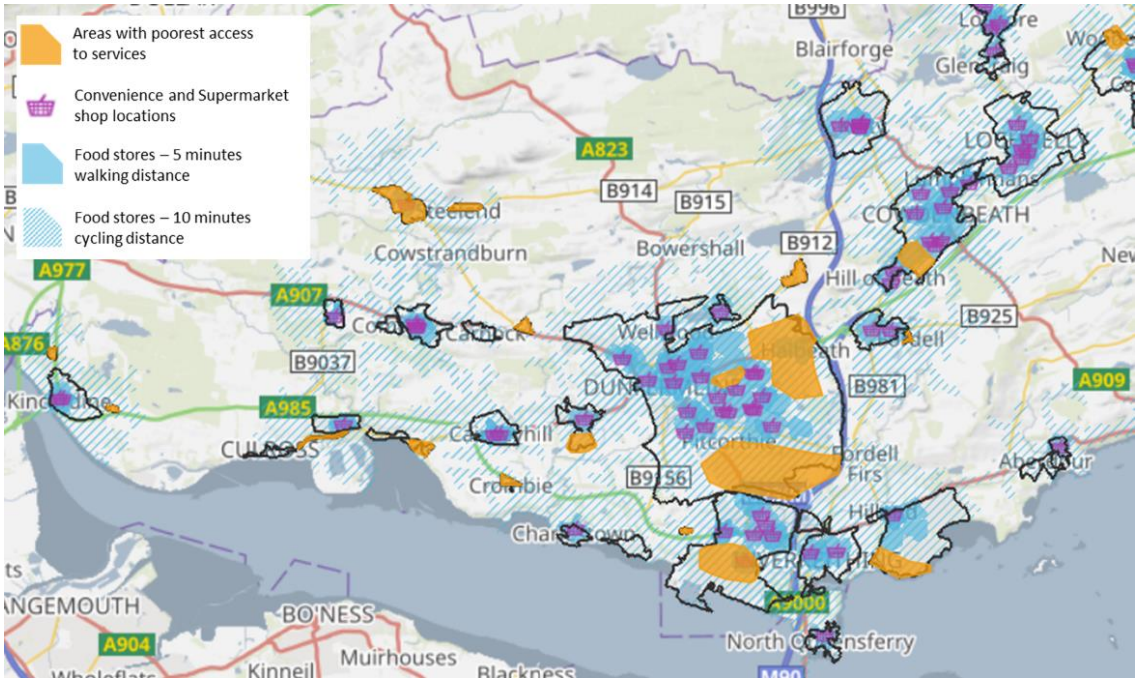
12.16 Many of the villages in the locality have permeable, traditional historic centres whilst others were built in the 20th century to support collieries in the locality. These tend to have less permeable layouts which can discourage walking, cycling, and wheeling.

12.17 Fife Council carried out a detailed assessment of how people in Saline and Steelend access services as a case study to inform the local living work for the LDP. The study found that:

- Saline and Steelend have few services within the villages. More services are available in Oakley which is 2-3 miles away. Most people access services such as dentists, supermarkets and sports facilities in Dunfermline;
- Public transport in the area is infrequent, slow and does not provide flexibility of use for day-to-day journeys so there is low use of public transport;
- Walking and cycling infrastructure are poor in the area and many people feel unsafe using it. There is no safe direct route to Oakley to walk and cycle; and
- The local community have shown a willingness to pick up services and facilities which have been withdrawn by the market or public bodies.

12.18 Many of the smaller settlements in West Fife have limited access to services and facilities although clusters of villages often share services between them. However, there are gaps in the existing active travel networks, particularly along the coast and between settlements (see figure below).

Figure 12.3: Example extract from Local living and 20 MN interactive mapping showing walking and cycling distances from convenience stores in the South and West Fife locality, and the areas which are least well served by services and facilities



Source: Fife Council

12.19 The viability of providing additional services and facilities in these areas is challenging and locating services strategically to serve a number of

settlements will be important if a reduction in the need to travel is to be achieved.

12.20 Annex 7 provides more information on Living Well Locally and 20 minute Neighbourhoods in Fife.

Links to evidence

- Living Well Locally case study – Saline and Steelend
- Annex 7: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods
- Interactive Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods mapping

Historic environment in the South and West Fife locality

12.21 South and West Fife has eight conservation areas mainly located in settlements along the coast. There are substantial areas of designated gardens and designed landscapes mainly relating to former estates including Valleyfield (designed by Humphry Repton), St Colme and Tulliallan, and a large number of listed buildings; of which 38 are category A listed including Culross Abbey. Scheduled monuments in the area include Culross Palace, Charlestown lime kilns and Crombie anti-aircraft battery.

Figure 12.4:Map extract showing historic environment designations in the South and West Fife locality

Source: Fife Council

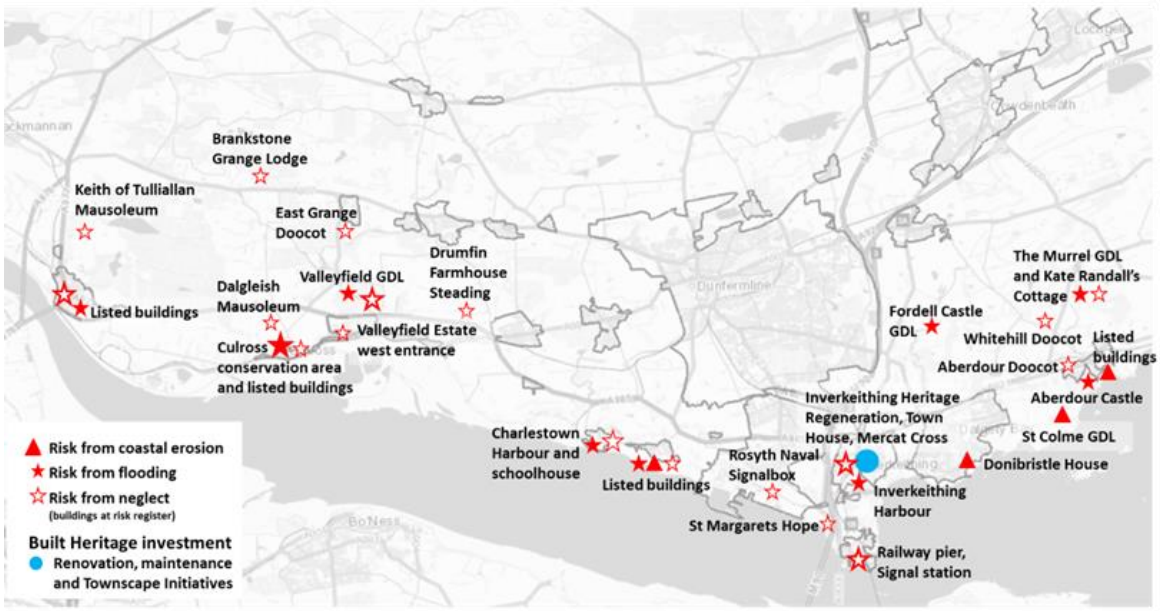
12.22 Inverkeithing and Rosyth centres both have many high quality historic buildings. In Rosyth these are in the Arts and Crafts style and relate to its garden city origins. These are generally in a good condition. In Inverkeithing the buildings are much older and there are more issues with poor maintenance of the historic fabric. However, there is a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme underway in Inverkeithing town centre with an overall investment of over £3.5 million carrying out building and public realm improvements.

12.23 In addition, it is important that any land use changes retain the key landscape characteristics and special qualities of the Inventory Battlefield of Inverkeithing II and that the wider setting and defined key views to the Forth Bridge UNESCO World Heritage Site are protected.

Risks to the historic environment

12.24 A large part of the Culross Conservation Area is predicted to be at risk of coastal flooding, this includes a substantial number of listed buildings. Several listed buildings in Limekilns and Kincardine; the historic harbours at Charlestown and Inverkeithing; and Aberdour Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument and designed landscape are also predicted by SEPA to be at risk from coastal flooding.

Figure 12.5:Map of the South and West Fife locality showing built heritage at risk from flooding and neglect; and some built heritage investment initiatives



Sources: Fife Council, HES, SEPA & Dynamic Coast Mapping

Notes: This map was created by visually comparing HES built heritage designations with the SEPA flood maps, the Dynamic Coast 2 webmap, the Buildings at Risk register and some areas which have received funding for townscape and heritage initiatives.

12.25 Valleyfield House garden is predicted to be at risk of flooding from the Bluther Burn and the Fordell Castle designed landscape is predicted to be at risk of flooding from the Fordell and Craiganet Burns. The Murrel designed landscape near Aberdour is also predicted to be at risk from flooding.

12.26 Several listed buildings in Limekilns and Aberdour; the category A listed Donibristle house and stables; and parts of the coastal edge of the St Colme Designed Landscape in Dalgety Bay are predicted to be at risk from coastal erosion on the Dynamic Coast2 webmap.

12.27 There are 28 buildings identified on the Buildings at Risk register in the South and West Fife locality including the listed Inverkeithing Primary School which was the victim of a fire in 2018, an application for demolition of the school building has been refused. One building at risk in Kincardine has recently been taken off the register as it has been restored.

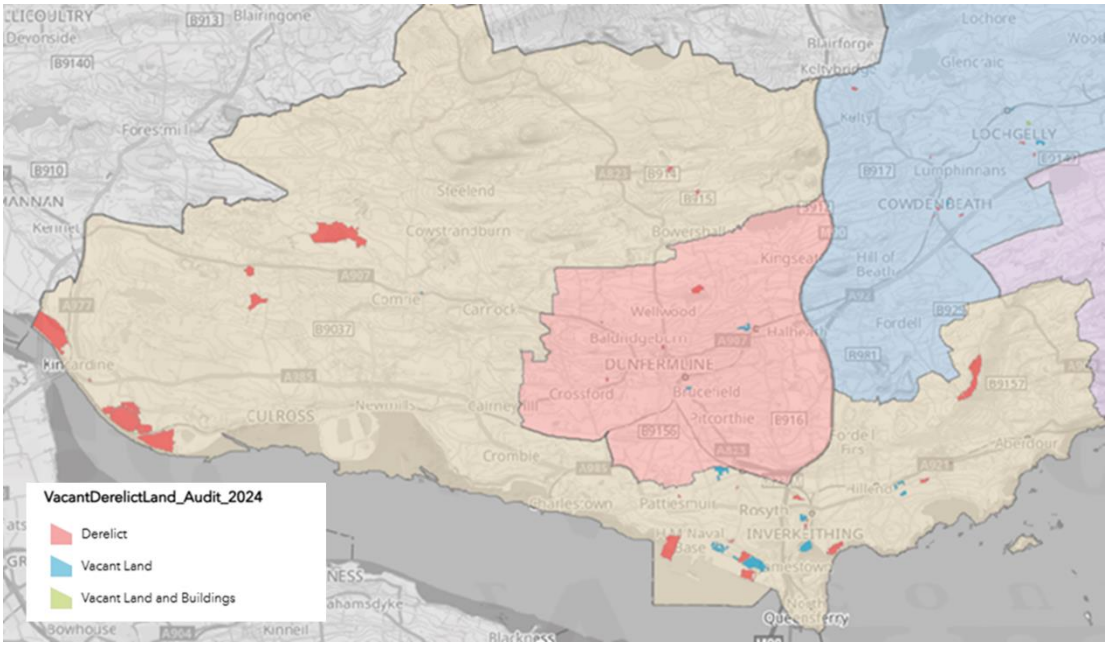
Links to evidence

- Conservation Area Appraisals
- Historic Environment Scotland Interactive map showing built heritage, landscape character designations
- Fife Historic Buildings Trust
- Buildings at Risk register
- Inverkeithing CARS project
- SEPA flood maps
- Dynamic Coast 2 webmap

Vacant and derelict land and environmental hazard in the South and West Fife locality

12.28 The South and West Fife locality has the largest amount of vacant and derelict land in Fife. The largest sites relate to former mining and quarrying activities (Comrie Bing, Bogside Colliery and Prestonhall Quarry); power generation (Kincardine and Longannet); and the dockyards in Rosyth.

Figure 12.6: Extract from the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2022 showing the South and West Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

12.29 Between 2021-22 the Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit identified that no vacant and derelict sites in south and West Fife were brought back into use, and no additional sites were identified. Funding from the Vacant and Derelict land fund has been allocated to help fund the restoration of sites at Hillend and Donibristle Industrial Estates and a task force has been set up to progress the redevelopment of the Longannet Power Station site.

12.30 Seven pipelines cross South and West Fife transporting gas, oil and other petrochemicals. Development close to these pipes and within associated zones is subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. There are also consultation zones associated with Muirside Explosives Depot near Blairhall, Nuclear submarines in Rosyth Naval Base and Braefoot Bay tanker terminal. The Health and Safety Executive consultation zones can be viewed on the adopted FIFEplan proposals map (advice/consultation information). The Health and Safety Executive have advice on the type and scale of development within the pipeline consultation zones.

12.31 There are no air quality management areas in the South and West locality but there is one smoke control zone covering most of Dalgety Bay, (it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney in these areas). Air quality is monitored by Fife Council on Admiralty Road (A985) in Rosyth.

Links to evidence

- Fife Vacant and Derelict land audit 2022
- FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted) September 2017 – interactive map
- Health and Safety Executive - Land Use Planning methodology
- Fife Council – Smoke Control Zones
- Fife Council – pollution mapping

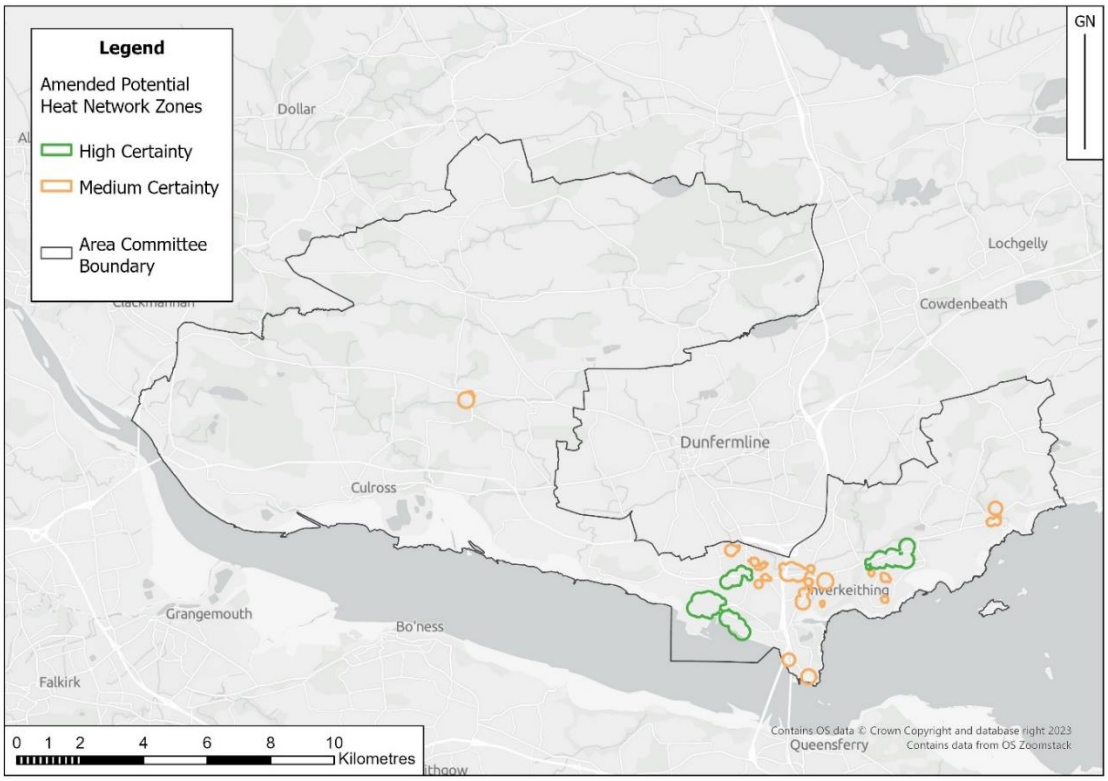
How the South and West Fife locality will need to change because of the climate and biodiversity emergencies

12.32 In common with other coastal areas of Fife, South and West Fife faces challenges arising from the climate and biodiversity emergencies. Opportunities will need to be taken to decarbonise heating in the locality to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change is increasing the risk of flooding, and rising sea levels increase the threat from coastal erosion. Both of these issues will affect how development is planned in the future. Water quality and protecting important habitats are also key issues in South and West Fife.

Decarbonising heating in the South and West Fife locality

12.33 Decarbonising heating will be important in helping Fife tackle the climate emergency and meeting net zero commitments. Potential Heat Network Zones in the South West Fife locality are being identified as part of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy for Fife. The potential heat network zones are shown on the figure below. Further work to identify Heat Network Zones will be undertaken in 2024-25.

Figure 12.7: Potential heat network zones in the South and West Fife locality



Source: Local heat & energy efficiency strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan | Fife Council)

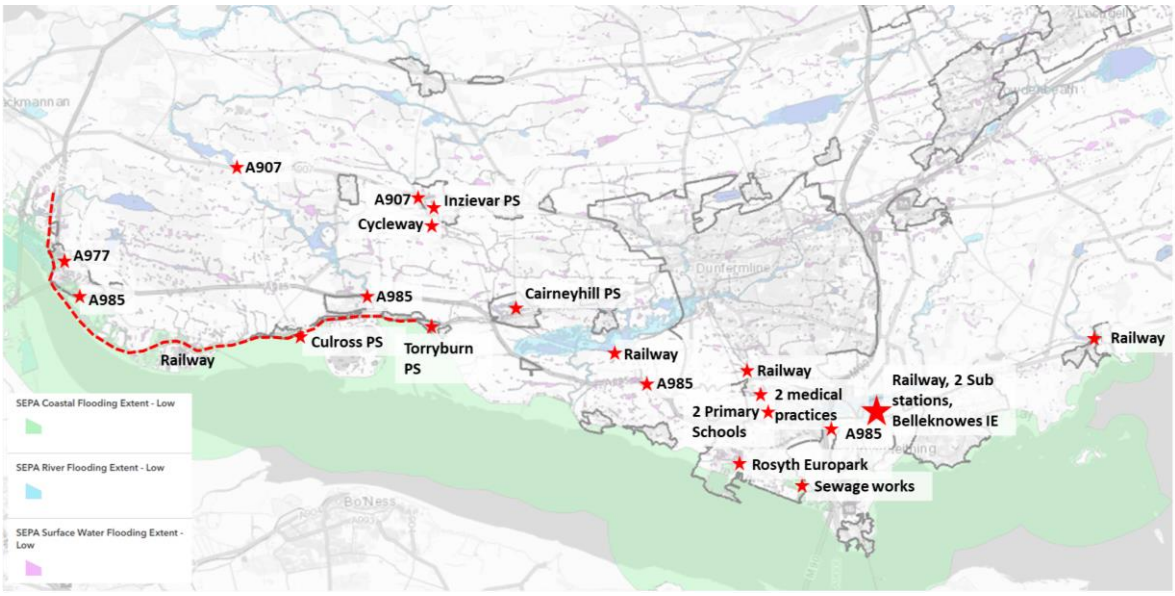
Links to evidence

- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

Flood risk in the South and West Fife locality

12.34 Much of the South and West Fife locality is identified by SEPA as predicted to be at risk of flooding, a risk that is increasing because of climate change. There is risk of coastal flooding all along the coast; and Inverkeithing and Rosyth have significant risks from river and surface water flooding. Rosyth Port, the Longannet site, and areas in Kincardine are all important sites that are at risk of coastal flooding.

Figure 12.8: Plan showing key assets predicted to be at risk of flooding in South and West Fife locality



Sources: Fife Council, SEPA & Dynamic Coast Mapping.

Notes: This map was created by visually comparing: Fife Council data on schools, healthcare facilities and key employment areas (see Local Living and 20 minute neighbourhood interactive map) and Mastermap and OS Base mapping with SEPA flood maps and Dynamic Coast 2 webmaps.

Caveat for use of SEPA flood maps. The Flood Maps are indicative and of a strategic nature. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the Flood Maps are accurate for their intended purpose, no warranty is given by SEPA in this regard. Within any modelling technique there is inherent uncertainty. SEPA has assessed the confidence it has in the maps and has shaded areas where data is not appropriate for use or where no data is available. ***It is inappropriate for these Flood Maps to be used to assess flood risk to an individual property.***

12.35 Over the last few years there have been many flooding events in the locality with Rosyth and Culross being badly impacted, with dated infrastructure making the situation worse.

12.36 There are existing flood protection schemes at Cairneyhill and Kincardine; these are both over 30 years old (see additional detail on these under *Formal Flood Protection Schemes* in the *Flooding* section of this Evidence Report). The requirement for new flood protection schemes have been identified for Cairneyhill, Culross and Kincardine in the Forth Basin Flood Risk Management Plan.

12.37 A detailed flood study has been produced for Cairneyhill, and one is proposed for Rosyth. In addition, Scottish Water has produced an integrated catchment study to look at flood risk from sewers in the Iron Mill Bay area which includes Rosyth. A follow up surface water management plan is now required.

12.38 SEPA has predicted that there is a risk of geomorphic change (change to the river channel) along stretches of the Brankholm and Bluther Burns in the South and West Fife locality.

Links to evidence

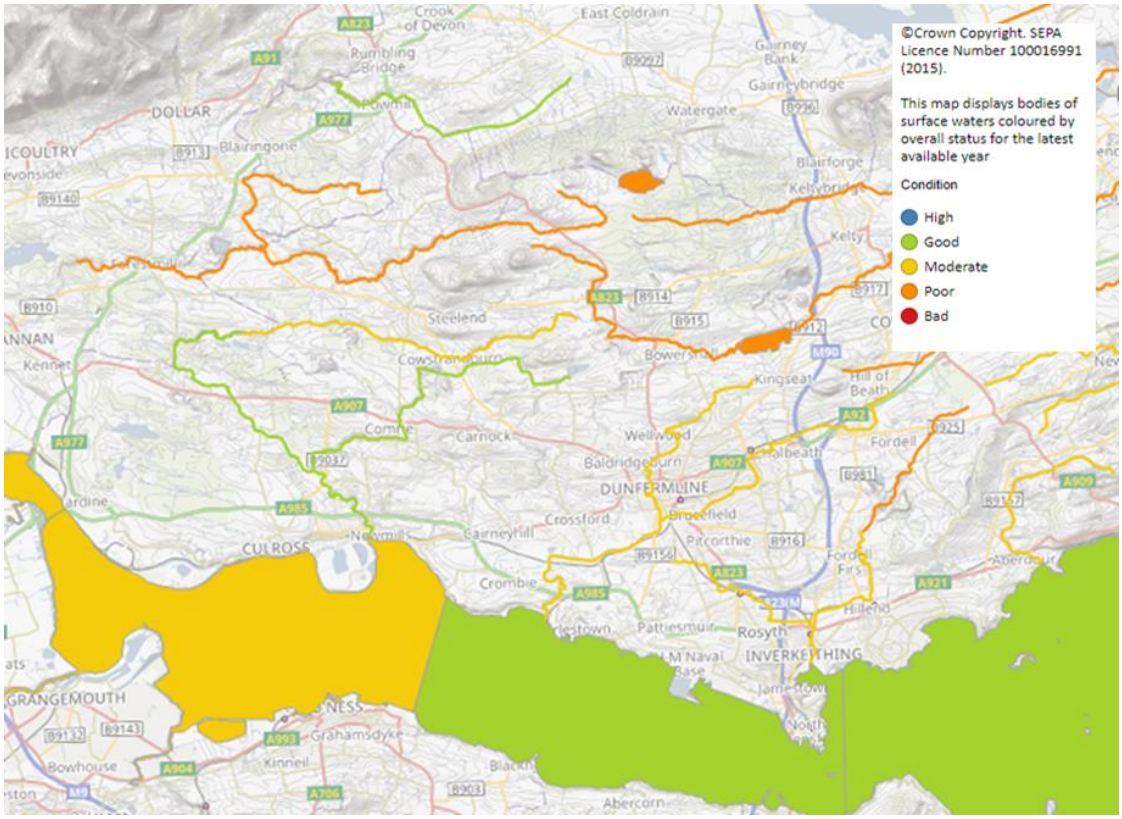
- Fife Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (January 2024)
- Addendum to Fife Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2024)
- SEPA Flood Risk Maps
- SEPA – Geomorphic Risk data
- Forth Estuary Local Plan District Flood Risk Management Plan
- Background paper on water and coastal erosion issues in Fife
- Interactive map showing predicted flooding, coastal erosion and geomorphic risk in Fife

Water quality in the South and West Fife locality

12.39 Alongside flooding there are also issues with water quality in some parts of South and West Fife which may have implications for planning and development in the locality.

12.40 The SEPA water classification hub classifies the ecological condition of surface water in the South and West Fife locality as mixed. Keithing Burn to Craiganet Burn, Meldrums Mill/Linn Burn, Kelty Burn, Black Devon, Loch Fitty and Loch Glow are classified as of poor ecological quality. Pressures on water quality include modifications from farming, barriers to fish migration from legacy structures and diffuse rural pollution (identified on the SEPA water environment hub). There have been some improvements in condition over the last few years with Grange Burn, the south section of the Bluther Burn and the Forth east of Charlestown being classified as having good ecological condition.

Figure 12.9: Extract from SEPA water classification hub showing quality of surface waters in the South and West Fife locality



Source: SEPA

12.41 Much of the groundwater in the locality immediately west of Dunfermline and Rosyth and the far west including Kincardine is identified as poor quality due to legacy mining or quarrying activities. Other areas including east of the Rosyth Naval base and east of Kincardine have good quality ground water.

12.42 The bathing waters at Aberdour Silver Sands are classed as excellent quality.

Links to evidence

- SEPA water classification hub
- SEPA water environment hub

Coastal erosion in the South and West Fife locality

12.43 The climate emergency is also increasing the risk of coastal erosion with areas of Limekilns, Dalgety Bay, and Aberdour predicted to be at risk.

12.44 There are extensive artificial coastal defences between North Queensferry and Aberdour which protect the coastal settlements in that locality.

12.45 Under the Coastal Change Adaptation programme, Fife will review its Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) in line with new Guidance on creating Coastal Change Adaptation Plans. It is anticipated the revised plan will be ready for publication in 2027/28.

12.46 The new Local Development Plan will have to consider how the risk of coastal erosion across the locality will influence future development. There is a strong presumption by Scottish Government that engineering solutions to protect areas at risk are no longer appropriate.

Figure 12.10: Map showing areas in the South and West Fife locality which are predicted to be at risk of coastal erosion (in red) – 2050 high emission scenario

Source: Dynamic Coast mapping (DC2)

Note: Caveat for use of Dynamic Coast maps. The Dynamic Coast maps should not be used to assess coastal risk to individual properties.

Links to evidence

- Dynamic Coast mapping
- Fife Shoreline Management Plan (2011)
- Fife Coastal Formal Defences Register Dec 2023
- Background Paper - Flooding, Coastal Erosion, Water Quality and Water Scarcity

Green and blue networks in the South and West Fife locality

12.47 This locality is within the Central Scotland Green Network – one of the eighteen national developments recognised within NPF4 and is one of Europe's largest green infrastructure projects. Key green and blue infrastructure assets in the area include the coast, including coastal woodlands near Dalgety Bay and Aberdour and the shore, Devilla and Blairadam Forests and designed landscape on former estates at Inzievar and Valleyfield Wood.

12.48 Some of the key active travel routes within the South and West Fife locality include: The Fife Coastal Path, The Fife Pilgrim Way, and The West Fife Way. There are also various national cycle routes within this locality: National Cycle Network routes 1, 76, and 764.

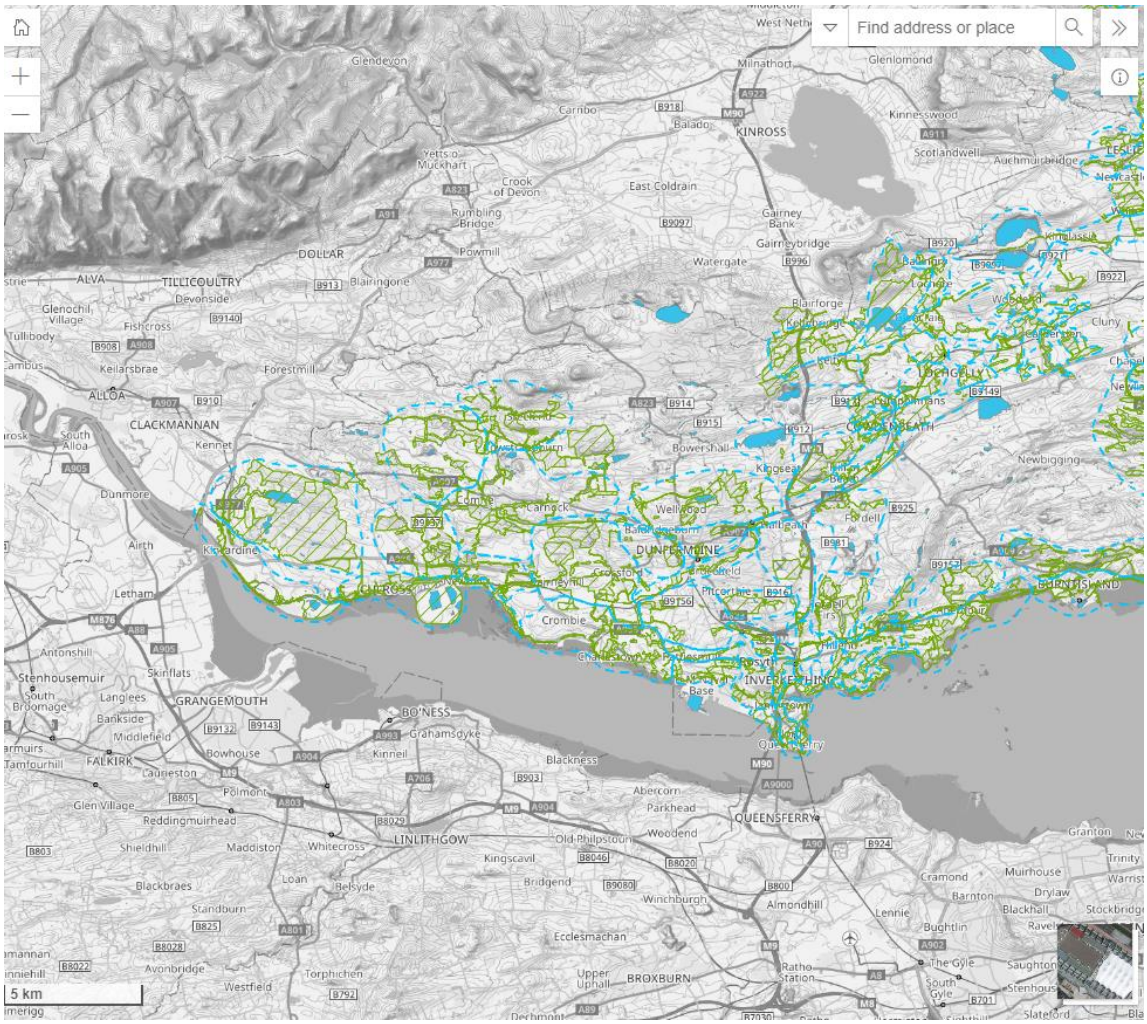
12.49 Green and blue network opportunities in the area include habitat enhancement and green and blue network connectivity at Longannet, Burrowmine Moor Quarry, Devilla Quarry, Cruicks Quarry, Comrie Colliery and Fordell Estate; and active travel aspirations to enhance connections along the coast by Crombie Point.

12.50 The Fife green and blue network audit reports for the area are:

- Aberdour Burntisland Kinghorn Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Forth bridgehead Report Green and Blue Networks 2023
- West Fife Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update

12.51 Green and blue networks are mapped on an interactive map and a storymap explains how the assets and opportunities were identified.

Figure 12.11: Extract from the Green and Blue Network interactive map illustrating key assets and existing blue and green network policy areas



Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Aberdour Burntisland Kinghorn Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Forth bridgehead Report Green and Blue Networks 2023
- West Fife Report Green and Blue Networks 2023 update
- Central Scotland Green Network
- Fife Pilgrim Way
- Sustrans National Cycle Network Routes in the Inner Forth area
- Fife Coastal Path
- Interactive map – Fife's Green and Blue network and ecosystem services
- Fife Green and Blue Network Audit Storymap

Biodiversity in the South and West Fife locality

12.52 Priority habitats within the South and West Fife locality include maritime cliffs and slopes, species rich grasslands, upland flush fen and swamp, upland heathland, lowland fen, lowland raised bog and a mix of ancient, semi-natural and long-established woodland.

Table 12.1: Summary of the priority habitats found within the South and West Fife locality including key sites

Upland	Freshwater & Wetland	Lowland & Farmland	Woodland	Marine & Coastal
Heath and moorland Upland calcareous grassland Upland flush fen and swamp Key site: Wether Hill (SSSI)	Inland freshwater, such as **Loch Fitty (LWS)** Lowland fen Lowland raised bog, such as **Lockshaw Mosses (SSSI)** Rivers Ponds, such as Jamestown Pond (LWS) Reedbed, such as St Margaret's Marsh (SSSI)	Species-rich grassland, such as **Ferry Hills (SSSI)** Field margins and boundaries Parks and areas with veteran trees, such as **Tulliallan** Lowland heathland	Ancient, semi-natural & long-established woodland, such as **Devilla Forest** Mixed lowland woodland Urban woodland	Intertidal communities: Firth of Forth (SPA, (RAMSAR, SSSI) Maritime cliffs & islands, such as **Hawkcraig Point (LWS)** Saltmarsh, such as Torry Bay (Local Nature Reserve) Strandline, sand dune & shingle communities

Source: Fife's Local Biodiversity Action Plan

12.53 These habitats support a wealth of wildlife including badgers (UK Protected Species), beavers (European Protected Species) west of Blairhall, bats (EPS), great crested newts (EPS), red squirrels (UKPS) in Devilla and Blairadam Forests and bluebells (UKPS). The Fife Biodiversity Action Plan states that the destruction of habitats is the number one cause of species extinction, so safeguarding priority habitats is important for the new LDP

12.54 Invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan balsam, and Rhododendron also pose a threat to the various ecosystems within the South and West Fife locality.

12.55 Another invasive non-native species which can be found within the South and West Fife locality is the grey squirrel which poses a threat to the native

red squirrel population and has negative implications for commercial forestry operations.

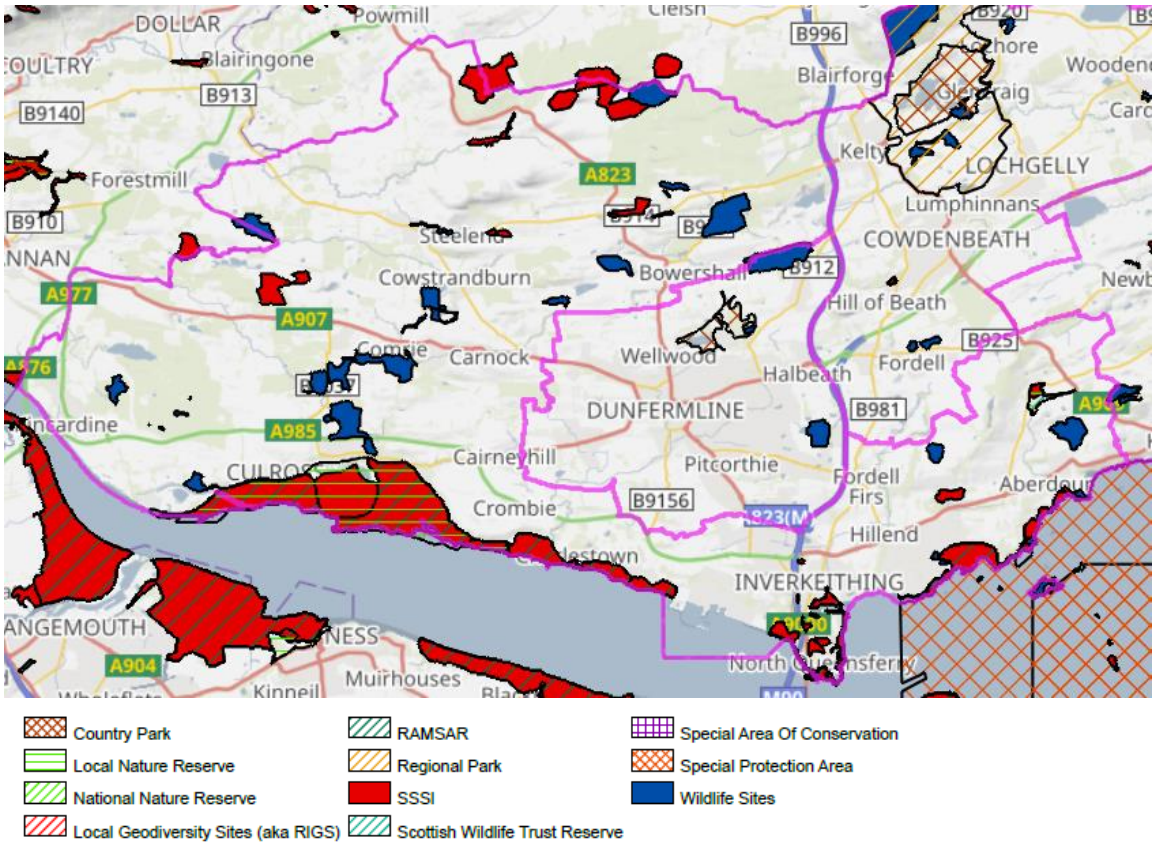
Links to evidence

- NBN Atlas
- Fife Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Nature Scot- Invasive non-native plants
- Nature Scot- Protected species A-Z guide
- Selected Key Bluebell sites in Fife – Fife Nature
- Great Crested Newt Records – Fife Amphibian & Reptile Group
- Indicative Red Squirrel Sites – Fife Nature

Natural Heritage designations in the South and West Fife locality

12.56 There are a number of sites designated for natural heritage in the South and West locality (see figure below). There are internationally designated natural heritage sites along the coast, the Firth of Forth Ramsar, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and the Outer Firth of Forth and St Andrews Bay Complex Special Protection Area have primarily been designated for their importance for marine birds, waders, and waterfowl.

Figure 12.12: Natural heritage designations in the South and West Fife locality. These can be viewed on the Green and Blue network interactive map



Source: Fife Council

12.57 There are 12 other SSSIs in the south and West Fife locality many of which relate to areas of peatland. There are two local nature reserves at Torry Bay and Cullaloe (which is also a National Nature reserve).

12.58 There are 23 locally designated Local Nature Conservation Sites, (formerly called wildlife sites), throughout the South and West Fife locality, the largest relate to former mine works (Blairhall Bing and Comrie Dean) and woodland from former estates (Valleyfield Wood and Black Wood). Twelve of the sites

were resurveyed around five years ago and found to be in a satisfactory condition. The others have not been re-surveyed.

12.59 More detail on why these sites have been designated for natural heritage in Fife is provided on the Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Government – Natural Heritage Designations
- NatureScot– local designations
- Fife Designated Natural Heritage Sites list
- Fife Local Nature Conservation Sites tracker Dec 2023

Landscape character and soils in the South and West Fife locality

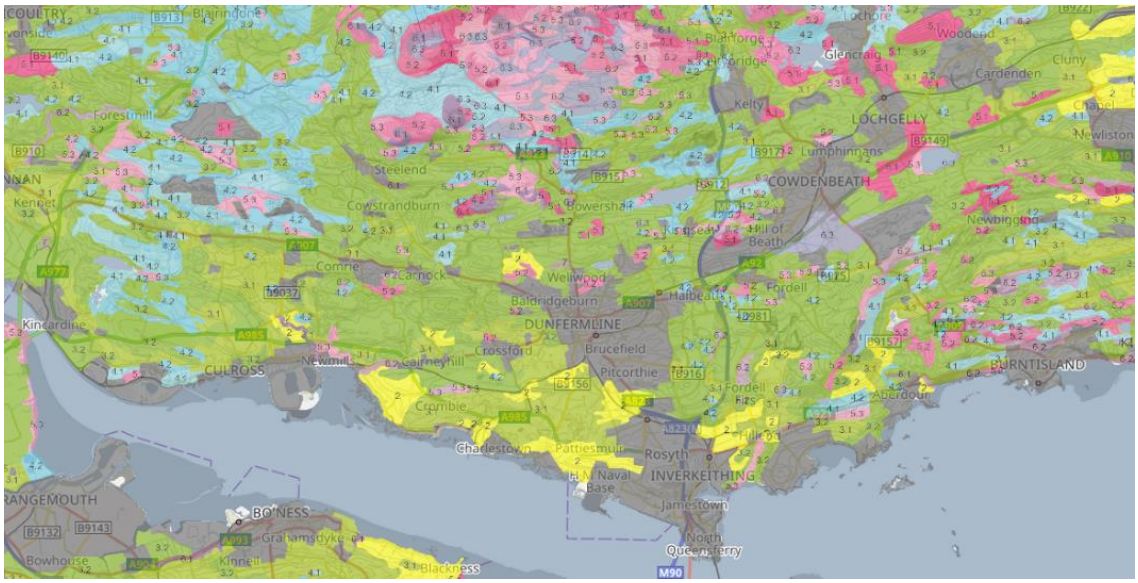
12.60 The landscape in the South and West Fife locality is characterised by lowland hills and valleys, coastal hills, and foothills (as identified on NatureScot Landscape Character types (2019) mapping). Part of Dunfermline's green belt is within the South and West Fife locality.

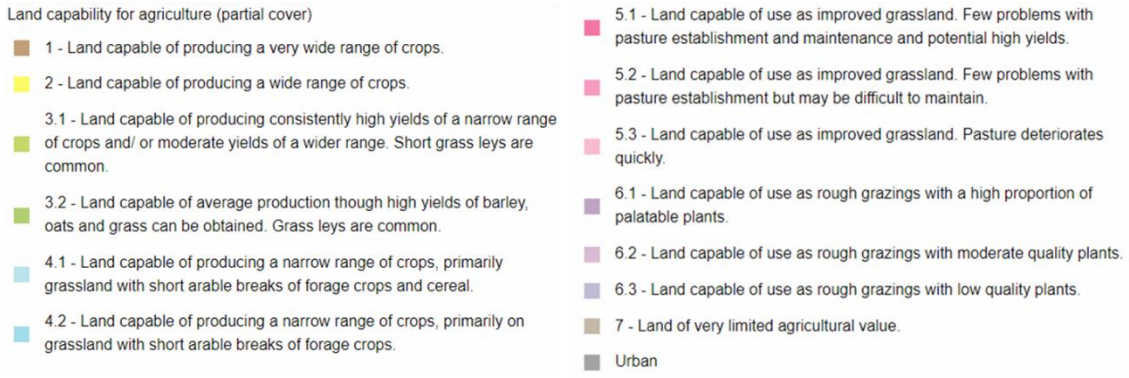
12.61 There are 7 local landscape areas including the Cullaloe Hills and Coast, the Cleish Hills and South West Dunfermline which cover large parts of the South and West Fife locality as designated in the adopted FIFEplan 2017.

12.62 There are several areas of peatland and carbon rich soils in the South and West Fife locality identified on the 2016 Carbon and Peatland Map, in particular around the Blairadam Forest area. There are areas of peatland which are classed as nationally important at Din Moss (Blairadam Forest), Glasgow Moss and Caldside Plantation in the west and Moss Easy north of Dalgety Bay.

12.63 Outwith the built-up areas, there is a large proportion of prime agricultural land (classes 1 to 3.1 in the Scottish Land Capability for agriculture map).

Figure 12.13: Extract from the land capability map for Scotland for the South and West Fife locality





Source: Scottish Government - ©Crown Copyright. Scottish Government Licence Number 100020540. All Rights Reserved.

12.64 There are four active quarries in the South and West Fife locality; 2 hard rock and 2 silica sand quarries. Some former coal mines have been restored such as Blair House located to the North of Oakley, and some such as St Ninians and Comrie Colliery are proposed for redevelopment.

Links to evidence

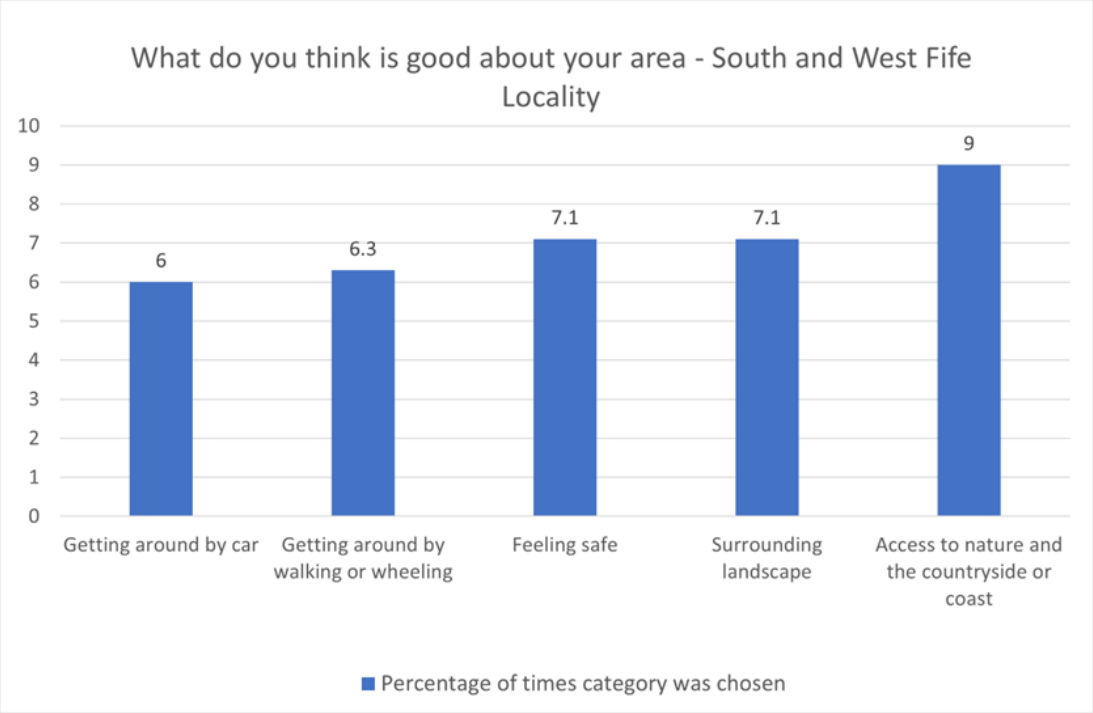
- NatureScot – Landscape Character Types 2019
- Adopted FIFEplan (2017) interactive map
- Scotlands Soils – Land Capability for agriculture
- List of Fife's Quarries
- Carbon and Peatland Map 2016
- Fife Council article – Restoration of Oakley opencast sites
- Invest in Fife – Proposals for St Ninians
- Dunfermline Press – Fife Council approve latest plans for Comrie Colliery site

The infrastructure issues that need to be addressed in the South and West Fife locality within the lifetime of the Plan

12.65 At a local level, the main infrastructure issues facing South and West Fife are access to healthcare, school capacity, access to sports and leisure facilities, and public transport provision - including public transport access to the new Dunfermline Learning Campus.

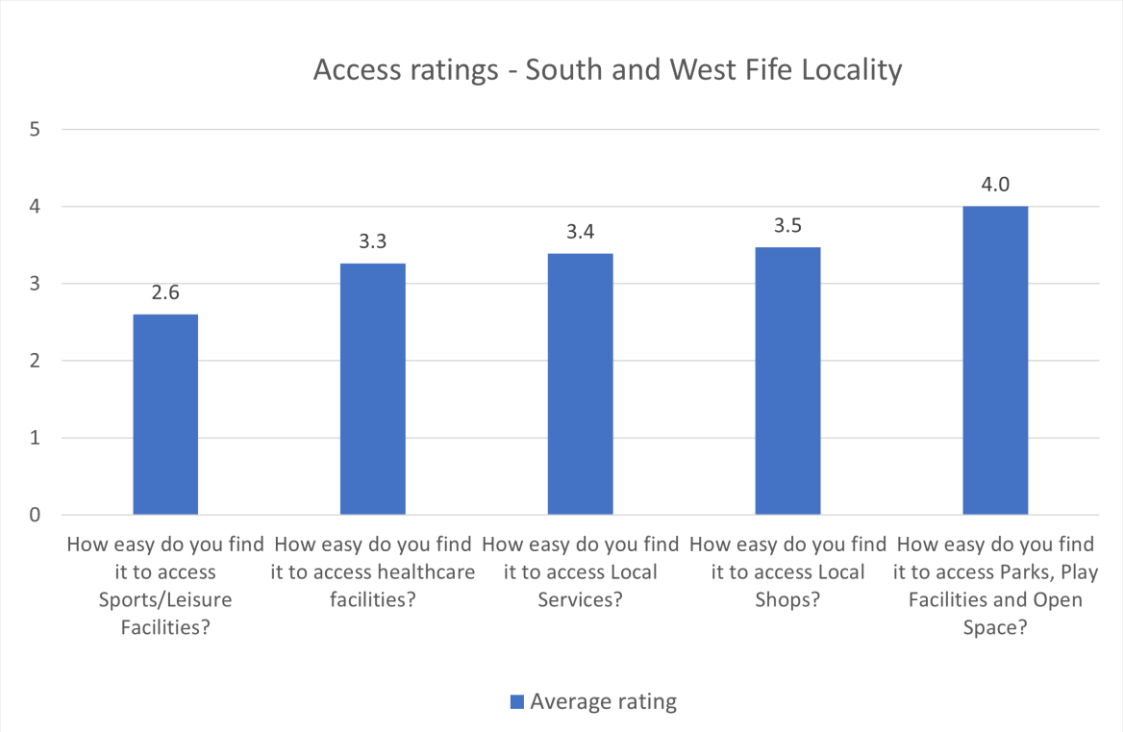
12.66 In the autumn of 2022, the community was invited to say what they felt was good about the South and West Fife locality, what was not so good, and what the key issues were that they felt needed to be tackled.

Figure 12.14: What respondents think is good about their area



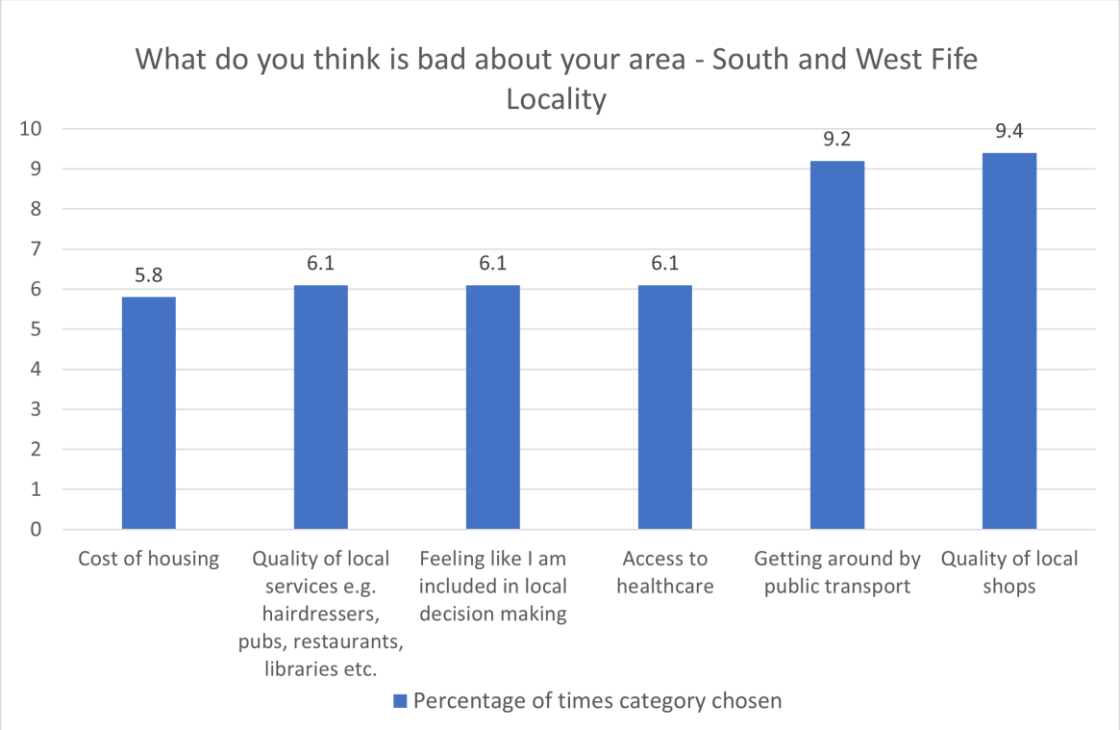
Source: Fife Council

Figure 12.15: Average ratings for access



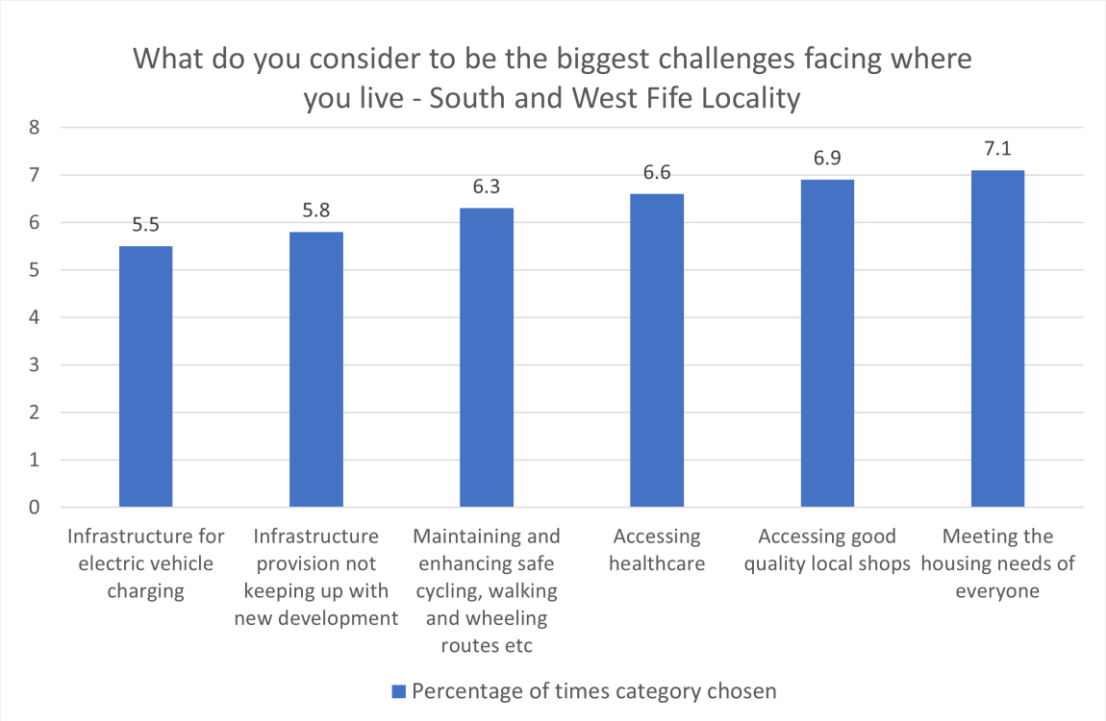
Source: Fife Council

Figure 12.16: What respondents think is bad about their area



Source: Fife Council

Figure 12.17: What respondents think the biggest challenges facing their area are



Source: Fife Council

12.67 The main issues that came through were poor access to sports and leisure facilities, with facilities being too concentrated in a few towns or Dunfermline. The lower level of public transport in parts of the locality is another barrier to accessing services.

12.68 The biggest challenges the locality is facing are meeting the housing needs for everyone, accessing good quality shops and access to healthcare.

Links to evidence

- South and West Fife summary of survey (residents)

Healthcare in the South and West Fife locality

12.69 South and West Fife has a range of health and care facilities. However, planned growth and demographic changes (in particular, an ageing population) over the lifetime of the new LDP are likely to put increased pressure on these facilities. NHS Fife is moving towards health and wellbeing hubs which provide multi-disciplinary care. It is anticipated that this will free up space in G.P. practices in the locality. Additionally, there has been struggles with G.P. recruitment in the locality.

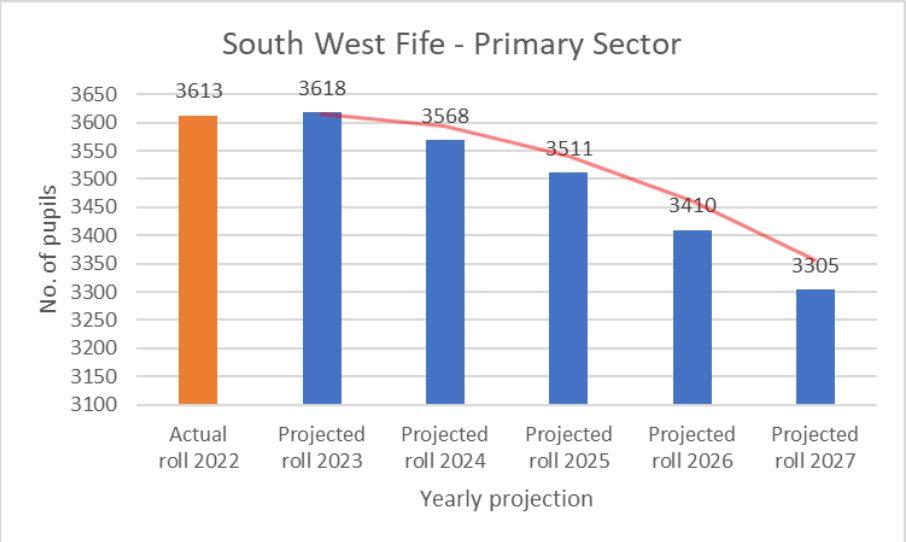
Links to evidence

- NHS Fife Estates Strategy

School places in the South and West Fife locality

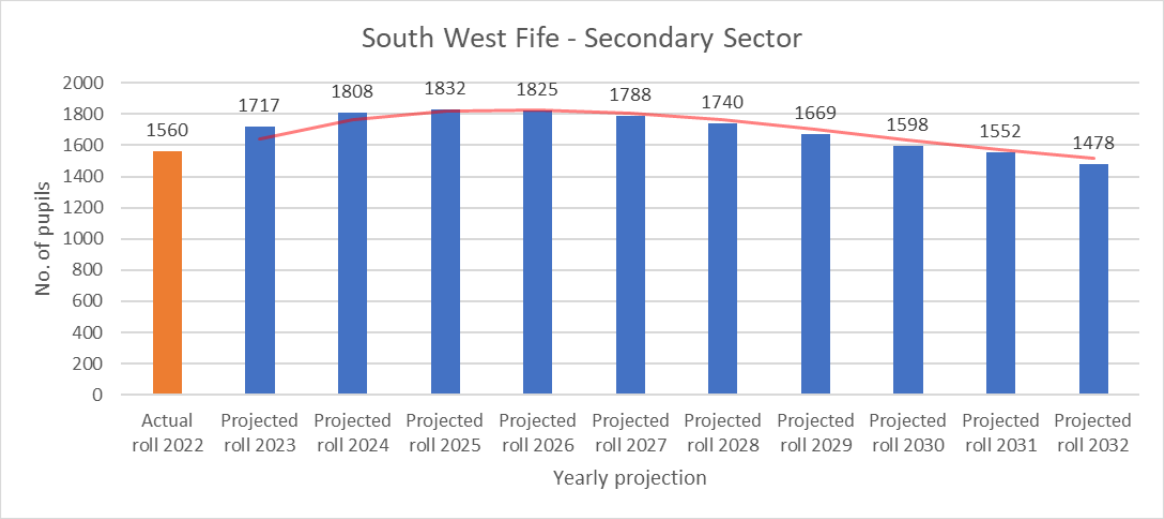
12.70 In education, there is projected pupil capacity across the whole of the existing and planned primary school estate to accommodate further growth (although that covers a range from some schools having falling pupil numbers and others having a potential shortage of space). Spare primary school capacity across localities does not mean there is capacity for new homes across all primary schools in the locality.

Figure 12.18: Projected pupil numbers in primary schools in the South and West Fife locality (2023 - 2027)



Source: Fife Council

Figure 12.19: Projected pupil numbers in secondary schools in the South and West Fife locality (2023 – 2032)



Source: Fife Council

12.71 At a secondary level there is projected to be a shortfall of places by 2024 across the locality. However, when combined with secondary school provision in the City of Dunfermline there is sufficient capacity across the wider area for secondary school places.

12.72 The expansion of early years continues to be monitored as well as additional places for pupils with additional support needs.

Links to evidence

- School Roll Projections by Area Committee September 2023

Open space, play space and sports facilities in the South and West Fife locality

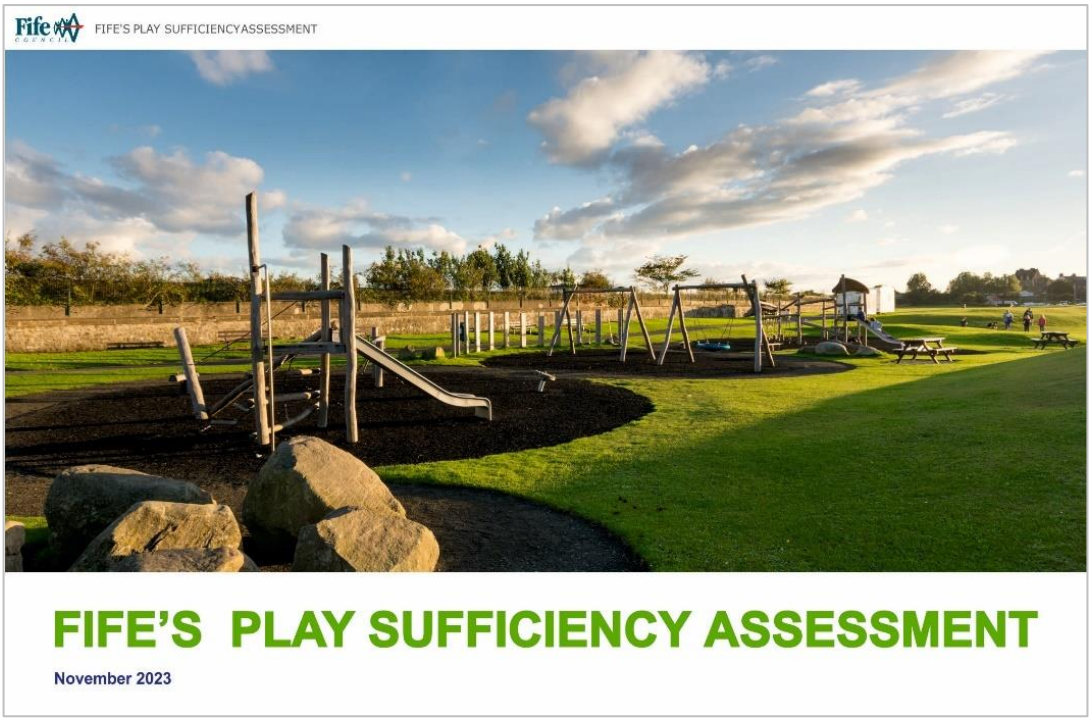
12.73 Open spaces, green and blue infrastructure, and outdoor places to play and socialise are key to successful placemaking. The outdoor spaces, including access to the coast, in the locality have helped to make communities more pleasant, liveable, healthy and resilient.

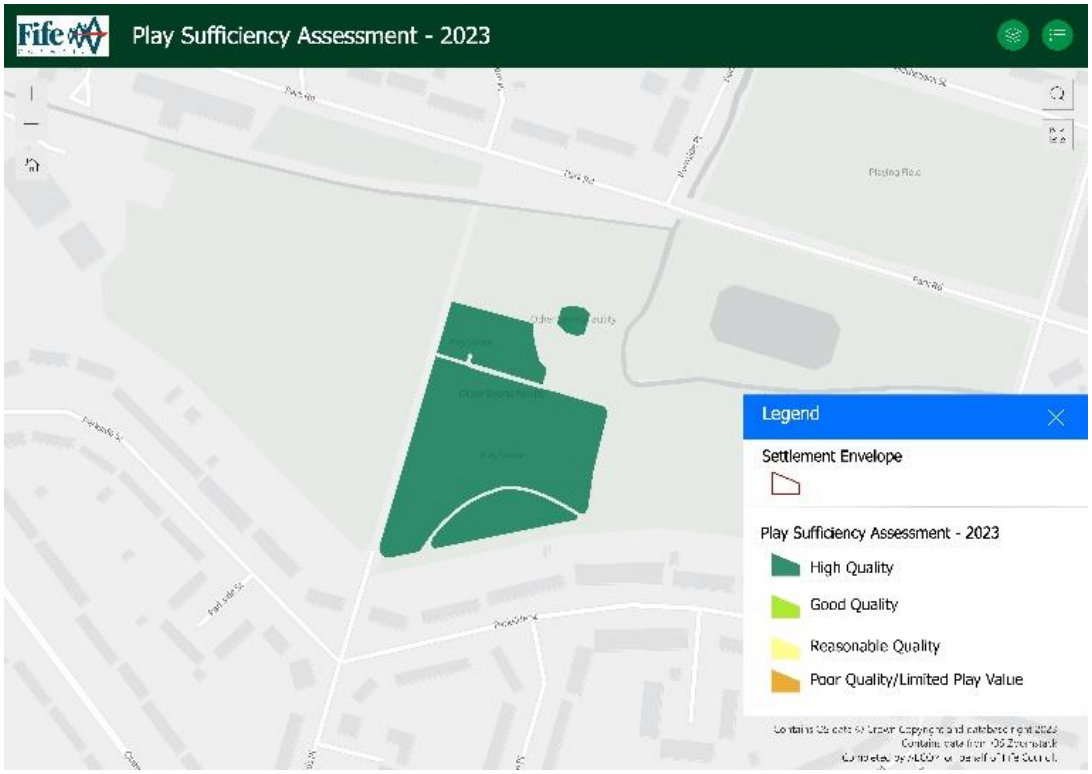
12.74 Work is underway to update the Fife open space audit and strategy which will be finalised in late 2025. Site visits to update the quality audit have been completed. These visits found that many settlements in the area have a high quality greenspace including Hopeward Wood in Dalgety Bay and Lang Haugh in Aberdour. Generally the quality of greenspaces are reasonable to high but there are a few classified as poor quality spaces including The Roods in Inverkeithing, Crow Wood in Dalgety Bay and Whinnyburn Place in Rosyth. Preston Crescent in High Valleyfield was classified as a good quality greenspace but there were signs of antisocial behaviour with extensive fly tipping. Dean Acres in Comrie, Carnock Bridge in Carnock and Kilbargie Street in Kincardine all had clear improvements in quality since the 2009 audit.

12.75 The updated audit has found there is around a 10% decline in the quality of greenspaces in the South and West area. In addition, most of the settlements in the area have below the Fife average provision of greenspace per head of population including Aberdour, Kincardine, Carnock, Comrie and Torryburn which were all found to have poor levels of provision. Only Blairhall and Saline were found to have above the Fife average levels of provision.

12.76 The Fife Play Sufficiency Assessment 2023 identifies that Kincardine, Carnock, Rosyth, Inverkeithing, and Dalgety Bay all have high quality play parks but of 61 play parks audited in the locality, over half of them were assessed as poor quality including Charlestown, Low Valleyfield, Gowkhall, Newmills and Hillend where there is no alternative provision available. Charlestown, Gowkhall, Cairneyhill, Rosyth and Dalgety Bay were found to have an insufficiency of play provision. Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment provides more information.

Figure 12.20: Indicative image from Fife's Play Sufficiency Assessment (showing part of the South and West Fife locality)





Source: Fife Council

12.77 Larger sports facilities which serve this locality are mainly located in Dunfermline. The key facilities in the south and west locality include Ballast Bank Sports Pavilion in Inverkeithing and Inverkeithing High School which is being replaced by a new High School in Rosyth. The new school will not replace the swimming pool provided at Inverkeithing High School. Dalgety Bay has a Squash and Tennis Club. The Sea Cadet Training Centre - Caledonia and the Police College both have training facilities with sports facilities in the locality. Cairneyhill has a Community Sport Hub. Other sports facilities include a number of boating and sailing clubs around the coast, golf courses in Saline, Aberdour, Kincardine and Cairneyhill. The other small villages in the area have a range of halls, pitches and bowling greens serving them.

12.78 A Facility Planning Model developed by SportScotland predicts patterns of demand for sports facilities (but not actual usage). The model outputs suggest that the west coast where Fife meets Clackmannanshire has the highest level of unmet demand for swimming pool facilities in Fife.

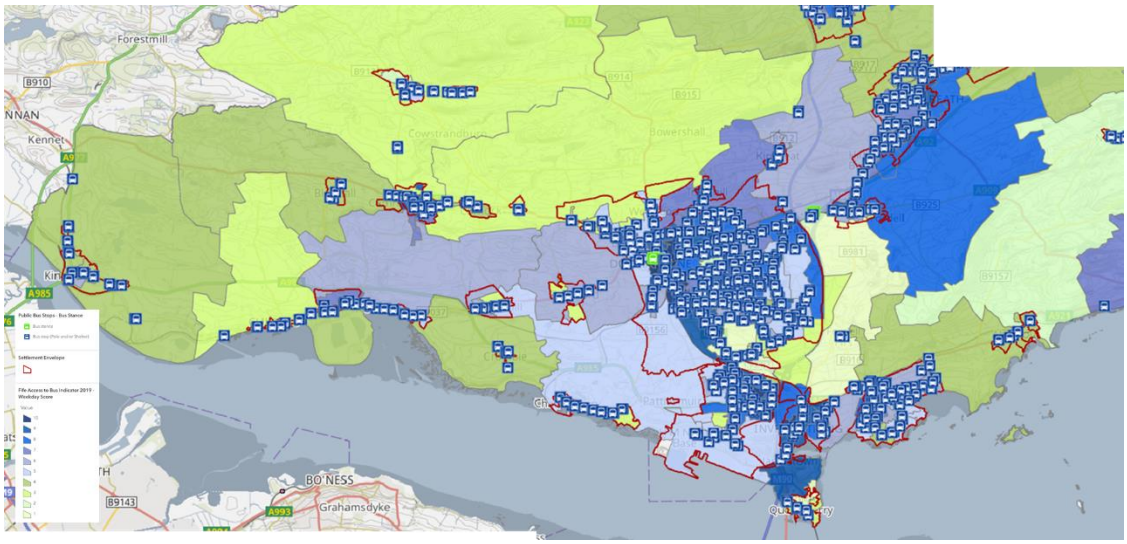
Links to evidence

- Play Sufficiency Assessment
- Fife Greenspace Audit 2010
- Open space quality audit – examples of good quality sites Jan 25
- Open space quality audit – examples of poor quality sites Jan 25
- Draft Fife Greenspace Audit 2024 – key changes since 2009
- Fife Council: New SW Fife High School
- sportScotland – Facility Planning Model Fife Council 2023
- Sportscotland – Community sports hubs map

Accessibility of public transport in the South and West Fife locality

12.79 Where travel is required in many rural parts of the locality, there is more limited access to public transport in parts of West Fife. However, the larger towns of Rosyth, Inverkeithing, and Dalgety Bay are well served by buses and train services; and the village of Oakley also has reasonable access for bus services. The demand for train travel has been higher than the service available (and the issue has been raised at parliamentary level).

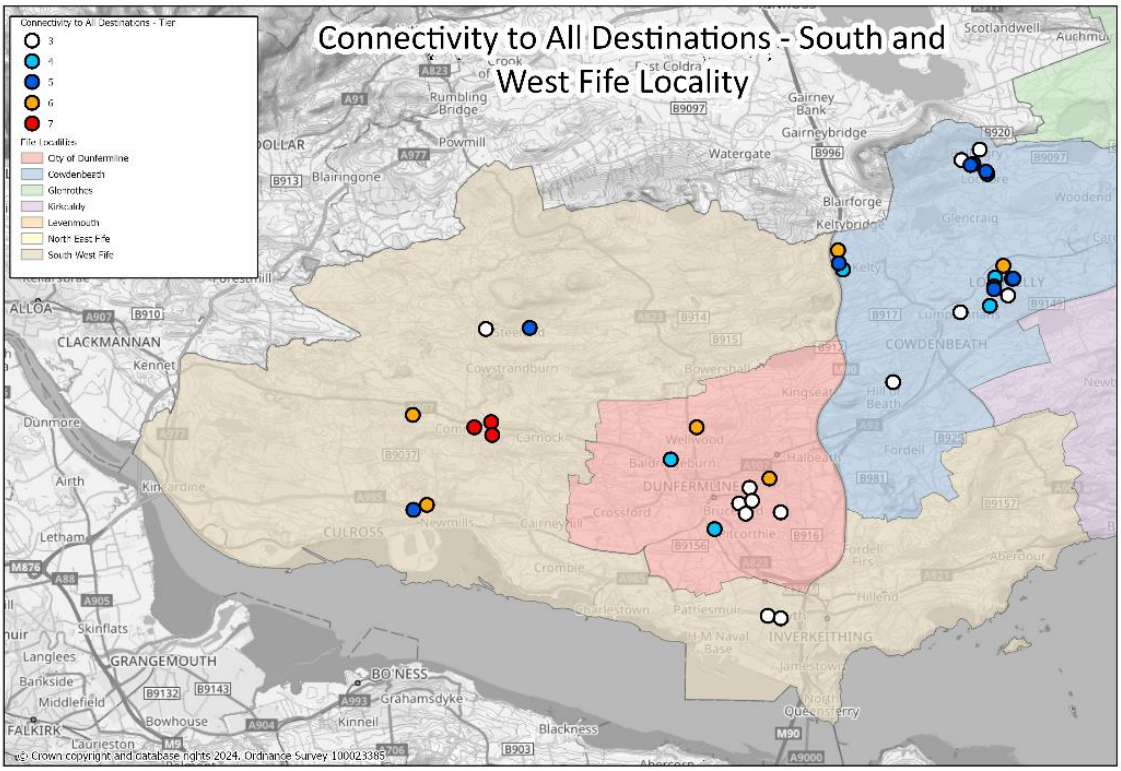
Figure 12.21: Weekday access to buses in the South and West Fife locality with bus stops (1= poor access, 10 = good access)



Source: Scottish Access to Bus Indicator (2019)

12.80 The figure below highlights overall levels of access to destinations such as employment and further education from areas within the locality. Tiers 1 and 2 are not shown on the map as they are considered to be good access scores. Tiers 3 and above indicate access issues. Public transport access to employment destinations is variable across the locality. Settlements on the railway line and around the Forth bridgehead area have relatively good access, as do Cairneyhill and Kincardine. More commentary on public transport accessibility is contained in Annex 10 (Transport).

Figure 12.22: Connectivity to key destinations from South and West Fife Locality



Source: LTS/LDP Modelling and Options Report

12.81 Other settlements have poor connectivity to employment opportunities.

12.82 A similar picture exists in terms of access to further and higher education, health and retail, with the settlements on the railway line having good access but most of those in West Fife having much poorer connectivity.

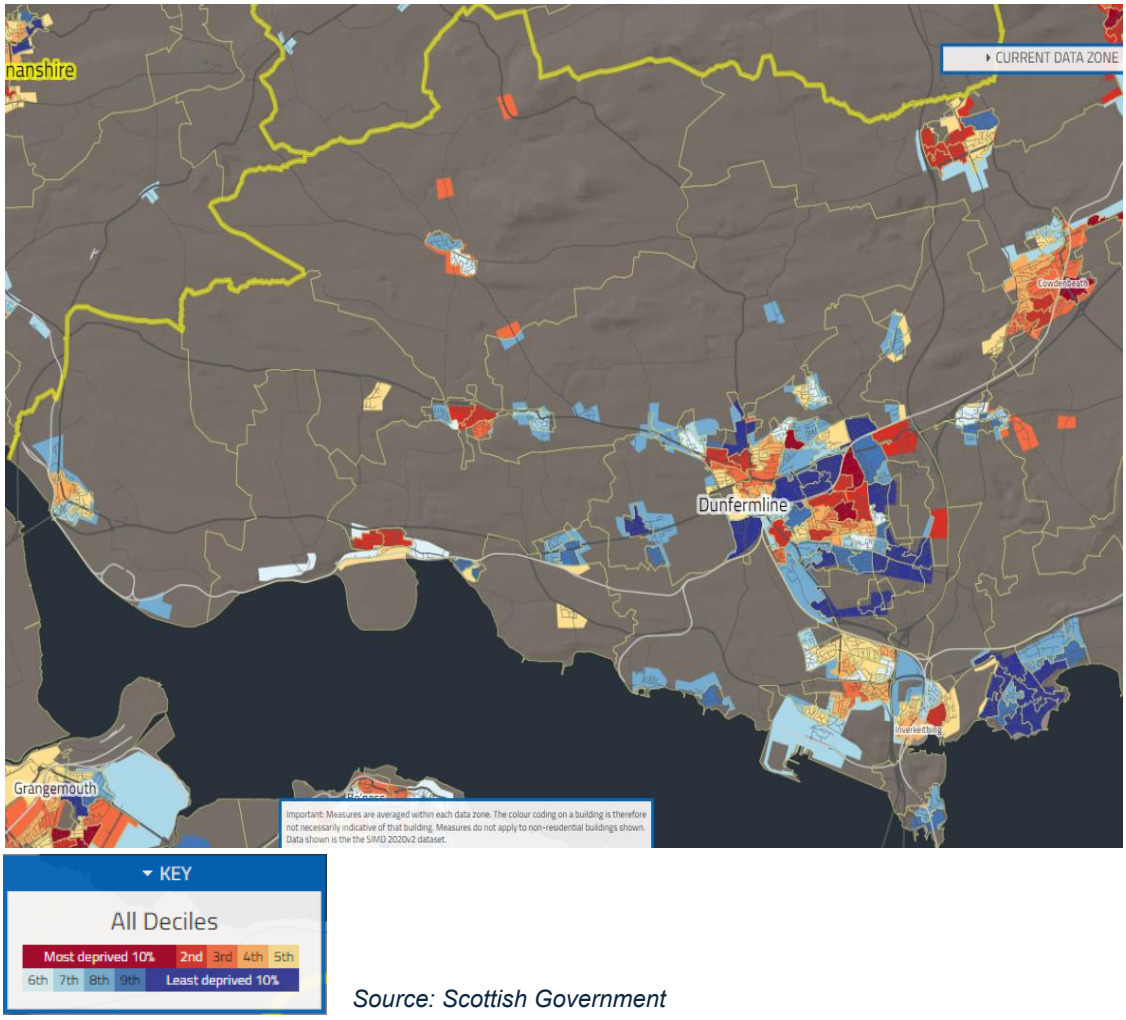
Links to evidence

- LTS & LDP Strategic Transport Modelling and option Development Report 2022
- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Interactive map showing weekday accessibility to buses, and location of bus stops and rail stations
- South and West Fife Surveys Analysis 2022

How the South and West Fife locality's economy is performing and how resilient it is to the future

12.83 South and West Fife is one of the least deprived localities in Fife although there are pockets of deprivation within the locality.

Figure 12.23: Deprivation in the South and West Fife locality



Source: Scottish Government

12.84 Education and skills are hugely important in ensuring that the local economy is resilient in the future. Settlements in South and West Fife consistently perform well above the UK average in education, although it should be a priority to upskill workforces to address future challenges like the climate crisis.

12.85 Overall, South and West Fife tends to perform well in terms of deprivation, with most settlements at or below the Scottish average in income deprivation and claimant rates. There are some settlements that are not keeping up, so there is potential to ensure equitable economic opportunities across the locality.

Links to evidence

- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

Employment in the South and West Fife locality

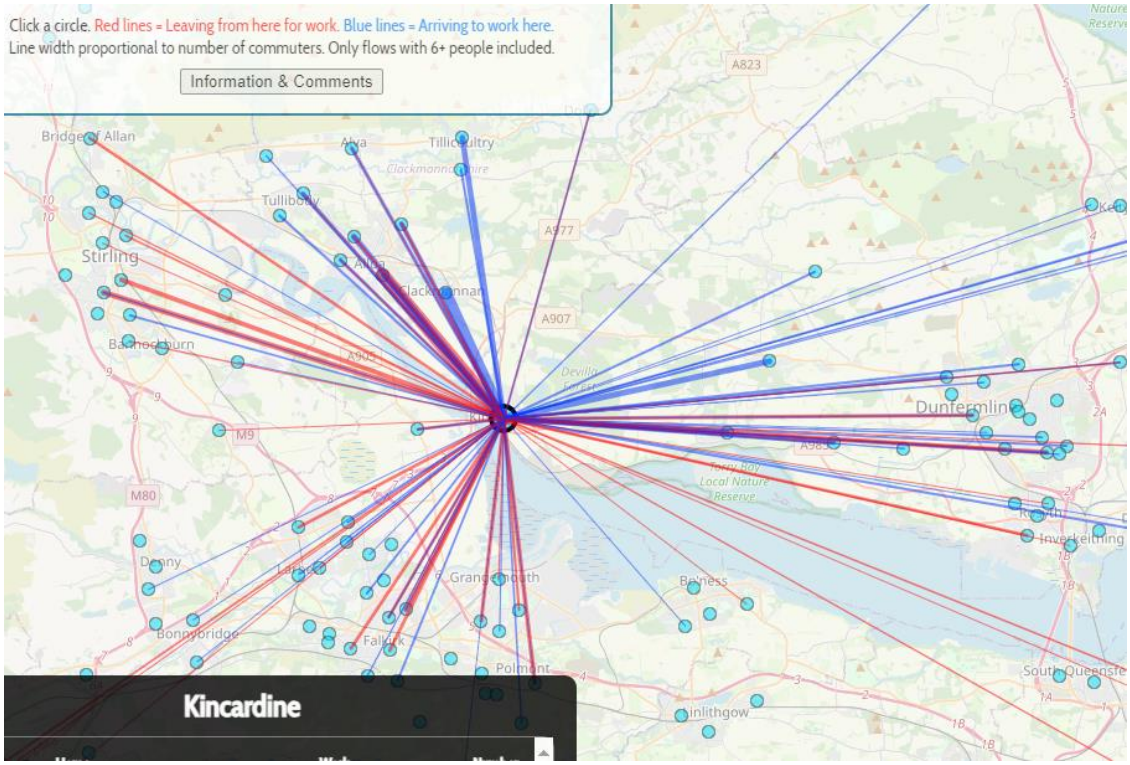
Travel to Work

12.86 With the exception of the Kincardine area, the majority of those living in South and West Fife travel to Dunfermline or Edinburgh for work with a relatively small number travelling to Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes.

12.87 A significant number of people travel to South and West Fife from all over the Mid and West Fife areas, with many using the Ferry Toll Park and Ride facility in Inverkeithing.

12.88 Rosyth and Dalgety Bay attract a significant number of people from the South and West Fife, Dunfermline, Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy, and Glenrothes localities with the majority travelling to Rosyth Dockyard/waterfront and Hillend and Donibristle Industrial Estate.

Figure 12.24: Example of journeys to work to and from part of the South and West Fife locality



Source: Datashine

Key Sectors

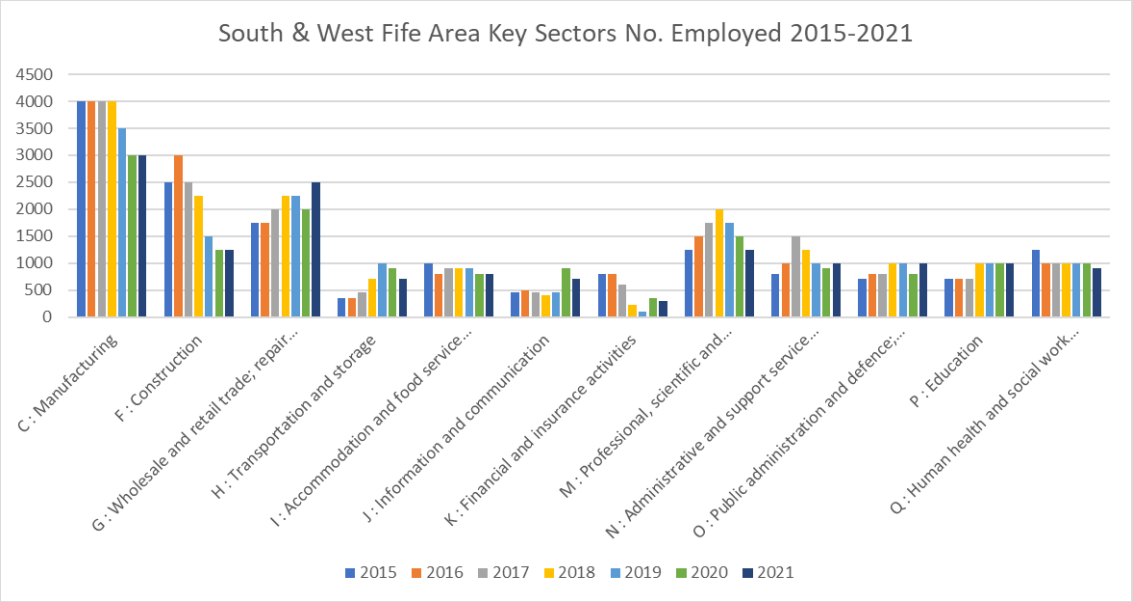
12.89 Manufacturing is the largest sector in South and West Fife followed by wholesale and retail trade.

12.90 Rosyth Dockyard and waterfront, Hillend and Donibristle Industrial Estate, and Longannet are key employment sites.

12.91 There is scope to build on the strategic location and rail connectivity of Longannet if flooding issues can be addressed to benefit local communities around this part of the Forth as well as via the Green Freeport initiative where opportunities for a range of economic activities and investment will be developed at Rosyth.

12.92 Growth Sector data is only available at a Fife-level and so cannot be included here. This is being considered as part of the emerging Fife Employment Land Strategy.

Figure 12.25: The South and West Fife locality's key employment sectors (number of people employed each year from 2015 to 2021)

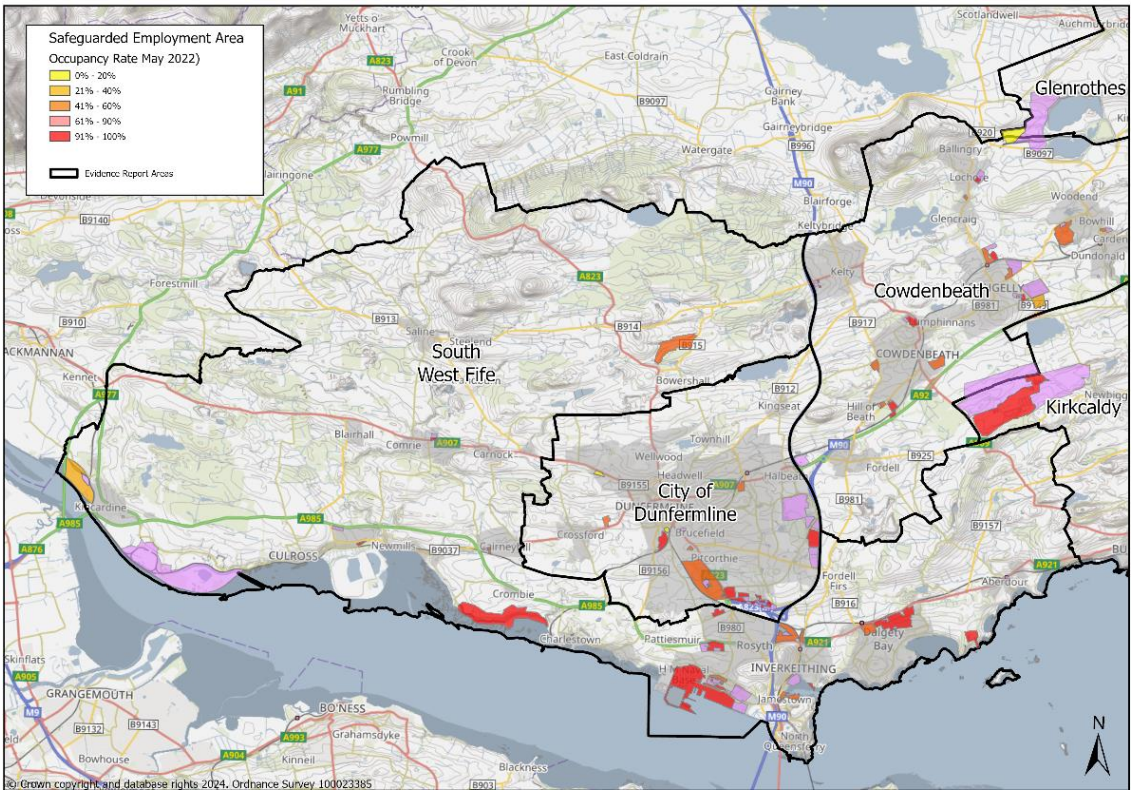


Source: NOMIS Key Sectors Data

Safeguarded employment area occupancy rates

12.93 The occupancy rates of safeguarded employment areas (industrial estates and business parks) in South and West Fife range from 62% at Innova Campus in Rosyth to 100% in 8 out of the 19 designated employment areas in the locality. This indicates a need for more available employment land in the LDP.

Figure 12.26: Occupancy rates in Safeguarded Employment Areas in the South and West Fife locality



Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

Availability of employment land in South and West Fife

12.94 Within the South and West Fife Locality, as at 2023, there are no key settlements that meet the available employment land requirement, as set out in the Fife Employment Land Strategy (2014-2021) and monitored through the Employment Land Audit.

12.95 Dalgety Bay is relatively close at 93% of its requirement. Inverkeithing and Kelty both meet 0% of the requirement. The remaining key settlements, Rosyth and the West Fife Villages, meet 49% of the requirement.

Table 12.2: 20 Key Settlements Availability of employment land by traffic light (RAG) status

Key Settlement	Audit Year	RAG Status	Percent Requirement Met	Total Requirement (hectares)
Dalgety Bay	2023	Amber	93%	2
Inverkeithing	2023	Red	0%	12.9
Rosyth	2023	Red	49%	27.9
West Fife Villages	2023	Red	49%	1.8

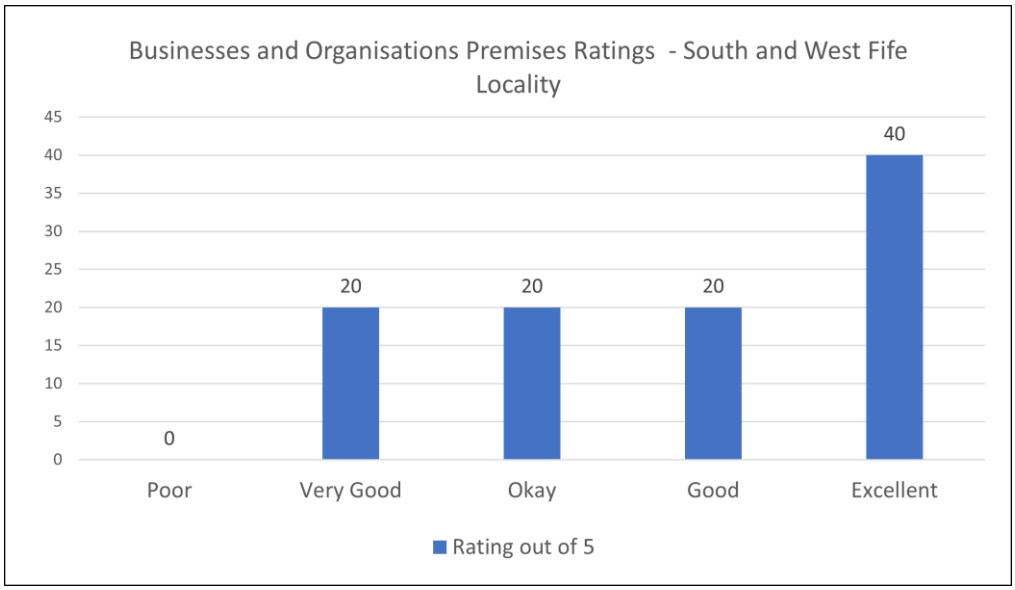
Source: Fife Employment Land Audit 2023, Fife Council

12.96 The emerging Employment Land Strategy and LDP will ensure a marketable supply of employment land is available to meet market demand through promoting and offering a range and choice of sites. For more information see the Fife-wide section of the Evidence Report.

Businesses and organisations consultation 2022

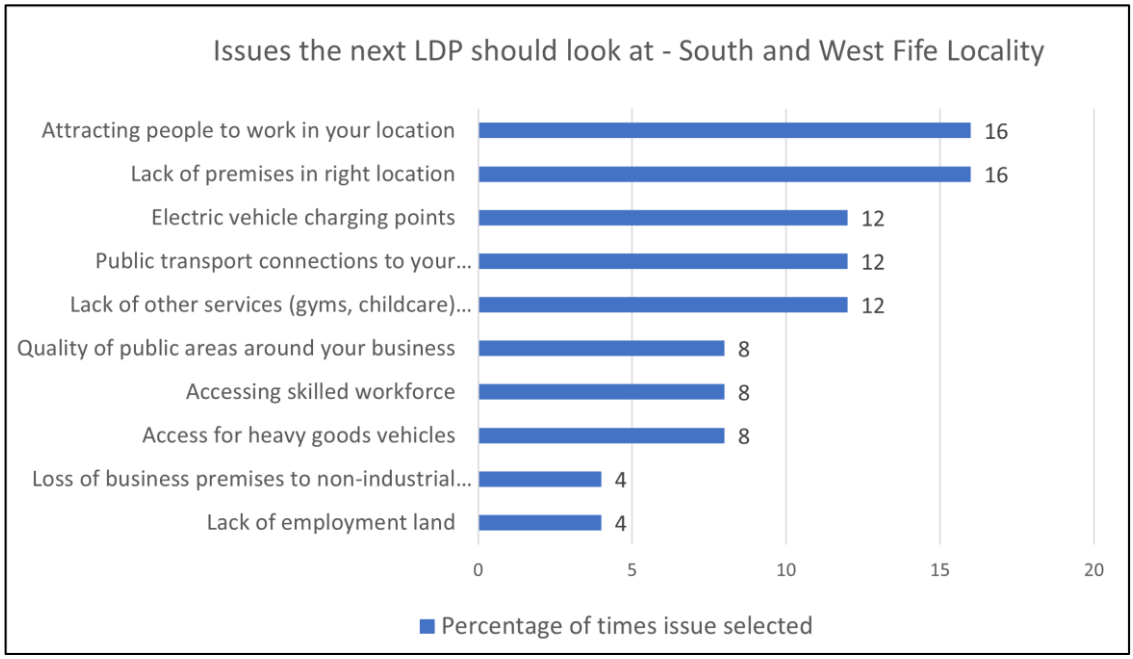
12.97 Businesses and organisations were consulted in 2022 on the issues that they face operating in the South and West Fife locality as well as what works well and what does not.

Figure 12.27: Premises ratings by local businesses and organisations in the South and West Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

Figure 12.28: Feedback about issues the LDP should look at in the South and West Fife locality



Source: Fife Council

12.98 Most respondents (80%) rated their premises as good, very good or excellent with none being rated as poor.

12.99 Existing locations being considered good came through strongly in the responses along with an appreciation of green spaces. The condition of some properties was described as excellent and affordable but one or two were deemed to be in not very good condition.

12.100 The surrounding landscapes and historic environment were listed as being a good thing about some of the more rural employment areas in the South and West Fife locality.

12.101 The poor condition of some employment areas was highlighted, in particular the roads and signage displays. In contrast some areas were deemed to be attractive and well maintained, generally in more rural locations.

12.102 Transport links were highlighted as a positive for the locality, with good access to the rest of Fife and Central Scotland. The lack of ancillary uses such as gyms in or near some employment areas is seen as an issue.

12.103 The two biggest issues respondents wanted the Local Development Plan to look at were attracting people to work in South and West Fife and a lack of premises in the right locations.

Links to Evidence

- DataShine: Scotland Travel to Work/Study
- Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030
- Fife Local Economic Profiles 2021-22
- 2021 Fife Business Base Report
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Economic Policy and Baseline Context April 22
- Key sectors Number of Employed 15-22
- Review of safeguarded employment areas
- Employment Land Audit 2023
- Businesses and Organisations Consultation 2022
- Fife Employment Land Strategy Review

Local shopping centres in South and West Fife

12.104 There are no designated town centres within the South and West Fife locality, however there are several local shopping centres of various sizes and compositions serving the towns and villages.

Figure 12.29: Map of Local Shopping Centre locations in South and West Fife

Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

12.105 The local shopping centres function as the main centre for the towns and villages except for Rosyth which has three. Occupancy rates are generally good with all being within the 90%-100% range with the exception of Kincardine (88.9%).

Table 12.3: Occupancy rates in Local Shopping Centres in the South and West Fife locality (2022)

Local Shopping Centre	Occupancy Rates % (2022)
Rosyth South	100
Rosyth Middle	100
Cairneyhill	100
Rosyth North	96
Inverkeithing	95
Dalgety Bay	93
Aberdour	92
Oakley	92
Kincardine	89

Source: Scottish Assessor Portal

Quality of Local Shopping Centres

12.106 Quality of place in the main local centres in South and West Fife is not high. The centre of Rosyth is leafy and attractive, particularly along Queensferry Road which has wide pavements and an avenue of mature trees along its length; the quality of place reduces where the road widens into a car park by the Gothenburg pub. The shop fronts are ordinary and while there has been some investment in the public realm it is aged in many areas.

12.107 The centre of Inverkeithing is distinctive and most of the historic core remains intact albeit there are some issues with maintenance. The modern inserts are mixed in quality and some of the shopfronts are undistinguished which is detrimental to the quality of place. The widening at the centre of the High Street is filled with car parking and so is no longer the place for people that it was in the past. There is very little green infrastructure and many of the planters are not being maintained. The public realm is generally older, and pavements are narrow and cluttered with street furniture. There is currently a programme of works to upgrade key historic buildings in the town along with some public realm improvements.

12.108 A consideration of the comparative value of retail and service businesses found that Rosyth scored relatively highly within Fife as a local centre.

12.109 Three Town Centre Building Improvement grants totalling just over £26,000 were awarded in the South and West Fife locality in 2022/23.

12.110 Austerity measures over the last 15 years have had an impact on the level of funding which can be accessed for town centre public realm and building improvements.

Figure 12.30: Inverkeithing Local Centre and Rosyth Local Centre

Source: Fife Council

Links to evidence

- Assessment of local shopping centres
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit summary report summer 2023
- Stories of Fife's Places site visit assessment sheets summer 2023
- Fife centres retail value assessment summaries summer 2023

Implications for Fife's new Local Development Plan of evidence specific to the South and West Fife locality:

- Within rural West Fife, many rural communities do not have access to day-to-day services within a 10-minute walk or cycle from their home. Reducing the need to travel in this area will need to focus on the clustering of services in groups of communities.
- Flooding and water quality are issues in parts of the locality, which will have implications for development under the new LDP.
- As with other coastal areas, coastal erosion is potentially a significant issue facing South and West Fife. Coastal flooding is also a significant risk as much of the land along the Firth is low lying in this part of Fife.
- Significant assets at risk from river and coastal flooding or coastal erosion include the Port of Rosyth and the sites of the former power stations at Longannet and Kincardine, Culross conservation area, Aberdour Castle and Donibristle House.
- Sites allocated in the LDP should include information on priorities for the protection, enhancement and extension of blue and green networks on

the site. This will include improvements to the condition of water bodies such as Loch Fitty, Keithing Burn and Kelty Burn; and opportunities to extend and enhance active travel routes through former quarries, mines and industrial sites.

- There is some capacity in primary schools across the area although individual schools are more constrained. Based on current housing land requirements, secondary schools do not have further capacity by 2027.
- In many parts of rural West Fife, there is poor access to key services and employment by public transport. Conversely, there is good access from the settlements around the bridgehead in South Fife.
- There is a shortage of serviceable employment land in South and West Fife. The LDP should consider allocating more employment land within the area.
- The development potential of the Forth Green Freeport and related development will require LDP support for longer term development and infrastructure needs.
- Recognise the mixed nature of South and West Fife - partly rural and agricultural, alongside some relatively isolated settlements e.g. Saline, Oakly and the presence of a number of coastal settlements.
- Significant vacant and derelict land levels including the former Kincardine Power Station and Longannet.
- Investigate and promote the potential of the former Longannet site.
- Retention of the Dunfermline to Alloa, and Rosyth rail links.
- Support Rosyth as an integral part of the Forth Green Freeport initiative.
- Support large scale digitally enabled manufacturing and shipbuilding, further developing the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus, and strengthening the nation’s agribulks hub by expanding and creating new trade routes to continental Europe.
- LDP support will also be focused on the following sectors: offshore wind, hydrogen, sustainable fuels, modular manufacturing and logistics.
- Build on the strategic location and rail connectivity of Longannet to benefit local communities around this part of the Forth.

Part 4 – What the Evidence Report means for Fife's new Local Development Plan

About this part

This part of the Evidence Report contains the site assessment criteria to be used in determining which development proposals will be included in the Proposed LDP. These criteria take account of the issues presented in the Evidence Report as well as national planning policy set out in National Planning Framework 4.

Sites and policies are also assessed as part of the Strategic Environmental Appraisal process, a statutory requirement for all LDPs. Further details of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the new LDP are contained in this part.

Finally, details of the next stages of preparing the new LDP for Fife are set out in this part of the Evidence Report.

13 Site assessment criteria

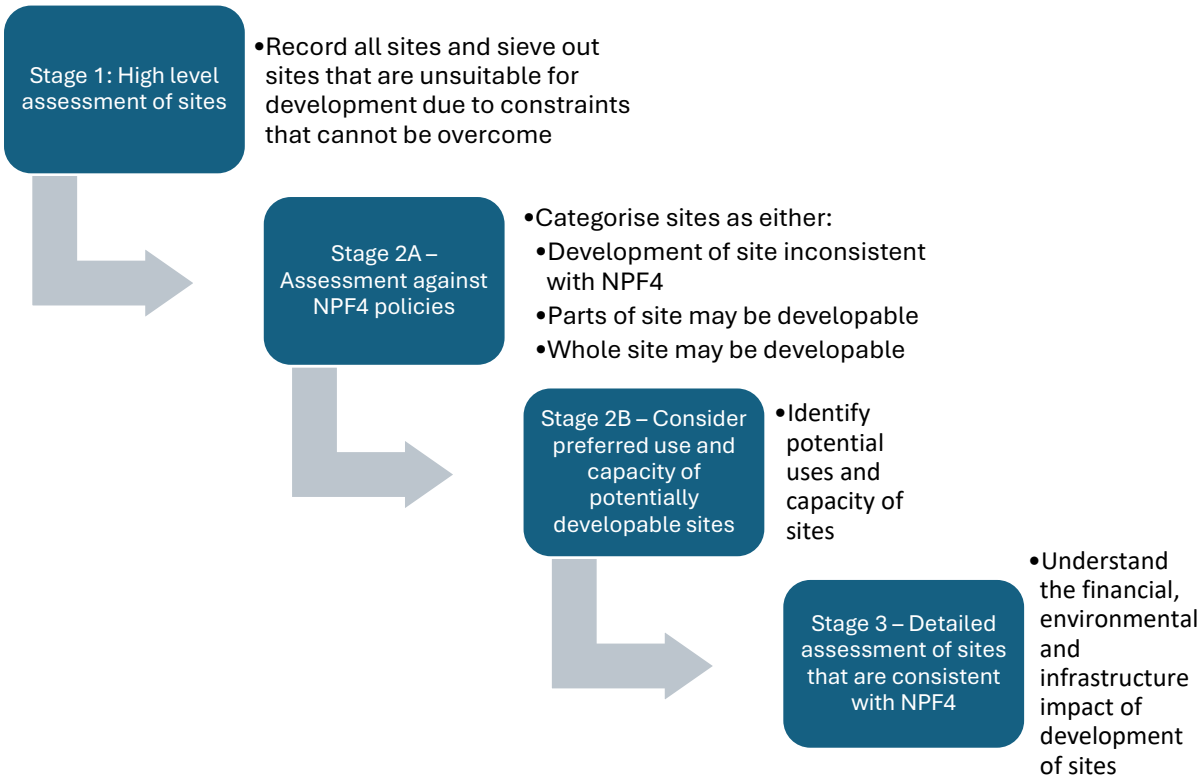
Assessing sites for inclusion in the new Local Development Plan

13.1 All strategy, policies and proposals in the Local Development Plan will be assessed to ensure that the plan: is consistent with national plans, achieve strategic objectives, avoids harmful impacts and maximises potential positive outcomes, and is deliverable.

13.2 The site assessment process will follow a four-stage process outlined on the diagram opposite.

13.3 Further details of each stage are contained on the following pages.

Figure 13.1: Site Assessment Process



Source: Fife Council

Which sites will be assessed

13.4 Sites to be assessed for the LDP will come from four different sources:

- All sites in the current FIFEplan that have yet to be built will be reassessed.
- Proposals contained in Local Place Plans produced by communities will be assessed.
- A call for sites and ideas exercise has been carried out for the Local Development Plan. This allowed landowners, developers, communities, and other stakeholders to put forward sites to be considered for inclusion in the new Local Development Plan.
- Finally, other possible sites may be identified.

Stage 1 – High level assessment of sites

13.5 The purpose of the high-level assessment is to record all sites and sieve out sites that are unsuitable for development due to constraints that cannot be overcome.

13.6 This will require a minimum level of information (if available) from any site promoter, community, or stakeholder.

13.7 The following physical constraints impact the ability for a site to be developed:

- Flood risk
- Coastal erosion
- Health and safety constraints
- Natural heritage designated sites
- Carbon rich soils

13.8 All proposed sites would also be considered against any registered Local Place Plan in the area of the proposal.

2. Site size

3. Site ownership

4. Current land use

5. Character of surrounding area

6. Site history

7. Previous engagement on site

8. Development progress (if applicable)

9. Proposed use (if known)

10. Site access

11. Any consideration of deliverability (a summary of any discussions with Fife Council, SPEN, SGN, Scottish Water and financial appraisal of development (factoring in requirements of NPF4)) and anticipated timescales (housing developments)

Stage 2A – Assessment against NPF4 policies

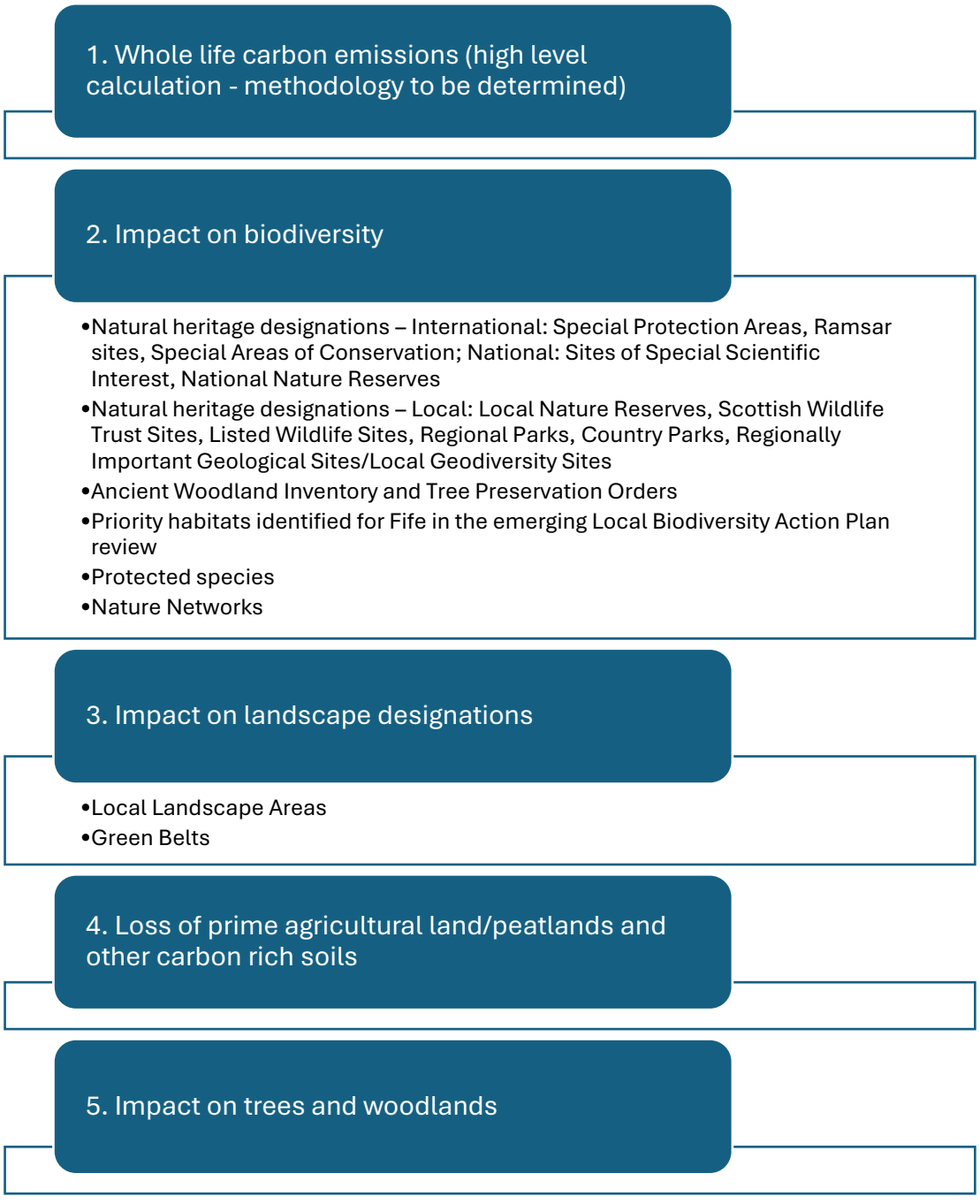
13.9 The purpose of the assessment against NPF4 policies is to categorise sites as either:

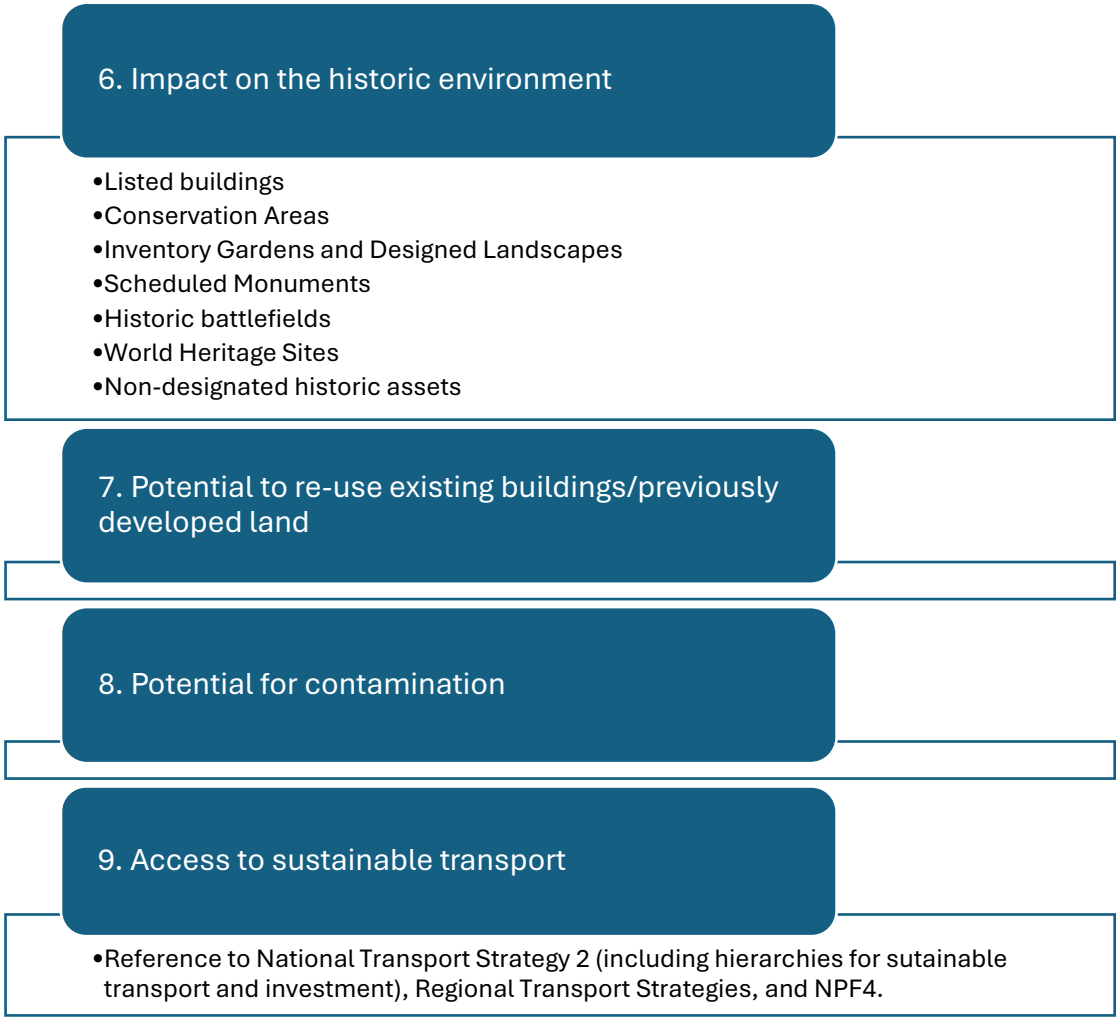
- Development of site inconsistent with NPF4 (and not to be taken forward to Stages 2b and 3)
- Parts of site may be developable
- Whole site may be developable

13.10 It will consist of a desk-top assessment structured around the three themes of NPF4 and their associated policies. Details are shown on the following pages.

Stage 2A - Sustainable Places Assessment Criteria

Figure 13.2: Stage 2A - Sustainable Places Assessment Criteria

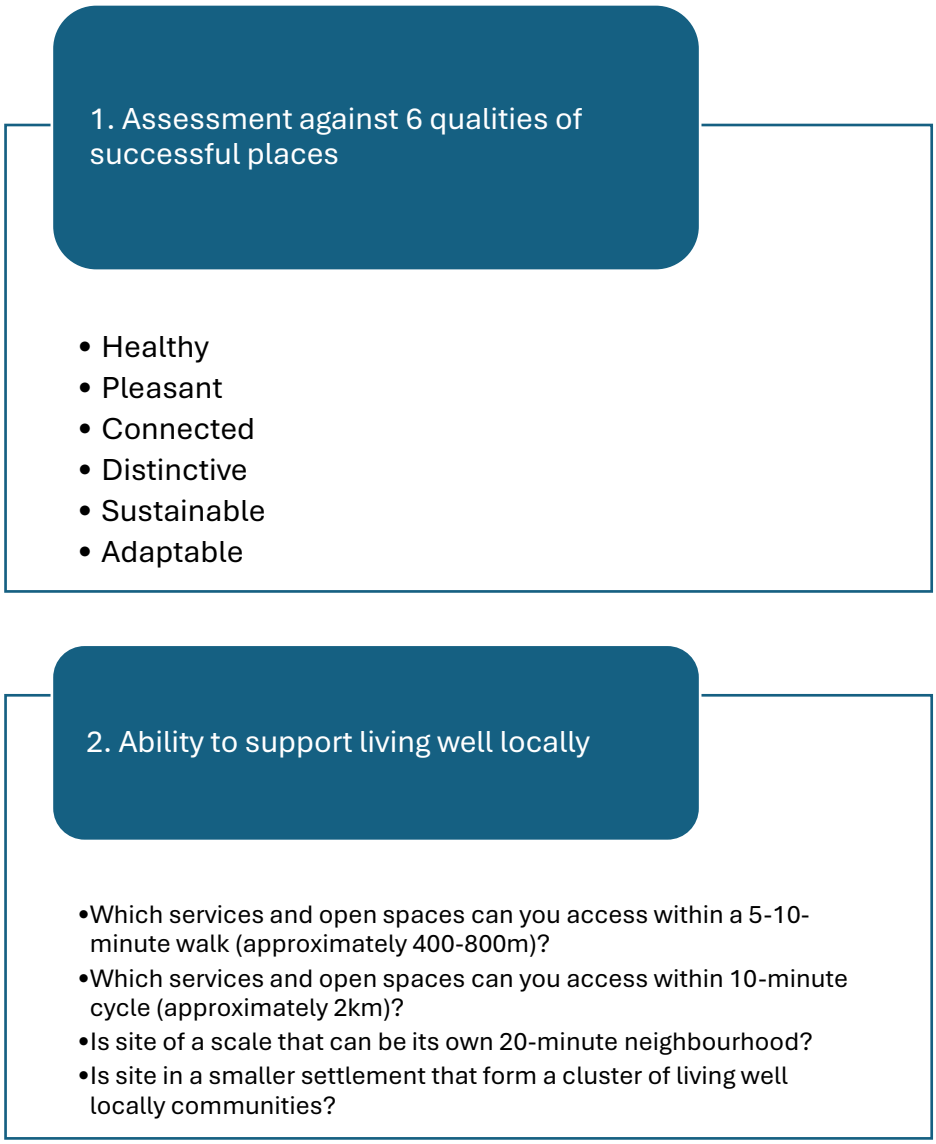


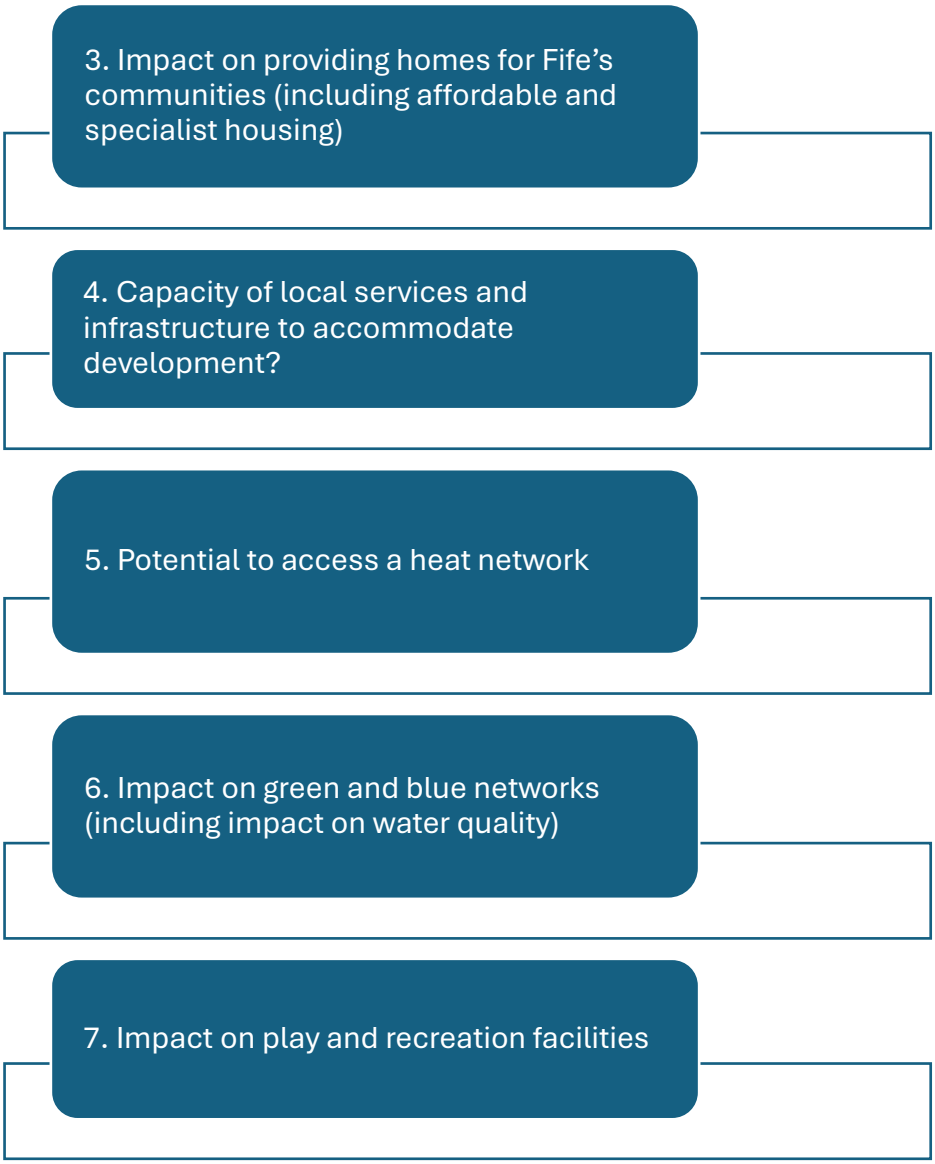


Source: Fife Council

Stage 2A – Liveable Places Assessment Criteria

Figure 13.3: Stage 2A – Liveable Places Assessment Criteria

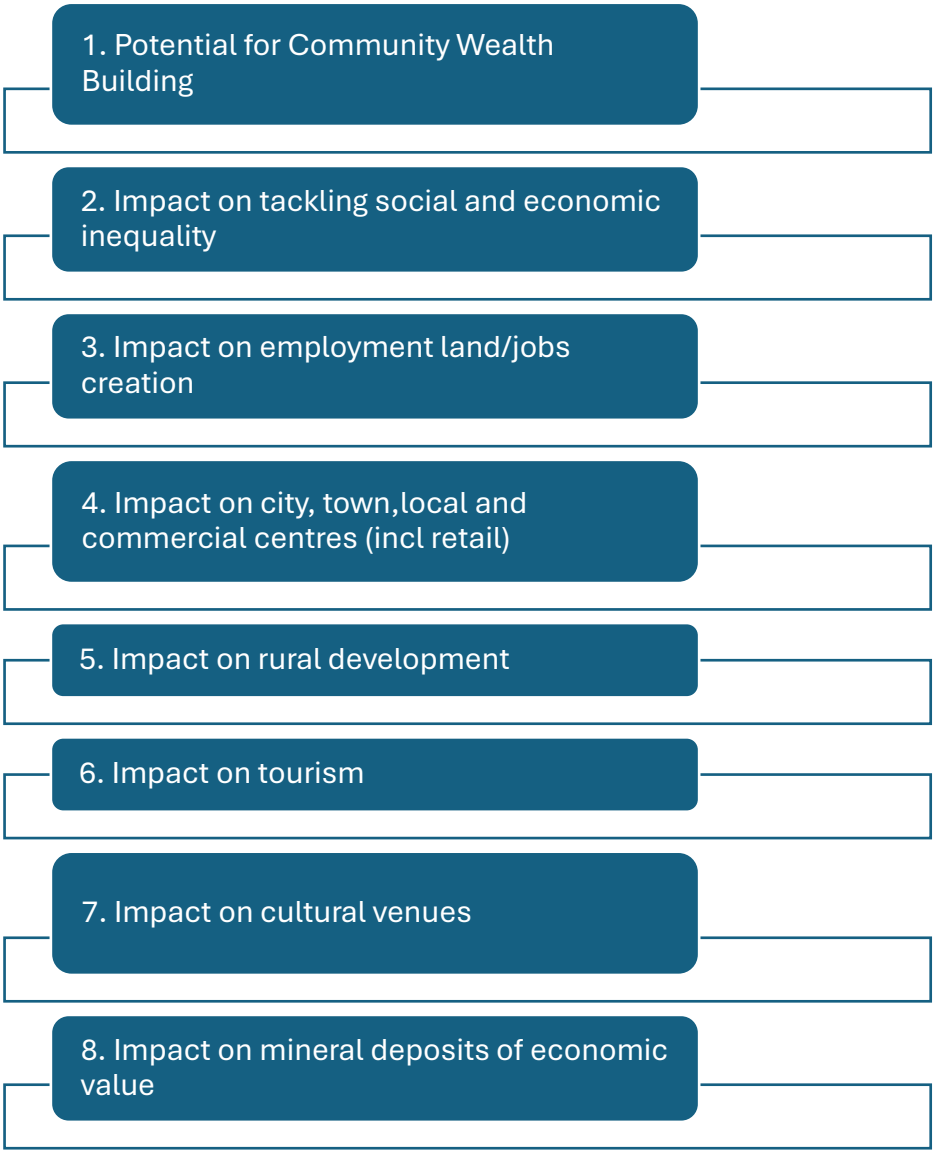




Source: Fife Council

Stage 2A – Productive Places Assessment Criteria

Figure 13.4: Stage 2A – Productive Places Assessment Criteria



Source: Fife Council

Stage 2B - Consider preferred use and capacity of potentially developable sites

13.11 The purpose of this stage is to identify potential uses (taking uses proposed by any site promoter/community as a starting point) and capacity of sites to feed into Stage 3 Detailed Assessment.

13.12 Only sites that are categorised as either ‘parts of site may be developable’ or ‘whole site may be developable’ will be assessed at Stage 2B.

Stage 3 – Detailed assessment of sites that are consistent with NPF4 and other national strategies

13.13 The purpose of this stage is to understand the financial, environmental and infrastructure impact of development of sites.

13.14 Only sites that are categorised as either ‘parts of site may be developable’ or ‘whole site may be developable’ will be assessed at Stage 3.

13.15 The following specific assessments will be undertaken at this stage (and may request further information from site promoters/communities) to allow these assessments to be undertaken.

- Viability assessment
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Transport Assessment (based on Transport Scotland’s DPMTAG and, if possible, considering the carbon emission associated with the location of development)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Habitats Regulation Appraisal
- Health and Equalities impact assessments

13.16 Fife Council will also work with the following key stakeholders and undertake other specialist assessments as required to establish the deliverability of sites:

- Homes for Scotland
- Historic Environment Scotland
- NatureScot
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- SP Energy Networks
- Scottish Water
- Scotland Gas Network
- Mining Remediation Authority.
- Fife Council Business & Employability Services
- Fife Council Contaminated Land team
- Other internal stakeholders

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

Historic Environment Scotland

- Historic Environment Scotland made the following comments on the site assessment approach in their feedback on the evidence report in May 2024:
- HES noted the approach to site assessment and encourages co-ordination between the site assessment process and the SEA.
- HES highlighted that the world heritage site and historic battlefield site are not listed in the list of historic environment assets in Stage 2a – sustainable places of the site assessment process. They welcomed the aim to develop criteria to assess the potential to reuse existing buildings/previously developed land and highlighted that the Buildings at Risk register would be a key evidence source.
- Fife Council Response: Historic Environment Scotland's support for the site assessment process is welcomed. The world heritage site and historic battlefield have now been added to this list of historic environment assets in stage 2a of the site assessment process.

Homes for Scotland

- Homes for Scotland made the following comments on a draft of the site assessment methodology in November 2023. This methodology was superseded before the submission of the Evidence Report and an alternative approach proposed. This related directly to the policies in NPF4 and to a Site Assessment and SEA checklist published by the consultation authorities in Feb 2024. However, the information to be assessed as part of the site assessment process proposed in the submitted evidence report remains very similar so the specific issues raised by Homes for Scotland have been addressed below.

- Homes for Scotland (HfS) considers that the Call for Ideas stage should not be optional for local authorities.
- Fife Council Response: Noted. Fife Council is carrying out a call for ideas and call for sites exercise.

- HfS felt that no consideration appears to have been given to the weighting of different factors as no site could meet all of the factors under consideration.
- Fife Council Response: The weighting that would be applied to different factors under consideration as part of the site assessment process would vary depending on the conditions and context of a site. The approach to the respective importance of different aspects under consideration will be similar to that undertaken as part of planning application processes. The policies, relative emphasis and priorities set out in NPF4 are to be used to guide the consideration of sites through the site assessment process and can be taken as a guide for site promoters.

- HfS consider that where sites have scored well, the council should consider their allocation even if the housing requirement has been met through other allocations.
- Fife Council Response: Comment noted.

- HfS feel that it is unclear to what extent relevant details of community engagement would be required as this is not a legal requirement – it would be expected that not having specific community support should not by itself be considered as a negative aspect.
- Fife Council Response: At this stage of the plan process there is no expectation that engagement with the local community will have taken place; however, we want to be aware if any engagement had been undertaken. Lack of engagement at this stage would not penalise the consideration of a site.

- HfS suggest that the wording regarding deliverability is changed to reflect NPF4 definition of deliverable land below as PAN2/2010 is soon to be replaced by new guidance on Housing Land audits and it is understood that deliverability criteria will be included: 'Land that is free from constraints or there is a commitment to overcome constraints, and development is able to be delivered in the period identified for the site within the Deliverable Housing Land Pipeline.'
- There should also be more weight given to commitment by a proven developer rather than details of land ownership.
- Fife Council Response: Any new deliverability criteria published in the new housing land audit guidance will be reflected in the site assessment process for the Proposed Plan. The weighting given to the commitment by a proven developer or a landowner will be judged on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific context.

- Homes for Scotland do not believe that a full statement of community benefit should be required at the site assessment stage as NPF4 Policy 16(b) relates to development proposals not allocation proposals. - Site assessment proposals may not be able to explain how the proposed development would contribute to a tenured split as this may not have been set at that time, and all other factors covered by a statement of community benefit would be covered by other aspects of the site assessment methodology.
- Fife Council Response: As part of the Fife LDP *Community* Matters ('call for sites') exercise, sites with 50 or more houses have been asked to provide a short high-level statement of community benefit. The guidance for completing the questionnaire explains what this could cover and includes meeting local housing requirements.

- Regarding providing information on the different tenures to be provided on the site it is understood that this would only be indicative at this stage of the planning process but is still an aspect of housing proposals that we would want site promoters to provide information on.

- Fife Council Response: Comment noted.

- Re NPF4 Policy 18: Infrastructure First and the requirement to provide evidence of contact with utility providers – HfS consider that this is important at site assessment stage but infrastructure commitments and solutions may not be available at this stage.
- Fife Council Response: The call for sites questions ask for information on any engagement with utility service providers but does not ask for confirmation or evidence of commitments and solutions.

- HfS flagged up that the landscape reports referred to are old and should be updated.
- Fife Council Response: NatureScot have a more up to date assessment of the character of Fife's landscape.

- Re potential alternative uses - HfS consider that the council should not suggest alternative uses without engaging with landowners/site promoters as there may be reasons why alternative uses are not appropriate or deliverable.
- Fife Council Response: Comment noted.

- Re access – if access is required via third party land – more detail is required as to how site promoters are to demonstrate connections will not be constrained by third party land ownership. HfS consider that it will be for the delivery programme to evidence what is required for the site to be deliverable as set out in the Development plan guidance (2023).
- Fife Council Response: The LDP Community Matters ('call for sites') process asks that site promoters provide evidence that they have control over land that they would need to deliver the infrastructure required for the site. This is an important aspect of the site assessment process. If Planning Services were to leave this information until after the sites are allocated there is a risk that sites allocated in the plan may be undeliverable. The Development Plan Guidance 2023 makes it clear that 'all sites proposed to be allocated for development in plans should have been assessed for their deliverability through the site appraisal process'.

- Re biodiversity enhancement – HfS consider that there needs to be published guidance on this before any robust assessment can be carried out.
- Fife Council Response: The call for sites questionnaire asks site promoters to provide a very brief overview of how they will comply with NPF4 Policies 3, 4, 6 and 20. They can use guidance provided by NatureScot in relation to these policies along with other sources of information and guidance which are referenced in the call for sites guidance document.

- Re flooding HfS is engaging with SEPA to get clarity on new guidance re NPF4 Policy 22 and flood risk area/flood prevention works.

- Fife Council Response: Comment noted.

- HfS flagged up that the term 'wayleave' may need to be reviewed as a wayleave represents an agreement between the landowner and a third party and will fall with any land sales. A deed of servitude sits with the land – suggest this reference is changed to 'wayleave or deed of servitude' and that the Council's legal team review this wording.
- Fife Council Response: In the call for sites questions site promoters are asked to provide details of any legal restrictions which could affect development. That would include both wayleaves and deeds of servitude.

- HfS highlighted that ensuring that a site is deliverable should not be seen as a carte blanche for the council to require unnecessary or unavailable information upfront. That would disadvantage small and medium sized developers.
- Fife Council Response: Fife Council has aimed to make the amount of information required from site promoters proportionate to the site assessment stage of the Local Development Plan process and asks for brief high level answers to be provided in most cases.

- HfS highlighted that it is important to engage small and medium sized developers early in the LDP review process as it may be increasingly difficult for them to bring forward sites not allocated for residential development in the plan.
- Fife Council Response: The call for sites process was publicised in a variety of ways including direct emails to known developers and agents, through the planning e-bulletin and promotion at the Fife Housebuilders Forum.

- HfS highlighted that it is important that the financial risk and costs of promoting sites with the new level of information required does not make it too risky for many to undertake.
- Fife Council Response: Fife Council has aimed to make the amount of information required from site promoters proportionate to the site assessment stage of the Local Development Plan process and asks for brief high-level answers to be provided in most cases. More detailed assessment will only be asked for in cases where more information and evidence is needed for a site to be determined as acceptable for allocation.

- Re evidence of funding – HfS highlighted that it is unclear how a developer is expected to provide evidence of funding for a project that could be many years away and information on planning gain requirements is unknown. In addition, many infrastructure providers would not commit to creating capacity unless a site is consented – a lack of information in this regard should not necessarily count against a site.
- Fife Council Response: Information on funding is not specifically asked for in the call for sites questions. However, funding is referred to as a detail we

may ask for additional information on in some cases. Lack of this information would therefore not necessarily count against a site.

Transport Scotland

- Discussions with Transport Scotland have led to the methodology referring to the NTS2 hierarchies for sustainable transport and investment. These will inform the site assessments.

14 Strategic Environmental Assessment

SEA Scoping Report – summary

14.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment plays an important role in the Local Development Plan process. It is a means to judge the likely impact of a public plan on the environment.

14.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment aims to offer greater protection to the environment by ensuring bodies preparing plans consider and address the likely significant environmental effects. It can also be used to help ensure that future development is sustainable.

14.3 The main purpose of the Scoping Report stage is to set out information to enable the SEA Consultation Authorities (NatureScot, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Environment Scotland) to form a view on the scope/level of detail that will be appropriate for the Environmental Report that will be prepared alongside the Proposed Plan.

14.4 The Scoping Report also highlights that a Habitats Regulations Appraisal will be carried out to assess the Local Development Plan and will help to inform the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. Annex 3 of the Scoping Report includes information relating to sites that will be considered as part of the Habitats Regulations Appraisal. The information gathered through the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Appraisal processes has been considered and has helped inform this Evidence Report.

Links/Resources

- Strategic Environmental Assessment – Scoping Report

Summary of Stakeholder Engagement and Statements of Agreement/ Dispute:

- In their feedback on the Fife evidence report in May 2024, Historic Environment Scotland highlighted that they have developed updated model questions and a proforma which could be used for the SEA.
- The SEA Consultation Authorities, Environment Scotland, NatureScot and SEPA were engaged in the preparation of the SEA Scoping Report. Historic Environment Scotland stated in their final response on the Scoping Report that they "*are content with the approach outlined in the report and are satisfied with the scope and level of detail proposed for the assessment, subject to the detailed comments below*". NatureScot responded that they are content will the scope and level of detail proposed. The response from SEPA stated 'We consider it to be a comprehensive report which identifies the key issues which fall under our remit in section 3 and proposes a satisfactory assessment methodology'. All the above responses welcomed that previous comments they had made on an earlier version of the document had been incorporated into the final report.

15 What happens next?

Gate Check

15.1 The Evidence Report will be assessed by the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) to check that it has sufficient information in it for Fife Council to prepare a new LDP. This is known as the Gatecheck. Only after the Evidence Report has passed the Gatecheck will work commence on preparing a draft of the new LDP.

Call for content

15.2 A 'call for content' stage for interested parties to suggest proposals for content or possible development sites for inclusion in the new LDP ran for 14 weeks from 18 November 2024 to 24 February 2025. This was promoted as *Place Matters*. Following this, the submissions received will be processed and analysed using the site assessment criteria described in this Evidence Report, as well as referencing national and local planning policies. Once the Evidence Report is assessed as being sufficient to prepare the LDP, work will continue to develop a spatial strategy as a context for preparing the Proposed Plan and identifying proposals to address the issues identified in the Evidence Report.

15.3 Preparation of the Proposed LDP is expected to take about 18 months and will involve further evidence gathering (particularly around the infrastructure needs of potential development sites). A Delivery Programme that sets out how the LDP will be delivered will be prepared alongside the draft LDP.

15.4 Once a Proposed LDP has been prepared, it and the Proposed Delivery Programme will be consulted on for at least 12 weeks. This will be followed by an Examination of the Proposed Plan led by the DPEA.

15.5 The new LDP is expected to formally become part of Fife's development plan in 2028.

16 Abbreviations

BARR – Buildings at Risk Register

BGS - British Geological Survey

CARS - Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme

CCS - Carbon Capture and Storage

CHMA - Centre for Housing Market Analysis

CLES - Centre for Local Economic Strategies

CSGN - Central Scotland Green Network

DPH - Director of Public Health

DPMTAG - Development Planning and Management Transport Appraisal Guidance

DSSB - Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband

EPS - European Protected Species

EV - Electric Vehicle

FELS - Fife Employment Land Strategy

FFWS - Fife Forest and Woodland Strategy

FHAA - Fife Housing Association Alliance

FRMP – Flood Risk Management Plans

FTTP – Fibre to the Premises

GCR - Geological Conservation Review

GSGN - Central Scotland Green Network

GVA - Gross Value Added

HEAP - Housing Emergency Action Plan

HES - Historic Environment Scotland

HfS - Homes for Scotland

HIA - Health Impact Assessment

HLA - Housing Land Audit

HMA – Housing Market Area

HMO - House in Multiple Occupation

HNDA – Housing Need and Demand Assessment

HNZ - Heat Network Zones

HoTOC - Houses that are both Overcrowded and Concealed

HST - Housing Supply Target

INNS - Invasive Non Native Species

LDP – Local Development Plan

LHEES – Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

LHLR – Local Housing Land Requirement

LHS - Local Housing Strategy

LNCS - Local Nature Conservation Sites

LOIP – Local Outcome Improvement Plan

LPP – Local Place Plan

LSC - Local Shopping Centre

LTS - Local Transport Strategy

LWS – Local Wildlife Site

MATHLR – Minimum All-tenure Housing Land Requirement

MUGA - Multi-use Games Area

NMP - National Marine Plan

NPF4 – National Planning Framework 4 (2023)

NRS - National Records of Scotland

NTS - National Transport Strategy

PAS - Planning Aid Scotland

RBMP – River Basin Management Plan

RCC - Reasonable Cost Contribution

RESP - Regional Energy Strategic Plan

SAC - Special Areas for Conservation

SDA - Strategic Development Area

SEA - Strategic Environmental Assessment

SEPA – Scottish Environment Protection Agency

SFDAD - Scottish Flood Defence Asset Database

SFRA – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

SGN - Scotland Gas Networks (or Scotia Gas Networks, the parent company)

SHIP - Strategic Housing Investment Plan

SLA - Strategic Land Allocation

SMP2 – Fife Shoreline Management Plan

SPA – Special Protection Area

SPEN - Scottish Power Energy Networks

SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

STL - Short-term Let

STLCA - Short-term Let Control Area

STPR - Strategic Transport Projects Review

UKPS - UK Protected Species

17 Annexes

Annex 01: Meeting legislative requirements

Annex 02: Fife LDP2 Evidence Report Information Sources

Annex 03: Matters required to be included in Evidence Report

Annex 04: Summary of participation and engagement

Annex 05: Engagement and participation overview

Annex 06: Review of FIFEplan

Annex 07: Local Living and 20 Minute Neighbourhoods

Annex 08: Housing Need and Local Housing Land Requirement

Annex 09: Localised Housing Issues

Annex 10: Transport

Annex 11: Infrastructure First

Annex 12: Waste Management

Annex 13: NPF4 Policy Intent & Outcomes