

Business and Employability Annual Service Report 2026

Introduction

This report reflects the performance of Business & Employability Services for 2026. It covers the period April 2025 to June 2026, highlighting our delivery and progress along with our change and improvement plans for 2026-27.

We have considered our performance in relation to the council’s policy priorities set out in the Plan for Fife; key indicators; financial and workforce pressures; and how we compare in relation to similar services in other Scottish councils, through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

Individual service indicators and results are published online in advance of this annual review to facilitate scrutiny and review.

These are available at www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance

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Service overview

Business and Employability Services are responsible for developing and delivering interventions designed to promote economic growth, enhance the employability of people living in Fife and support local businesses.

Service Vision

The aim of Business and Employability Services is to help grow a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife, delivering prosperity for the region while ensuring inclusivity and resilience in the face of changing economic landscapes.

Service Areas

Our work is delivered in the following way:

- **Driving change in Fife's economy** over the short, medium and long term through developing and delivering strategies to grow the local economy. This includes delivering capital projects, attracting and supporting inward investment, improving the availability and quality of employment land and business properties, and delivering sector initiatives including promoting and supporting tourism through the management of the Welcome to Fife Industry Leadership Group.
- **Providing support and advice to start up and growing Fife businesses** in particular through Economic Development Team's services which include building export capability and business resilience, driving innovation, providing access to finance and support to key sectors and managing the Service's Business Property Portfolio and the Business Gateway Fife contract.
- **Managing Fife's Local Employability Partnership, the Opportunities Fife Partnership, and directly delivering employability initiatives** to help clients in disadvantaged groups and communities into fair and sustainable jobs, particularly targeting young people and the long-term unemployed.
- **Developing and managing place-based programmes** such as town centre regeneration through investment in Fife's built and natural heritage, urban design frameworks, smart place plans, and digital connectivity.
- **Managing the council's engagement in regional partnerships, City Region Deals and strategic growth projects** including the Forth Green Freeport, Edinburgh & South East of Scotland and Tay Cities Region Deals, Mossmorran Taskforce and the Industrial Communities Alliance.

Demand & delivery overview

This report highlights a strong year of delivery across business support, employability, regeneration and partnership working, despite a challenging economic environment and growing uncertainty around future external funding.

Through the development and delivery of place-based projects and programmes, embedding Community Wealth Building approaches across our activities and by leading Fife's transition to a low carbon economy, we are helping build resilience and create opportunities for the future. Our collaborative approach, working with national and regional partners, local businesses, and the third sector, ensures that Fife remains at the forefront of economic development activity in Scotland.

Overall Highlights

The activities and interventions delivered by the Service during 2025/26 are detailed in pages 11-27. Key achievements during this period include:

Supporting Businesses

- Business Gateway Fife supported 605 new business start-ups (42 more than the previous year and the highest number of any local authority area in Scotland), 1,100 established businesses and 2,000 new and pre-start businesses.
- 214 businesses received financial assistance totalling £284k which is estimated to have supported 218 jobs.
- By promoting Fife's investment offer and supporting potential investors, over £10.5 million of inward investment was secured for the region.
- 270 companies were supported to attend or exhibit at 79 trade shows, exhibitions or learning journeys, including seven

international events. These activities increased market awareness, generated valuable business leads, strengthened strategic partnerships, and positioned Fife businesses to access growth opportunities across domestic and international markets.

- Pupils at Fife schools participated in 72 different Culture of Enterprise activities which provided 1,409 instances of pupil engagement.

Place-Based Regeneration & Infrastructure

- £13m of seed funding was secured for the Rosyth tax site following approval of the Fife Green Freeport's Full Business Case in December 2025.
- A new business park was opened at Fife Interchange North and new business units were delivered in Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth. These investments modernise Fife's business infrastructure thereby supporting future economic growth.
- 96% of the floorspace in the Service's Business Property Portfolio was occupied.
- Between March 2022 and April 2026, the Business Property Portfolio reduced its bad debt by 85%.
- The amount of vacant floorspace fell between 2021 and 2025 in all of Fife's main town centres apart from Glenrothes.
- Visitor numbers to Fife increased by 8% to 4.79m and their economic impact by 13% to £956m, reflecting successful marketing campaigns and infrastructure improvements.

Demand & delivery overview

Employability & Skills

- More than 4,000 people facing significant barriers to employment were helped to move closer to work, with over half achieving positive employment outcomes.
- Over 830 individuals participated in employability programmes delivered by the Service's Employability Team, 73% of whom moved directly into employment.
- Life Chances Plus, the inclusive recruitment programme, secured placements for 106 people, not only within Fife Council services but also within NHS Fife and the third sector.
- 85 Modern Apprenticeships and 201 Foundation Apprenticeships were supported.

Working in Collaboration and Partnership

- The Service secured over £20m of external funding for more than 60 different economic development and employability projects.
- 70 of the 90 former employees of the Exxon Fife Ethylene Plant at Mossmorran acquired alternative roles and all apprentices secured new placements.

Our people

Workforce Profile, including headcount

- 216 people (192.52 full-time equivalent (FTE) posts). Represents 1.17% of Fife Council's headcount.
- 73.6% are full time, 68.5% permanent and 50% female.

Workforce Age

- Average workforce age is 43.4, lower than 45 years in 2024/5 and the council's average age (44.8). 9.72% of the workforce is aged 24 and under, more than 6.84% in 2024/25 and the overall council rate (5.7%). Lowering the average age of the workforce has been a Service priority.
- Average age of leavers is 39.9 and new starts 32.6.

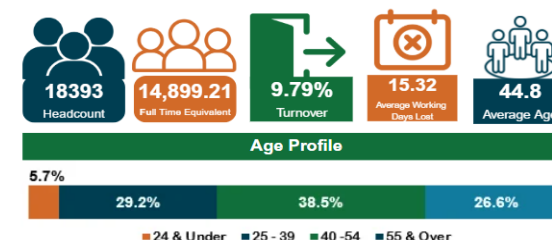
Workforce Turnover

- Turnover reduced to 16.20%, down from 29.47% in 2024/25 but still higher than the council's overall rate (9.79%), mainly due to the number of short-term placements and contracts.
- The primary reason for leaving was end of temporary contract.

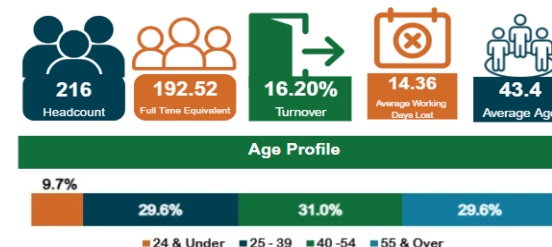
Working Days Lost (WDL) per FTE Post

- Average WDL to sickness absence was 14.36, this is higher than 9.70 in 2024/25 but lower than the overall council figure (15.32).
- Short term absences account for 2.8 WDL and longer-term absences (over 28 calendar days) 11.5 WDL.

Fife Council Workforce 2025/26



Business & Employability 2025/26



People Plan Priorities

- Focus on retention, upskilling, and recruitment pathways (Apprenticeships, Developing the Young Workforce, Workforce Youth Investment) to build a responsive workforce.
- Use inclusive recruitment approaches to reduce vacancies and help those furthest from the labour market.
- Engage staff in future plans and strengthen leadership through structured development and succession planning.
- Maintain a healthy, skilled workforce through ongoing training, skills-matrix reviews, and wellbeing support.

Our budget

Business Area	Budget 25/26 £m	Provisional Outturn 25/26 £m	Variance 25/26 £m
Employability	3.202	2.905	(0.297)
Economic Development	0.807	0.748	(0.059)
Place, Programmes & Policies	2.057	1.981	(0.076)
Administration	0.311	0.110	(0.201)
Total Net Expenditure	6.377	5.744	(0.632)

	Budget 25/26 £m	Provisional Expenditure/ (Income) 25/26 £m	Variance Overspend/ (Underspend) 25/26 £m
Staff Costs	9.735	9.481	(0.254)
Property Costs	1.645	1.363	(0.283)
Transport Costs	0.114	0.107	(0.006)
Supplies and Services	3.641	3.557	(0.084)
Third Party Payments	5.032	5.772	0.740
Transfer Payments	1.685	0.693	(0.993)
Support Services Charges	0.073	0.076	0.003
Total Expenditure	21.926	21.049	(0.877)
Internal Income	(0.907)	(1.412)	(0.505)
External Income	(14.642)	(13.893)	0.750
Total Income	(15.549)	(15.305)	0.244
Net Expenditure	6.377	5.744	(0.632)

Key points

The Service's total underspend of £632,000 can be explained as follows:

- **Employability** – the team's underspend is mainly due to £246,000 from ring fenced budgets that is being carried forward to 2026/27 for future delivery.
- **Economic Development** – the total £59,000 underspend was from various project budgets.
- **Place, Programmes and Policy** – the main reason for the £108,000 underspend was unfilled employee vacancies.
- **Administration** – the £201,000 underspend was due to the Head of Service vacancy and underspend in associated project budgets.

Our risks

Key corporate and service-specific risks affecting delivery are actively tracked and managed, with control measures in place. The table below highlights current service-specific risks and ongoing mitigation actions to minimise risk impact. Progress against these will be reported next year. Full details on all risks are available on request.

Risk	Mitigation
ICT Failure (high)	There is a risk that critical failure of systems could occur and information will not be available to support service delivery. The Service is currently reviewing IT continuity to ensure transition of critical operations.
Workforce Challenges (medium)	There is a risk that the Service will not have the right people in the right place at the right time. CPD is prioritised to enhance skills and experience; succession planning and talent management approaches are used along with investment in trainee posts and leadership development.
Legal & Regulatory Compliance Failure (medium)	All relevant staff undertake regular professional development to keep up to date with legislative changes.
Data Records Management (medium)	All staff undertake relevant training.

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to support existing local businesses to grow (high)	Score remains unchanged due to the council's decision to approve funding from reserves to ease the transition from UKSPF funding to the Local Growth Fund.
Failure to provide employability support (medium)	While funding uncertainty and demand pressures remain key external factors, the Service continues to manage these through commissioning, performance monitoring and partnership engagement. The risk remains at its current level and will be reviewed in line with funding and policy developments.
Failure to deliver capital programmes (medium)	While inflationary pressures, supply-chain constraints and external funding conditions continue to impact phasing and affordability, these risks are being mitigated through programme review, scope management and alignment with available external funding. The risk remains under active management and will be reassessed as part of the next scheduled review.

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to support Fife as a sustainable tourism destination (high)	The sector continues to face external pressures due to the cost of doing business, national legislation, workforce availability and changing visitor behaviour; however activity remains focused on supporting resilience, diversification and sustainable growth rather than volume-led recovery alone. The risk remains under ongoing review with no immediate requirement to escalate.
Failure to support thriving town centres/sustainable places (high)	Structural challenges affecting town centres remain, however activity is focused on prioritised locations and deliverable projects. The risk remains relevant but is being actively mitigated through place-based investment and alignment with wider regeneration and community planning priorities.
Disconnection with national and regional priorities (high)	The risk remains live but is currently well-managed through active policy scanning and partnership working.

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to support entrepreneurship (medium)	The provision of council transition funding is a mitigating factor which will keep the likelihood low for 2026/27.
Failure to secure inward investment (medium)	Continued engagement with Scottish Development International and the Scottish Government's Invest in Scotland portal and new relationship building with the UK Government's Department for Business and Trade will keep the likelihood score low.
Failure to achieve a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife (extreme)	Likelihood has increased following confirmation of the arrangements for the UK Government's new Local Growth Fund which will give Fife significantly reduced levels of revenue funding. Risk is now outwith optimal zone due to external factors, there are no internal controls that can mitigate. The Service's reliance on external funding increases the likelihood of the risk.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Introduction - service delivery context and challenges

The Service's key role is to lead delivery of Fife's Economic Strategy by developing and delivering economic development and employability interventions.

Given its reliance on external funding for many of the interventions it delivers, the Service has continued to adopt an agile and responsive approach to maximise opportunities and maintain delivery.

Although the Scottish economy grew by 0.1% in the three months to April, the pace of growth was subdued partly due to the impact of the Middle East conflict on energy and fuel costs and its effect on consumer and business sentiment¹. Fife's labour market weakened over the past year with an increase in unemployment and fall in the number of payrolled employees although earnings increased.

¹ [Scottish economic bulletin: July 2026, Office of the Chief Economic Adviser, Scottish Government](#)

Priorities & progress

The Service's four priorities reflect those set out in the [Fife Economic Strategy 2023-30](#), namely:

- **Supporting Local Businesses**
- **Creating Thriving Places by Delivering Place-Based Regeneration and Infrastructure**
- **Delivering Employability and Skills**
- **Working in Collaboration and Partnership.**

Fife's Economic Strategy also commits the Service to taking a **Community Wealth Building** approach to maximise the local impacts of investment in projects and programmes, and to making sure that its interventions support the council's commitment to **tackling climate change**.

Business and Employability's 2025-28 Service Change Plan commitments are included in the priorities above.

Progress over the past year in delivering the Service's four priorities along with what it will focus on in 2026/27 are set out in the following sections of this report.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 1

Supporting Businesses

The number of VAT-registered businesses in Fife fell for the 5th consecutive year; business conditions remain challenging and Mid-Fife has a particularly low business density. The Service has responded to these challenges by continuing to prioritise supporting new start-ups and helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) become more resilient, find new markets, progress towards net-zero ambitions and adopt new technologies.

Progress

Supporting new business start-ups and their early survival

Business Gateway Fife (BGF) supported a total of **605 new business start-ups**, 42 more than the previous year and the highest number of any local authority area in Scotland by a significant margin (the next highest was Glasgow City with 490 starts). It is expected that this support will have helped create 894 new full-time equivalent jobs; 51% of starts supported were female-led businesses (see separate Business Gateway Report).

Business Gateway Fife also administered a **Start-up Grant scheme** on behalf of Fife Council. The scheme, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, provided 91 new businesses with grant support totalling £37,589.

Helping small-and medium-sized businesses to grow and expand

InvestFife, the collective external brand for all of the Service's economic development operations, helped existing businesses grow and become more resilient in the following ways:

- **Business Gateway Fife's business advisory services** supported over 1,100 established businesses and 2,000 new and pre-start businesses. Increased business rates and staffing costs were among the most common issues raised.
- **£284,000 of financial assistance** was given to 214 businesses which is estimated to have supported 218 jobs.
- **270 businesses were supported to attend and/or exhibit at 79 trade shows, exhibitions, learning journeys and sector events** including seven international trade events outwith the UK. Three International Trade Pathway training courses and two 'How to Sell at Trade Shows and Exhibitions' workshops were also delivered.
- Companies were helped to identify new market opportunities through **Trade Gap Analysis**, and **Cyber Gap Analysis** support enabled businesses to benchmark their cyber resilience and identify actions required to meet evolving customer, supply chain and regulatory requirements.
- 11 town centre and independent retail businesses participated in a **business support programme** covering marketing, digital transformation, e-commerce and premises optimisation.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Developing and strengthening supply chain opportunities

The Service's Economic Development Team delivered a programme of supply chain development activity which helped local businesses access new markets and strengthen commercial connections. This included:

- The **16th Annual Fife Business Week** whose 18 events were attended by over 800 people. Its sector-focused sessions helped businesses understand local supply chains and connect with buyers and partners.
- A new **collaboration with Business Babble** during Fife Business Week which produced a podcast episode "Inside Scotland's Most Supportive Entrepreneur Ecosystem," featuring local business owners which gained more than 200 views on YouTube.
- The third year of the **Build Fife Programme** which provided practical, expert-led workshops and 'Meet the Buyer' sessions to 13 construction-related businesses.
- A **Fife Defence Supplier Event**, attended by over 100 delegates and a **Defence Ready Programme** to strengthen the capability and competitiveness of Fife businesses within the defence sector supply chain.
- A **Food and Drink App Feasibility Study**, which identified support amongst producers for a dedicated platform to help residents and visitors discover local food and drink businesses and **Build Fife: Food and Drink Programme**, which developed the leadership, management and growth skills of local producers; both were part of the Team's activity in leading delivery of the Food Economy pillar of the council's [Food for Fife Strategy and Action Plan](#).

- Activity to increase awareness of future opportunities linked to the **Forth Green Freeport** where more than 20 active investor enquiries have the potential to generate supply chain opportunities for Fife businesses in advanced manufacturing, energy transition and logistics.

Driving Innovation

A programme of events and activities delivered by the Economic Development Team helped strengthen links between businesses and academia and improve access to funding and support. This included:

- An **Innovation Workshop** to help businesses explore European collaboration opportunities and funding pathways.
- A programme of **CeeD Best Practice Visits**, including a visit to Quaker Oats in Cupar.
- A series of workshops and tailored expert support delivered in partnership with Scottish Enterprise, SMAS, SP Technologies and The Data Lab through the **Automate to Accelerate** programme (funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund).

Supporting the transition to Net Zero

Business Gateway Fife's **Specialist Business Advice** programme, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, enabled five businesses to undertake energy efficiency audits; its **SME Development Grant Scheme** provided 11 businesses with grants which helped them reduce energy costs and progress towards net zero.

The **Forth Green Freeport Net Zero Charter** and governance framework are now in place, ensuring investment proposals support decarbonisation and fair work.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Attracting and supporting inward investment

The coordinated support provided to businesses by InvestFife - which brings together the Service's expertise in employment land, commercial property, business support, planning and skills - helped secure **£10.5 million of inward investment** into Fife.

The InvestFife Team contributed to the development of **regional investment propositions** for the Tay Cities Region and Edinburgh & South East Scotland, ensuring Fife's key investment opportunities, strategic sites and sector strengths are represented within Scotland's national inward investment offer. These propositions are promoted internationally by Scottish Development International thereby raising the profile of Fife's opportunities to investors considering Scotland as a business location.

Fife's investment offer was further promoted through participation at the UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiiF), where a Fife delegation showcased the region to developers, investors and industry leaders. A dedicated **UKREiiF Investment Prospectus** highlighted a portfolio of investment-ready sites and opportunities.

Using digital technologies to improve the efficiency of our business support services

The Economic Development Team increased its use of AI to improve the efficiency of its delivery of services to businesses, including using Copilot to minute meetings and summarise government strategies and action plans.

The team is also using tools such as Canva to create content which would previously have required the input of a Graphic Designer.

Developing enterprise and entrepreneurial skills in young people

72 different **Culture of Enterprises activities** were delivered to pupils at Fife schools. These included:

- A bespoke workshop for S5 and S6 pupils participating in **Young Enterprise Scotland**.
- Tailored **start-up talks and workshops** for Fife College students across courses including hair & beauty, 3D design, sound production, complementary therapies, and photography.
- The annual **Dragon's Den** final which saw young people from eight Fife schools present innovative social enterprise ideas to a panel of local business leaders. Delivered in partnership with the Social Enterprise Academy and Developing the Young Workforce Fife, the programme helped participants build confidence and develop enterprise, employability and presentation skills while fostering creativity, teamwork and social responsibility.
- A takeover day at the Dunfermline Learning Campus to show S2/S3 pupils the wide variety of jobs that are available in the **Food and Drink and Hospitality sectors**.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Areas for Improvement

In order to maximise the economic development opportunities of the **Mossmorran site**, the Economic Development Team will work with Scottish Enterprise and ExxonMobil to develop and implement a coordinated process to capture, assess and respond to business and investor enquiries.

To **ensure its support is responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges**, the Economic Development Team will expand its programme of sector forums and roundtable discussions to strengthen its dialogue with key industries. The Service will use market intelligence, business engagement and sector insights to inform future priorities and the delivery of its trade development, innovation, inward investment and business growth support

Feedback from businesses indicates that navigating support remains complex. To address this, the Economic Development Team will continue to **improve the customer journey for businesses, entrepreneurs and investors** by strengthening collaboration across Economic Development, Business Gateway Fife and partner organisations, ensuring businesses can more easily access the advice, funding and support required at each stage of their growth journey.

Whilst business survival rates are increasing, only just over half of all new businesses in Fife survive for the first three years. **Building resilience at the start-up stage** is a key factor in improving long-term business survival. Business Gateway Fife is therefore currently piloting new delivery approaches to enable its advisers to dedicate more intensive one-to-one support to businesses that are approaching launch or have recently started trading, helping them navigate this critical early phase of development. Business Gateway

Fife is also exploring new ways of strengthening continuity of support as businesses mature, including the automatic referral of start-up clients to a Growth Adviser after 12–18 months of trading. This will help ensure businesses continue to receive tailored advice and growth support at a crucial stage in their development, rather than relying on business owners to re-engage with the service themselves.

In order to target support towards sectors and projects with the greatest potential to deliver sustainable economic growth and high-value employment in Fife, further work will be undertaken to **identify and respond to opportunities arising from the UK Modern Industrial Strategy, Scotland's Defence Strategy and the transition to net zero**,

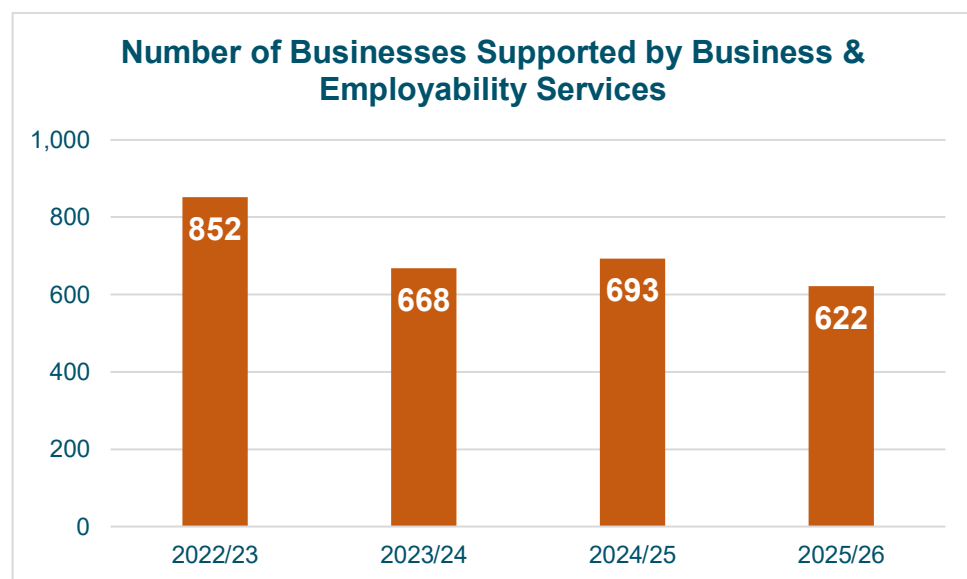
Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Relevant KPI details

Business Support

In 2025/26, over 600 individual businesses received direct support from the Service. The number of businesses supported was lower than in previous years due to the conclusion of some grant funding which supported this activity. In addition, most financial support is now delivered by Business Gateway Fife.

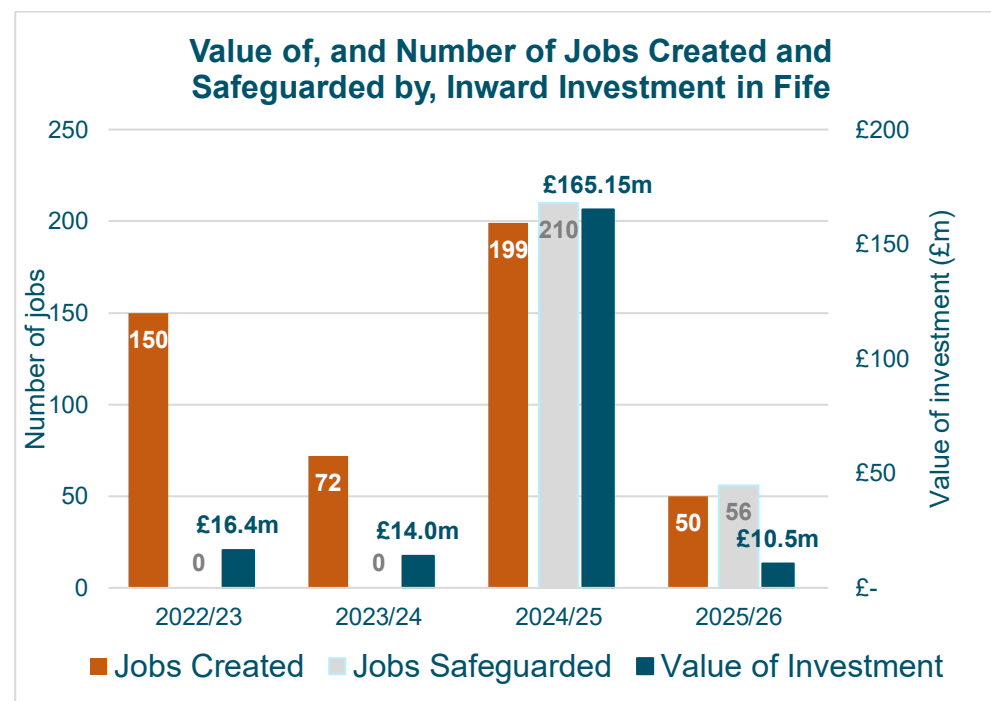
This support – advice, financial support or referral to another agency – is additional to the support which was given to over 3,100 businesses by Business Gateway Fife's Advisors. Examples of some of the support given to businesses can be seen [here](#).



Inward Investment

As a result of the support provided to new and existing businesses by InvestFife, £10.5m of inward investment was secured for Fife during 2025/26, investment that is estimated to create and/or safeguard 106 jobs. An additional 136 jobs were created/safeguarded by indigenous investment.

As can be seen from the graph below, the previous year (2024/25) was an outlier year with a higher number of investments overall and two major investments (TagEnergy's battery energy storage facility at Pitkevy and Navantia UK's acquisition of Harland & Wolff's UK facilities) accounting for the majority of the investment value.



Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 2

Creating Thriving Places

The Service has supported the Directorate's shift towards a place-based approach and in response to the need to modernise Fife's business infrastructure and address high town centre vacancy rates, it has continued to access and deliver significant capital investment in infrastructure and place. The impact of investment in tourism marketing and infrastructure is reflected in increased visitor numbers and spend.

Progress

Providing high-quality, modern business premises

The Service continued to deliver new and refurbished business units to help businesses start-up and grow. This included the completion of a **new nine-unit business park at Fife Interchange North**, constructing new units at John Smith Business Park in Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth Business Park along with the refurbishment of units at Queensway Industrial Estate in Glenrothes as part of the Fife Industrial Innovation Investment (Fifei3) Programme part-funded by the Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Region Deal.

Funding from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund was used to make improvements to Lomond House at the John Smith Business Park and install new signs at Mitchelston Industrial Estate.

The Service also directly manages a portfolio of **403 office and industrial units** across 45 locations in Fife which support more than 300 businesses. Between March 2022 and April 2026, the portfolio's bad debt was reduced by 85% from £221,184 to £32,561.

Around £13 million of **Fife Green Freeport** seed capital funding has been secured for projects at the Rosyth tax site to address infrastructure gaps and improve the site's investment readiness. In 2025/26, work focused on advancing the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus (AGIC), developing a new integrated energy infrastructure system and carrying out a feasibility study for a Rosyth rail freight line.

Developing serviced employment land sites and bringing vacant & derelict land and buildings back into productive use

The council's £1.7m award from the Scottish Government **Vacant and Derelict Land Fund** was used to support around 10 separate initiatives across Fife including the demolition of derelict buildings at Albany Gate, Glenrothes.

In 2025, there were 187 sites of vacant and derelict land across Fife amounting to 608 hectares, **98 fewer hectares than in 2024**. Whilst over half of this reduction was due to the reclassification of the status of a number of sites, 43 hectares were brought back into productive use compared to 13 hectares the previous year.

Funding from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund was used to complete site servicing at **Levenmouth Business Park**.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Delivering place-based investment to help revitalise and re-purpose Fife's key town and city centres

The Service's Town Centre Team delivered place-based investment and practical interventions to support town centre resilience across Fife. This included:

- Progressing heritage-led regeneration projects in **Inverkeithing** (now at practical completion), advancing delivery phase applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic Environment Scotland for a **Buckhaven Built Heritage Programme** and supporting a successful application to Historic Environment Scotland to establish a new **City Heritage Trust for Dunfermline**.
- Using funding from the Scottish Government's **Place-Based Investment Programme** to support the development of Dunfermline's Bruce Square, new visitor facilities at Silver Sands and the regeneration of Cowdenbeath Town House.
- Completing a HM Treasury Green Book Outline Business Case and accompanying masterplan for **Dunfermline Abbey** and its wider precinct. Activity is ongoing to identify and secure funding to support this programme.
- Starting the development of an HM Treasury Green Book Outline Business Case on behalf of the **Pittencrieff Park** Ambitions Group, to explore potential commercial opportunities and review governance and operational management arrangements.
- Undertaking work to develop a spatial masterplan and supporting strategy for **Dunfermline City Centre**, building on the adopted Design and Development Framework, the

outcomes of the Citizens' Assembly, and wider strategic documentation.

- **Delivering targeted support to town centre businesses and property owners** through building improvement programmes and training initiatives delivered in partnership with InvestFife and Business Gateway Fife (See Priority 1).
- Launching **the Vacant Shops Academy in Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy** as part of work to test meanwhile use/pop-up shop initiatives and other non-retail uses to support the reoccupation of empty units.

Supporting and delivering investment in tourism infrastructure and events

The Service carried out the council's consultation on the implementation of a Visitor Levy and led the following key achievements under the 4 priority strands of the [Fife Tourism Strategy](#):

1. Place

- Delivery of the third year of the '**The Kingdom - Where it All Begins**' marketing campaign (which received 8.3 million impressions); a Dunfermline specific promotional campaign; and golf activity including the launch of a dedicated online resource and partnership with Bunkered magazine.
- **Product development** including discovery walking trails, cycle route maps, an art trail, Pilgrim Passport, and a film about Fife's drinks industry.
- Strategic work into **developing Fife's events sector** - growing local events, attracting bigger national/international events, and working with partners to develop Fife's business tourism (MICE market).

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

- Securing **Coach Friendly accreditation** for Dunfermline.
- Completing infrastructure works at **Aberdour Silver Sands** providing improved parking, accessible boardwalks and paths and refurbished toilets.
- Continuing to promote visitor opportunities at the **Forth Bridges** and leading the revision of the The Forth Bridge World Heritage Site Management Plan endorsed by Cabinet Committee in August 2026.

2. People

Activity included the launch of a **free online training portal** for Fife's hospitality businesses, and participation in a **Regional Tay Country Tourism Conference** and **HospitaliTAY** – a major initiative led by Fife College to tackle long-standing and emerging skills shortages across the hospitality sector in the Tay Cities Region.

3. Business

A programme of business showcases, seminars and networking events was delivered along with **business grant schemes** for digital capability (£40k), green tourism (£30k) and market development (9 awards).

Work with the **travel trade** included attending trade shows, building relationships with travel agents and buyers, delivering FAM trips and developing itineraries.

4. Sustainability

Implementation of the **Fife Tourism Climate Action Plan** has started following its launch in autumn 2025. Welcome to Fife secured a place in the pilot VisitScotland Sustainable Destinations Programme to help deliver the Action Plan.

Areas for Improvement

The Service will continue to participate in the development and delivery of **place-based projects and programmes, masterplans and HM Treasury Green Book business cases**, monitoring and responding to emerging funding programmes and making best use of the resources available to deliver modern business premises, employment land and heritage-led regeneration and town and city centre renewal across Fife.

In response to continuing high vacancy rates in some town centres, the Town Centre Team will deliver **practical short- and long-term interventions to address vacant and underutilised properties**, including meanwhile uses, business support initiatives and the Vacant Shops Academy, and will support the creation and activation of **high-quality public spaces** that increase footfall, dwell time and community activity.

The Service's Business Property Portfolio will investigate ways of **providing more support for its tenant businesses**.

The Tourism Team's focus will be on regional working, sustainability/inclusion, accessibility, securing increased awareness of Fife as a destination and building stronger relationships with the travel trade. Golf will also be a focus with The Open returning to St Andrews in 2027.

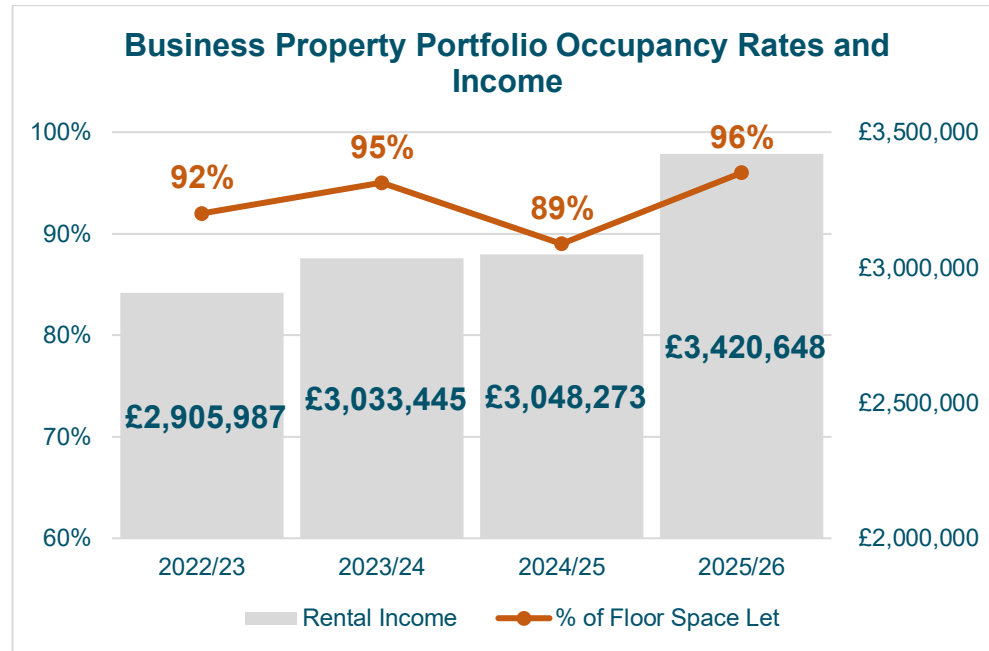
A report on the outcome of the consultation on a potential **Transient Visitor Levy** will be taken to Cabinet Committee later this year.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Relevant KPI details

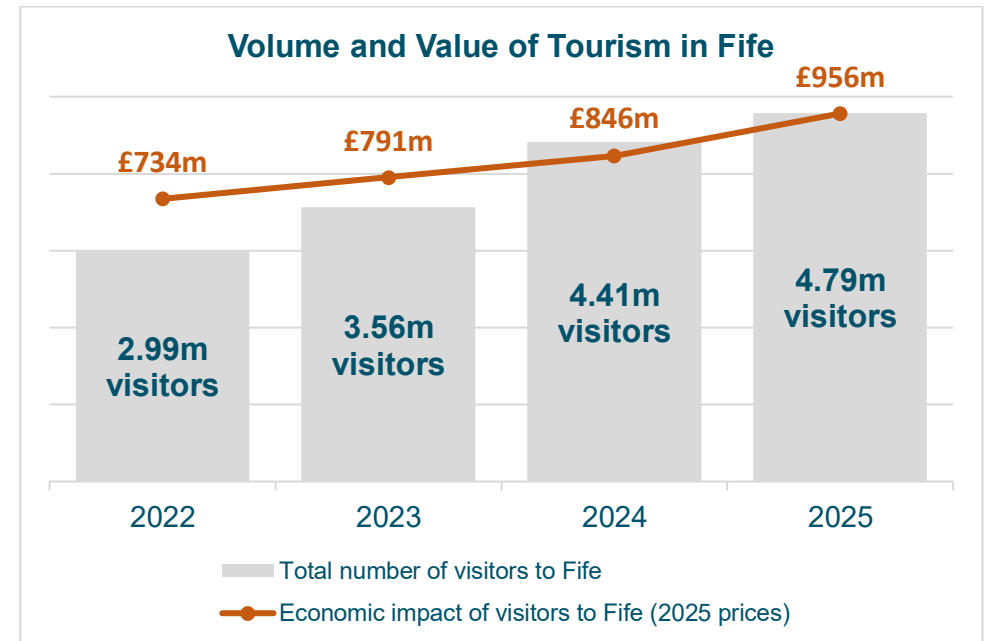
Business Property Portfolio

At the end of 2025/26, 96% of the floorspace and 93% of the units in the Service's Business Property Portfolio were occupied. The units brought in over £3.4m in rental income to the council.



Tourism

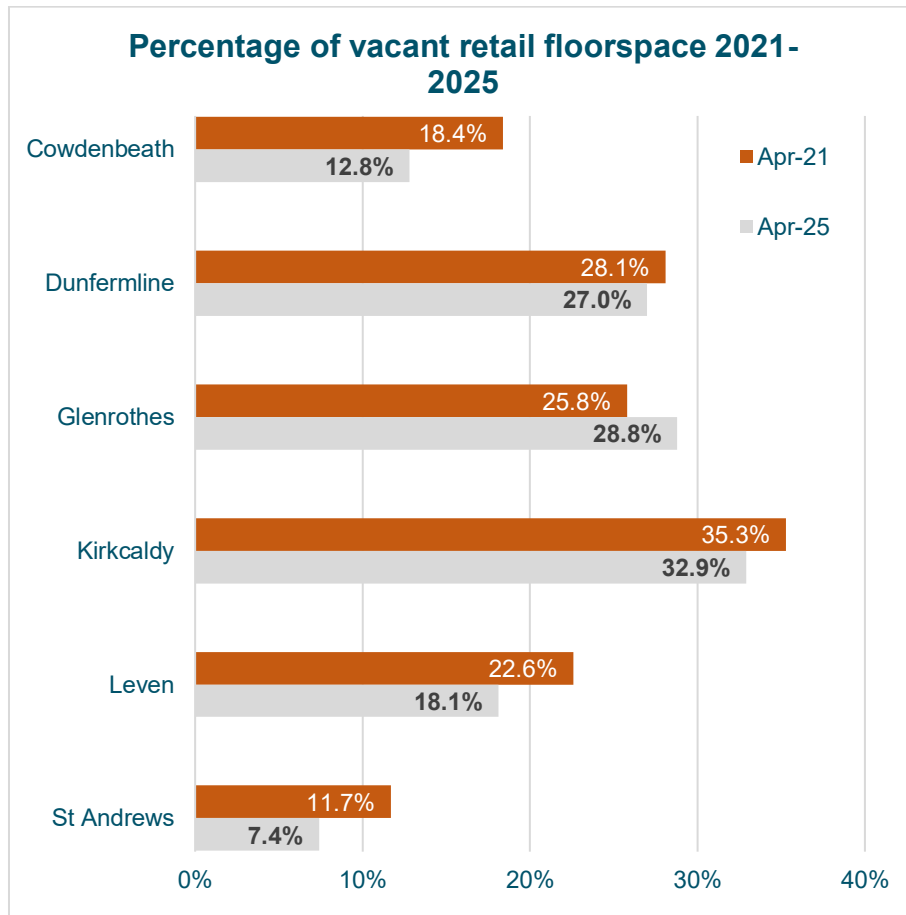
Tourism in Fife grew strongly in 2025, delivering an 8.6% increase in visitor numbers and bringing in £956 million to the local economy - 13% more than the previous year in real terms.



Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Town Centre Vacancy Rates

The amount of vacant floorspace fell between 2021 and 2025 in all of Fife's key town centres apart from in Glenrothes. Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Dunfermline have the highest vacancy rates.



Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 3

Delivering Skills, Training and Fair Employment

Despite low levels of unemployment in Fife, a significant number of people face multiple barriers to meaningful employment and businesses in certain sectors find it hard to recruit and retain staff with the right skills. There are persistently high rates of people claiming out-of-work benefits in Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy and Levenmouth. The Service has responded to these challenges by targeting its employability support to the people and communities where it is needed most.

Progress

Targeting enhanced employability support to those most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market

Fife's Local Employability Partnership, the **Opportunities Fife Partnership**, supported over 4,000 people on their employability pathway.

Employability Services delivered a broad programme of activity which helped people across Fife build skills, confidence, work experience and routes into fair, sustainable employment. Support was targeted at people experiencing barriers to work, including young people, adults with health conditions or disabilities, people furthest from the labour market and those requiring additional support.

Key activity included:

- **Inclusive recruitment and Life Chances Plus** provided alternative routes into entry-level employment while supporting employers to fill hard-to-fill posts. During 2025/26, Life Chances Plus supported 106 starts with placements in Fife Council services, NHS Fife and the third sector.
- **Supported employment and specialist support** delivered tailored keyworker support, employability preparation, mental health support, work placements, qualifications and in-work support. Over the past year, 466 young people accessed this support, 121 of whom achieved paid jobs and a further 320 other positive outcomes. The **Positive Pathways** programme supported 158 adults, 76 of whom progressed into paid employment.
- **Sector-based Skills Academies** delivered practical, short-term training linked to employment opportunities and sector needs. In 2025/26, 81 individuals participated in 14 academies in construction, digital, cooking, adult social care, geospatial, creative music and film. As these programmes are designed as a stepping stone on the employability pathway, most participants continued to receive ongoing support, although 30% moved into work.
- **Matrix Fife** continued to provide supported work opportunities for individuals whose health conditions and disabilities are a barrier to work. In 2025/26, Matrix supported four Positive Pathways groups and continued to develop commercial and public sector contract activity to sustain supported employment opportunities, including a supply and fit contract at Fife Council's new Cupar care

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

home, upholstery work for Edinburgh Council, furniture and soft furnishings for schools in Edinburgh and care homes in Fife and involvement with Warp-it refurbishments.

Ensuring school and college leavers have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to move on to positive destinations

85 **Modern Apprenticeship** places were supported, 65 within Fife Council and 20 with other employers.

201 **Foundation Apprenticeships** were supported, 164 of which are on track to be completed – 138 within the Children and Young People Framework and 26 within the Health and Social Care Framework.

Encouraging the adoption of inclusive employment and fair work practices

The 23rd **Fife Business Diversity Awards** took place in December 2025. Organised by the Supported Employment Service, the awards showcased the success of people who have faced overwhelming challenges on their journey to find and stay in work, and the employers who create diverse workforces by providing opportunities for all.

The **Forth Green Freeport Fair Work and Skills Charter** requires all tax site investors to commit to fair work and skills outcomes

Monitoring and Responding to Current and Future Workforce Skills Needs

The Forth Green Freeport (FGF) Fair Work and Skills Strategy is being delivered through governance arrangements that connect employers, education providers and the public sector. In 2025/26, work focused on the FGF Skills Fund, workforce and skills analysis,

engagement with training providers and planning for current and future skills needs across priority sectors. The Service's Economic Development Team helps align employer and sector demand with skills provision and workforce development, including opportunities linked to advanced manufacturing and wider sector growth.

Increase the scale & range of Community Wealth Building benefits achieved through public sector procurement contracts

The Service played a key role in embedding Community Wealth Building approaches across economic development activity, helping maximise the local economic benefit from public investment and procurement, strengthening local supply chains and supporting Fair Work ambitions

Areas for Improvement

The Service will continue to work closely with partners to deliver employability support where it's needed most, especially in communities experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage. The **Opportunities Fife Partnership** will be used as the central structure for governance, partnership alignment and strategic direction for employability provision in Fife and its focus on wider skills needs and strategic alignment will be strengthened.

Key areas of work will be:

- As a result of ongoing funding uncertainty, continuing to **protect employability pathway capacity**, particularly as delivery remains heavily shaped by No One Left Behind and multiple funding streams.

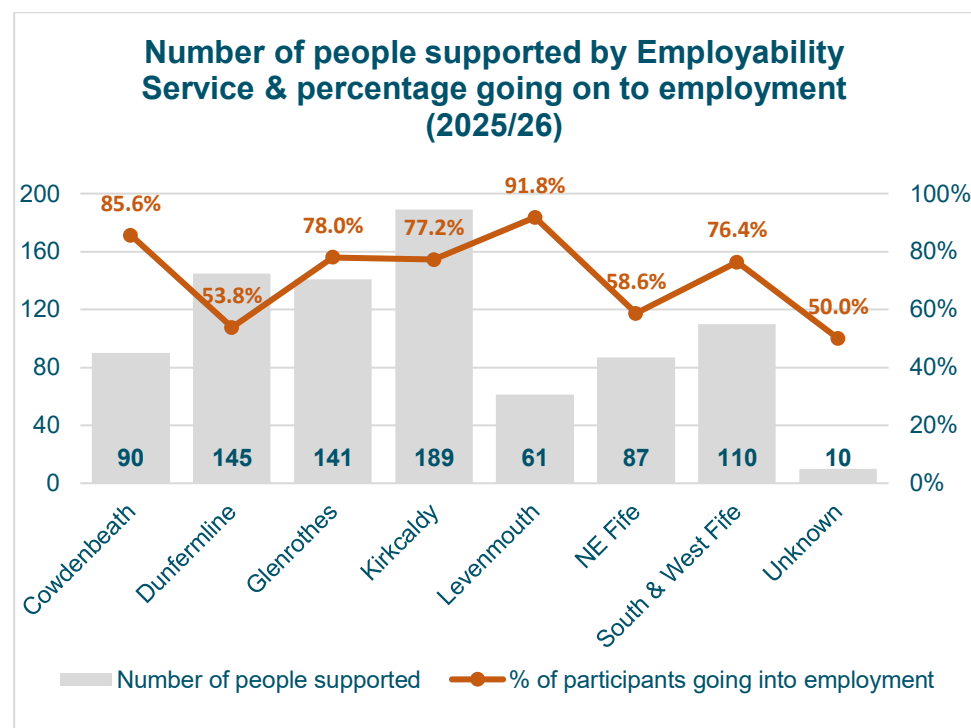
Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

- In response to a still overcrowded and fragmented landscape, **simplifying access to support** for residents and providers and **reducing complexity** across the pathway.
- To reduce duplication, improve efficiency and ensure resources are targeted at the groups and places with greatest need, **strengthening links** between employability delivery, Fair Work, local labour market demand, employer skills needs and place-based priorities.
- In recognition of the need for more information on the outcomes of clients in work, **strengthening the evidence base around sustained fair work outcomes**, not only immediate positive destinations, including the impact of in-work support and progression.
- Some parts of Fife such as Cowdenbeath and Levenmouth have seen lower registrations on our employability programmes. By taking a **place-based approach to delivery** we will ensure access to employability programmes in these areas is increased. This work will include working through local community venues, trusted third sector partners and outreach activity, while simplifying referral routes and ensuring communities with the highest levels of disadvantage and lowest engagement with employability support remain a key focus.

Relevant KPI details

Participants on Employability Programmes

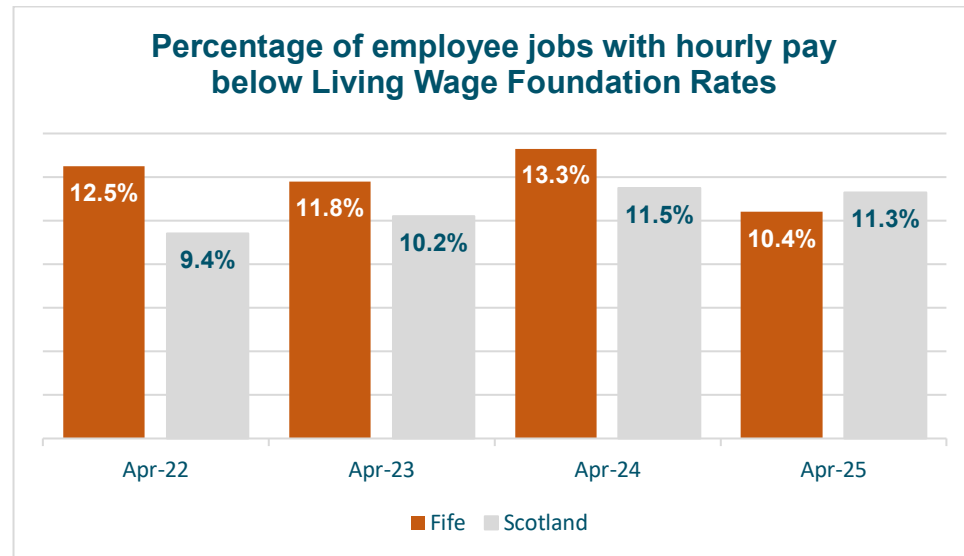
There were 833 participants on employability programmes delivered by Employability Services, 607 or 73% of whom went on to find employment.



Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Employees paid less than the Real Living Wage

An estimated 10.4% of employees working in Fife aged 18 and over earned less than the real living wage in April 2025. This was the lowest level recorded in Fife and, for the first time since 2020, the Fife rate was below the Scottish rate.



Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Priority 4

Working in Collaboration and Partnership

The Service leads and manages the council's involvement in a number of local, regional and national partnerships. It influences the development and delivery of local and regional policy through the robust evidence base it maintains and monitors through its land use audits, labour market and business base intelligence and economic investment propositions.

Progress

Opportunities Fife Partnership

The Service manages Fife's Local Employability Partnership - the Opportunities Fife Partnership - overseeing delivery of its Employability Pathway. Over the last 12 months it has strengthened partnership delivery, targeting support where need was greatest, and aligning employability activity with tackling poverty, inclusive growth, Fair Work and improved life chances.

Tourism

The Service also leads and manages the business-led Welcome to Fife Industry Leadership Group, supports Fife's six Local Tourist Associations and chairs Cruise Forth, the volunteer-led organisation set up to maximise the benefit of cruise visitors to Fife.

Forth Green Freeport (FGF)

Following the UK Government's approval of the FGF's Full Business Case in December, the project has moved into delivery phase unlocking £25 million in seed funding, including £13 million for projects in the Rosyth tax site. The Economic Development Team has shaped and influenced the programme's development and is now helping drive forward delivery ensuring its impact is optimised for Fife.

Tay Cities Region Deal

The Service leads DigiTay, the Deal's regional digital and data programme; since the project launched in 2023, 704 people in Fife have been supported through digital skills training. The Service's Tourism Team has actively participated in a number of regional tourism projects including Scotland's Tay Country Inclusive Tourism Programme which is providing training for local businesses to better serve disabled travellers, older adults, and their families. The Service also provides an assurance role for existing projects within the Tay Cities Region Deal, such as Eden Campus and the Stretch Dome Simulator.

Edinburgh & South-East Scotland (ESES) City Region Deal

The Service manages the City Region Deal's ten-year £59 million Fife i3 Programme, which is helping to expand the supply of modern business space and serviced employment land across Mid and South Fife. New business units totalling 6,238 sqm have been built in Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy, Levenmouth, Dalgety Bay and Dunfermline, supporting 215 jobs to date. In addition, 6.58 hectares of employment land has been serviced, with some sites sold to the private sector in Dalgety Bay, Dunfermline and Lochgelly. The programme gives priority to businesses that demonstrate innovation

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

and are committed to Fair Work, paying the Real Living Wage, and to Low Carbon policies, helping to ensure high-quality employment and long-term economic resilience in Fife.

Mossmorran

The Service manages the Task Force set up following the closure of ExxonMobil's plant at Mossmorran to support the plant's workforce and contractors and to secure a future productive use for the site.

Triple Helix Collaborations

The Economic Development Team continued to strengthen Fife's triple helix approach, bringing together the public sector, academia and industry to support innovation, business growth and advanced manufacturing. This included supporting collaborative funding bids with the University of St Andrews through the Local Innovation Partnership Fund and with the University of Strathclyde through the proposed UK Centre for Quantum Commercialisation Skills, alongside working with partners to secure £5 million of UK Government investment through the Scotland Defence Growth Deal for the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus (AGIC) in Rosyth. These collaborations are helping to strengthen Fife's innovation ecosystem, improve access to expertise and funding, support SME growth and develop the skills needed for future industries.

Continuing to make the case for additional funding & investment in Fife

Over £13m of external funding was secured for 59 different economic development and employability projects, in addition to £7.45m received for the Fife i3 Programme from the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal

The Service continued to influence Scottish and UK Government economic policy and fiscal strategy through its response to national consultations, membership of professional bodies (such as the Economic Development Association Scotland (EDAS), Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED), Scottish Cities Alliance, Prosper, and CoSLA), involvement with representative groups (such as the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) and the Improvement Service), and regional economic partnership engagement through both the Edinburgh & South East Scotland and Tay Cities Regional Deals.

Continuing to develop a robust evidence base of the Fife economy that helps to inform strategy and evaluate impact

Annual Local Area Economic Profiles are produced analysing the latest labour market and business base trends in Fife and in each of the council's seven committee areas. The latest profiles can be seen [here](#).

Other publications include [quarterly labour market updates](#), an annual [Business Base Report](#) and [economic investment propositions](#).

The Service carried out its [annual audits of housing, employment and vacant and derelict land](#). It also continued to deliver the council's street naming and numbering statutory responsibilities.

Performance assessment – Priorities & Progress

Areas for Improvement

In order to maximise the opportunities arising from the move to regional scale working the Service will **continue to scope what Regional Partnerships will mean for the council**. In particular it will work with the Edinburgh and SE Scotland and Tay Cities Regional Partnerships to benefit from funding for business and employability support from the Local Growth Fund.

As a result of the uncertain and constrained funding environment (see Priorities for 2026/27 below), the Service will **prioritise securing funding** from alternative sources in order to sustain its services, maintain delivery capacity and support the council's ambitions for inclusive economic growth.

To ensure communities benefit from the opportunities arising from the **Fife Green Freeport**, the Service's Economic Development Team will work across partners and stakeholders, including through skills and workforce planning, community awareness activity and collaboration with local partners.

To better align their work with the council's spatial planning functions, annual housing and land use audits and the council's street naming and numbering statutory responsibilities are being moved to the Planning, Climate and Sustainability Service

Performance assessment – Operational delivery

Overview of progress

The results against the Service's current key performance indicators can be found in Appendix 1 and online at www.fife.gov.uk/councilperformance

Progress

Business and Employability Services monitor several indicators to measure both the health of Fife's economy and progress in delivering its interventions.

As can be seen from the Service's key indicators in Appendix 1:

- The Service is performing well in terms of the support it gives to businesses and those out of work.
- Fife's tourism industry continues to grow sustainably.
- Vacancy rates are below target rates in Fife's key town centres apart from in Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes.
- Although Fife's labour market weakened over the year with a fall in employment, earnings increased and unemployment remains lower than the rate for Scotland overall.
- Whilst business survival rates are increasing, only just over half of new businesses survive for the first three years.
- The Service's workforce has a high rate of working days lost and employee turnover.

A dashboard of health-check indicators was developed for the Fife Partnership's Economy and CWB Delivery Board in order to monitor or 'take the pulse of' the performance of Fife's economy (Appendix 2). From this, it can be seen that:

- Fife's economy is performing within the top ten of Scotland's local authorities for only one indicator – the percentage of employee jobs paid below the real living wage.
- Fife's overall labour market performance and productivity are average but largely improving.
- In terms of business growth, levels of poverty and youth unemployment, Fife is currently performing in the worst ten of Scotland's 32 Local Authorities.

Challenges

The latest forecasts from the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) point to a subdued outlook for the UK economy over the next two years. Growth is expected to remain modest, at around 0.9% in 2026, while inflation could rise in the short term, peaking at 3.8% as higher energy and shipping costs have an impact on prices. Unemployment is expected to increase reflecting ongoing cost pressures and structural changes like the adoption of AI. These trends are likely to affect younger workers most with youth

unemployment forecast to rise in the coming years as entry-level opportunities become more limited².

Areas for improvement

Having an accurate, detailed and up-to-date evidence base is crucial in developing economic policy and to ensuring interventions are targeted to where they are needed most.

The Service is therefore in the process of reviewing the indicators it monitors to improve both the way in which it tracks and reports its performance and progress in delivering economic development and employability interventions and how agilely it identifies and responds to changes in market need and the challenges and opportunities facing Fife's economy.

² [Skills Development Scotland Economy, People and Skills Report July 2026](#)

Our year ahead

Priorities for 2026/27

2026/27 will see a significant change in the external funding available for the interventions Business and Employability Services deliver.

The conclusion of UK Shared Prosperity Fund revenue support, introduction of the UK Government's new Local Growth Fund through Regional Partnerships, reshaping of the Tay Cities Deal together with shifts to more localised funding, create a more uncertain and constrained funding environment for the Service. While these funding streams continue to provide important opportunities, they will not replicate the scale, flexibility or direct revenue support previously available through UKSPF. As a result, there is a short-term transition issue and a potential wider medium-term requirement to secure recurring funding in order to sustain Business and Employability services, maintain delivery capacity and support the council's ambitions for green and inclusive economic growth.

Activity will require to move to focused, place-based delivery and impact will be maximised by concentrating the Service's effort, capital investment and partnership activity on a smaller number of priority places, sites and sectors where regeneration can directly unlock business growth, employment and private sector investment and on delivering employability support where it is needed most.

The Service will also continue to lead Fife's transition to a low carbon economy.

Supporting Businesses

- Work with Scottish Enterprise and ExxonMobil to help to maximise future investment and economic development opportunities of the Mossmorran site.
- Expand the programme of sector forums and roundtable discussions to ensure support is responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges.
- Prioritise trade development, innovation, inward investment and business growth support, using market intelligence, business engagement and sector insights to inform future priorities and service delivery.
- Ensure businesses can more easily access the advice, funding and support required at each stage of their growth journey.
- Pilot new approaches to help build businesses' resilience at the start-up stage to improve long-term business survival
- Identify and respond to opportunities arising from the UK Modern Industrial Strategy, Scotland's Defence Strategy and the transition to net zero.

Thriving Places

- Continue to participate in the development and delivery of place-based projects and programmes, masterplans and HM Treasury Green Book business cases, monitoring and responding to emerging funding programmes and making best use of the resources available to deliver modern business

premises, employment land and heritage-led regeneration and town and city centre renewal across Fife.

- Progress the delivery of practical short- and long-term interventions to address town centre vacancies and underutilised properties.
- Investigate ways of providing more support for tenant businesses in the Service's Business Property Portfolio.
- Focus tourism activity on regional working, sustainability/inclusion, accessibility, securing increased awareness of Fife as a destination and building stronger relationships with the travel trade. Golf will also be a focus with The Open returning to St Andrews in 2027.
- Report on the outcome of the consultation on a potential Transient Visitor Levy to Cabinet Committee.

Delivering Skills, Training and Fair Work

- Continue to use the Opportunities Fife Partnership as the central structure for employability provision in Fife, while strengthening its focus on wider skills needs and strategic alignment provision in Fife.
- Continue to protect employability pathway capacity and respond to ongoing funding uncertainty.
- Simplify access to support for residents and partners and reduce complexity across the pathway.
- Reduce duplication, improve efficiency and ensure resources are targeted at the groups and places with greatest need by improving links between employability delivery, Fair Work, local labour market demand, employer skills needs and place-based priorities.

- Increase access to employability programmes in parts of Fife where programme registrations have been lower by taking a place-based approach to delivery.
- Strengthen the evidence base around sustained fair work outcomes, not only immediate positive destinations, including the impact of in-work support and progression.

Working in Collaboration and Partnership

- The Service will continue to scope what Regional Partnerships will mean for the council in order to maximise the opportunities arising from the move to regional scale working.
- Work with the Edinburgh and SE Scotland and Tay Cities Regional Partnerships to benefit from funding for business and employability support from the Local Growth Fund.
- Identify and secure alternative sources of revenue funding in order to sustain Business and Employability services.
- Ensure communities benefit from the opportunities arising from the Fife Green Freeport, through skills and workforce planning, community awareness activity and collaboration with local partners to maximise local participation and benefit.

Reference links

[Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-2030](#)

[Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit 2025](#)

[Fife Tourism Strategy 2023-2030](#)

[Scottish Economic Bulletin: July 2026, Office of the Chief Economic Adviser, Scottish Government](#)

[Skills Development Scotland Economy, People and Skills Report June 2026](#)

Appendix 1 – Key indicators

Key KPI Status:  OK  Warning  Alert  Data only  Unknown **Trend:**  Improving  No change  Getting worse

Customer (Business Support)

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target	Status	Long Trend
New Business Start-ups supported by Business Gateway Fife	603	503	614	562	605	600		
Businesses supported by Council Economic Development activities - Fife	963	852	668	693	622	424		
Number of existing businesses supported by Business Gateway Fife	N/A	1,868	2,789	1,505	3,106	1,200		

Other Service Operations

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target	Status	Long Trend
Percentage of participants on Fife Council employability programmes progressing into employment	N/A	N/A	N/A	15.1%	55.4%	44.1%		
Percentage of participants on Fife Council employability programmes progressing to a positive destination	N/A	N/A	N/A	14.8%	66.0%	27.8%		
Number of sites (part or whole) removed from Fife's Vacant & Derelict Land Register	N/A	9	13	5	17	Target not appropriate		

Plan for Fife (P4F) Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target	Status	Long Trend
New businesses surviving at least 3 years (%) Fife (P4F)	55.5%	44.8%	54.2%	54.1%	Data not yet available	50%	✓	↑
Total Visitor Numbers to Fife (All Visitors) (millions) (P4F)	1.89m	2.99m	3.56m	4.41m	4.79m	4.5m	✓	↑
Economic Impact of Tourism in Fife (All Visitors) (£millions) (STEAM)	£461.44m	£734.49m	£790.55m	£846.31m	£956.12m	£863.24m	✓	↑
Total FTE Employment Supported by Tourism in Fife	7,752	10,135	10,824	11,403	12,588	11,631	✓	↑
Retail vacancy rate (%) Kirkcaldy	35.3%	31.0%	28.5%	28.7%	32.9%	30.9%	●	↓
Retail vacancy rate (%) Leven	22.6%	13.5%	21.0%	15.5%	18.1%	18.2%	✓	↑
Retail vacancy rate (%) Dunfermline	28.1%	28.8%	29.2%	28.1%	27.0%	28.6%	✓	↑
Retail vacancy rate (%) Glenrothes	25.8%	24.5%	24.3%	26.4%	28.8%	25.4%	●	↓
Retail vacancy rate (%) Cowdenbeath	18.4%	15.0%	12.4%	13.6%	12.8%	14.9%	✓	↑
Retail vacancy rate (%) St Andrews	11.7%	8.0%	4.6%	6.7%	7.4%	7.8%	✓	↑
Median Weekly workplace Earning - Fife(P4F)	£597.80	£573.30	£631.40	£694.40	£741.20	£722.87	✓	↑
Median Weekly Resident Earnings - Fife(P4F)	£610.60	£604.30	£681.50	£732	£763.30	£762.01	✓	↑
Employment Rate (P4F)	69.3%	74.1%	75.4%	75.1%	73.5%	74.6%	▲	↑
Unemployment rate (%) Fife (P4F)	3.7%	3.9%	3.4%	3.6%	3.8%	4.0%	✓	↓
Number of Participants progressing from FC Funded/operated employability programmes into employment	1,455	855	740	2,432	2,019	Target not appropriate	○	↑

Resources

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Target	Status	Long Trend
Average WDL per FTE	8.65	9.67	11.29	9.69	14.36	9.6		
Average Long Term WDL per FTE	6.99	6.98	7.51	6.6	11.54	6.5		
Workforce who are Female (%)	45.1%	47.4%	46.9%	54.7%	50.0%	Target not appropriate		
Workforce who are Full-time (%)	76.0%	79.2%	77.0%	74.2%	73.6%	Target not appropriate		
Workforce who are Permanent Employees (%)	77.7%	76.3%	74.2%	71.6%	68.5%	Target not appropriate		
Employee Turnover	N/A	N/A	15.02%	14.21%	16.20%	10%		
Employees aged 24 and under (%)	13.70%	6.4%	9.9%	6.8%	9.7%	Target not appropriate		
Employees aged 25 to 39 (%)	23.4%	29.5%	27.2%	28.4%	29.6%	Target not appropriate		
Employees aged 40 to 54 (%)	31.4%	33.5%	31.5%	33.2%	31.0%	Target not appropriate		
Employees aged 55 and over (%)	31.4%	30.6%	31.5%	32.6%	30%	Target not appropriate		
Number of Voluntary Redundancies (FTEs)	0	0	0	0	0	Target not appropriate		
Number of WYI Bids	0	0	3	1	0	Target not appropriate		
Number of WYI Programme new starts	0	0	2	1	0	Target not appropriate		

Local Government Benchmarking Framework Indicators

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Family Group Av 2024-25	Target	Status	Long Trend
Proportion of people earning less than the living wage (LGBF)	17%	12.5%	11.8%	10.4%	12.9%	10.2%		
Proportion of properties receiving Superfast Broadband (LGBF)	96.2%	97.5%	98.3%	98.9%	96.7%	97.1%		
Immediate available employment land as a % of total land allocated for employment purposes (LGBF)	3.31%	3.72%	4.46%	3.53%	17.4%	Target not appropriate		
Claimant Count as a % of Working Age Population (P4F)	4.1%	3.6%	3.3%	3.4%	2.9%	3.1%		

Appendix 2 – Economy & Community Wealth Building Dashboard

Economy & Community Wealth Building Dashboard				
Healthcheck Indicators – Measures to help us ‘take the pulse’ of Fife’s economy				
Outcome		Indicator	Latest data & performance compared with other Scottish Local Authorities	Recent Fife Trend
A Stronger, More Resilient Economy	Jobs Growth	Jobs density – number of jobs per resident aged 16-64 (2024)	0.70	↑
	Higher Rates of Enterprise/Business Growth	Business density – number of businesses per 10,000 resident adults (2025)	282	↓
		New business starts per 10,000 of the population* (2024)	39	↓
		3-year business survival rate (2021-2024)	54.1%	↑
	More productive economy	Number of social enterprises per 10,000 of the population* (2024)	7	↓
A Fairer Economy	Fairer Work	Gross Value Added (GVA) per job filled (2023)	£58,403	↑
		Employment Rate (Apr 2025 – Mar 2026)	73.5%	↓
	Less Poverty	Economic Inactivity Rate (Apr 2025-Mar 2026)	23.9%	↑
		% working age population with RQF4+ (HNC, Advanced Higher+) (2025)	51.3%	↑
	Lower Youth Unemployment	% employee jobs paid below the real living wage (2025)	10.4%	↓
A Greener Economy	More school leavers achieving a positive destination	Gender pay gap % (2025)	5.2	↓
		% children living in relative low-income households after housing costs (2025)	16.2%	↓
	Stronger Communities	% working age pop claiming out-of-work benefits (2025/26)	3.1%	↓
		% 16–19-year-olds in education, employment or training (2025)	91.4%	↑
	Longer Visitor Stays	% of Fife school leavers achieving a positive initial destination (2024/25 school leavers)	96.6%	↑
A Greener Economy	Lower Emissions	Number of assets in community ownership per 10,000 of the pop* (2024)	1.2	↓
	Longer Visitor Stays	Per capita industry & commercial greenhouse gas emissions tCO2e (2024)	3.6	↓
Average length of stay (guest nights) of short-term lets (2025)			3.6	↑
Key:				
Cells highlighted in red contain values that are within the ten weakest outcomes of Scotland’s 32 Local Authorities				
Cells highlighted in amber contain values in neither the top ten nor the bottom ten values of Scotland’s 32 Local Authorities				
Cells highlighted in green contain values that are within the ten strongest outcomes of Scotland’s 32 Local Authorities				
* Working age population (aged 16-64 years)				
Notes:				
These are all outcome indicators so do not measure or reflect activities and outputs being delivered by partners.				