

Environment, Finance & Communities Scrutiny Committee

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



Tuesday, 13 April, 2021 - 10.00 a.m.

AGENDA

Page Nos.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct Members of the Committee are asked to declare any interest(s) in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.
3. **MINUTE** – Minute of Meeting of Environment, Finance & Communities Scrutiny Committee of 2 February 2021 3 - 5
4. **COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER - UPDATE** – Joint Report by the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods and the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment 6 - 11
5. **TACKLING POVERTY - FUNDING ANALYSIS** – Report by the Executive Director - Communities 12 - 41
6. **MANAGING FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING AND MINIMISED ABSENCE (POST CORPORATE ABSENCE PROJECT)** – Report by the Head of Human Resources 42 - 62
7. **PARKS, STREETS & OPEN SPACES SAVINGS 2013-2021** – Report by the Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment 63 - 67
8. **PRESSURES ON ROADS & TRANSPORTATION SERVICES** – Report by the Senior Manager (Roads & Transportation Services) 68 - 75
9. **ENVIRONMENT, FINANCE & COMMUNITIES FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** 76

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

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6 April, 2021

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**THE FIFE COUNCIL - ENVIRONMENT, FINANCE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE - REMOTE MEETING**

2nd February, 2021

10.00 a.m. – 11.40 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Tim Brett (Convener), Neil Crooks, John Docherty, Linda Erskine, Mick Green, Andy Heer, Rosemary Liewald, Fay Sinclair, Ryan Smart, Darren Watt and Jan Wincott.

ATTENDING: Eileen Rowand, Executive Director, Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Les Robertson, Head of Revenue & Commercial Services, Caroline MacDonald, Procurement Service Manager, Revenue & Commercial Services, Finance & Corporate Services; Stuart Fergie, Programme Manager (Commercialisation), Communities and Neighbourhoods; John Mills, Head of Service, Gavin Smith, Service Manager, Housing Access & Homelessness, Housing Services; Elizabeth Mair, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

35. MINUTE

The Committee considered the minute of meeting of the Environment, Finance & Communities Scrutiny Committee of 27th October 2020.

Decision

The Committee agreed to approve the minute.

36. SHORT TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2020-21

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services providing information to allow members to review and scrutinise the financial strategy that had been developed for the Council in order to ensure a sustainable financial position in the short term following the significant financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report on the short-term financial strategy which had also been presented to the Policy and Co-ordination Committee on 7th January, 2021.

Councillor Darren Watt joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

37. ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services providing details of the Council's approach to meeting Scottish housing regulatory requirements, particularly in the identification of areas of non-compliance in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, as reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator through the Annual Assurance Statement.

Decision/

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) To note the approach to housing performance improvement, particularly in addressing the areas of non-compliance with the Scottish Social Housing Charter; and
- (2) that members be kept advised of any areas where Fife Council was not in the top quartile.

38. COMMERCIALISATION PROGRAMME - PROCUREMENT TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Revenue and Commercial Services advising of progress on the "Transforming Fife Council's Procurement Service" project as part of the Commercialisation Programme and wider Changing to Deliver Programme over the past 6 months.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note:-

- (1) the progress made in transforming the Council's Procurement Service;
- (2) the Scotland Excel Year 2 progress report;
- (3) that Scotland Excel had now exited from Fife;
- (4) the financial benefits being delivered and on target to be delivered;
- (5) that the Programme would close in March 2021 with all procurement project follow on activity falling into Business as Usual activity; and
- (6) that a further update report would be submitted to the Committee in 6 months.

39. HOUSING ACCESS RECOVERY PLAN

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services outlining progress in implementing the Housing Access Recovery Plan which was supported by the Convener and Vice Convener of the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee on 19th September, 2020 as a response to the significant and damaging impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on housing operations and supply.

Decision

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress in terms of housing supply and demand; and
- (2) that a report on the revised private sector leasing scheme be provided once the scheme had been considered by the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee.

40./

**40. ENVIRONMENT & PROTECTIVE SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD
WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted the Environment and Protective Services Sub-Committee Forward Work Programme which would be further updated as appropriate.

13th April 2021

Agenda Item No. 4

Community Asset Transfer – Update

Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods and Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment

Wards Affected: all

Purpose

This report provides information on the Council's community asset transfer policy and process, along with the number of community asset transfer (CAT) applications received to date, the number of approvals and refusals, and any issues arising.

Recommendation(s)

Committee members are asked to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no legal or risk implications.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA is not required as the report does not propose a change to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

No consultation was required in relation to this report. However, elected members are consulted on CAT applications in their area.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 enables community transfer bodies to request the ownership, lease or management of publicly owned buildings or land. The community transfer body (CTB) and its request must meet the requirements of the Act before the Council can validate and consider the request.

2.0 Process for Dealing with Community Asset Transfer Applications

- 2.1 Fife Council's Policy Statement in relation to community asset transfer was approved in September 2017. The Policy Statement set out a number of principles: recognising that Fife Council holds its property assets as a resource to be used in the delivery of services and to support the delivery of Council and Fife Partnership outcomes; that the transfer of assets to local community organisations can play a key role in supporting and sustaining local communities and that community asset transfer may achieve better value for money and deliver more sustainable outcomes for both the Council and the wider communities it serves. Since the Policy Statement was approved, the Council has provided a number of training sessions for community organisations, elected members and staff to learn about the CAT process and, importantly, how organisations can be supported to take ownership of Council assets.
- 2.2 Over the years, the Council has refined the two-stage process for dealing with (1) CAT enquiries and (2) formal CAT requests. This is not required in terms of the Act but encourages organisations to make an informal application in order for the Council to assess the extent of any advice or support necessary for organisations to make the most of the opportunities that the Act offers. A CTB can submit a formal request in terms of the Act at any time. The Community Asset Transfer Team has set up an evaluation panel to evaluate and score requests in accordance with the criteria set down by the Act. A scoring matrix has been developed in order to allow requests to be evaluated objectively, fairly and transparently. The evaluation panel will score a request and make a recommendation to either accept or reject a request.
- 2.3 Section 82 (5) of the Act states that an authority must agree to a request unless there are reasonable grounds for refusing it. Reasonable grounds for refusal must be determined in the circumstances of each individual case. However, they are likely to include cases where:
- the benefits of the asset transfer request are judged to be less than the benefits of an alternative proposal;
 - agreeing to the request would restrict the relevant authority's ability to carry out its functions; or
 - failure to demonstrate the benefits or delivery of the proposal.

3.0 Update on CAT Applications Received by Fife Council

- 3.1 Since August 2016, when the CAT process went 'live', there have been 67 enquiries regarding 50 different Council assets across Fife. Not all of these enquiries have led to CAT applications for various reasons, including organisations seeking alternative ways to provide services or being unable to secure the financial resources required to take on ownership of an asset.

- 3.2 As per the Council's two-stage process, 53 stage one applications have been received over this period and, of these, 25 organisations were invited to submit a stage two application. Of the remaining 28 stage one applications, there were various outcomes, including the organisation withdrawing the application; the application being rejected as it did not meet the CAT criteria, or the organisation being provided with support to offer services from an alternative location.
- 3.3 Twenty-five organisations were invited to submit stage two applications and there have been various outcomes in relation to the stage two process. Three organisations decided not to proceed with a CAT and withdrew their application; two organisations (Kingdom Brass Band and Kirkcaldy YMCA) have completed the CAT process and been successful in taking ownership of a Council asset; ten organisations have had their stage two application approved by Committee and formal offers of purchase are awaited and three organisations have had their stage two applications refused. One of these organisations has appealed to Scottish Ministers.
- 3.4 The refusal of a stage two application has mainly resulted from an organisation being unable to demonstrate adequate community benefit and/or not having the finances in place to maintain the asset in the longer term.
- 3.5 To ensure that the Council is as up to date as possible with the requirements of the Community Empowerment Act and the community asset transfer process, training has been provided to officers from across the directorates by the Community Ownership Support Service. The Council's own processes have been revised and updated to ensure that it is as straightforward as possible for organisations to apply for CAT, and all documentation is available online.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The Council has a two-stage process for enabling community organisations to apply for a community asset transfer. Since the process went live in 2016, 67 enquiries have been received about the potential leasing or ownership of a Council asset and these have led to a number of stage one and stage two applications. The Council continues to support organisations through the CAT process and to enable them to identify alternative ways of providing services if a CAT is not a suitable route.

List of Appendices

1. Community Asset Transfer Enquiries by Committee Area

Background Papers

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

None

Report Contact:

Tim Kendrick
Community Manager (Development)
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Tim.Kendrick@fife.gov.uk

Community Asset Transfer Enquiries by Committee Area

Cowdenbeath

Community Organisation	Property Name
Crossgates Village Park	Humbug Park, Crossgates
Kingdom Brass Band Kelty Evangelical Church	Kelty Library
Lochgelly Albert Junior Football Club	Gardners Park, Lochgelly
Kelty Marion Colts Football Club Sons of Struth Football Club	Ore Park, Glenraig
Primrose Community Trust	Humbug Park
Living Solutions	Site 1, Glenfield Industrial Estate

Dunfermline

Community Organisation	Property Name
Dunfermline Boxing Club	Halbeath Community Centre
The Abbeyview Forum	Dunfermline South Locality Office
Ahmidyya Muslim Community, Edinburgh Limited Edition Fundraisers A Veterans Best Friend	Touch Community Centre

Glenrothes

Community Organisation	Property Name
Glenrothes Arts Club The Glenrothes Spiritualist Group	The Whitehouse, Glenrothes
Lomond Colts Football Club	Dovecot pitches & pavilion, Glenrothes
Glenrothes Model Railway Club	Building 1 & 2 Balbirnie Centre
Tullis Russel Brass Band	Woodside Hall, Glenrothes
International Fire & Rescue	Ex-fleet services premises, Strathore Road, Thornton

Kirkcaldy

Community Organisation	Property Name
Chapelhood Neighbourhood Centre	Chapel Neighbourhood Centre
Individual Plato Café	Dunnikier Old Men's Club
Adam Smith Global Foundation Church	Pathhead Halls, Dysart
Burntisland Common Good	Burntisland Burgh Chambers
Kirkcaldy Community Football Partnership	Randolph Park, Kirkcaldy
Kirkcaldy YMCA	Gallatown Bowling Club
Nourish	Glebe Park Centre, Kirkcaldy

Levenmouth

Community Organisation	Property Name
Sailors Rest Community Gym	Sailors' Rest
Kennoway Star Hearts Football Club	Cotlands Football Pitches
Save Wemyss Ancient Caves Society	East Wemyss Senior Citizens, East Wemyss

North East Fife

Community Organisation	Property Name
Crail Community Trust Crail Community Partnership	Crail Town Hall
Pittenweem Community Trust Pittenweem Fishermen's Memorial Association	The Gyles
North East Fife Community Hub	St David's Centre, St Andrews
Individual Kingdom Vineyard	Victory Memorial Hall, St Andrews
Crail Community Trust Crail Community Partnership	Crail Community Hall
Auchtermuchty Trust Auchtermuchty Theatre Group	Auchtermuchty Town Hall
Elie & Earlsferry Community Council Earlsferry Town Hall Ltd	Earlsferry Town Hall
Guarbridge Community Development Trust	Land in playpark, Guardbridge
Newburgh Community Trust	East Shore Park, Newburgh
St Andrews Harbour Trust	Fishermen's Stores, The Shore, St Andrews
Forgan Arts Centre	Leng Home, Newport-on-Tay
Crail Community Partnership	Land at Warsea Road
Crail Community Partnership	Bowbutts Open land
Crail Community Partnership	Kilminning South
St Andrews Environmental Network	FC Local Office, St. Mary's Place, St Andrews
Duffus Park Tennis Club Duffus Park Bowling Club	Duffus Park, Cupar

South West Fife

Community Organisation	Property Name
Culross Community Council Culross Development Trust	Public Toilet Block, Culross
Torryburn & Newmills Development Trust	Torryburn Community Leisure Centre
Valleyfield Heritage Project	Public Woods, High Valleyfield
Royal Burgh of Inverkeithing Pipe Band	Hillend Pavilion, Inverkeithing
Crombie Residents Association Trench Boxing Club	Crombie Leisure Community Centre
Valleyfield Youth Football	St Serf's Park, High Valleyfeld

Saline & Steelend Community Development Trust	Saline Community Centre
Hillfield Swifts Football Club Hyperclub Inverkeithing Hillfield Swifts	Ballast Bank, Inverkeithing
Remembrance Garden Society	Land on former primary school
Saline & Steelend Community Development Trust	Garage Blocks, Saline

13th April 2021

Agenda Item No. 5

Tackling Poverty – Funding Analysis

Report by: Mike Enston, Executive Director

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To present findings of analysis into anti-poverty spending and the impact it has.

Recommendation(s)

To review the work to date and make suggestions for further analysis

Resource Implications

None, although the report itself is about resource implications

Legal & Risk Implications

None

Impact Assessment

No issues

Consultation

Consultation throughout the process of preparing this report has been undertaken with –

- Tackling Poverty and Crisis Prevention Group who commissioned the work (officer group)
- Tackling Poverty and Crisis Prevention Sub-Committee
- Fife Partnership
- Policy and Co-ordination Committee

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Poverty is one of the most intractable problems faced by any local authority and considerable resources are expended on alleviating its effects and attempting to reduce it. The impact of the covid pandemic is likely to exacerbate this situation and therefore a reform area on anti-poverty and crisis prevention has been identified as a priority. The working groups in this reform area commissioned work to look at anti-poverty spending and to explore if there was a way to quickly determine the impact this spending does or is likely to have.
- 1.2 A key objective was to develop a challenge which helps us move from simply describing poverty levels and its many issues to one which informs policy discussions and choices.
- 1.3 The work was undertaken by Fife Council Research Team working closely with the officer led Tackling anti-poverty and crisis prevention working group and the member led sub-committee of the same name. The final report of this work is appended. The purpose is to provide insight where possible and to provoke discussion within the reform work with a view to finding more effective ways to tackle poverty in Fife. This report is just one aspect of that discussion.

2.0 Issues and Options

- 2.1 The work proceeded along 2 fronts, one was to develop a model to apply data to in order to develop insight (covered in the report), the other was to compile a dataset of anti-poverty spend which could be used in that approach.
- 2.1 Information at a detailed enough level to understand the projects undertaken under the banner of anti-poverty does not normally occur. Therefore a process was undertaken to identify these projects and request basic details from those managing them. This was a laborious process which resulted in a snapshot of the situation with regard to spending just before the covid lockdown occurred. In some cases project details were not known and this in itself is a key discussion point.
- 2.2 The report is appended and draft versions and presentation of the findings have been widely shared. It is not a perfect snapshot of anti-poverty spending and does not purport to be. It is however good enough to achieve a reasonable level of insight. In particular this is not a budget exercise, figures are self reported project spends rather than budgeted spends or actual outturns. That approach would not be possible using only finance data. The model used is relatively simple, even crude, but even so represents a step change in attempting to understand a tricky problem.
- 2.3 The report concludes with questions for discussion, these are –
 1. **How do we achieve greater knowledge of actual spending on specific anti-poverty efforts?**

This might encompass systems to more clearly identify the rationale for spending on specific projects, how we collect and monitor spending, how spending is planned and whether there is a need to review budget headings where work that is not anti-poverty work is still required.

2. **Can we be sure that all of the initiatives which we operate achieve a meaningful impact or even that they are capable of doing so?**

How do we ensure that the spending will achieve what is intended, are the mechanisms being funded capable of alleviating or reducing poverty, is impact monitoring built into the project, is the target audience and ways to reach them properly specified?

3. **Local impact can be difficult to measure and even at a large scale, the manner in which we target effort can result in any impact being difficult to see, how should we measure anti-poverty impact?**

How do we measure and detect changes that our projects make, how can we measure impacts locally, can we separate our impact from the noise of background trends and other initiatives?

4. **Is our balance of spending across anti-poverty initiatives the most effective it could be?**

Do we need to consider the range of activity to target poverty more strategically, how do we ensure a local element that still delivers strategic ambitions, are we doing enough to reduce poverty itself, while alleviating crisis is important, are there different approaches we could consider?

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The work has already provoked useful discussion and provided insight and focus in a complex area of work. However, as is the case with insight, it has raised many questions about what we should do next. It has been the purpose of this work to raise those questions with a degree of rigour even if the information can never be perfect.

List of Appendices

1. Anti-Poverty Spending Impact Final Report, March 2021

Background Papers

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

None

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Research Manager
Rothesay House (working from home at present)

Telephone: 03451 55 55 55 + VOIP Number 444330 (use teams during current stay at home restrictions)

Email: William.penrice@fife.gov.uk

Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report

Which Committee report does this IA relate to (specify meeting date)?

Environment, Finance and Communities Scrutiny Committee, 13th April 2021

What are the main impacts on equality?

None

What are the main recommendations to enhance or mitigate the impacts identified?

N/A

If there are no equality impacts on any of the protected characteristics, please explain.

The report is designed to raise questions around spending more generally in regard to poverty. It does not make specific policy recommendations as it is background for the development of policy.

Further information is available from: Name / position / contact details:

William Penrice

Research Manager

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APPENDIX

Anti-Poverty Spending Impact

Final Report

March 2021

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
 2. Poverty in Fife
 3. A framework for understanding the spend on anti-poverty work
 4. The impact of the anti-poverty budget
 5. Benchmarking spending
 6. Discussion points raised by findings
- Appendix 1. List of projects included
- Appendix 2. Types of projects within categories

1. Introduction

Poverty is without doubt one of the great intractable issues we face. This discussion paper is designed to open up discussion about next steps for anti-poverty work within the reform agenda. It hopes to do this by reflecting findings of work on impact in the anti-poverty budget (albeit a small part of total expenditure on poverty related work). In particular to consider tools and levers at our disposal and how we use them. This is only a place to start, the information used has been collected directly from those managing projects. It has been conducted rapidly and there may be issues with the data; the models could be further refined; and the benchmarking could be better. Reaching for perfection would have significantly increased the time required or more likely would have been prohibitive to even trying to gain any insight. It is unlikely a perfect approach would have provided significantly greater insight. The work fulfils its primary aim of provoking discussion about poverty spending and how we see this as part of a wider reform agenda.

Anti-poverty work is diverse and complex. A simple starting place may be to consider it as work undertaken to keep those in or close to poverty safe and healthy from economic harms, while seeking more sustainable solutions. High quality employment is the obvious sustainable solution. However, even if sufficient such employment were available, not everyone is 'work ready'. People are at different points on a path to being able to take up well paid work. It means that to be viable, anti-poverty work must encompass all points along that path, for instance from helping people in immediate crisis, to helping young people leave school with appropriate qualifications to ensuring a supply of suitable employment. An even wider range of activity supports these efforts, including keeping people safe and healthy, especially in childhood, creating good links and engagement with communities or maintaining the right kinds of facilities to facilitate anti-poverty work.

This paper begins with a rapid review of poverty in Fife, before considering the work undertaken in an attempt to understand the impact of our spend on anti-poverty work. It then draws this together in a series of discussion points. The aim of which is to provide a starting place for a more ambitious, even disruptive discussion about how we can best tackle poverty in Fife.

Table 1 shows the anti-poverty budget (approx. £34m) and the breakdown of the element analysed in this study (£19.9m). This was the budget examined, although it should be stressed that below this high level picture, information on spend is provided directly by project managers and no attempt has been made to reconcile this to the actual budget expenditure as this would not have been possible in any reasonable timeframe. That in itself generates one of the discussion points, how do we achieve better up to date information on anti-poverty expenditure.

Area	2019/20 Budget	Amount analysed	Funded by Scottish Government	Temporary
COMMUNITIES	£000s			
Anti Poverty strategy Cowdenbeath	270	181		
Anti Poverty strategy Dunfermline	135	99		
Anti Poverty strategy Glenrothes	135	113		
Anti Poverty strategy SWF	174	102		
Anti Poverty strategy Kirkcaldy	170	105		
Anti Poverty strategy Leven	274	220		
Anti Poverty strategy NEF	135	124		
Scottish Welfare Fund - Fife Council Top Up	482	482		
Scottish Welfare Fund - Scottish Government Funding	2,607	2,607	Yes	
CARF Support Referrals	307	0		
Fife Law Centre	50	50		
Training Frontline staff	30	30		
Enhance homelessness prevention services	170	0		
Credit Union Expansion	40	40		
Welfare Reform	636	636		
Hardship Fund (HRA)	1,000	1,000		
Area Locality (HRA)	399	0		
Holiday Hunger	400	400		
Free access to sanitary products	225	19		
COMMUNITIES TOTAL	7,639	6,208		
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES				
Schools Support project	154	154		
C&F Grants/Payments to individuals	127	127		
Education - Breakfast Cafes	150	150		
Education - Holiday provision	300	300		
Clothing Grant	1,333	1,333	Yes	
Free School Meals (School Catering)	5,543	5,543		
Free Access to Sanitary Products	148	148	Yes	
Education - Pupil Equity Funding (until 2020/21)	10,049	0	Yes	Yes
Education - Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding (until	1,005	0	Yes	Yes
C&F Scottish Attainment Challenge Funding for Looked After	1,096	0	Yes	Yes
EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES TOTAL	19,905	7,755		
ENTERPRISE AND ENVIRONMENT				
Fife Employability Intervention Programme	200	200		
Fife Youth Jobs Contract	1,447	774		Yes
National Assistance Burials	63	63		
Fairer Fife Funding	11	11		Yes
Opportunities Fife - Gingerbread	60	60		Yes
ENTERPRISE AND ENVIRONMENT TOTAL	1,781	1,108		
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES				
DHP and Welfare Reform Administration	160	160		
Discretionary Housing Payment	4,694	4,694	Yes	
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL	4,854	4,854		
TOTAL	34,179	19,925		

Table 1. Summary of anti-poverty budget and elements analysed to develop tool

2. Poverty in Fife

Poverty is a complex issue and shows much variation across Fife and so a rapid summary must generalise somewhat. Fife tends to track national trends in income and employment deprivation but shows an increase in health deprivation. Particular issues remain in the mid-Fife area and western Fife, but small pockets of deprivation are seen throughout (figure 2.1). While the number of people who are income deprived remains stable or perhaps slightly reducing (figure 2.3), our share of Scotland's most deprived datazones has increased slightly and child poverty shows an increasing trend (figure 2.2).

Employment has the greatest potential to reduce poverty. The economic picture across Fife is mixed. In terms of jobs available per person, Fife is falling behind the Scottish average, although some sectors such as tourism continue to perform well. While employment is key, this is very much dependent on the nature of the job, with in work poverty representing a growing problem for many families. While the 2018 employment rate in Fife was higher than the Scottish average, around one in five (20.8%) adults were earning less than the living wage. Average wages in 2018-19 were also lower than the Scottish average, equating to a yearly difference of £1586.

DWP figures suggest that child poverty is seeing a gradual increase in Fife (figure 2.2). Between 2014/15 and 2018/19, the proportion of Fife children in relative low-income families increased from 17 to 21%, with the latter figure equating to over 13,000 children. This was one of the highest proportions in Scotland, with only four local authorities linked with a higher rate in 2018/19. In 2018, the percentage of Fife children in workless households was 15.1%, which is higher than the Scottish average of 11.6%.

The proportions of households managing well financially, measured in the Scottish Household Survey, has historically seen Fife perform better than Scotland, but in recent years this trend has been reversed, with 53% of households managing well financially in 2018. The ability to manage financially is exacerbated by both income and inequality. A greater percentage of households in the most deprived areas are either just getting by or not managing well, with only 39% of households managing well when the income level is below £15,000.

For the purposes of the current exercise, it would be reasonable to conclude that current activity has at best kept levels of poverty static but with signs that potentially Fife is not doing as well as it could be. It generates the obvious question of what do we do to change that trend and meaningfully impact poverty levels in Fife?

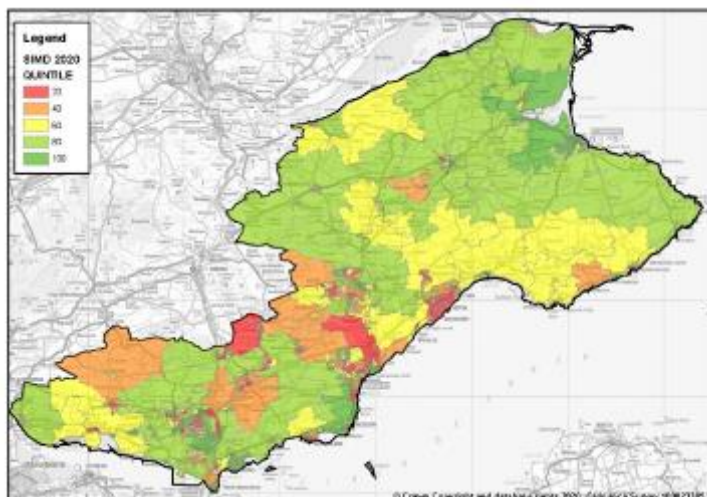


Figure 2.1 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020.

It shows the distribution of areas with most deprivation (red) and grades to the least deprived areas (green)

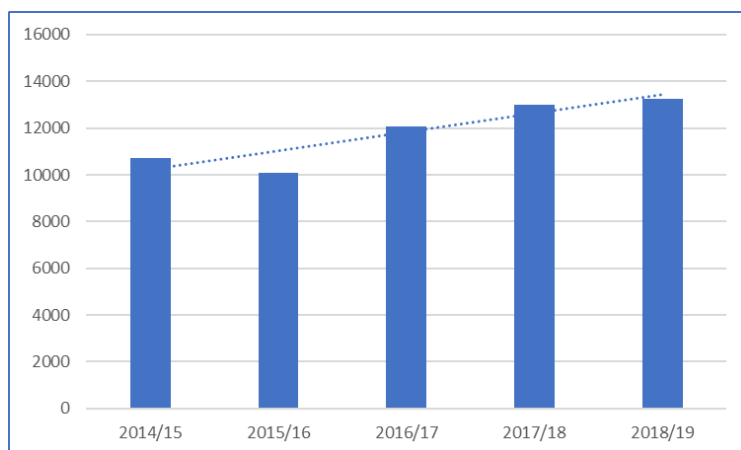


Figure 2.2 Change in number of children under 16 living in relative low income families in Fife (DWP)

The graph shows an increasing trend of children

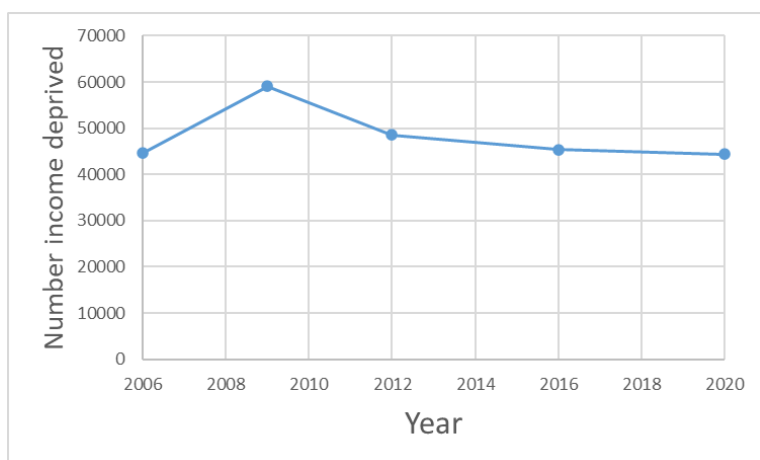


Figure 2.3. Number of income deprived people identified in SIMD.

3. A framework for understanding the spend on anti-poverty work

A simple tool allowing relatively rapid assessment of impact has been created. This is somewhat rough and ready and has the purpose of opening up discussion about how we might better consider the impact of what we do.

As a starting place, projects are categorised on a scale which roughly equates to dealing with crisis at one end and at the other enterprises which generate employment (Figure 3.1). These categories allow us to consider the nature of the projects being funded. Appendix 2 provides a sense of the types of project within these categories.

The reach of the projects was also estimated (Scale Weighting), effectively this is a crude assessment of the people reached by a project relative to the wider need. It was not possible to identify successful outcomes as such for people reached (considered later).

BENEFIT CATEGORY WEIGHTING		
Weight	Category	Detailed Category
1	Mitigation of Poverty	General Activities
2		Crisis Management
3		Mitigation for unemployed people
4	Preparation for employment	General preparation for work initiatives
5		Unemployed on work training schemes
6	Gateway type employment creation	Employed on work training schemes
7		Uncertain employment (temporary, zero hours, start-up entrepreneurs etc)
8		Creating employment infrastructure
9	Sustainable Employment Creation	Employment requiring benefit 'top ups'
10		Higher quality, e.g. above living wage, type employment
11	Facilitating employment generators	Facilitating those who will employ others in jobs requiring "top ups"
12		Facilitating those who will employ others in higher quality jobs

SCALE WEIGHTING		
weight	Category	
1	A few Individuals (<30) or unknown	
2	Estimated more than 30 people and less than 10% of the target audience	<10%
3	Estimated 11-24% of target audience	<25%
4	Estimated 25-50%	<50%
5	Estimated 51-75%	<75%
6	Estimated 76-100%	Up to 100%

Figure 3.1 Simple Categorisation Model

It considers categories of projects and the scale i.e. the reach of the project relative to the likely need.

The focus of the work has been on developing a practical methodology with which to place an economic value on the benefits that are produced by different types of project in line with the recommendations of HM Treasury (HM Treasury Green Book 1). The unit costs, unit values and Benefit Cost Ratios that are presented in the report are only illustrative. They are based on readily available evidence. Therefore, the results of the tool we have developed should be considered illustrative, which should be sufficient to generate some insight and provoke useful discussion.

We have used two central pieces of information that are reasonably well understood by the relevant policy and research communities. The first is the cost to the public sector of creating the additional benefit (the cost per job, cost per hectare of open space improved etc.). The second is the value that society assigns to each benefit produced (the value of a job, the environmental improvement etc.). It then assembles the known evidence on both the first and second key parameters (central estimates with identified ranges, as well as cautious estimates) and produces Benefit Cost Ratios that summarise the value to society of adopting the policies concerned. We have modelled these benefit ratios to our categories.

Modelling these published ratios allows a Benefit Cost Ratio to be calculated (figure 3.2) and a cumulative benefit to be derived (figure 3.3).

	Year			
	1	2	3	4
General Activities	0	0	0	0
Crisis Management	0.1	0	0	0
Mitigation for unemployed people	0.4	0	0	0
General preparation for work initiatives	0.72	0	0	0
Unemployed on work training schemes	1.04	0	0	0
Employed on work training schemes	1.3	1.04	0	0
Uncertain employment (temporary, zero hours, start-up entrepreneurs etc)	1.65	1.65	0.825	0
Creating employment infrastructure	2.2	2.2	2.2	0
Employment requiring benefit 'top ups'	6.5	6.5	6.5	0
Higher quality, e.g. above living wage, type employment	8.7	8.7	8.7	0
Facilitating those who will employ others in jobs requiring "top ups"	9.1	9.1	9.1	0
Facilitating those who will employ others in higher quality jobs	9.3	9.3	9.3	0

Figure 3.2. The Modelled Cost Benefit Ratio for each project category showing the approximate benefit of £1 spend over 3 years.

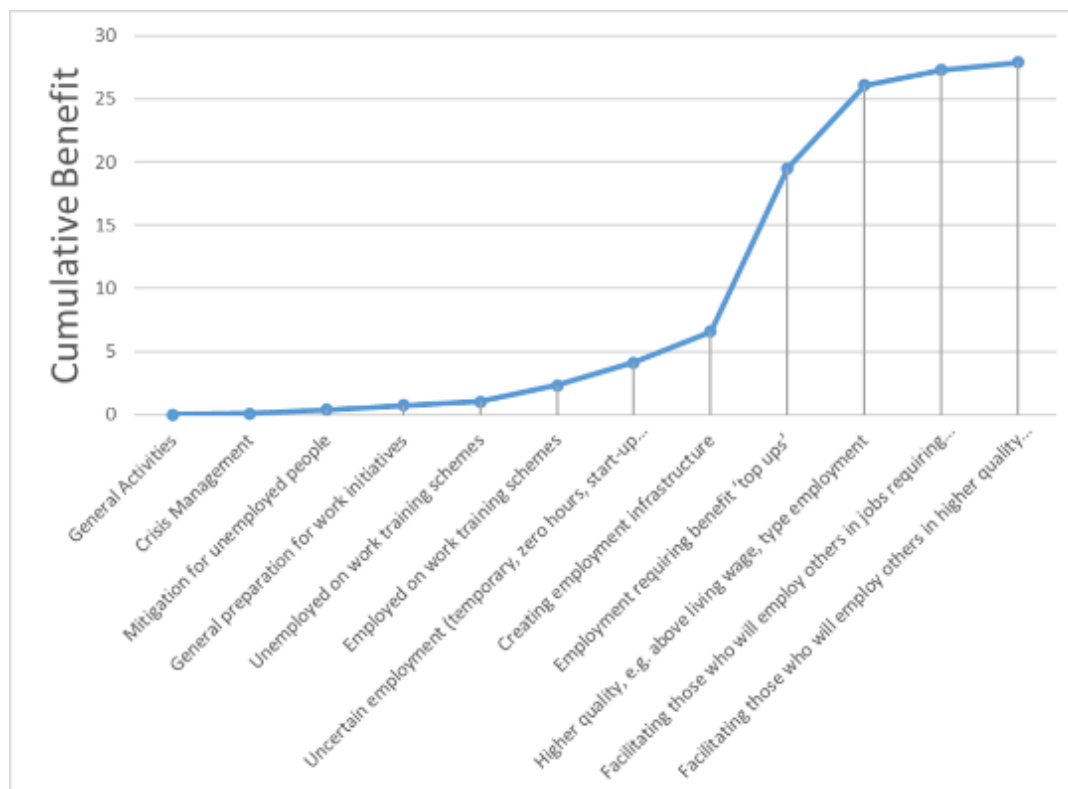


Figure 3.3 The Cumulative Benefit ratio of each £1 spent on each project category type.

While crude, the approach does result in relative benefit information which in itself is intuitive, in that for instance generating sustained employment results in more lasting benefit than managing crisis. It shows a tipping point around creating employment infrastructure, this seems very obvious, but in creating a model such obvious outcomes give confidence it reflects reality.

This allows us to multiply each £1 of spend by a benefit ratio for the poverty category to give a better idea of how that spend might lever longer term benefit. Of course, this is predicated on successful outcomes being achieved. This is a big assumption and at the present time there is insufficient data to test if this is always the case.

A total of 178 projects were examined, totalling around £19.9m of expenditure. Data was collected from managers responsible for the projects relating to spend and approximate numbers of customers. The potential customers were also estimated by researchers based on local demographics, along with the approximate number of customers this provided the scale weighting.

In understanding impact, the assumption has been made that we will influence Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) rank, a relative measure or we would reduce the number of people identified as income deprived (by SIMD), an absolute measure. Comparing these relative and absolute measures and modelling what change is required to see a rank change provides useful insight in its own right regarding targeting and measuring impact.

Relative measures such as SIMD rankings are problematic as effort in an area does not necessarily result in the expected outcome. In particular figure 3.4 shows that moving the most deprived datazones out of this arbitrary, but commonly used category of the 20% most deprived datazones is not the same for all datazones and increases dramatically for the most deprived datazones. Therefore, effort in the most deprived datazones may have significant impact locally, but the impact is not visible in the measures.

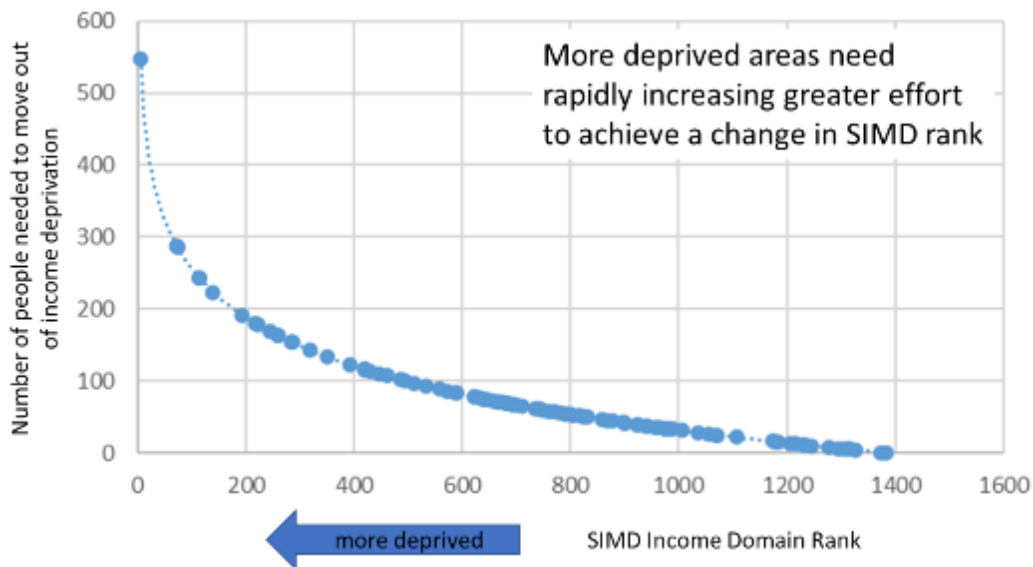


Figure 3.4 Analysis of the number of people who would need to be moved out of each datazone to move that datazone out of the bottom 20% most deprived.

We can consider this further by asking what exactly would be required to move Fife up one place in the SIMD rank for datazones in the 20% most deprived. A simulation was built to shed light on this. It shows that the most efficient approach, of targeting only those datazones which are near the tipping point of that 20% most deprived would require least effort, but in real terms would also help the least people, only 36 (figure 3.5), an untargeted approach would require over 4000 people to be moved out of income deprivation for the same SIMD rank shift. The most efficient approaches to change the indicator are in practice having relatively limited impact on poverty in a real-world sense. It starkly shows the need to balance relative and absolute outcomes and to avoid over reliance on indicators.

However, where an absolute change in the number of people moved out of income deprivation is being planned, e.g., an arbitrary 5% improvement, such an approach is helpful in giving a sense of the level of targeting effort required to create that impact. Figure 3.6 shows that this is a minimum of around 190 datazones targeted for that 5% improvement. Many of the processes involved are relatively random and so this represents a genuine minimum rather than the guideline targeting level, but it is helpful in understanding the scale. In this case a minimum 38% of datazones would be targeted to achieve a 5% improvement.

This illustrates that understanding targeting is crucial for achieving measurable impacts.

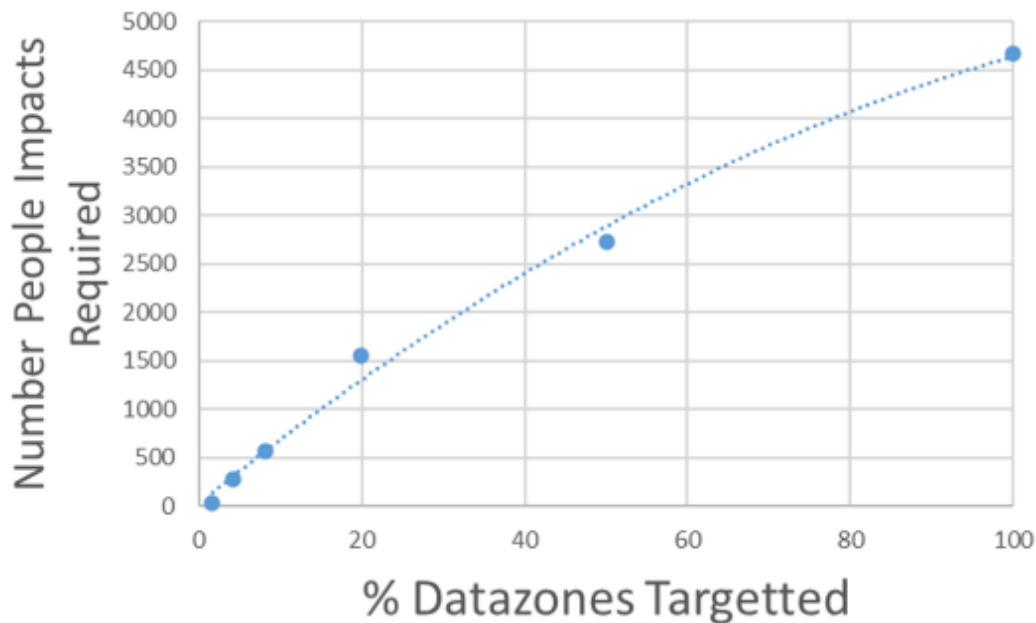


Figure 3.5 Simulation showing the impact of targeting models in Fife.

It shows the number of people who would need to be moved out of income deprivation to move Fife one place on SIMD rankings (datazones in 20% most deprived) using different targeting models. To the left is very focussed targeting on only a few (8) datazones, at the right is targeting the whole of Fife. All points on the line represent a change of one rank place for Fife.

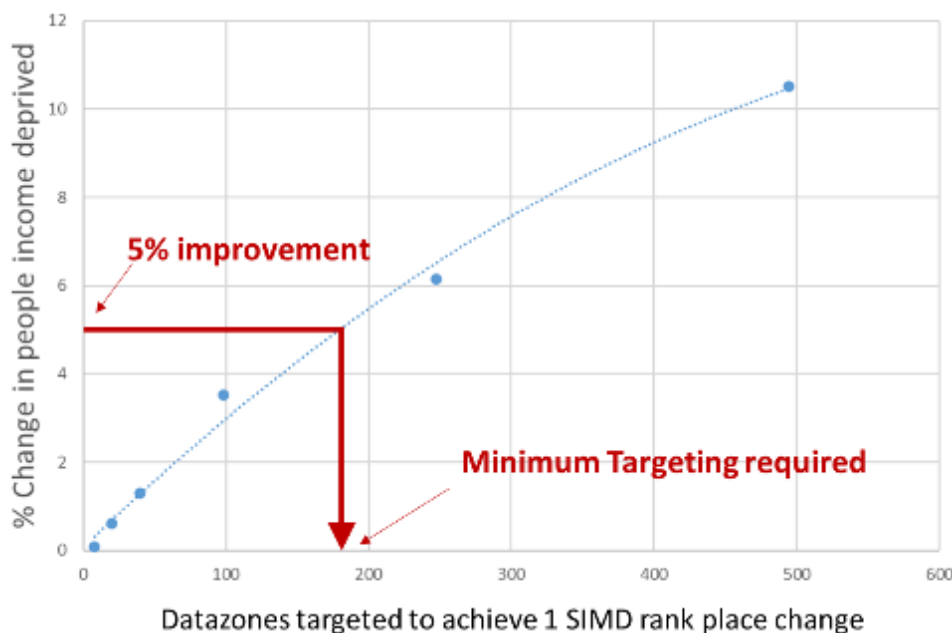


Figure 3.6. Using the targeting simulation to understand targeting approaches for absolute measures of change in deprivation.

The example shows that the absolute minimum number of datazones that would need to be targeted for a 5% change in people income deprived would be around 190. This assumes that targeting translates perfectly to outcomes, which is unlikely, but provides insight into the minimum scale of targeting needed.

In terms of localised spending, 5% of anti-poverty funded projects are provided directly at an area level with the rest centrally managed (e.g. through schemes such as crisis grants). When comparing area expenditure alone and plotting against a measure of need (ONS Claimant counts as a proxy for poverty), we see anomalies in that Levenmouth and Cowdenbeath appear to be funded to a higher level than the need alone might suggest. There are issues with this approach and it is crude, it simply serves to provoke discussion about whether we knowingly target the greatest need and raises questions about how we identify need.

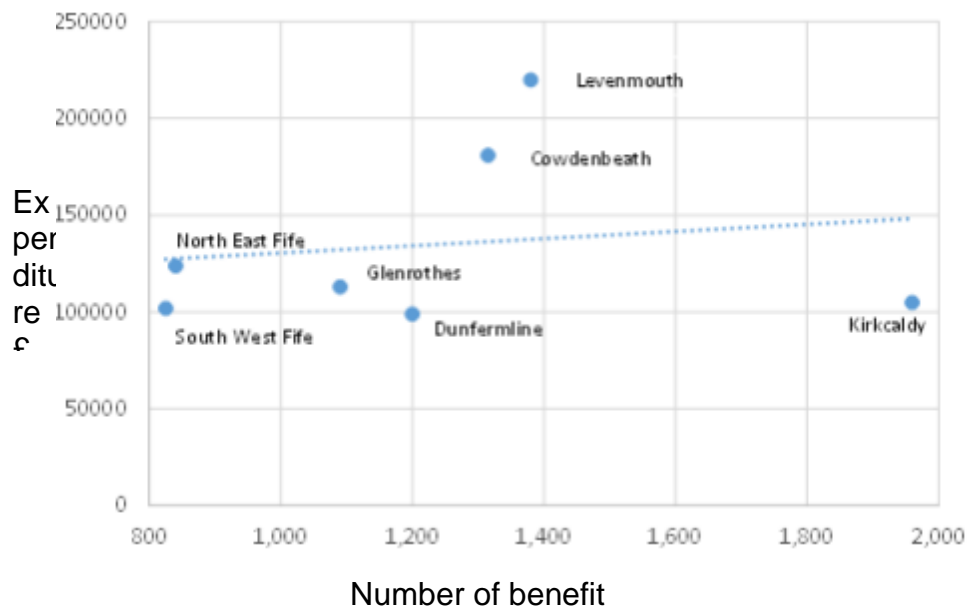


Figure 3.7 Number of ONS claimants and spend by Committee area.

Source: National Official Labour Market Statistics (NOMIS) Claimant Data/Office of National Statistics Claimant Count

4. The impact of the anti-poverty budget

The anti-poverty project dataset was used to understand spending by applying the spending values to the categorised benefit ratios and scale weightings. The initial dataset of just under £6m was used to trial some basic tools and to generate discussion. This dataset has now been expanded to incorporate spend of almost £20m, this excludes PEF (Pupil Equity Fund) spending.

It was shown that within the budgets analysed, the bulk of spending was on crisis management (figure 4.1). however, looking at the benefit ratio (figure 4.2) we see that 59% of the benefit is derived from 4.9% of the spend, which is on creating employment infrastructure projects. It should be borne in mind that no attempt was possible to identify if all of that spend resulted in positive outcomes. It does however give insight into the intent of the spending and the likely benefits sought. There is of course also a separate economic development budget and this is considered later.

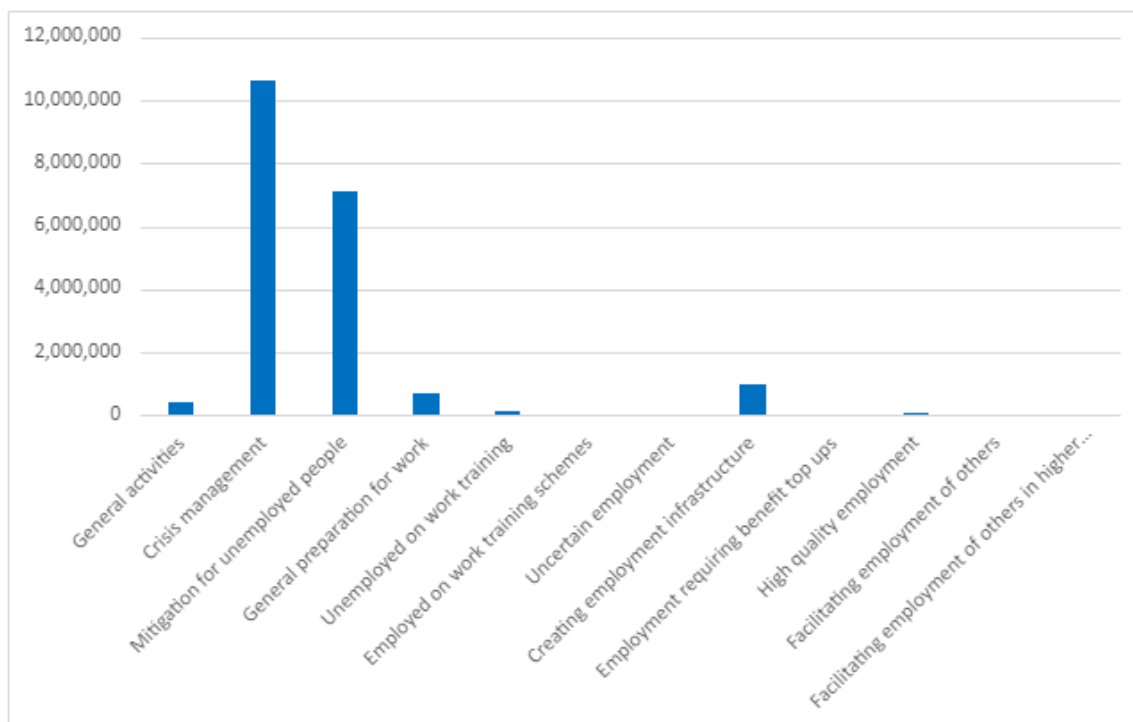


Figure 4.1 Spend (£) per category

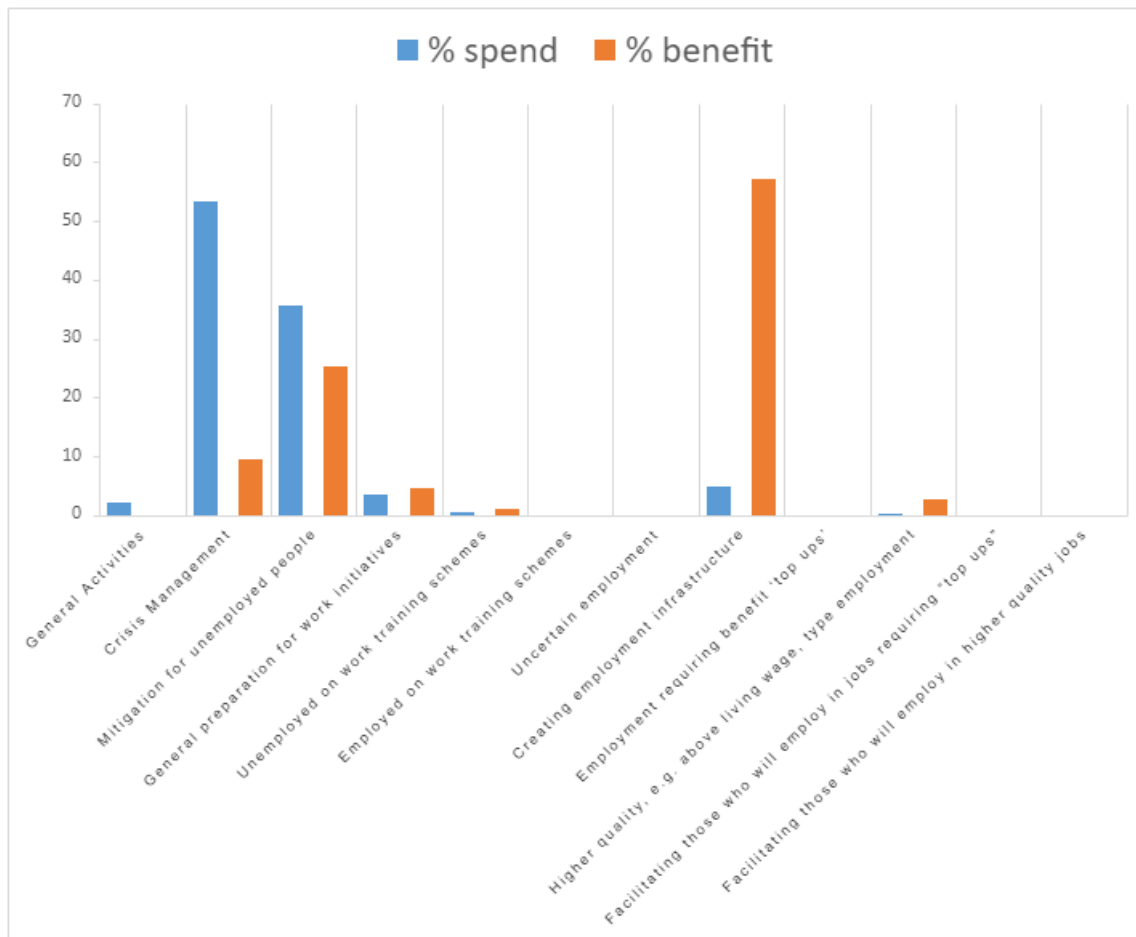


Figure 4.2 The percentage spend relative to the percentage benefit for each category.

In terms of the target audience reach of the projects, it can be seen in figure 4.3 that reach is variable with an average of 22% of the whole need. In practice this is probably an appropriate level of reach. It shows that the projects are relatively focussed but operating at scale or attempting to at least.

The spending can be represented as a matrix to understand the combination of likely benefit and reach as in figure 4.5. It shows a tendency to lower benefit projects and where these are showing higher benefits, they are at medium scaling levels.

In the main the projects are operating at Fife-wide level, with 95% being centrally allocated (figure 4.4), this will in particular represent the Fife wide systems for contacting and receiving support.

In terms of the 'types' of projects analysed; further categories were assigned to the 178 projects to demonstrate more specifically the types of projects funded. Pupil Equity and Attainment Challenge Funding is one of the largest grants available (£12.2m). Whilst it is targeted at closing the poverty related attainment gap, it has been excluded from this analysis as there is less discretion on spending.

The largest category (44%) related to financial assistance in time of crisis. Along with crisis spending, 2 categories make up over 75% of all spending, notably food poverty (32%):

Modelling of almost £20m of spend where there was a higher degree of optionality in how funds were spent (i.e., excluding PEF) against return-on-investment ratios obtained from other studies shows that 90% of all spending is on crisis management and mitigation for unemployed people which delivers about 35% of all long-term benefit. The largest benefit is derived from creating employment infrastructure with 59% of benefit being delivered from only 4.9% of spending. While crisis management is essential, it is less effective than other activities at generating longer term benefit. This does not suggest that spend should simply be moved, helping people in crisis remains a priority.

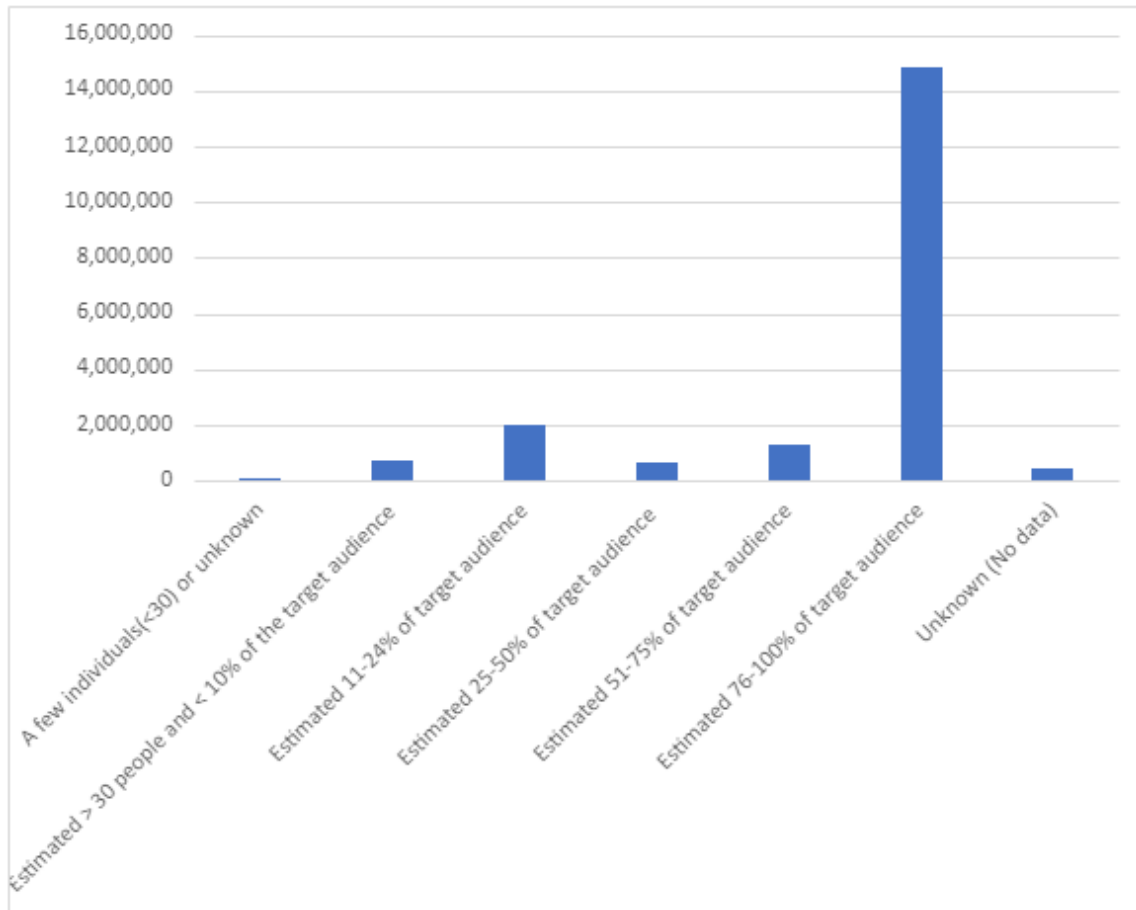


Figure 4.3. Spending (£) at scale categories.

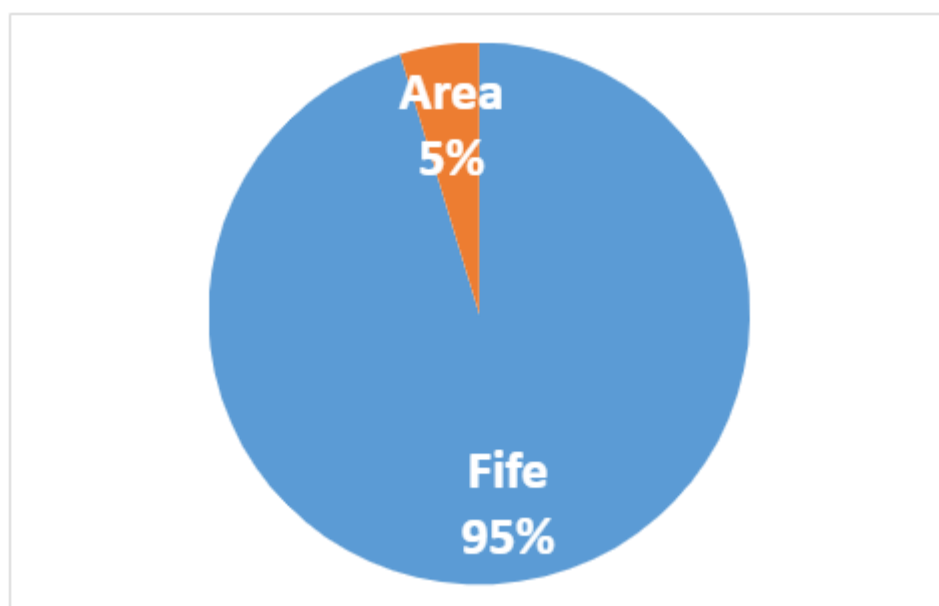


Figure 4.4. Breakdown of spend between Fife wide and local area spending.

	A few Individuals (<30) or unknown	Estimated more than 30 people and less than 10% of the target audience	Estimated 11- 24% of target audience	Estimated 25-50%	Estimated 51-75%	Estimated 76-100%
General Activities	22000	146000	91500	27000	47000	4000
Crisis Management	11000	318000	404000	440000	1213000	7954500
Mitigation for unemployed people		15000	0	148000	0	6876000
General preparation for work initiatives	1800	11000	669000	0	0	0
Unemployed on work training schemes	16000	65000	25500	0	0	0
Employed on work training schemes	0	5500	0	0	0	0
Uncertain employment (temporary, zero hours, start-up entrepreneurs etc)	0	0	0	0		0
Creating employment infrastructure	0	200000	774000	0	0	0
Employment requiring benefit 'top ups'	0	11000	0	0	0	0
Higher quality, e.g. above living wage, type employment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Facilitating those who will employ others in jobs requiring "top ups"	0	0	0	0	0	0
Facilitating those who will employ others in higher quality jobs	0	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 4.5 Spend by category and scaling level.

Top left is lower benefit at lower scale, while bottom right represents Higher benefit and higher scales.

Not included in the above matrix is spend of £430,000 where services were unable to provide engagement data; and £60,500 allocated to projects which did not start.

Category	£ spend	% total
Financial assistance - crisis (e.g., SWF, Housing hardship)	£9,100,000	44.0
Food Poverty	£6,500,000	32.0
Clothing Poverty	£1,300,000	6.3
Employment opportunities	£1,000,000	4.9
Job Clubs/getting ready for work	£600,000	3.0
Other	£2,000,000	9.8

Categories greater than 1% of spending excluding Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). £ spend rounded to nearest £100,000.

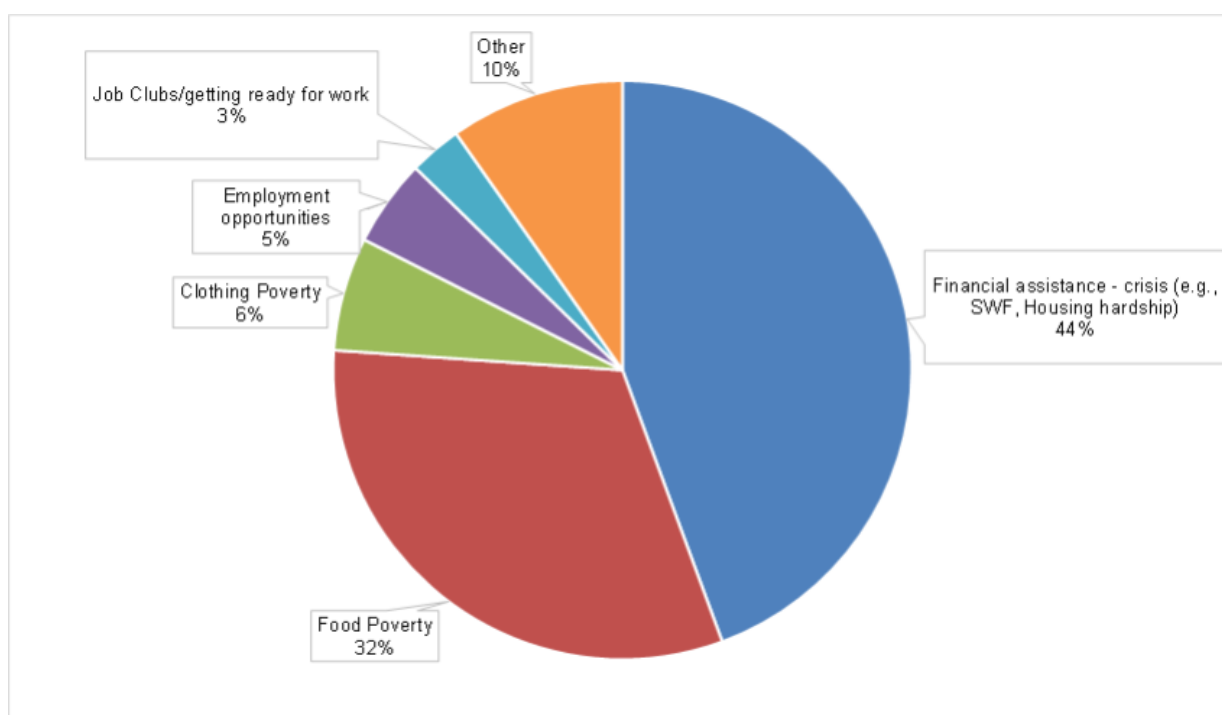


Figure 4.6 Highest spending anti-poverty categories

5. Benchmarking spending

It is not possible to benchmark the modelling undertaken for this report with other local authorities. However, there do exist some indicators which while not ideal for the present purpose, do shed some light on how our profile of spending sits relative to other authorities. We have looked to the Scottish Government Welfare Statistics and Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF). The expenditure outlined in this section is not comparable to figures presented elsewhere in the report. We included this information to give a 'feel' for the relative spending profile. This is best described as a high level 'can opener' to help inform further discussion.

Fife is increasingly spending more on crisis grants while there is a relatively stable situation across Scotland as a whole (Figure 5.1). Fife proportionally spends more per 1000 population on crisis grants than Scotland (Figure 5.1).

Overall spending (all Council budgets, not just the anti-poverty budget) on economic development and tourism is much greater than crisis grants. Using the same per 1000 population measure Fife invests a relatively smaller amount than Scotland on economic development and tourism (Figure 5.2).

This tends to suggest that the balance of spending on crisis management versus that on reducing poverty may not be in line with what is expected.

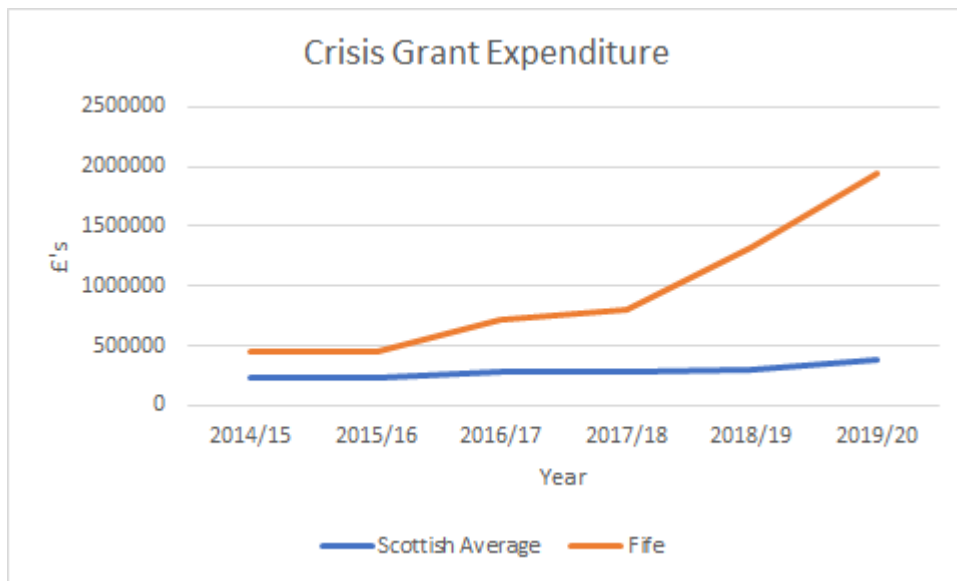


Figure 5.1: Crisis Grant Expenditure

Source: Scottish Government - Scottish Welfare Statistics 2020

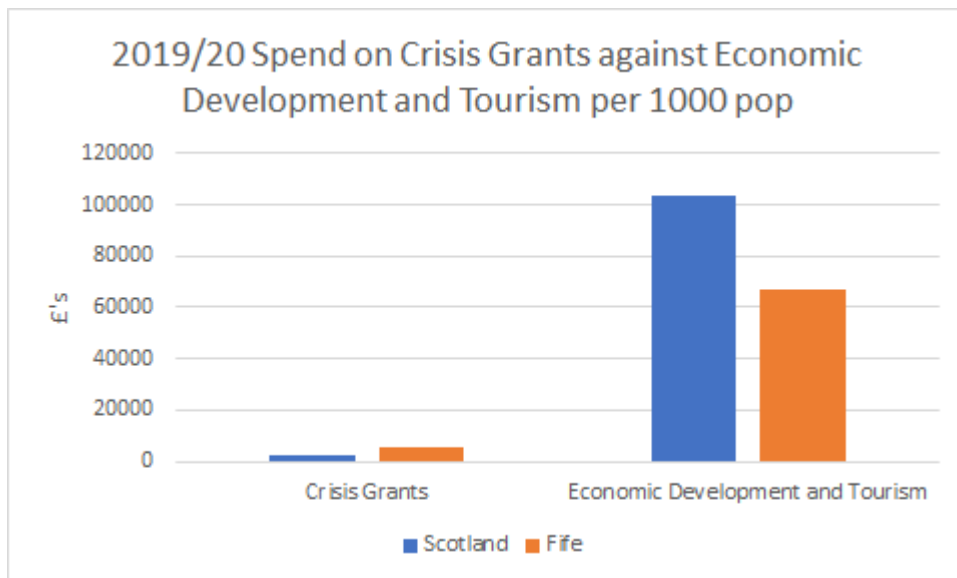


Figure 5.2 Spend on Crisis Grants against Economic Development and Tourism

Source: Scottish Government - Scottish Welfare Statistics 2020 and Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

6. Discussion points raised by the findings

The purpose of this report is to provoke a discussion in regard to anti-poverty spending. A number of discussion points can be identified and these can be expressed as discussion questions.

1. How do we achieve greater knowledge of actual spending on specific anti-poverty efforts?
2. Can we be sure that all of the initiatives which we operate achieve a meaningful impact or even that they are capable of doing so?
3. Local impact can be difficult to measure and even at a large scale, the manner in which we target effort can result in any impact being difficult to see, how therefore should we measure anti-poverty impact?
4. Is our balance of spending across anti-poverty initiatives the most effective it could be?

Appendix 1. List of projects included

Directorate	Fife/Area	Project	Budget
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Templehall - Friday Night Football	£4,993.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Templehall - Community Talking Shops	£52.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Templehall - Making Memories 50+	£1,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Templehall - Talking Cafes	£4,987.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Templehall - Templehall YAG	£5,301.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Templehall - NDP Connection Events	£535.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Linktown - Heritage Initiatives	£1,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Linktown - CCTV	£7,500.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Linktown - Community Lunch	£255.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Linktown - Forth View Notice Boards	£1,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Linktown - Parent Engagement Sessions	£330.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Linktown - Local Youth Club Initiatives	£600.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Castle - You Decide PB	£10,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Castle - NDP Discretionary Budget	£2,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Castle - Family Work Pilots	£250.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Children's Choir	£850.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Bike Project	£600.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Community Skips	£1,395.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Family Excursions	£2,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Feel Good Therapies	£2,630.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Holiday and Weekend Provision	£6,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Women supporting Women	£340.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - NDP Democracy	£500.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - NDP Community Safety	£1,500.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Clothing Bank	£1,500.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Gallatown - Family Work Pilot	£250.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Community Engagement and Development	£846.40
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Schools Intervention Programme	£14,000.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Kirkcaldy Foodbank Travel Vouchers and Support	£1,660.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Job Clubs	£2,925.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Kirkcaldy Can Project	£4,900.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Holiday Hunger Easter Pilot	£3,520.00
Communities	Kirkcaldy	Fairness Matters Priorities	£20,000.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Raising Aspiration - Modern Apprentice	£15,000.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Raising Aspiration - Jennie Lee Projects	£36,925.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Supporting Foodbanks - Travel (CB)	£500.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Supporting Foodbanks - Travel (Benarty)	£500.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Fuel Poverty - Greener Kirkcaldy (Cowdenbeath)	£20,000.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Economic Disadvantage - Driving 4 Success	£6,850.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Economic Disadvantage - Tots to Teens Togs	£1,000.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Economic Disadvantage - Curnie Club	£9,352.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Kelty Management Group	£21,442.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Hill of Beath Furniture	£10,000.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Shutter Art	£1,967.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Homestart Resilience Worker Lochgelly High	£17,454.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Homestart Resilience Worker Beath High	£4,990.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Cleaner, Tidier Fife	£30,000.00
Communities	Cowdenbeath	Active School Sports Development	£4,830.00

Communities	Leven	Employability - Clued Up	£11,250.00
Communities	Leven	Employability - Summer School Provision	£1,800.00
Communities	Leven	Employability - Levenmouth Academy Joint approach	£30,000.00
Communities	Leven	Employability - Entrepreneurial Opportunities Pilot	£5,603.00
Communities	Leven	Employability - Silverburn Park Campsite Training	£1,432.00
Communities	Leven	Employability - Renewable and Environment Systems	£906.00
Communities	Leven	Fuel Poverty - Greener Kirkcaldy (Levenmouth)	£25,000.00
Communities	Leven	Food Insecurity - The People's Pantry	£250.00
Communities	Leven	Food Insecurity - Woodlands Family Centre	£240.00
Communities	Leven	Food Insecurity - Levenmouth Foodbank	£2,500.00
Communities	Leven	Food Insecurity - Community Fridge (CLEAR)	£600.00
Communities	Leven	Food Insecurity - Levenmouth Independence Initiative	£2,000.00
Communities	Leven	Food Insecurity - People's Pantry	£3,410.00
Communities	Leven	Food Insecurity - Eat Well (Kennoway)	£2,414.00
Communities	Leven	Family Learning - Woodlands Family Centre engagement	£980.00
Communities	Leven	Family Learning - Homestart Picnic in Glen	£840.00
Communities	Leven	Family Learning - Gingerbread outing to Lochore	£260.00
Communities	Leven	Family Learning - Gingerbread Tea time Provision	£1,100.00
Communities	Leven	Family Learning - Sailors Rest Creche Improvement	£4,500.00
Communities	Leven	Holiday Activities - East Fife Youth Acedemy	£620.00
Communities	Leven	Holiday Activies - CLD Ardroy Residential	£4,960.00
Communities	Leven	Holiday Activities - Community Use Activity for All	£1,865.00
Communities	Leven	Holiday Activities - Active Sports Activity for All	£3,800.00
Communities	Leven	It's Your Choice (room rental and printing)	£1,000.00
Communities	Leven	East Wemyss & McDuff Green Poverty Action Group	£22,528.00
Communities	Leven	Community Works Locality Response Team	£25,000.00
Communities	Leven	Kingdom Community Bank Financial Planning Project	£8,712.00
Communities	Leven	Pantry Future Sustainability	£4,020.00
Communities	Leven	Levenmouth Healthy Body, Healthy Mind Project	£6,000.00
Communities	Leven	Levenmouth Independence Initiative	£9,000.00
Communities	Leven	Greener Kirkcaldy Fuel Poverty Project	£5,400.00
Communities	Leven	Levenmouth Foodbank Hygiene Project	£4,920.00
Communities	Leven	Hygiene Packs for All Project	£6,600.00
Communities	Leven	Poppyview Family Centre - childcare costs	£2,088.00
Communities	Leven	Coaltown of Wemyss - Senior Citizen's Christmas treat	£200.00
Communities	Leven	Levenmouth Foodbank - contribution towards new van	£3,394.00
Communities	Leven	Kingdom Off Road Motorcycle Club - 'On the Right Track' programme	£4,900.00
Communities	Leven	Methilhill & Denbeath Church Guild - senior members meal and concert	£250.00
Communities	Leven	East Wemyss & McDuff Community Council - elderly Christmas party	£165.00
Communities	Leven	Summer & October school holidays - Holiday Hunger initiative	£1,088.98
Communities	Leven	East Fife Community Football Club - 'It's Game and Talk Time' programme	£1,667.00
Communities	Leven	Woodlands Family Centre - "Stay and Play" programme	£176.00
Communities	Leven	Woodlands Family Centre - "Butterfly Blether and Playroom Patter" programme	£430.00
Communities	Leven	The Shed @ Bayview Men's Shed - assistance with start-up costs	£3,800.00
Communities	NEF	Fuel Poverty	£13,000.00
Communities	NEF	Concessionary Bus Travel scheme research	£17,439.00
Communities	NEF	Holiday/Family Activities	£12,124.00
Communities	NEF	Discretionary Fund	£14,880.00
Communities	NEF	Community Meals	£2,000.00
Communities	NEF	Staff costs - Development Worker Travel/Food	£8,000.00
Communities	NEF	Staff costs - St Monans	£5,000.00
Communities	NEF	Staff Costs - Young Carer Project Worker	£9,722.00

Communities	NEF	Staff Costs - Social Prescribing	£18,751.00
Communities	NEF	Welfare Reform mitigation - Home start	£5,000.00
Communities	NEF	FVA - welfare issues	£6,000.00
Communities	NEF	Welfare support workers	£5,592.00
Communities	NEF	Kinship Carer Events	£1,350.00
Communities	NEF	Seniors Household Advice and Repair Service	£5,000.00
Communities	SWF	Anti-Poverty WRAP Action Plan	£22,000.00
Communities	SWF	SSUK Projector and 4 laptops	£2,088.00
Communities	SWF	USB Sticks	£35.00
Communities	SWF	Food Insecurities - Rosyth Community Hub	£10,000.00
Communities	SWF	Food Insecurities - West Fife Villages Community Hub	£3,000.00
Communities	SWF	Food Insecurities - Gillespie Church F1 initiative	£1,333.00
Communities	SWF	Food Insecurities - Oakley Pantry Fridge	£1,000.00
Communities	SWF	Fuel Poverty - Greener Kirkcaldy (SWF)	£25,000.00
Communities	SWF	Employability - Coalfields Regeneration CJS Trainees	£8,950.00
Communities	SWF	Health & Wellbeing - 83rd Scouts mini-bus (transport poverty)	£2,772.00
Communities	SWF	Health & Wellbeing - 7 Habits License	£500.00
Communities	SWF	Health & Wellbeing - Tesco vouchers Xmas holidays	£2,570.00
Communities	SWF	EATS Rosyth	£3,470.00
Communities	SWF	Discretionary Fund	£2,570.00
Communities	SWF	CEW Welfare Reform Travel	£8,588.00
Communities	SWF	Camilla Training	£5,346.00
Communities	SWF	Transport Consultation	£1,200.00
Communities	SWF	Money Advice Toolkit	£1,995.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Dunfermline Advice Hub	£50,000.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Food for Families	£1,334.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Broomhead Pantry	£385.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Liberty Church Christmas Day	£200.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Tryst Anti-Poverty Projects	£700.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Travel Vouchers	£500.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Locality Response Team	£42,000.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Food for your Future	£1,000.00
Communities	Dunfermline	Enterprise Hub	£2,500.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Kat's Mission Community Hub	£6,800.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Castle Furniture Project	£10,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Friendship Cabin	£5,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Ladybird Nursery	£2,500.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Friends of Warout	£5,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Glenrothes Home Start	£5,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Glenrothes Youth Forum	£700.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB - Auchmuty & Dovecot TRA	£5,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Making New Connections booklet	£1,375.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Welfare Reform Discretionary Fund	£4,400.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Cooking the Books	£3,750.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Welfare Support Worker	£6,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	PB Universal Challenge costs	£291.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Food Insecurity - Glenrothes Foodbank	£15,400.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Food Insecurity - Family Food and Fun	£7,217.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Targeted - Cadham Youth Project	£773.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Targeted - Mental Wellbeing Positive Youth	£4,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Targeted - Age Concern Pension Credit Uptake	£4,386.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Family Learning - Home Start	£3,170.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Family Learning - Family Summer Sessions	£4,400.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Health & Wellbeing - Positive You Social Prescribing	£16,000.00
Communities	Glenrothes	Welfare Discretionary Fund	£1,600.00
Communities	Fife	Scottish Welfare Fund	£482,000.00
Communities	Fife	Scottish Welfare Fund	£2,607,000.00

Communities	Fife	Fife Law Centre	£50,000.00
Communities	Fife	Training Front Line Staff	£30,000.00
Communities	Fife	Credit Union Expansion	£40,000.00
Communities	Fife	Welfare Reform	£636,000.00
Communities	Fife	Hardship Fund (HRA)	£1,000,000.00
Communities	Fife	Holiday Hunger	£400,000.00
Communities	Fife	Free Access to Sanitary Products	£19,000.00
Education and Children's Services	Fife	Schools Support project	£154,000.00
Education and Children's Services	Fife	Grant/Payments to individuals	£127,000.00
Education and Children's Services	Fife	Breakfast Cafes	£150,000.00
Education and Children's Services	Fife	Holiday Provision	£300,000.00
Education and Children's Services	Fife	Clothing Grant	£1,333,000.00
Education and Children's Services	Fife	Free School Meals	£5,543,000.00
Education and Children's Services	Fife	Free Access to Sanitary Projects	£148,000.00
Enterprise and Environment	Fife	Fife Employability Intervention Programme	£200,000.00
Enterprise and Environment	Fife	Fife Youth Jobs contract	£774,000.00
Enterprise and Environment	Fife	National Assistance Burials	£63,000.00
Enterprise and Environment	Fife	Fairer Fife Funding	£11,000.00
Enterprise and Environment	Fife	Making it Work (Lone Parents)	£60,000.00
Finance and Corporate Services	Fife	DHP and Welfare Reform Administration	£160,000.00
Finance and Corporate Services	Fife	Discretionary Housing Payment	£4,694,000.00

Appendix 2 Types of projects included within categories

List and explanation of categories referred to in Section 4.

Category	Types of Projects included
Crisis Management	Crisis grants; Food poverty; Clothing poverty; Burial assistance, Hardship funds; Discretionary Housing payments
Mitigation for unemployed people	Credit Unions; Clothing grants; Free School meals; Access to sanitary products
General preparation for work	Job Clubs; School partnerships; Short courses
Unemployed on work training schemes	Longer term training courses/apprenticeships
Employed on work training schemes	No projects
Uncertain employment	Entrepreneurial opportunities pilot scheme
Creating employment infrastructure	Employability intervention programmes; Fife Youth Jobs Contract
Employment requiring benefit 'top-ups'	No projects
Higher quality employment	Living wage employment
Facilitating those who will employ others in jobs requiring 'top-ups'	No projects
Facilitating those who will employ others in higher quality jobs	No projects

13th April 2021

Agenda Item No. 6

Managing for Health, Wellbeing and Minimised Absence (post Corporate Absence Project)

Report by: Sharon McKenzie, Head of HR

Wards Affected: None

Purpose

This report updates Scrutiny Committee on absence and related activity, including SPI finalised results for 2019/20 as reported to CET on 3rd March 2021. Plans for future progress are in the context of managing in a post-COVID environment.

Statistical information on absence and SPI information is presented, along with directorate scorecards in the appendices to the report.

Recommendations

Committee are asked to:

Note the actions and provide comment on plans since absence information was last reported to Scrutiny Committee in August 2020

Resource Implications

CET have agreed to additional measures over the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years.

Resource implications for additional support measures are £65,000 in 2021/22 and £26,000 in 2022/23.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are risks if a safe work environment is not provided and may lead to employee absence and challenge under Health and Safety legislation.

There are also risks in not providing an appropriate level of support and reasonable adjustments to employees who require them in terms of employment legislation and disability legislation. The latter may apply to long-covid as this is an emerging debilitating long-term condition.

We have previously noted that there is a risk of unrealistic expectations as initiatives to lever a cultural shift and change behaviours take time.

There is a risk of 'Under reporting' with employee self-service, although supervisor diligence reduces the likelihood. There is also a risk that the burden on supervisors recording sickness for employees will be more time consuming than predicted. Balanced against this are the considerable benefits and flexibilities that employee self-service brings.

Impact Assessment

An EqlA is not necessary because the report does not propose a change to existing policies. We cannot say when the predicted post-pandemic mental health impact will affect the workforce, or how badly. Strengthening and continuing provision will support employees and should reduce the length of health absences. If an employee cannot continue in work, it is important to show support has been given or offered if an employment termination decision is challenged.

With pressure to deliver at pace there is also the potential that insufficient consideration is given to managing and avoiding workplace stress, particularly during managing change. Workplace stress is covered by Health and Safety legislation. Available stress information has been refreshed to mitigate this risk.

Consultation

The Trade Unions are kept up to date on Corporate Absence measures during meetings with HR to discuss general health, wellbeing and attendance issues.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Before Covid, there was a programme of improvement activities delivered through the Absence Programme (CAP). There was good progress with agreed actions and in areas which started slowly, the training was gaining traction.
- 1.2 During lockdown, and during restrictions, priorities changed. Through necessity, face-to-face training stopped, and front-line response and front-line support focussed all capacity on service delivery. Similarly, the Health, Safety & Wellbeing team prioritised 'incident response'. Supporting the council and services' response to the pandemic from risk assessments and safety advice to following up covid positive cases in the workplace, continues to be the priority. Employee wellbeing has also been part of incident response. Given the nature of the pandemic the priority has been safe working with support for wellbeing as the next priority.
- 1.3 The pandemic has certainly raised awareness of health and safety and raised awareness of the consequences of poor health including poor mental health and musculoskeletal issues. It led the Scottish Government to articulate expectations of wellbeing support from employers during this time through the creation of the Wellbeing Champions Network. Fife Council has participated in this network.
- 1.4 Although the 2019/20 SPI increased, sickness absence levels from March 2020 reduced. This is consistent with information from the Office for National Statistics which confirms that UK workplace absences due to illness fell in 2020. However, levels are expected to increase again.

At some point, sickness absence will include Covid related sickness and post incident mental health impacts, which in some cases may be long-term. This may change the future profile of absence in the organisation and we are already seeing the impact of delayed NHS interventions.

- 1.5 The method of reporting sickness by employees had to change during lockdown as the Shared Service Desk (SSD) could not function as it would normally. The SSD normally provide first line service desk support to employees and managers who need support and, with absence, this included recording absence on the centralised system and informing critical contacts. Employee Self Service (where employees directly enter their absence to the system) was introduced during lockdown as a mitigation and has been continued, reducing demand on the SSD but transferring reporting activity, in some cases, to managers.
- 1.6 There are resource implications for pro-actively managing absence and wellbeing. There are likewise resource implications for not proactively managing absence and wellbeing – although these will generally be seen in the longer term.
- 1.7 The COVID-19 pandemic has caused disruption, triggered a recovery strategy designed to strengthen support to localities whilst also highlighting potential workload/stress and MSK (musculoskeletal) health related impacts.
- 1.8 Absence reports have been presented to committee for many years. Since the Being Well at Work Report recommendations were considered in December 2017, updates on the resulting Corporate Absence Project have been included in the June and December 2018 and January and November 2019 update reports and the last report on 20th August 2020.
- 1.9 It is therefore an appropriate time to take stock of the approach to ensure that good practice aspirations are realistic, resourced and focus on priority areas as services work through the impacts of the pandemic on their respective areas of delivery.
- 1.10 The Corporate Absence Project concluded with two areas outstanding due to the pandemic. These are specific skills training (Having Difficult Conversations) and Mental Health awareness and support. These were ambitious workstreams targeting all 1500 formal supervisors and managers in the organisation. The work undertaken pre-pandemic served the organisation well as those in receipt of training have been better skilled to support staff through a difficult period. The Corporate Absence Project Final Update is in Appendix 1.

2.0 Managing Absence – Beyond CAP

Interventions for Health and Wellbeing

- 2.1 Fife Council employer provision has no obvious gaps provided we continue skills training for all staff roles, including supporting and managing employees. Other employers, particularly in the private sector, provide more health and wellbeing therapies, supports and activities, but have proportionately larger budgets. In terms of importance, the top two features for workplace wellbeing are the absence of hazards i.e., a safe workplace, and secondly, a supportive supervisor.

A safe place of work is a basic legislative requirement and ensured through the provision of necessary equipment and training.

The Corporate Absence Programme was addressing potential supervisor skill and confidence gaps through Having Difficult Conversations training and raising Mental Health awareness.

- 2.2 About half the formal 1500 supervisory workforce was trained in Having Difficult Conversations before the pandemic. A small number have used the on-line option available since October 2020. Funding for a programme providing between 2 and 3 training events a month has been agreed at a cost of £17,000 for 12 months and will cover 200-300 supervisors. Training will be updated to incorporate refreshed How We Work Matters behaviours to maximise impact and minimise duplication. The current contract extends to 31 October 2022, so a 1-year programme is proposed from April 2021 to March 2022 with a review at that point.
- 2.3 Pre-pandemic around 40 directorate nominees were trained, and directorate cascade training started on Mental Health Awareness Training.
- A cascade model was proposed to contain costs and, importantly, build capacity in services so that services could decide whether to extend the cascade to other staff once all supervisors were trained.
- 41 delivery sessions have been held and 399 supervisors trained out of approximately 1500 formal/2000 informal supervisors.
- Mental Health Co-Ordinator roles for each directorate organised and arranged the cascade training. So far one co-ordinator in each Directorate except HSCP has confirmed they can continue and around half the trainers. Trainers will need a 2-month lead time so this programme will take time to build up momentum again.
- 2.4 The impact of the pandemic has highlighted the importance of good mental health. It takes about 4 weeks input to deliver and host a 1-week awareness week, and 6 weeks for a 2-week offering like the one this Spring. A more detailed plan to get best use of existing provisions will be developed under the themes of Wise Up (knowing and using what is in place), Speak Up (encouraging and asking for support) and Speed Up (planning and acting quickly so there is early intervention). This approach will cover absence management and wellbeing and will be developed within current capacity. The aim is to provide support across the organisation targeted on areas of highest need and greatest impact. We are extremely fortunate that UNISON have offered up to £10,000 to support wellbeing and proposals will be discussed and agreed with them.
- 2.5 CET also discussed the potential for a dedicated role to deliver appropriate mental health awareness and support activities and this will be explored further.
- 2.6 Before the pandemic, a network was being set up to train and support volunteer Mental Health First Aiders. An ongoing programme of refresh for the 43 already trained, development of the 26 volunteers to be trained and any new recruits is required when NHS training is again available. Unfortunately, there is currently no indication when this will be. An annual budget of £8,000 was agreed to support this.
- Existing provision is summarised in Appendix 2, for information.
- 2.7 **Agreed Actions:**
- Continue a programme of skills training to support effective conversations (£17,000 for 2021/22 financial year, then review)
 - Provide mental health awareness training and support to run a network of Mental Health First Aiders (£8,000 per annum)
 - Explore and cost options for a dedicated Mental Health trainer role with a proposal to CET.

Strategic Focus - Preventing Stress

- 2.8 Before the pandemic a draft Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy for the council had been discussed with Executive Directors. Since then, HR have now incorporated Health, Safety and Wellbeing into the refreshed Workforce Strategy. The identified priorities -Stress, MSK, Violence & Aggression and effective Management of Health & Safety have not changed. For example, the organisation level Stress Risk Assessment is currently being refreshed to make it easier for services to use it as a tool when undertaking service stress risk assessments. Work related stress is the priority as it contributes to, and in extreme cases can cause, poor mental health.

It is an appropriate focus in a post pandemic context where there will be fragile employees and a notable change agenda.

2.9 Agreed Actions:

- Directorates will use the stress risk assessment process to develop action plans where staff request them, or where clusters of concerns are identified.
- Directorates will ensure the stress risk assessment process is used as a preventive measure when managing change, consistent with existing policy provision.

'Hot Spot' Temporary Positions to Create Sustainable Solutions

- 2.10 CET agreed temporary funding for specific posts to generate short-term improvement and long-term sustainability. The pandemic disrupted the planned programme in Education and Children's Services and delayed recruitment to posts in Facilities Management and Building Services. These positions have now been readvertised.

2.11 Agreed Actions:

- The position of Project Manager – Staff Wellbeing in Education and Children's Services has been extended to 31 July 2022
- Management Support Officer Building Services and Management Support Officer Facilities Management have been re-advertised with funding carried forward.

3.0 Performance

Statutory Performance Indicator

- 3.1 The 2019/20 sickness absence SPI was published in February 2021. The SPI results for Fife Council for the 2019/20 year show an increase in absence levels. The October 2020 rolling year information is included where possible to show movement since March 2020, which indicates the initial impact of the pandemic in reducing sickness absence, however these levels will be likely to increase again as the period of the pandemic extends and when we return to the new norm.

The Improvement Service in their commentary on the 2019/20 SPI have confirmed '*Absence levels for both teaching and non-teaching staff have increased in 2019/20, by 3.1% and 3.8% respectively.* Fife is below the national average of working days lost for teachers which is 6.4, and above the national average of 11.9 for other staff.

- 3.2 Organisation and directorate information is covered in the paragraphs below and Appendix 3.

SPI Results - 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and current position				
	Fife Council 2017/18 (i.e., 12 months to March 2018). <i>Published</i>	Fife Council 2018/19 (i.e., 12 months to March 2019). <i>Published</i>	Fife Council 2019/20 (i.e., 12 months to March 2020) <i>Published</i>	Fife Council rolling 12 months to October 2020
All Other Employees	13.44	13.10	13.86	11.83
Teachers	6.64	6.76	6.35	5.15
All Employees	11.82	11.58	12.06	10.21

Because of the publication period, the SPI result confirms the previous, rather than a validated current position. Rolling 12-month figures provide a more current position, although still draft in terms of SPI. Data is considered draft until published by the Improvement Service. Service and directorate information is normally available to managers through Pentana although we are now in a period, following Oracle Cloud implementation, when reports are being built. Managers currently have access to individual sickness reports on Oracle Cloud however, until sickness profile report build is complete, overview reporting will be limited.

- 3.3 Benchmarking on a wide range of Absence Management related areas continues through the Society of Directors of Personnel and Development (SPDS) Wellbeing group. A programme of peer review on SPI calculation methodology is currently underway and results will be reported to the SPDS group when review is concluded later this year. Any requirement to modify existing guidance to achieve greater consistency, and how to treat Covid related absences, will be progressed with the Improvement Service following a recent decision to separate covid absences from SPI collection for 2020/21.

Service Performance

- 3.4 The Service and Directorate target is to end the financial year with a lower Working Days Lost Average than at the start of the financial year.

Directorate	Average WDL per FTE		
	2018/19	2019/20	Year to 31st October 2020
Communities	10.19	10.38	8.66
Education & Children's Services	8.56	8.82	7.28
Enterprise & Environment	13.70	13.97	11.47
Finance & Corporate Services	11.23	10.51	8.15
Health & Social Care	18.78	20.98	19.60
Fife Council Overall	11.58	12.06	10.21

For 2019/20, 44% of Services achieved the target. For the rolling year to 31st October 2020, all Directorates have reduced their average Working Days Lost since April 2020.

Service Costs

- 3.5 Costs shown in the table below are sick pay costs for the financial year 2019/20.

	JUN-19	SEP-19	DEC-19	MAR-20	Total
	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20
Education and Children's Services other staff	879,302	560,570	816,215	1,078,243	3,334,330
Education and Children's Services teaching staff	1,459,050	727,003	1,757,227	1,547,657	5,490,937
Enterprise and Environment	1,203,201	1,023,514	1,121,531	1,254,735	4,602,981
Finance and Corporate Services	290,537	265,865	340,166	225,395	1,121,963
Communities	255,256	158,270	236,304	468,971	1,118,801
Health and Social Care	1,154,280	949,304	1,072,825	1,375,231	4,551,640
HRA Housing and Neighbourhood Services	114,062	95,659	124,877	161,737	496,335
	5,355,688	3,780,185	5,469,145	6,111,969	20,716,987

- 3.6 Additional costs to those shown include overtime and casual or agency workers specifically for sickness absence cover and the opportunity cost of lost work in roles that do not require temporary backfill.

Absence and trend information is included in the People section of Directorate Performance Reports for discussion and scrutiny.

Directorate Profile Reports

- 3.7 The approach has been reviewed to establish a simple report that provides useful comparative information to support discussion and scrutiny within the directorate and allow directorates to target improvements in areas relevant to their workforce profile. A format which provides information for discussion is provided in Appendix 4 (a - e) however until Oracle Cloud reports have been finalised, the content is provisional. When available, reports may be considered for inclusion in Directorate Performance Reports.

Feedback

- 3.8 There have been surveys during the pandemic to check on a range of staff issues. Given the nature of the pandemic, most have included an element of health, safety and wellbeing which has been used to shape information on self-help, and support. Workforce Development are introducing a programme of Pulse and Heartbeat surveys and this will indicate any developing areas for a deeper dive and specific feedback will be sought from time to time on health, safety and wellbeing matters.

4.0 Next Steps

Policies

- 4.1 No new policies are proposed this year. The Supporting Mental Wellbeing at Work Policy introduced in September 2019 is generic and underpins our aim that every supervisor is supportive of every employee with any condition. Employees themselves are generally the experts on how a medical condition impacts them, and what would help them to manage their condition at work. There are many available sources of on-line medical information available to employees and supervisors. Also, specialist organisations providing support and the latest knowledge.

- 4.2 The Attendance Management procedure, and over 20 guidance documents, have been reviewed and refreshed. Whilst responsibilities and standards have not changed, the language and format were updated to better suit access through electronic devices. The first tranche of the refreshed documents went live in 2020 and the second tranche is due to go live in April.
- 4.3 A 'Reasonable Adjustments Passport' has been developed. The aim is to capture adjustments agreed with an individual so that a move to another team, or a new manager, does not require the whole discussion to start again each time. Consideration was given to introduction at the end of 2020 however, in view of the potential to confuse already complex COVID-19 arrangements and adjustments, it will be introduced as soon as a suitable window is identified.
- 4.4 As mentioned in previous reports, Fife Council applies all the recognised tools and measures to support employees and manage absence. Predictions on improvement from absence initiatives are generally based on a static workforce with manager capacity and appropriate investment. In the current context, now including post-pandemic issues, absence may well continue to fluctuate despite the availability of a supportive framework of measures.

Approach

- 4.5 The impacts of COVID on the workforce, and the detail of what the period of post-COVID recovery will look like, are unknown. Most services have been significantly impacted as capacity has been diverted and normal operations disrupted or extended.

Manager and supervisor capacity within services when the pandemic ends, has been a consideration. The focus will therefore be making best use of what is in place, and finishing what was in progress before the pandemic, so we have a solid foundation for whatever the future brings.

We have tools/approaches to support health and wellbeing, flexibility to support staff to remain at work or return to work (and introducing more flexible workstyles will also help in the medium term) and asking the right questions at regular 1-2-1 meetings are key to understand emerging concerns. The current range of supports will continue, and the Mental Health First Aider network will be developed. Self-help, and general wellbeing information will continue to be provided, and in all areas, there will be fine tuning in response to feedback. Stress prevention tools, which were refreshed a year ago, can be used in a preventive way including to gauge pressure points and support change exercises.

- 4.6 Given the period of disruption and interim arrangements, a work programme is outlined in Appendix 5. It needs to be refined, and results areas discussed and agreed with Directorates. The aim is to make sure there is awareness of what is in place (Wise Up), employees are using what is in place and encouraging and asking for support (Speak Up) and supervisors are planning and acting quickly (Speed Up).

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Managing absence in the council stays a challenge for all line managers as capacity is stretched.

- 5.2 The policy and procedural framework are sound and approaches and support consistent with the norm and external standards of good practice. Work is in progress, both corporately and within services, to focus on ways to support employees to stay at work or return to work as early as possible. Line managers are gaining competence and confidence, and training and support will be continued. This is particularly important in relation to Mental Health awareness, and the Mental Health First Aider network.
- 5.3 The 2019/20 SPI was higher than 2018/19. Due to the pandemic, rolling year sickness to October 2020 had reduced. However, the norm following the pandemic cannot be predicted and genuine pressures within services may have the effect of balancing out the impact of positive measures, particularly if there are significant post-pandemic health impacts in the workforce.

List of Appendices

1. Corporate Absence Project Final Update – January 2021
2. Fife Council Employer Provision
3. Directorate and Service Sickness Absence Levels
4. Directorate Profile Reports (a-e)
5. Fife Council absence support plan

Report Contact


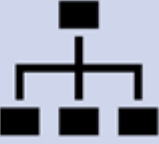





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Corporate Absence Project Final Update at 25 January 2021

Project	Progress	Feedback	Status / Recommendation
 Skills Development for line managers, to equip them to have difficult conversations	<p>Last face-to-face session occurred March 2020 due to Covid pandemic.</p> <p>From Autumn 2020, training moved to online delivery</p>  <p>870 Line Managers Trained - face to face attendance 849 and online 21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Face to face training had an excellent uptake ★ Last evaluation results were undertaken in February 2020. ★ Uptake for online training has been much lower than face to face 	 <p>Approximately 980 line managers remain to be trained (+ turnover approximately 10%)</p> <p>CET to confirm whether training is funded through central budget or service budgets.</p>
Project	Progress	Feedback	Status / Recommendation
 <p>Modify the standard Return to Work Form to provide an option which would support a Health Conversation for the most common, but difficult, health situations</p>	<p>Implemented and forms live on Oracle</p> <p>Six-month evaluation completed in July 2020.</p> 	 <p>85% of employees gave positive feedback and felt the modified forms facilitated a supportive discussion</p>	<p>Project closed</p> 

Project	Progress	Feedback	Status / Recommendation
 Day One Reporting Pilot a Nurse First Point of Contact sickness reporting model	Concluded across 4 pilot areas on 31 March 2020	Limited evaluation undertaken to allow OC build. Risks of Employee Self Service/Manager Self Service identified. Insufficient cost benefits for wider deployment.	Project closed  Recommendation. Day One is not adopted.

Project	Progress	Feedback	Status / Recommendation
 Introduce self-referral for counselling support	Self-referral steadily increasing and account for 31% of referrals – an average of 13 per month. Evaluation de-prioritised due to COVID-19.	To maintain confidentiality, the counselling provider is collecting data on whether the self-service helps employees. Also recording whether referral due to COVID-19.	Project closed 

Project	Progress	Feedback	Status / Recommendation
 <p>Introduce approaches to support Mental Health in the workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ 2,240 employees have completed the MHW eLearning module. ★ 41 sessions of Mentally Healthy Workplace training were held by inhouse trainers and 399 employees attended between September 2019 to March 2020. ★ Three Mental Health 1st Aid courses were held with 44 volunteers trained over the two-day sessions in February 2020. 	 <p>95%+ said learning met their objectives. Over half have put the learning into practice already.</p> <p><i>"Gained a better understanding of how the workplace can promote positive wellbeing for staff and the actions I can take to support staff to make them feel valued as a member of the team."</i></p> <p><i>"I wanted to gain more knowledge and tools to support staff. This course was definitely good for this, the packs great too and can refer at anytime afterwards."</i></p> <p><i>"How to support those with mental health issues while maintaining a service - approximately 75 of my current team have a diagnosed mental health issue or display traits of these conditions."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Face to Face MHW and MH1st Aid training is the property of Public Health Scotland (PHS). Training has been paused as PHS do not think it would be effective as on-line delivery ★ Directorates focussed on managing service provision and MH1st aiders trained pre-COVID publicised during lockdown. ★ Uptake on MH1st aid remains low – 8 support conversations have occurred since provision was first publicised on 30 April 2020. ★ Continuation of training to support mental health in the workplace planned subject to funding as detailed in the report.

How the Council Supports Employees.

Everyone has 'mental health' and 'physical health' along a spectrum from thriving and being in great health to being seriously unwell at the other end of the spectrum.

Proactive Prevention this is the universal starting point where legislation sets acceptable parameters and governments promote wellness through national education campaigns.

Basic practical needs to be met include practical support, a safe working environment (absence of uncontrolled hazards, absence of work-related stress), sufficient equipment and training, breaks and nutrition.

The council ensures workplace requirements are met through

- Manager and supervisor skills training
- Technical competence skills training
- Mandatory - induction (general and H&S specific)
- Health & Safety Management Framework
- Risk assessments process and safe systems of work

Once basic practical needs are met, emotional and physical needs can be addressed

Basic emotional needs can be met through self-care and wellbeing planning, emotional support through formal meetings, supervision, reflective practice and informal connections. A good culture and early intervention are important.

Basic Physical needs can be met through self-care, informed nutrition choices and exercise planning, opportunities to raise risks and have them addressed, a positive safety culture of looking after self and others and culture of early intervention.

The council does this in the workplace through

- Wellbeing information available on intranet & employee app
- Awareness raising activity – newsletters
- Employee wellbeing handbook
- Paid sickness leave
- HWWM standards and leadership development
- HDC training for supervisors
- Mentally Health Workplace training
- MH e-learning
- Suicide awareness video clips
- Mandatory targeted training & e-learning (differs by directorate, informed by relevant data) e.g. stress awareness, bullying

The next tier of intervention moves from a universal approach to a reactive response to meet individual needs.

From a clinical perspective this is still through health education but also through GPs providing information and signposting. This scales up to brief mental health and physical health interventions (e.g. medication).

The council seeks to address this in the workplace by PROACTIVE SUPERVISION

- Active application of council policies and guidance e.g. Supporting MH at Work, Menopause, flexible working arrangements applied, return to work health conversations
- Workplace adjustments (passport to be introduced)
- Service and directorate targeted programmes in response to local issues.

The goal is to move from being reactive to preventive and effective supervisor discussions and taking action as early as possible achieves this.

Available **targeted interventions** are

Mental Health - MH 1st Aider network and stress risk assessments – individual or

Physical Health – DSE workplace adaptations

The following **additional individual interventions** are most effective when timed early and prevent a deterioration in health. They can be effective as a short-term support to employees to bridge the gap before clinical interventions can take place. They are time limited and not a substitute for clinical intervention when this is required.

Mental Health – Counselling, CBT

Physical Health - Physiotherapy

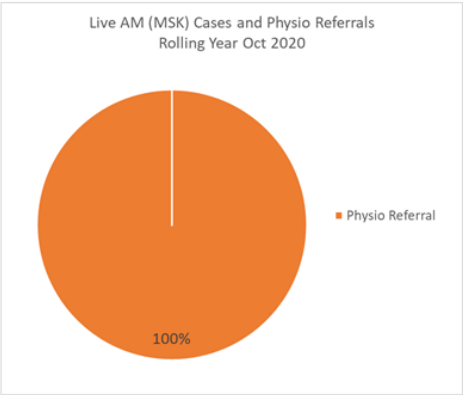
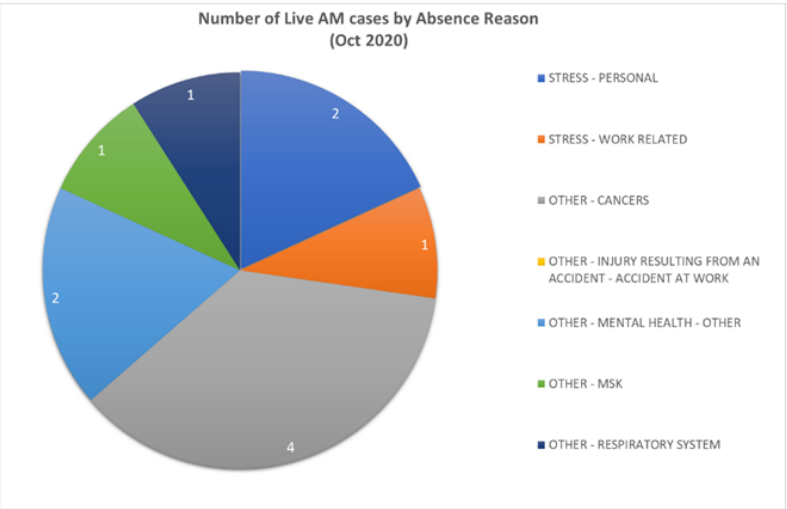
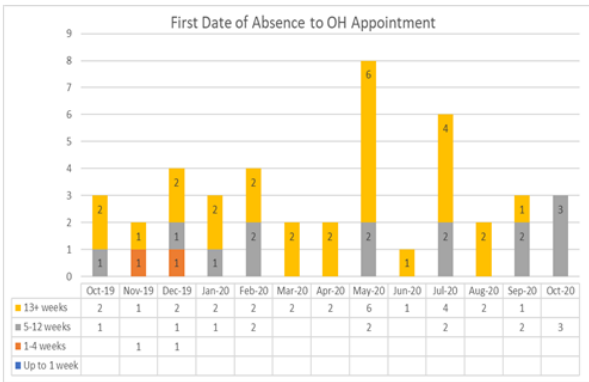
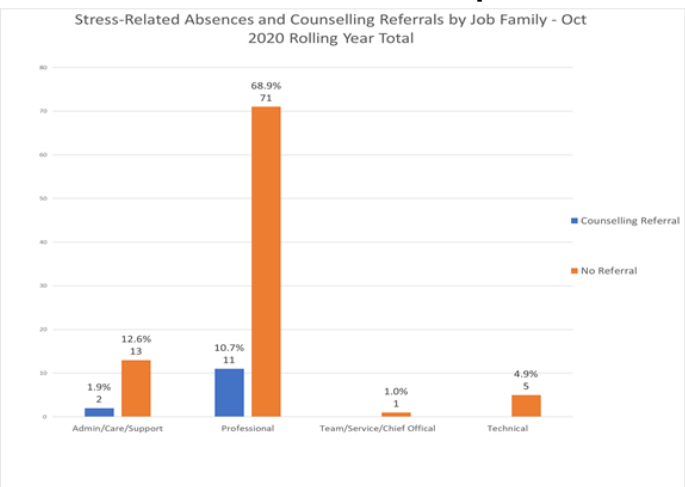
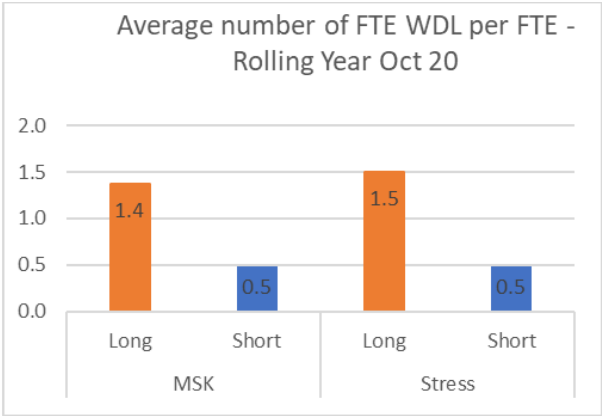
Appendix 3

Summary of Directorate and Service Sickness Absence Levels

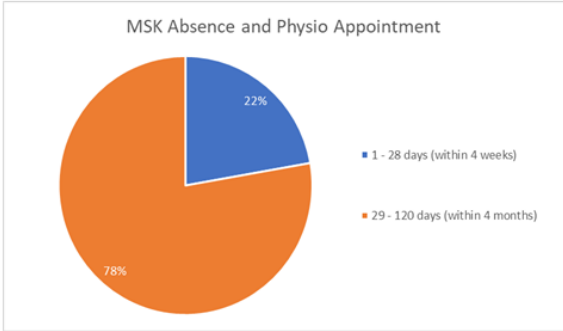
Directorate / Service	Average WDL per FTE		Improvement Yes / No
	2018/19	2019/20	
ED Education - All Other Employees	10.19	11.23	No
ED Education - Teachers	6.76	6.35	Yes
ED Children & Families	14.03	13.14	Yes
ED Criminal Justice	9.93	14.33	No
EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES TOTAL	8.56	8.82	No
HSC Divisional General Manager (East)*	18.48	20.33	No
HSC Divisional General Manager (Fife Wide)	20.43	23.00	No
HSC Divisional General Manager (West)	13.89	15.89	No
HSC Strategic Planning Performance & Commissioning	6.34	15.18	No
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TOTAL	18.78	20.98	No
EE Economy, Planning & Employability	8.38	11.00	No
EE Parks, Streets & Open Spaces	15.11	17.15	No
EE Waste Operations	19.22	21.18	No
EE Roads and Transportation Services	18.03	14.93	Yes
EE Building Services	13.26	14.50	No
EE Facilities Management	12.63	12.45	Yes
EE Bereavement Services	25.27	19.45	Yes
EE Property Services	6.77	7.09	No
ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT TOTAL	13.70	13.97	No
COMM Communities & Neighbourhoods	5.64	4.56	Yes
COMM Customer Service Improvement	13.18	13.02	Yes
COMM Housing Services	12.53	13.66	No
COMM Corporate Development	13.11	10.51	Yes
COMMUNITIES TOTAL	10.19	10.38	No
FSC Democratic Services	13.59	6.95	Yes
FSC Human Resources	10.49	9.07	Yes
FSC BTS Service	14.51	10.06	Yes
FSC Legal Services	9.37	6.54	Yes
FSC Financial Services	8.62	10.10	No
FSC Business Support Service	11.07	11.65	No
FSC Revenue & Shared Services	10.43	10.10	Yes
FSC Revenue & Shared Services (Incl. Bus Sup & Procurement)	10.80	10.98	No
FSC Assessor	9.15	14.48	No
FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL	11.23	10.51	Yes
GRAND TOTAL	11.58	12.06	No

*Includes all Home Care

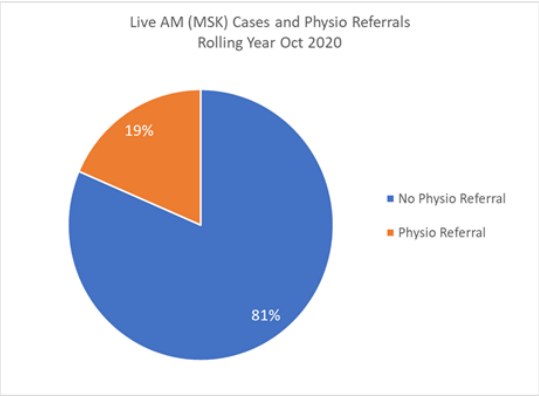
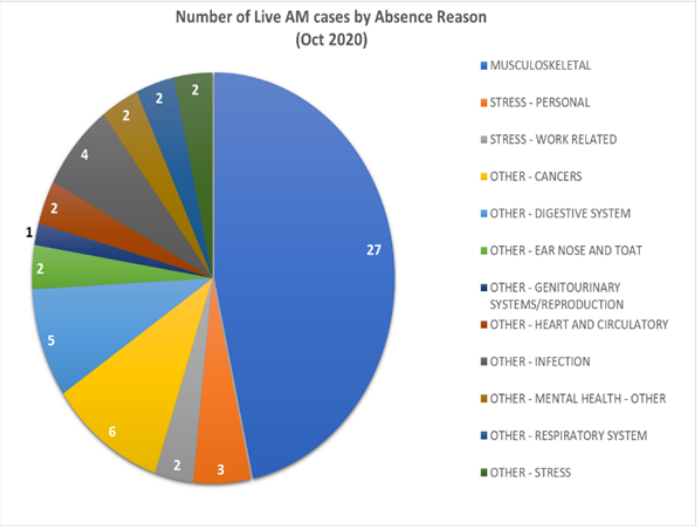
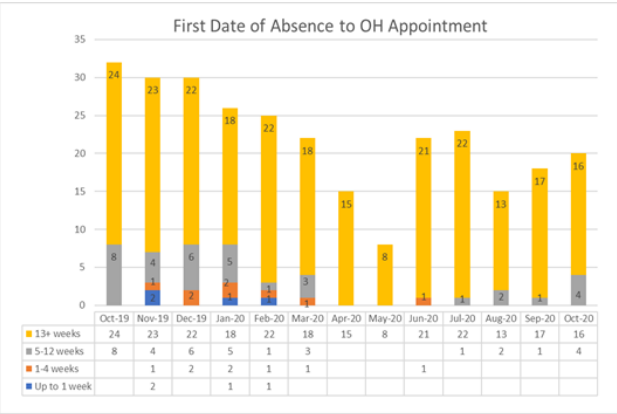
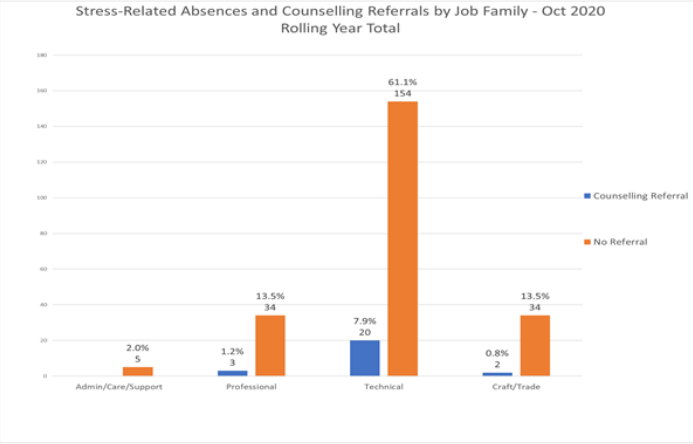
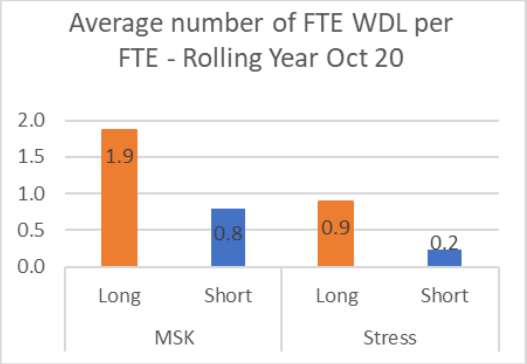
Communities Profile Report



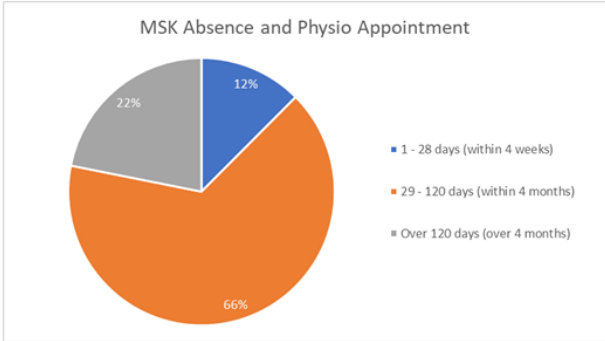
	No. RTW with record on system (% complete)	No. RTW with no record on system (% not complete)
MSK Absence	317 (86.8%)	48 (13.2%)
Stress/Mental Health Absence	183 (83.9%)	35 (16.1%)



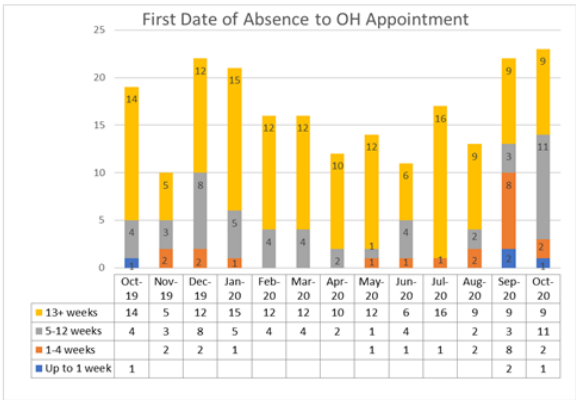
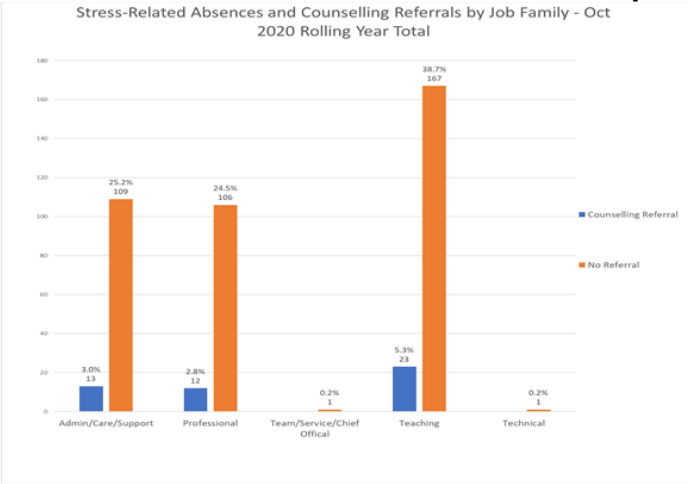
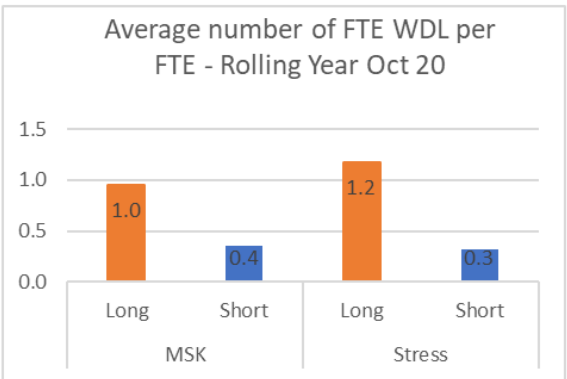
Enterprise and Environment Profile Report



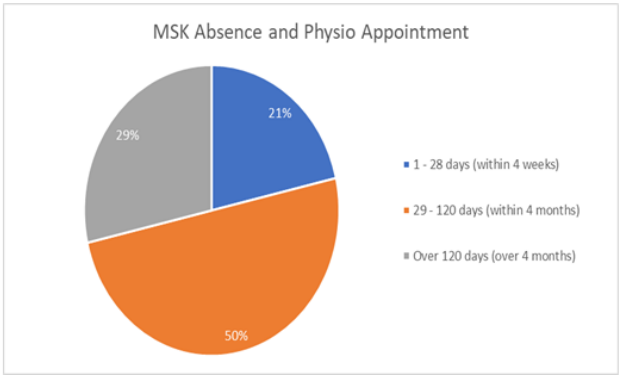
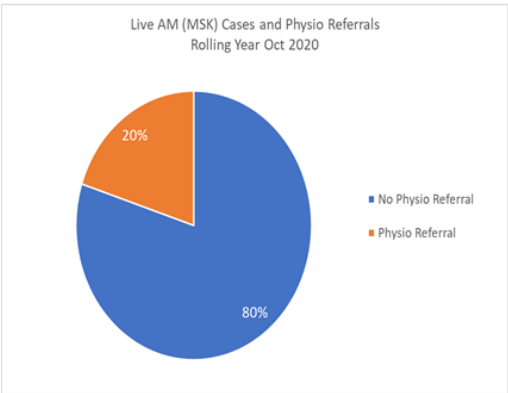
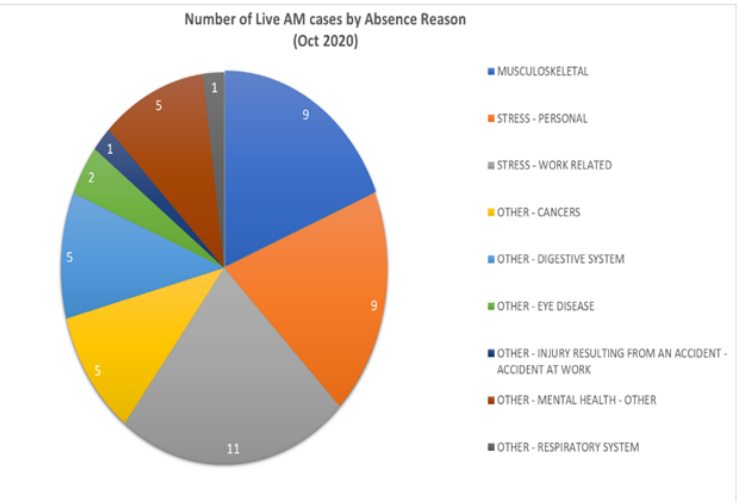
	No. RTW with record on system (% complete)	No. RTW with no record on system (% not complete)
MSK Absence	1988 (83.9%)	381 (16.1%)
Stress/Mental Health Absence	524 (74.6%)	178 (25.4%)



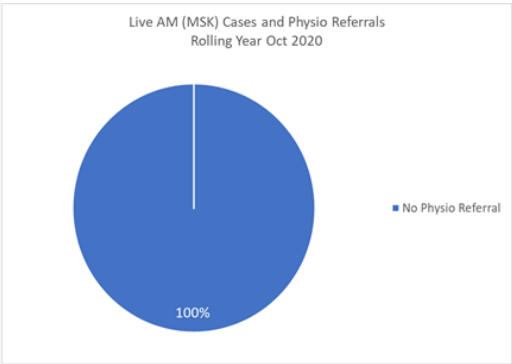
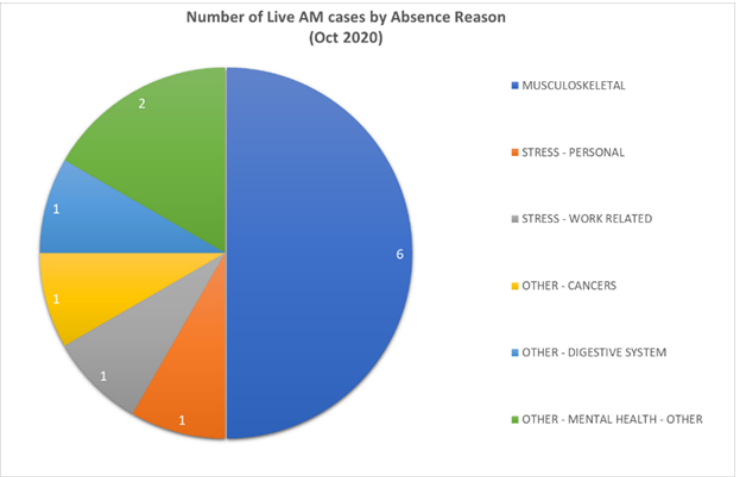
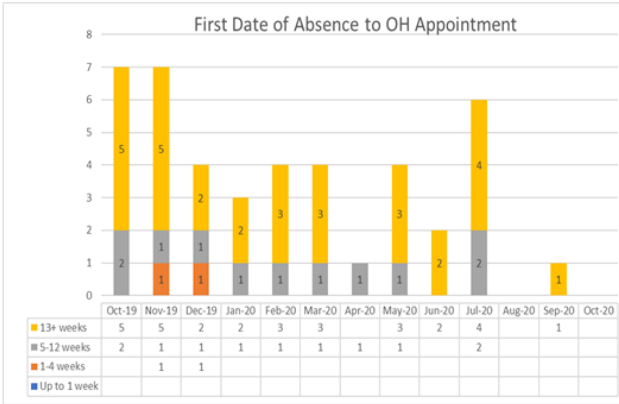
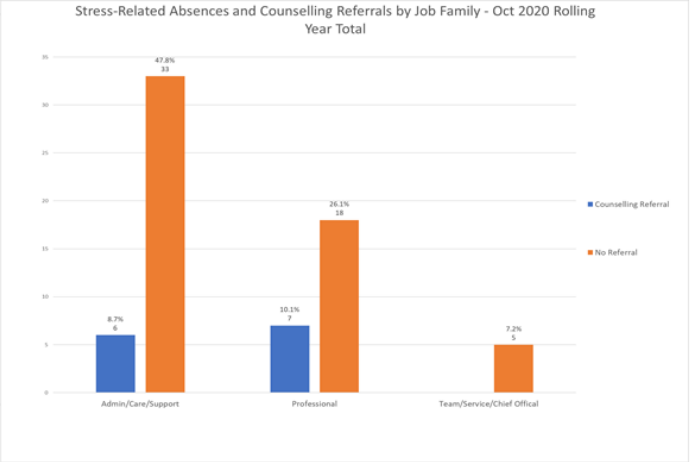
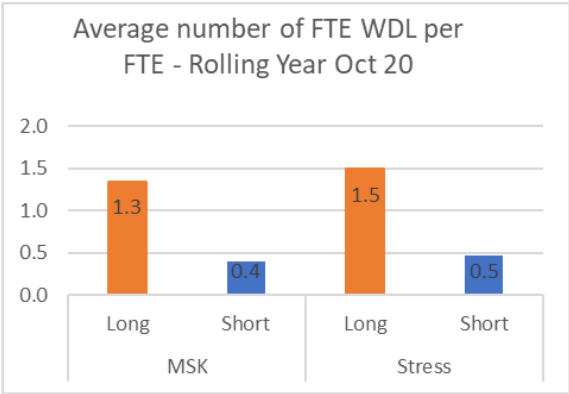
Education and Children's Services Profile Report



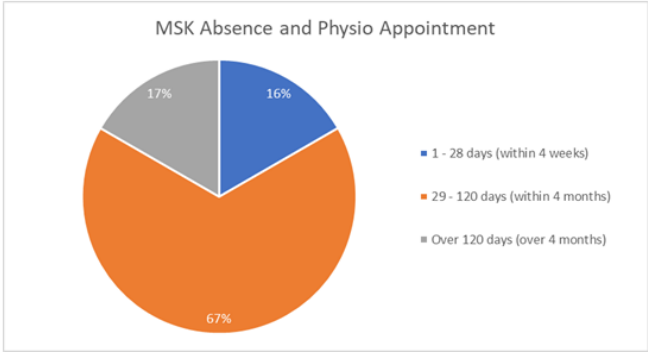
	No. RTW with record on system (% complete)	No. RTW with no record on system (% not complete)
MSK Absence	585 (53.6%)	506 (46.4%)
Stress/Mental Health Absence	294 (47.9%)	320 (52.1%)



Finance and Corporate Services Profile Report

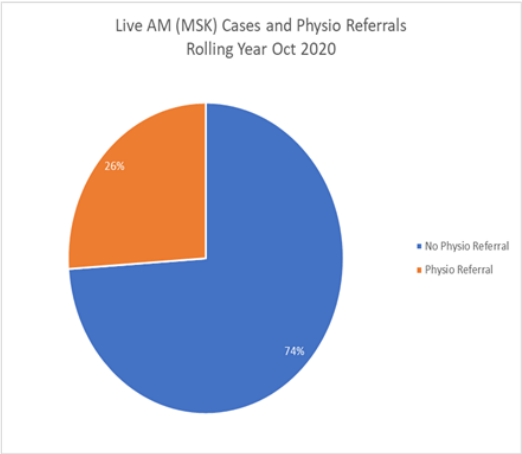
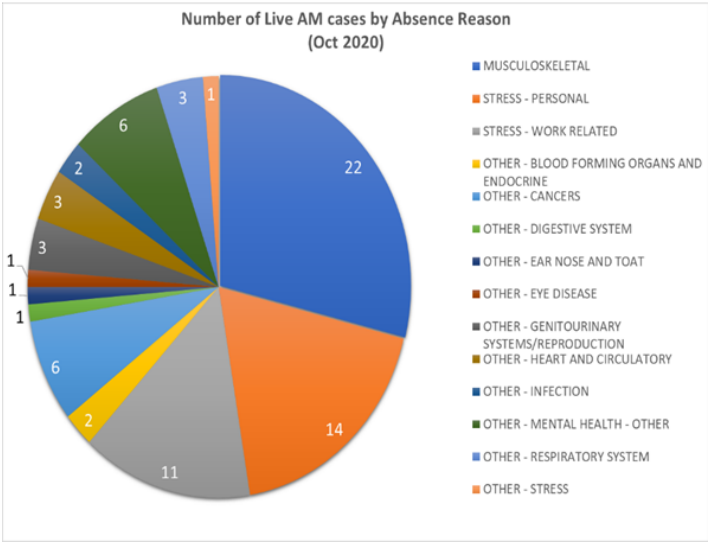
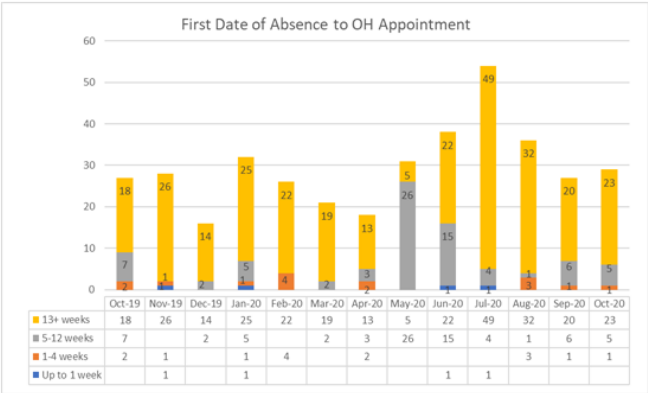
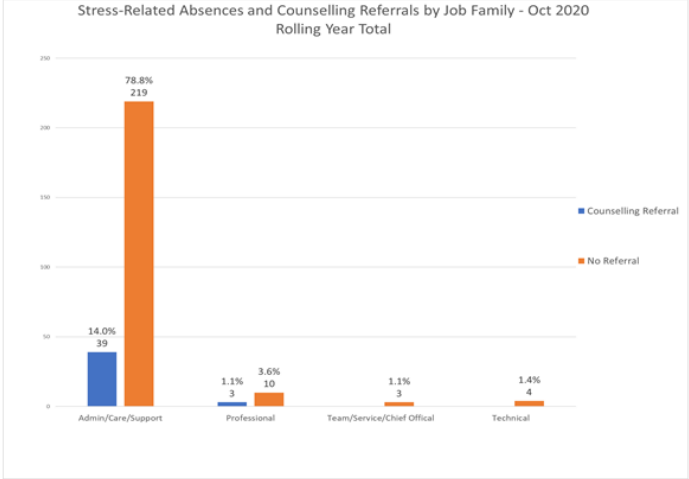
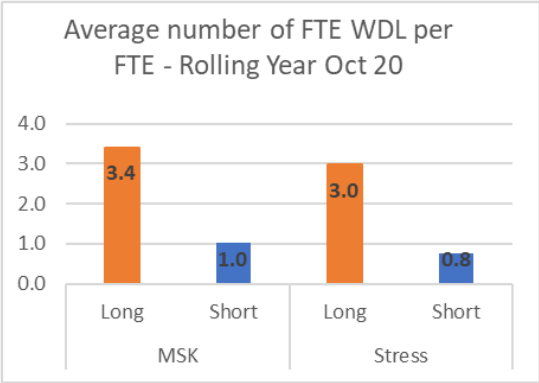


	No. RTW with record on system (% complete)	No. RTW with no record on system (% not complete)
MSK Absence	318 (89.3%)	38 (10.7%)
Stress/Mental Health Absence	235 (86.7%)	36 (13.3%)

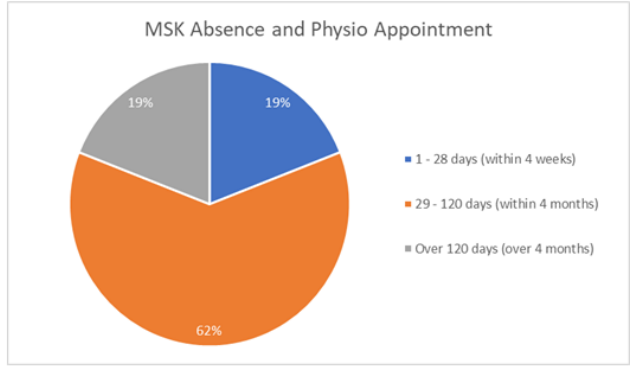


Health and Social Care Profile Report

Stress-Related Absences and Counselling Referrals by Job Family - Oct 2020
Rolling Year Total



	No. RTW with record on system (% complete)	No. RTW with no record on system (% not complete)
MSK Absence	983 (80.4%)	239 (19.6%)
Stress/Mental Health Absence	440 (73.7%)	157 (26.3%)





Vision: all employees safe and well taking steps to self-serve, with supportive managers – all helping to minimise absence.

Mission: reduced staff absence, maximising available capacity (staff and resources) to deliver services

MANAGING FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING & MINIMISED ABSENCE

Influencing factors:

All staff subject to employer T&C, policy and procedure.
Fife Council Oracle Cloud process bedding in - progressively more self-serve
Covid legacy of excessive demands, particularly front line services and managers.

CURRENT ASSETS

- Updated and comparable employer policies & procedures
- Extensive guidance & learning
- Good supports already available
- Committed, experienced managers and supervisors
- Manager appetite to increase capacity to mitigate budget cuts
- Refreshed HWWM framework
- Talking Points framework

CHALLENGES

- Sustainable improvement
- Further budget reductions
- Managers & supervisors stretched with limited capacity
- Ensuring training delivered to increase competence/confidence
- No 'additional' burdens
- Focus on Attendance given other work and reform priorities
- COVID stress and health legacy

STRATEGY – USE MARGINAL GAINS – BE BETTER USING WHAT WE HAVE IN PLACE

WISE UP

- Ensure information is available and easy to use by managers and employees
- Focus tools, information & training on prevention and early intervention
- Balance standardised reports with directorate relevant information
- Ensure awareness of what is available
- Review training and learning – needs analysis, fill gaps, review mandatory
- Ensure role & responsibilities clear – no hearsay or bad habits
- Evidence led decisions making best use of available data
- Embrace employer wellbeing strategies
- Be aware of corporate hot spots (MSK & Stress) and directorate ones
- Provide support early to prevent move to long-term
- Give priority focus at supervision and set manager targets
- Top down approach – no exceptions
- Manage change well

SPEAK UP

- Regular 1-2-1 meetings, Effective RTW, Talking Points always include 6 HSE stress factors
- Use Stress risk assessment and other tools for improvement discussions
- Build employee confidence to speak up and ask for support

SPEED UP

- Managers and supervisors skilled to plan, prepare, anticipate, act quickly
- Use MI, check trends/patterns, provide good info to others, scrutinise DNA
- Ensure Managers and supervisors 'own it and do it NOW'

Desired Results March 2023

Overall

- Council WDL remain below 10.5
- Reduced service spend on absence cover £ X to £y

Corporate Team

- Directorate profiles provided through OC

Employees (via survey)

- At work when not prevented through ill health
- Supported early, preventing work absences
- Know they are valued
- Confident to raise concerns
- Confident workplace safety has not been compromised

Managers (stats and survey)

- Proactive, quick to support
- Comply with employer policy, timescales and record keeping
- 90% OH referrals under 13 weeks
- 95% stress and MSK RTW held and recorded - 5 days
- 100% effective OH referrals – no returns or queries
- Anticipatory scheduling – meetings take place within 10 working days of medical information received
- Having good conversations
- Evidence of work issues and well managed budget reduction impact – 1-2-1's data on any stressors

13 April 2021

Agenda Item No. 7

Parks, Streets and Open Spaces Savings 2013 - 2021

Report by: Ken Gourlay, Head of Assets, Transportation and Environment

Purpose

To evidence the savings taken from the Parks, Streets and Open Spaces (PSOS) budget over the last 8 years and highlight the consequential environmental impacts.

Recommendation(s)

Committee are asked to note the financial savings to PSOS and the transformation in the operating model over the last 2 years to assist with delivering these.

Resource Implications

There are no immediate resource implications arising from this report. The report highlights the agreed savings for PSOS over the past 8 years.

Legal & Risk Implications

No legal or risk implications directly from this report.

Impact Assessment

No impact assessment has been necessary.

Consultation

The Finance Service have contributed to and reviewed the content of this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 PSOS were transferred from the Communities Directorate to the Enterprise and Environment Directorate in 2016 and formed part of the Environment and Building Services merger of business units in 2017. The restructure and alignment of these frontline services was designed to maximise the potential for sharing common resources over time.
- 1.2 Following the Directorate transfer it was quickly established that PSOS were a service in need of significant change and an improvement programme of projects was embarked upon.
- 1.3 The last two years have seen a transformation in the operating model with much needed structural change and financial governance introduced.
- 1.4 The majority of savings have been achieved through significant staff reductions without any form of modernisation.
- 1.5 The permanent workforce has been reduced by nearly a third in the last eight years and that has resulted in a visible decline in standards of street cleanliness and parks presentation.
- 1.6 Further discernible regression has been caused by reduced investment in floral enhancements, mechanical sweeping, weed spraying and grass cutting frequencies.

2.0 Savings

- 2.1 Table 1 below, shows the annual approved savings taken between 2013 and 2021.

Table 1.

Savings (£000)	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
Service Integration	300	300						
Staff Reductions	200	88	528	332				
Mechanical Sweepers		82	516	171				
Additional Income	100	100	45	55				
Supplies and Services	100	177						
Fleet Reductions		37	11					
1% saving			185	185	185			
Maintenance				195	73	125		
Floral Plants				130	40			
Playparks					50			
Structure					100	400		
Meadows							100	
Management savings								500
Travel		3						
Overtime				38				
Mileage				2				
Absence				9	7			
Charges				2	2			
Vacancies					87			
Total	700	787	1,285	1,119	544	525	100	500

2.2 As part of a wider savings programme across the Council, **£5.56m** savings have been taken from PSOS in the last 8 years.

2.3 Circa **£3.6m** has taken the form of staff savings.

3.0 Annual Overspends

3.1 The Table 3 below, shows the year-end budget overspends between 2013 and 2020

Table 2.

14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
90	514	393	193	922	323

3.2 The table shows the difficulty within the service of meeting meet core commitments without exceeding spending limits.

3.3 In the main, the overspends can be attributed to loss of income, unfunded works, priority works and continued delivery of service level agreement commitments.

4.0 Workforce Reduction

4.1 Table 4 below, shows the workforce reductions between 2014 and 2019. There have been no frontline staff savings since 2018/19.

Table 3.

Area	FTE Reduction 2014/2015	FTE Reduction 2015/2016	FTE Reduction 2016/2017	FTE Reduction 2017/2018	FTE Reduction 2018/2019	Total
Cowdenbeath	1	5.4	0	0	0	6.4
South West Fife	4	6	2	0	2	14
Dunfermline	13	16	7	0	2	38
Kirkcaldy	5	9	4	0	3	21
North East Fife	9	12	9	0	1	31
Glenrothes	8	11	6.8	0	2	27.8
Levenmouth	4	6	1.7	0	0	11.7
Total	44	65.4	30.5	0	10	149.9

4.2 The permanent workforce establishment in 2014 was **498**, in 2020 it had reduced by 30% to **348**.

5.0 Improvement Programme

5.1 The service now has a programme of improvement projects to transform delivery models and align resources with demand and finance. The generation of additional income, full cost recovery and the sourcing of additional budget provision will be key to sustainable recovery and a return to a level of quality service provision.

5.2 Improvement Programme

	% Complete
• Service Level Agreements	70
• Structural Reorganisation	60
• Digital Back Office System	10
• Financial Management Infrastructure	50
• Annualised Hours	30
• Process Standardisation	50
• Tree Team Expansion	0
• Street Cleansing Route Optimisation	60
• Fife Wide Tree Survey Programme	10
• Playground Inspection Review	30
• Fencing Team Expansion	80
• Public Garden Care	50
• Private Garden Care	0
• Materials Procurement	0
• Contractor Procurement	0
• Fleet Procurement	80
• Small Plant and Tool Procurement	10
• Grassland Management	10
• Private Land Management	25
• Factoring	0
• Environmental Apprenticeship Academy	100
• Ash Dieback Strategy	30
• Sports Pavilions Asset Review	75
• Training Matrix / Programme	20
• Green Waste Disposal	0
• Hand Arm Vibration Review	50
• Non-Routine Work Process	80

6.0 Service Realignment

6.1 Eight years ago the grounds maintenance and street cleansing functions existed as individual business units operating independently of each other. In 2013, they were merged to form PSOS and the expectation was that benefits would accrue from one management structure and a more flexible use of staff resources.

6.2 Unfortunately, PSOS have enjoyed limited benefit from the merger with roles and responsibilities becoming confused in a convoluted organisational structure. The complexity of the conflation has also contributed to service's difficulty maintaining service provision against a reducing resource envelope.

6.3 After the significant overspend of 2018/19, it became clear that the two functions should no longer co-exist in one business unit, if financial transparency and stability was to return.

- 6.4 The most effective way to inform decision making and improve operational provision was considered to be the formation of two new business divisions and separate street cleansing and grounds maintenance activities.
- 6.5 In July 2020, street cleansing returned to the Domestic Waste Service and a new dedicated Grounds Maintenance Service was created. (An Elected Members Briefing was issued at the time).

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Eight years of budgets savings totalling £5.56m and a complicated organisational delivery model have made it difficult for PSOS to maintain service standards.
- 7.2 The savings have removed 30% of the workforce, and reduced investment in the tools and materials necessary to maintain decent standards of cleanliness and maintenance in the parks and streets of Fife.
- 7.3 The service realignment and improvement programme of projects will provide the interventions and medium-term business changes to recover the environmental legacy created by the savings.
- 7.4 A longer term financial strategy and additional investment will be required to absorb growth and lift standards beyond mediocrity to excellence in the future. The £525k recurring investment and £400k 'one-off' award in this year's budget is most welcome and will result in visible environmental impacts this year.
- 7.5 In conclusion, the new operating models and business units will strive to optimise productivity, stabilise finances and recover a level of quality service provision. Both teams will provide the best environmental standards they can with the resources available to them.

List of Appendices

None

Background Papers

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

- None

Report Contact

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13th April 2021.

Agenda Item No. 8

Pressures on Roads & Transportation Services

Report by: Derek Crowe, Senior Manager Roads & Transportation Services

Wards Affected: All wards

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to discharge the request by the Convener and Vice Convener to bring forward a report on the current pressures on the service and in particular the implementation of the risk based approach to road inspections and repairs, related systems and other pressures impacting on service performance.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Committee consider current performance and activity as detailed in the report.

Resource Implications

There are no additional resource implications and the service is required to work within established staffing levels and budgets.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no known legal or risk implications associated with this report.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA has not been completed as this report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices at this time.

Consultation

Liaison with Finance Service has been carried out in developing this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Fife has an ever-growing length of road network through ongoing development, with increasing traffic volumes, increasing utility activity and increasing expectations from road users who are much more social media active and quick to complain and make comments or observations about delays, defects and problems.
- 1.2 Whilst Covid-19 travel restrictions have brought about a reduction in general traffic volumes, there has been quite an increase in demand from road users and many elected members in relation to contact with the service on roads related matters. This has been difficult to resource during the pandemic due to the split nature of home and office working, the impact on normal team working arrangements, staff absences and the steady operational pressures of delivering a wide range of transportation services.
- 1.3 Roads & Transportation Services has been the subject of numerous management reorganisations and downsizing. By way of example, in 2012, there was a dedicated Head of Service, 3 no Senior Managers and 12 no Service Managers. Arising from approved staff budget savings, circa £1.5m was been taken from the Roads & Transportation staff budget from 2014-2020. The transformed service now has management capacity of 1 no Senior Manager and 8 Service Managers and a general service reduction of 60+ posts. That remains the current structure as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report. As part of the 2018 managing change exercise there were several key strategies to developing the new structure within the available budget namely:
 - Reduced management capacity
 - Minimise Client / Contractor Roles
 - Replace Inherited Area Models
 - Centralise to Improve Resilience
 - Streamline Roles / Lean Management
 - Combine & Integrate Similar Services
 - Manage Expectations and Focus on Outcomes
- 1.4 Given that many parts of the service are self-funding from income such as Parking, Harbours, Bus Stations, DRT, the Roads and Bridges teams from capital design fees and Roads Operations from the Service Trading Account, the reduction in the staffing budget fell mostly on the Traffic Management, Roads Network and Asset Management elements of the service. This has had a lasting impact on capacity to meet increased service demands in these areas.
- 1.5 Meanwhile, in relation to the available service expenditure budgets, the overall service budget (net) has reduced from £33.5M in 2012/13 to £22.5m in 2020/21, a drop of 33%. When comparing the four main roads maintenance budgets, (excluding winter since it does not maintain the asset), over the same period the budget has dropped from £14.6m down to £9.2m, a drop of 37%.
- 1.6 In summary, the capacity of the service and the funding available to deliver the wide range of roads & transportation services has greatly reduced and the service needs to seek and implement more efficient processes and manage customer expectations. A main aim is to maximise programmed works ahead of reactive repairs. New software systems can prove challenging to implement and embed. They require time to modify processes and practices in order to iron out operational issues and inevitably some areas may require a culture shift with employee groups to deliver fully.

- 1.7 The key functions of the 8 service teams are detailed within Appendix 1 to this report. This includes a wide and diverse range of activities and services that support, operate and manage and maintain Fife's transport network along with some related technical and engineering functions including:
- Roads, Footways, Street Lighting
 - Winter Gritting & Snow Clearing
 - Flooding, Flood Prevention & Drainage
 - Road Safety & Traffic Management
 - Utility & 3rd Party Coordination & Management
 - Active Travel
 - Climate Change
 - Car Parking & Enforcement
 - Local Transport Strategy
 - Levenmouth Reconnected (Leven Rail) Programme
 - Bridges & Structures
 - Harbours & Coastal Protection
 - Bus Stations and Park & Rides
 - School Transport
 - Fife Bus (Demand Responsive Transport)
 - Local Bus Services & Concessionary Travel
 - Comprehensive Civil Engineering Design & Construction Services

2.0 Scrutiny Areas Requested

- 2.1 Three areas were highlighted to Roads & Transportation for committee scrutiny namely:
- A. An update on the Risk Based Road Inspection & Repair Approach
 - B. An update on the Alloy information management system; and
 - C. An update on Roads Network / Traffic Management Pressures

A) RISK BASED ROAD INSPECTION & REPAIR APPROACH

- 2.2 On 24 October 2019, Economy, Tourism, Strategic Planning & Transportation Committee approved the implementation of the Road Asset Condition Inspections – Policy & Standards from 1 April 2020 following a period of preparation and transition.
- 2.3 This 'risk-based approach' is in line with the latest Code of Practice, national guidance and best practice. It is very different from the prescriptive descriptions of defects (such as pothole depth $\geq 40\text{mm}$) in previous codes and the current tendency for 'worst case scenario' thinking to be used in assigning categories of response. This is in recognition that Local Authorities no longer have the same level of available budgets.
- 2.4 As well as its primary purpose, to safeguard road users, the implementation of a risk-based approach is aimed at improving efficiency and providing best value for money through more appropriate categorisation of defects and corresponding response. Importantly, by freeing up existing resources from the reactive repairs of low-risk defects allows a shift in the volume of reactive repairs toward an increase in permanent programmed work and enabling a higher proportion of reactive repairs to be of higher quality. This is a key objective of this approach.

- 2.5 The implementation of the new approach has been complicated by two main issues since implementation: (i) impact of Covid-19 on working practices / training / teamworking and (ii) change of operating management system from Bentley to Yotta Alloy. The Alloy system is covered separately in section B) below.
- 2.6 As part of the risk based approach, the inspectors no longer work to an intervention criteria regardless of location. The new approach follows a number of steps: (i) Hazard Identification, (ii) Risk Assessment (likelihood of encountering the hazard and the most probable (not worst possible) consequence should this occur, and the risk factor when considering 'Likelihood' and 'Consequence'. Having established the risk factor the appropriate response is identified in Table 1 below:

Risk	Priority	Response Type	Repair Target (from date of risk assessment)
Critical	1	Immediate	Within 24 hours (Make safe)
High	2	Rapid	Within 5 Working Days
Medium	3	Include in Cyclic Works Programme	Within 3 Months
Low	4	Include in Area or Route Works Programme	Within a Rolling 12 Months
Negligible	5	Routine Monitoring	Per Inspection Frequency

Table 1. Response Types

- 2.7 In relation to the latest performance information, the following information was pulled on 23 February 2021 from the Alloy system:

P1's			P3's		
No of P1's since 31/08/2020	395		No of P3's since 31/08/2020	1606	
No of P1's Complete	355		No of P3's Complete	459	
%Pass	66%	259	%Pass	29%	459
%Fail	28%	99	%Fail	0%	0
%Incomplete-Fail	9%	37	%Outstanding - Failed	0%	0
			%Outstanding - still in date	71%	1147
P2's			P4's		
No of P2's since 31/08/2020	2116		No of P4's since 31/08/2020	1065	
No of P2's Complete	1607		No of P4's Complete	462	
%Pass	65%	1376	%Pass	43%	462
%Fail	11%	230	%Fail	0%	
%Outstanding - Failed	21%	438	%Outstanding - Failed	0%	0
%Outstanding - still in date	3%	71	%Outstanding - still in date	57%	603

Table 2. Road Defect Performance: September 2020 – February 2021

- 2.8 The new approach is significantly different from its predecessor and there has been a huge investment in new equipment and training the technical and inspection staff to understand and buy-in to the new system and achieve the needed culture change with the inspectors and hence the benefits of the new approach.
- 2.9 In relation to the P1 performance shown above (28% fail) – this is a reflection of the situation when the system was first introduced – the majority of the P1 failures were due to a delay in closing off repairs within Alloy and not actually a failure in completing the repair within the target time. Such repair types are always given top priority. Lessons have been learned and the procedures for signing off P1's within Alloy have been tightened up hence future 'failures' will be much lower. Overall a number of operational challenges have now been overcome and repair performance standards are on the improvement.
- 2.10 The winter weather this year impacted on the inspection & repair service since it is the same repair teams that carry out winter road gritting and snow clearing. From 28 December 2020 there was around 30 days of solid sub-zero temperatures and a constant requirement for road gritting. That was then followed by Storm Darcy on 6 February 2021 initially with severe rain and flooding then followed by days of steady and repeated snowfall that remained for around 2 weeks. In addition to posing an operational and logistical challenge, the severe winter weather had a dramatic impact on Fife's roads with a consequent upsurge in potholes and road defects.
- 2.11 Now that the severe weather is passed, a purge has been implemented to deal with the accrued backlog of pothole repairs with up to 12 crews working on a 7-day per week operation. In terms of scale there is normally 2-4 repair teams / week day. As an overview, the potholes are evenly spread though urban locations although parts of Dunfermline and West Fife are worst affected. The majority overall are rural particularly in North Fife. Some rural roads have numerous potholes of varying sizes which take time to make safe and also take up more material impacting on productivity. As a result of the severe weather we have experienced a larger than normal volume of Category P1 repairs requiring immediate attention and this has diverted resources away from lower category repairs.

B) YOTTA ALLOY SYSTEM

- 2.12 The previous inspection management system (Bentley) involved a part electronic and part paper system and that could lead to many communication difficulties and data control issues. The inspection was recorded within Bentley but then had to be passed to the Roads Operations teams in paper format to instruct and record the works. Thereafter once the orders were returned as complete, the record was updated in the electronic system. It had been an ambition of the service to make this an end-end electronic system for many years but due to other BTS priorities this had not happened. There had been increasing problems and costs associated with the Bentley system and in 2020, an opportunity arose and Roads & Transportation Services working in partnership with BTS made a decision to move from Bentley to Yotta Alloy - an end to end electronic inspection and repair recording system.
- 2.13 Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the implementation and rollout of Alloy and many processes and training plans had to be amended to abide with social distancing guidelines and protocols governing group meetings and training sessions. In addition, the lack of onsite support from BTS meant there was no field-testing prior to 'go live' which in turn hindered the rollout of the new system and it was subject to many operational difficulties that required 'fixes' and changes to processes.

- 2.14 The inspectors started inputting their inspections and ad-hoc repairs into the new Alloy system which came into effect from September 2020 and this has been a success. They had several remote training sessions with BTS and whilst not as good as face-face this proved helpful. The inspectors now issue the repairs within Alloy, to Roads Operations directly from their site visits.
- 2.15 The Alloy system, as well as issuing works orders from inspections, allows the Roads Operations team to record the date and time of the repair of the defects and close out the job using their on-site tablets. It also allows the repair team to take and upload photos of the repair before and after which is very helpful. The inspectors can then quickly see when the repairs have been completed and the quality of the repair. There have been ongoing challenges with signal availability and strength particularly in rural parts of Fife. This has caused problems with losing data and excessive processing time. In addition, there has been a need to manage the significant culture change for operatives inputting the details into digital devices on site without the opportunity for face-face training during the pandemic period. Such issues continue to be addressed as the Alloy system is rolled out. At the time of writing this report the backlog in South Area has been closed out and the remaining backlog of 5-day repairs in North Area has proved challenging due to the continued number of new / added pothole reports. By the time of the committee meeting it is hoped this backlog will be ended.
- 2.16 After early teething problems, the defect and repair information is now more up to date and much more robust than before. Feedback from the technical and inspection staff has been positive confirming that the new Alloy system is easy to navigate around and provides robust and vital information showing if deadlines are being met.

C) ROADS NETWORK / TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PRESSURES

- 2.17 In relation to para 1.4 above the Roads Network Management team is now tightly balanced in relation to managing supply and demand and member expectations. This has proved to be a challenging area since the restructure in 2018, but during the Covid-19 pandemic, changes to working arrangements and the sustained spike in email correspondence reached crisis point when 5 members (15%) of the roads network team were off ill long term including 2 of the 4 Lead Consultants in the team.
- 2.18 To cope with this imbalance in demand/supply the Service Manager implemented several coping strategies across the team and this helped but it was not possible to provide a normal level of customer service. At the time of writing this report both Lead Consultant posts are now operational again and the team is working to catch up with the backlog of enquiries.
- 2.19 The service delivers annual programmes of Carriageways, Footways, Bridges, Street Lighting, Traffic Management & Road Safety infrastructure projects. These are determined through the 7 Area Roads Programmes (ARP) and agreed by the local Area Committees. In addition to quarterly reporting to Area Committees on progress, an on-line site is updated regularly to keep members advised on the status of ARP programmes. The Fife Direct link for that site is:

[Area Roads Programme \(ARP\) | Fife Council](#)

- 2.20 Due to the impact of Covid-19 and the severe winter weather, this has been a difficult year to progress the ARPs with around 3 months construction delivery lost during the first lockdown period and the first 2 months of 2021 badly impacted by winter weather, with sustained low temperatures, flooding and lengthy snowfall.
- 2.21 Similarly, the design and investigation processes were complicated by home working requirements and travel restrictions. Priority for delivery has been given to those straightforward design projects such as Carriageway and Footway schemes and those with external funding such as Spaces for People and Cycling Projects once more normal operations could be delivered. This has impacted on the areas that require public consultation and higher design input such as the Traffic Management and Road Safety projects. In addition, following the period of snowfall, construction resources were diverted to pothole patching further increasing the slippage of many projects. Such delayed projects will slip into next financial year and will be delivered early in 2021/22.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The resources and capacity within Roads & Transportation Services has reduced greatly over the last 10 years and the service is at a fine balance to manage general demand and supply and during workload peaks there is a need to manage expectations and communications. The impact of greatly increased email traffic over the period of travel restrictions and home working requirements has been very challenging and made worse by long term staff absences during the pandemic.
- 3.2 The implementation of the risk-based approach to road inspections and repairs combined with the implementation of the Alloy system during the pandemic period has proved very challenging however these related issues will lead to an improvement in managing and reporting road defects in the future.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Roads & Transportation Services – Team Functions/Contacts - March 2021

Background Papers

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

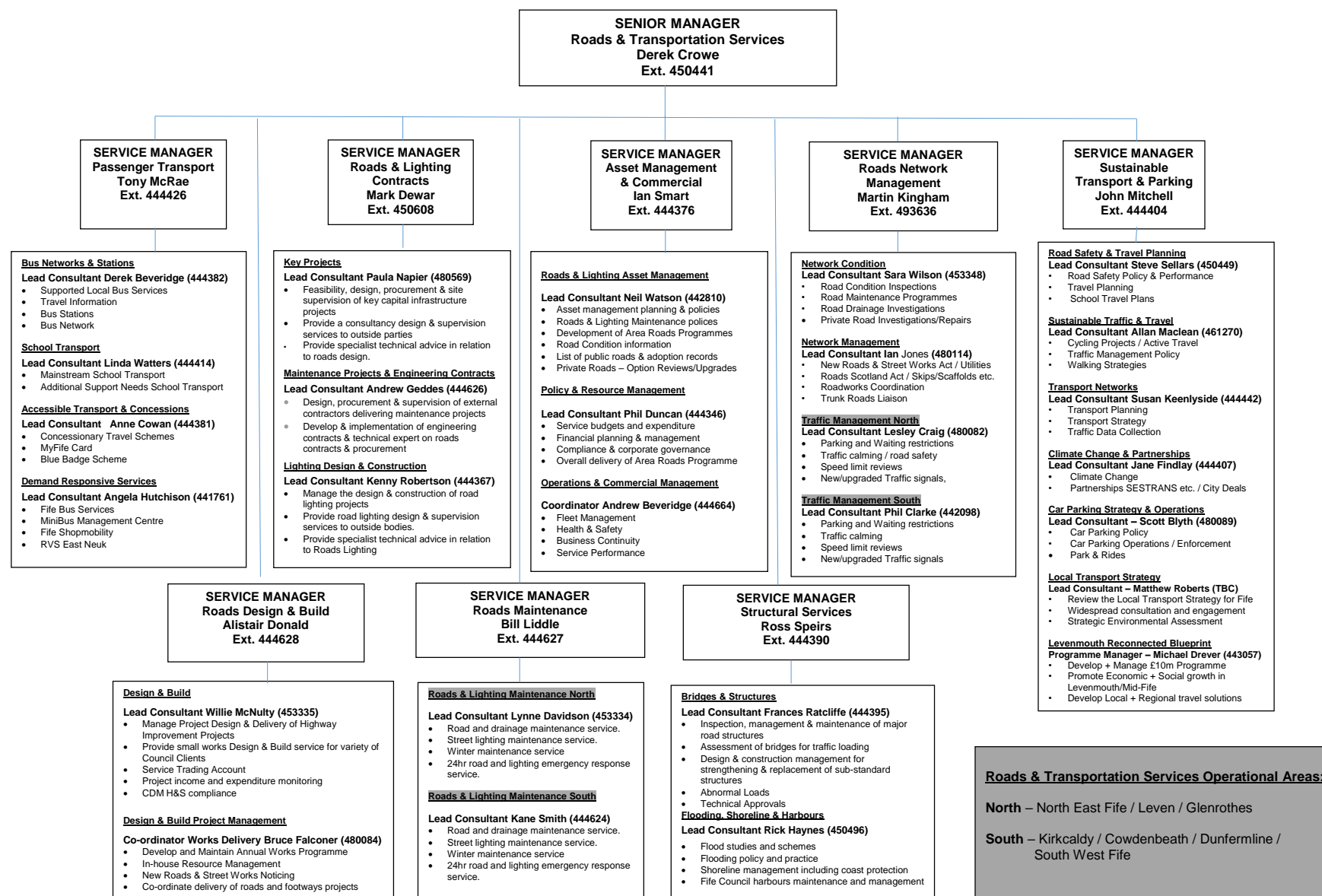
- None

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ROADS & TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

TEAM FUNCTIONS & CONTACT DETAILS – March 2021



Agenda Item No. 9**Environment, Finance & Communities Scrutiny Committee****Forward Work Programme as of 05/04/2021**

Environment, Finance & Communities Scrutiny Committee of 1 June 2021			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Compact - How this will be delivered at local level	Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Sharon Douglas	
Minute	Elizabeth Mair	Democratic Services	
Environment, Finance & Communities Forward Work Programme	Elizabeth Mair	Democratic Services	
Contact Centre Review Update	Communities	Diarmuid Cotter	
Digital Programme	Business Technology Solutions	Charlie Anderson	
Update on Environmental Health Service	Enterprise and Environment	Nigel Kerr	

Unallocated			
Title	Service(s)	Contact(s)	Comments
Climate Change Update	Assets, Transportation and Environment	Ross Spalding	
Commercialisation Programme - Procurement Transformation Project - Update	Finance and Corporate Services	Les Robertson, Stuart Fargie	
Agency Workers/Overtime	Human Resources	Anne-Marie Cardle, Jacqui Laing, Tracy Hogg	
Commercialisation Programme - Procurement Transformation Project - Update	Finance and Corporate Services	Les Robertson, Stuart Fargie	