

Cabinet Committee

Council Chamber, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes /
Blended Meeting



Thursday, 9 October 2025 - 10.00 am

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 in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage. | |
| 3. | MINUTE – Minute of Cabinet Committee meeting of 11 September 2025. | 3 - 6 |
| 4. | COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING - PROGRESS REPORT – Report by the Head of Property Services. | 7 - 17 |
| 5. | OPPORTUNITIES FIFE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO EMPLOYABILITY PATHWAY COMMISSIONING 2026-29 – Report by the Executive Director (Place). | 18 - 23 |
| 6. | FIFE DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME 15 – Report by the Head of Planning Services. | 24 - 49 |
| 7. | WELLBEING AND SAFEGUARDING SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES – Joint report by the Chief Executive, Head of Human Resources, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Service Manager, Audit and Risk Management. | 50 - 55 |
| 8. | REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY BENEFITS AND PENSIONS POLICY ISSUES – Joint report by the Head of Human Resources and Head of Finance. | 56 - 62 |
| 9. | CABINET COMMITTEE - OUTSTANDING REMITS FROM COMMITTEES | 63 - 65 |

The Committee is asked to resolve, under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, to exclude the public and press from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act (relevant paragraph numbers are detailed beside the heading to each item).

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| 10. | PAY STRATEGY AND EQUAL VALUE ASSESSMENT (PRIVATE REPORT) (Paras. 11 and 12) – Report by the Head of Human Resources. | 66 - 73 |
| 11. | PROPOSAL TO BUILD 5 NEW PROPERTIES ON WESTMILL SITE, KIRKCALDY (PRIVATE REPORT) (Paras. 8 and 9) – Report by the Head of Children and Families and Criminal Justice Service. | 74 - 94 |
| 12. | AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME - QUEENS MEADOW, COALTOWN OF BALGONIE (PRIVATE REPORT) (Paras. 8 and 9) – Joint report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Property Services. | 95 - 111 |

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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2 October 2025

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BLENDED MEETING NOTICE

This is a formal meeting of the Committee and the required standards of behaviour and discussion are the same as in a face to face meeting. Unless otherwise agreed, Standing Orders will apply to the proceedings and the terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct will apply in the normal way

For those members who have joined the meeting remotely, if they need to leave the meeting for any reason, they should use the Meeting Chat to advise of this. If a member loses their connection during the meeting, they should make every effort to rejoin the meeting but, if this is not possible, the Committee Officer will note their absence for the remainder of the meeting. If a member must leave the meeting due to a declaration of interest, they should remain out of the meeting until invited back in by the Committee Officer.

If a member wishes to ask a question, speak on any item or move a motion or amendment, they should indicate this by raising their hand at the appropriate time and will then be invited to speak. Those joining remotely should use the "Raise hand" function in Teams.

All decisions taken during this meeting, will be done so by means of a Roll Call vote.

Where items are for noting or where there has been no dissent or contrary view expressed during any debate, either verbally or by the member indicating they wish to speak, the Convener will assume the matter has been agreed.

There will be a short break in proceedings after approximately 90 minutes.

Members joining remotely are reminded to have cameras switched on during meetings and mute microphones when not speaking. During any breaks or adjournments please switch cameras off.

THE FIFE COUNCIL - CABINET COMMITTEE - BLENDED MEETING

Council Chamber, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

11 September 2025

10.00 am - 12.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), Tom Adams (substituting for Councillor Mary Lockhart), David Alexander, David Barratt, John Beare, Patrick Browne (substituting for Councillor Jan Wincott), James Calder, Rod Cavanagh, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson (substituting for Councillor Judy Hamilton), Linda Erskine, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Allan Knox, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Sarah Neal and Craig Walker.

ATTENDING: Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive; Elaine Muir, Head of Finance, Tracy Hirst, Finance Operations Manager, Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Mary McLean, Legal Services Manager, Helena Couperwhite, Committee Services Manager and Michelle McDermott, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services, Finance and Corporate Services; Pam Ewen, Head of Planning Services and William Shand, Strategic Development Infrastructure Manager, Planning Services; Nigel Kerr, Head of Protective Services and Lyndsey Radke, Lead Trading Standards Officer, Trading Standards; John Mitchell, Head of Roads and Transportation Services, Susan Keenlyside, Service Manager and Allan Maclean, Lead Consultant, Roads and Transportation Services; and Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Judy Hamilton, Mary Lockhart and Jan Wincott.

415. CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

The committee noted that Councillor Rod Cavanagh had replaced Councillor Stefan Hoggan as a member of the Cabinet Committee.

416. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Altany Craik declared an interest at para. 423 - Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 - Access Rights at East Dock, Burntisland - as he was a council appointee to Forth Green Freeport.

417. MINUTE

The committee considered the minute of the Cabinet Committee meeting of 14 August 2025.

Decision

The committee approved the minute.

418. REVENUE MONITORING 2025-26

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) providing members with a strategic overview of Fife Council's finances and reporting on the current forecast position for financial year 2025-26.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) instructed Services to continue to mitigate overspends in order to manage within overall service budgets in the current year and ensure strong financial management;
- (2) noted that detailed monitoring reports would be submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committees; and
- (3) requested that Scrutiny Committees ensured appropriate level of support and challenge in relation to financial reports.

419. CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN - PROJECTED OUTTURN 2025-26

The committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided a strategic financial overview of the Capital Investment Plan and advised on the projected outturn for the 2025-26 financial year.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) approved the Capital Investment Plan re-profiling detailed within Appendix 1 to deal with the carry forward budgets from 2024-25 into later years of the plan;
- (2) approved a budget transfer in the HRA capital investment plan of £5m from the component replacement budget and £0.350m from major projects to the fire risk assessment programme;
- (3) noted the projected outturn position and that the level of financial risk continued to be heightened due to the impact of inflation and supply chain challenges;
- (4) instructed Services to plan projects within the approved resource within the Capital Investment Plan;
- (5) noted that more detailed capital outturn reports for 2025-26 would be submitted to relevant Scrutiny Committees of the council;
- (6) noted that budget variances would be managed by the appropriate Directorate in conjunction with the Investment Strategy Group; and
- (7) noted the updated prudential indicators provided.

420. PLANNING OBLIGATIONS AND GOOD NEIGHBOUR AGREEMENTS: DRAFT GUIDANCE CONSULTATION

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning Services seeking approval of a proposed response to the Scottish Government consultation paper on an updated guidance on Planning Obligations and Good Neighbour Agreements.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) reviewed and approved the proposed consultation response as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) authorised officers to submit the consultation response to the Scottish Government; and
- (3) delegated to the Head of Planning Services, in conjunction with the Convener, to include additional comments agreed by this committee and respond to the consultation.

421. SCOTTISH ILLEGAL TOBACCO OFFICERS - HOSTING WITHIN FIFE COUNCIL

The committee considered a report by the Head of Protective Services which highlighted the opportunity for Fife Council to host up to two full-time Scottish Illegal Tobacco Officers (SITO) as part of a nationwide initiative to combat the growing threat from illicit trade in illegal tobacco products in our communities. The report also outlined the strategic benefits and collaborative opportunities this initiative would bring to Scottish local authorities, including Fife.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the strategic importance of Fife Council's hosting role for the project duration;
- (2) agreed that Fife Council would formally host up to two full time Scottish Illegal Tobacco Officers (SITO) for a project duration for a minimum of four years from 1 April 2025;
- (3) supported the integration of Scottish Illegal Tobacco Officers into the Fife Trading Standards team to meet our aim and those of colleagues in other Scottish local authority Trading Standards Services (SLATS) of continuing and expanding the enforcement role in combatting the illicit supply of illegal tobacco products in our communities;
- (4) endorsed continued collaboration with HMRC, Police Scotland, SLATS and the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards for Scotland (SCOTSS) and the new role of Fife Trading Standards in contributing to this; and
- (5) noted that the Heads of Protective Services and Finance would agree the terms of the funding agreement between Fife Council, HMRC and the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards for Scotland.

422. ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The committee considered a report by the Head of Roads and Transportation Services seeking approval for the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan for Fife 2025-2035.

Decision

The committee approved the Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan for Fife 2025-2035.

Councillor Leslie left the meeting at 11.10 am and rejoined the meeting at 11.15 am. and Councillor Davidson left the meeting following conclusion of the above item.

The meeting adjourned at 11.45 am and reconvened at 11.55 am.

Having declared an interest in the following item, Councillor Craik left the meeting at this stage.

423. LAND REFORM (SCOTLAND) ACT 2003 - ACCESS RIGHTS AT EAST DOCK, BURNTISLAND

The committee considered a joint report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods Service and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services following a motion at the meeting of Fife Council on 8th May 2025 requesting officers to submit a report to Cabinet covering a summary of the council's approach to managing access rights in general; a summary of the council's position on access rights around the East Dock as defined under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003; and a recommendation on options for access at East Docks and any associated enforcement action, with an indicative timeline for any enforcement action.

Decision

The committee:-

- (1) noted the council's approach to managing access rights;
- (2) noted that officers would continue to exercise the council's statutory function by reviewing information as it became available, engaging with interested parties and ensuring that any existing access rights were respected;
- (3) noted that no further enforcement action was currently recommended on access rights at East Docks, Burntisland;
- (4) noted that formal enforcement action could not be taken at this time; and
- (5) recognised the council's role in facilitating additional discussions between Forth Ports and Burntisland Harbour Access Trust.

Councillor Davidson rejoined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

424. CABINET COMMITTEE - OUTSTANDING REMITS FROM COMMITTEES

The committee noted the list of outstanding remits from committees.

Community Wealth Building – Progress Report

Report by: Alan Paul, Head of Property Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual update on Community Wealth Building as agreed at Cabinet Committee on 10 October 2024.

Recommendation(s)

Cabinet Committee members are asked to:-

1. note the progress made to date to deliver Community Wealth Building, and
2. endorse the priorities and next steps for 2026 and beyond.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications arising from this progress report. Embedding CWB activity within delivery has been identified within the CWB Policy Framework approved by Cabinet Committee in 2023.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report. Existing systems and processes will require to be redesigned to support both the implementation of a CWB approach and to influence practice and cultural shifts. This will be undertaken at a service level in line with adaptation towards a CWB model of delivery.

Impact Assessment

An EqIA is not required as this report does not propose any changes to existing policies or practices.

The Fairer Scotland Duty requires the council to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socioeconomic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. The strategic approach to Community Wealth Building in Fife is strongly focused on delivering fair outcomes and reducing inequality.

Consultation

This report has been developed in consultation with key council services that are involved in the development and delivery of Community Wealth Building.

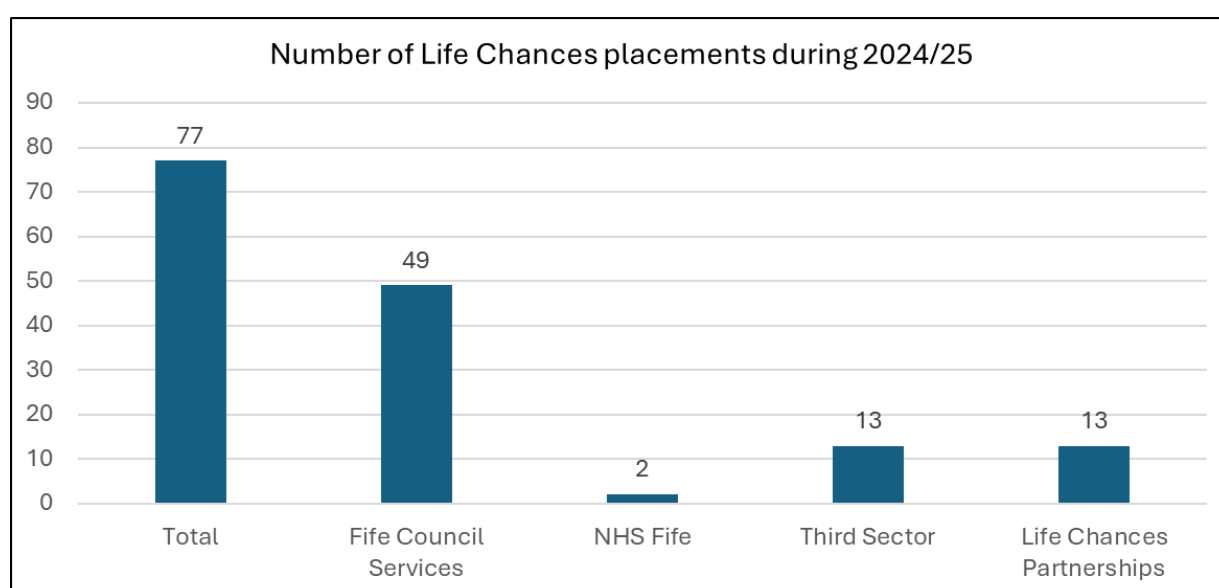
1.0 Background

- 1.1 Fife Council is committed to implementing the Community Wealth Building (CWB) approach in its policies, plans and strategies and in how it uses its resources, across the whole organisation, in operational delivery and service change planning. The council has committed to working in partnership with other anchor organisations to develop collaborative, local approaches to embedding CWB systems and processes in the delivery of services across Fife. Fife Council has made a pledge to the Fife Anchor Charter, committing to long-term collaboration between anchor organisations to reframe the development of Fife’s local economies and environments through CWB.
- 1.2 In April 2023, Cabinet Committee approved the CWB Policy Framework as the primary guiding policy framework through which the organisation will align to deliver the economic, social and environmental benefits set out in the Plan for Fife. This paper is part of the annual reporting cycle to Cabinet Committee on CWB implementation and provides an update on the progress made since the previous report to this committee in October last year.

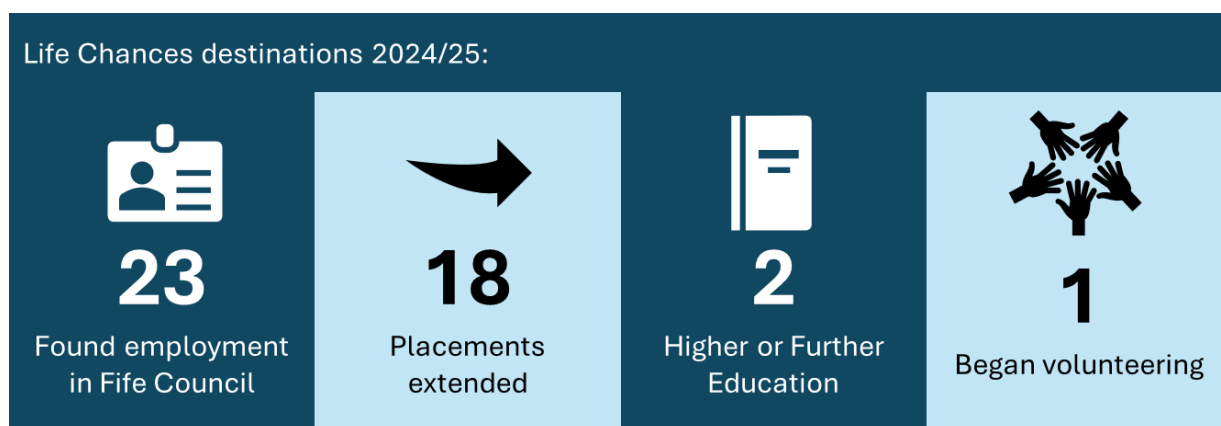
2.0 Progress (October 2024 – October 2025)

Life Chances Plus – an alternative approach to recruitment

- 2.1 The Life Chances progressive recruitment approach was developed by Fife Council to take structural steps to reduce socio-economic disadvantage by using the power of public resources and levers within the council’s sphere of influence. The approach was made a mainstream alternative to recruitment in Fife Council in 2024, helping the council address recruitment challenges and generate positive outcomes for people on the employability pathway.
- 2.2 A target of 60 placements in 2024/25 was achieved and surpassed with 77 placements filled. This included 49 placements with council services and involved a number of partner organisations offering opportunities – two in NHS Fife and 13 in the third sector. In addition, there were 13 Life Chances Partnerships, which are collaborations between the Employability Service and Fife Gingerbread to support lone parents with placements in Fife Council’s Education Service and Fife Sports and Leisure Trust.



- 2.3 Following their placements, 23 individuals found employment in Fife Council; 18 had their placements extended; two moved into higher or further education; and one began volunteering. Appendix 1 provides case study examples on clients' placements, the additional support they can access, and their destinations post-placement.

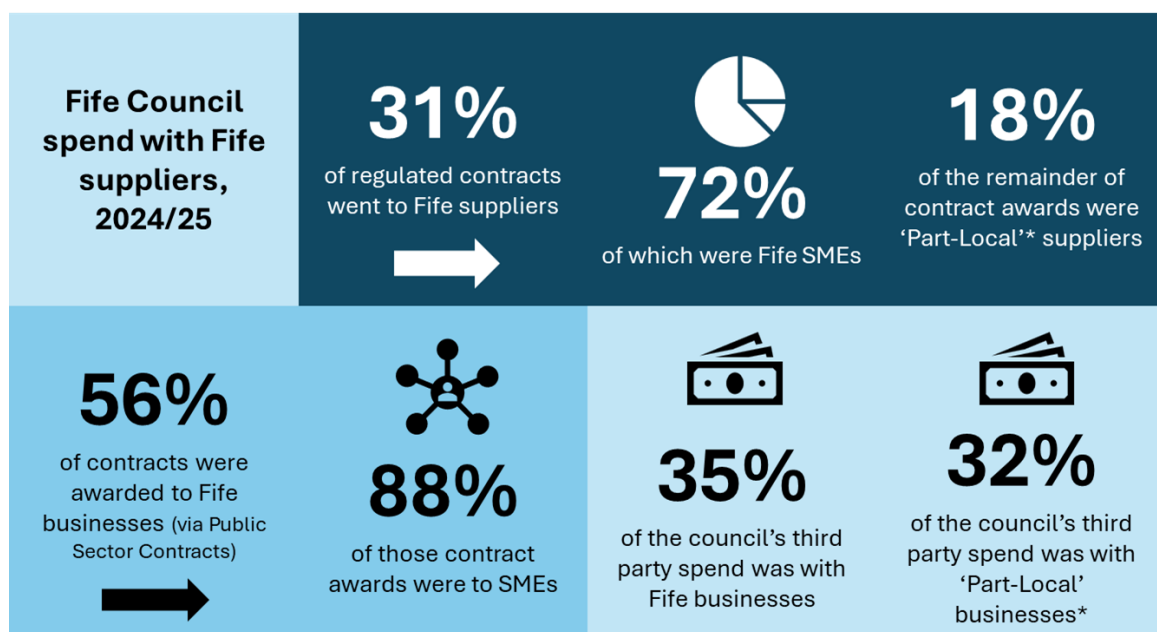


- 2.4 Moving forward, there are ambitions to grow Life Chances and increase its scale and impact. This involves increasing the number of services offering Life Chances opportunities and growing the approach to include other anchor organisations and even the private sector in Fife. The target for 2025/26 is 160 Life Chances placements, a significant increase that will require more organisations and services coming forward with opportunities.
- 2.5 To further expand the model, a Life Chances Plus Strategy Group (a partnership group including Fife Council, NHS Fife, Fife Health & Social Care Partnership, Fife College and Fife Voluntary Action) is exploring how in-work progression and skills and qualifications can be embedded in the model to ensure people on Life Chances can access more opportunities and higher paid work. Providing in-work progression opportunities will support a pipeline from entry level jobs to higher paid positions, which will be needed to sustain the model and ensure more placements are able to be offered.
- 2.6 To help ensure financial sustainability and futureproofing of the programme and to reduce dependency on variable external funding, Services and partners are encouraged to use vacancy budgets and other underspends where available to fund the duration of the placement at the Real Living Wage.

Procurement – Social Value, Community Benefits, & Supply Chain Development

- 2.7 A refreshed [Procurement Strategy](#) for 2025-2030 was approved by Fife Council in early 2025. The strategy approaches procurement through a Community Wealth Building lens and the Sustainable Procurement duty. This aims to embed wealth building in the council's procurement processes to ensure as much of Fife Council's procurement spend is with local businesses, as well as delivering community benefits (see Appendix 2 for case studies), ensuring the payment of the Real Living Wage from contracted suppliers and collaborating with others to maximise efficiencies and improve outcomes.
- 2.8 As reported in the previous CWB progress report to Cabinet Committee in October 2024, Fife Council is implementing a new model for obtaining social value from large-scale infrastructure projects, as tested in the Dunfermline Learning Campus (DLC). Closer partnership working between Fife Council, Hub East Central Scotland and contractor, BAM, has ensured that activity is being undertaken in a timely manner to meet social value targets set out in the contracts for the new Caledonia High School, Rosyth and Templehall Community Centre, Kirkcaldy.

- 2.9 With funding from Hub East Central Scotland, work has commenced on a two-year pilot to enhance social value through external third party spend in construction. Building on experiences from the DLC, Fife Council has procured 'Social Value Portal' to aid monitoring and reporting of community benefits. The Social Value Portal is a platform that enables organisations to measure, report and procure social value. It integrates procurement processes and ongoing contract monitoring. It supports Community Wealth Building and sustainable procurement through consistent capture and reporting of social value data. A policy review and a Local Needs Analysis were undertaken to identify community challenges and opportunities. These insights inform social value strategies and lay the foundation for a needs-based approach across Fife.
- 2.10 Alongside investment in the Social Value Portal, work has been undertaken on a range of additional measures, to include:
1. The [Community Benefit Request Form](#) has been introduced to help community organisations communicate their needs more effectively to suppliers. The form allows community groups to submit specific requests for support that can potentially be met through suppliers' community benefit commitments or voluntary contributions. It is made clear on the form that there is no guarantee of fulfilment of requests. The request form refers to the Plan4Fife 2017–2027 to encourage shared purpose and linkage for onward reporting. There have been over 100 requests that have been logged from a variety of organisations across Fife's third sector. Some examples of the requests received and those that have been successfully matched from each of Fife's seven areas include:
 - Friends of Craigtoun (North East Fife Area) requested support to replace the workshop roof.
 - Glenrothes Camera Club (Glenrothes Area) requested a donation of a laptop.
 - Kirkcaldy Parks Running Festival (Kirkcaldy Area) requested financial support/sponsorship.
 - Headwell Community Council (City of Dunfermline Area) requested benches and planters.
 - CLEAR Buckhaven and Methil (Levenmouth Area) requested a financial donation to support the purchase of plants and garden/litter picking tools.
 - EATS Rosyth (South & West Fife Area) requested financial donation to support its community larder.
 - Lo'gelly Lunches (Cowdenbeath Area) requested financial donations and transit van hire.
 2. Improvements have been made to the tracking methodology for community benefits. This has been used to prepare the information supplied in the latest [Annual Procurement Report for 2024/25](#), which went to Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee in September 2025. The report includes new figures on local spend:



* 'Part-local' – suppliers that have depots/branches and/or local employment to service the contract tendered.

3. A staff toolkit is in development to support Procurement Officers with embedding community benefits in tenders and contracts.
4. The Procurement Team are progressing the development of an online portal to promote and interact with communities to identify, track and monitor requests. This would be the next iteration of the request form, allowing a more interactive user interface for communities, suppliers and council officers.
5. A briefing note was issued to all councillors in May 2025 (and re-issued in September 2025) providing information on the delivery of Community Benefits within procurement processes and for promotion of the aforementioned Community Benefit Request Form.

2.11 Following on from last year's successful Build Fife programme, Fife Council, in partnership with Hub East Central Scotland and Tier 1 contractors, delivered a refreshed Build Fife programme for 2025 to support local construction and associated businesses with aspirations for growth. To date, the programme has delivered the following outcomes: 26 local business supported to build capability, relationships and to grow

- New contracts won (c.£400k and rising)
- Organisational structural changes leading to internal jobs creation / employment opportunities (FTE 3)
- Opened wider supply chain opportunities - hiring of local social media marketing company, tendering specialists
- New business connections: Fife Council, Tier 1 Contractors, Local Businesses
- Improved business processes, methods and understanding (contracts, tendering, and payments process)
- Market development (gaps in Fife Council markets)

2.12 The Build Fife construction programme will run for a third time in 2026 and will include a new workshop on sustainability that will focus on key sustainability priorities for contractors and for Fife Council (i.e. social value/community benefits and community wealth building). In addition, the Build Fife programme has been adapted into a focused leadership development programme, run in September 2025, for owners and managers of Fife-based Food and Drink sector businesses. Ten businesses have been supported in this programme. The Build Fife Food and Drink programme is fully funded by UKSPF

and is run in partnership with the regional food group, Food From Fife. An evaluation of this programme will be undertaken to ascertain if it can be held for the other key sectors.

Partnership Collaboration

- 2.13 A report to Fife Partnership Board in February 2025 highlighted the need for “action with measurable targets to deliver and implement” the community wealth building priority across partners to achieve scale and impact, for example, increasing the target for Life Chances placements. At the end of 2024, a new multi-agency partnership was established, the Economy & Community Wealth Building Board, to more strongly connect similar policy objectives and develop a collaborative work plan that will help transform policy commitments into more impactful practice and movement building. The Board is developing a collaborative work plan and has identified key areas of focus, including Life Chances Plus (see paragraph 2.5) and Plural Ownership. A plural ownership working group will be established to develop a vision for plural ownership of the economy in Fife and will develop an action plan. Actions could involve expert advice and support for social enterprise development and support for community organisations and community enterprises with asset transfer, for example, through training, funding, or advisory services, to enable meaningful participation in plural ownership. There is potential to link plural ownership efforts with procurement strategies (e.g. supporting social enterprises in tenders – the [‘Buy Social’ pledge](#)) and Life Chances (e.g. supporting social enterprises to become placement hosts).

3.0 Priorities for 2026 and Beyond

- 3.1 A key priority for community wealth building approach has been to achieve greater scale and impact. We will do this by delivering Life Chances Plus (embedding in-work progression and further opportunities for participants to develop skills and qualifications), obtaining greater community benefit and social value from procurement, continuing to develop and support local supply chains and key sectors and developing collaborative approaches to support plural ownership of the local economy.
- 3.2 A pipeline of opportunities is needed to ensure community wealth building is maximised. This involves looking at future large-scale infrastructure projects to ensure community wealth building is embedded at the start. In addition, our approach to place and place-based working will adopt community wealth building to ensure investment in these areas is retained for local communities. The Kirkcaldy place programme is considering how to adopt community wealth building in its approach. This will provide a unique opportunity to test different approaches to implementing community wealth building at a local scale and could be replicated in future place work.
- 3.3 In addition, how community wealth building is measured is a key priority. A balance scorecard / performance dashboard is being developed for the Economy & Community Wealth Building Board that will support the monitoring of key indicators and will allow the Board to assess what’s working well and what gaps and challenges need to be addressed. Fife Council is also exploring an opportunity with the Improvement Service to look at community wealth building baseline measures.
- 3.4 Opportunities nationally will continue to be explored. Fife Council is represented on the Scottish Government’s Community Wealth Building Bill Steering Group. In March 2025, the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament. The Bill, if passed into an Act, will place a duty on local authorities and partners to prepare, publish and implement a community wealth building action plan. In preparation for this legislation, Fife Council is engaging with national forums, including a Community Wealth Building Practitioner’s Network, facilitated by the Improvement Service, which

provides a platform for exploring concerns and issues about the legislation and learning from other local authorities and best practice.

- 3.5 Furthermore, a [survey](#) carried out by ESES Communities at the end of 2024 found that over half of respondents from Fife either had never heard of community wealth building or had heard of it but weren't sure what it means. This suggests that some work is needed to upskill staff, and potentially community, knowledge of community wealth building – what it means and how it works in practice. To support the adoption of community wealth building across the council and wider Fife Partnership, as well as the implementation of any new legislation, increasing knowledge of community wealth building will be key.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The impact of community wealth building in Fife is starting to be felt with more people moving into secure jobs through Life Chances, more local businesses benefiting from work with Fife Council and more benefits to communities from council procurement activity. However, greater scale and impact could be achieved.
- 4.2 Over the past year, work has been undertaken to consolidate the work we have done on community wealth building to date and has moved in a new direction with new partnership and areas of focus. The next year will focus on continuing to collaborate with partnership to achieve scale and impact, identifying a pipeline of opportunities that can be maximised, engaging nationally to learn from good practice and prepare for any new legislation, and increasing knowledge and understanding of community wealth building in order to implement it more successfully and with greater impact.

List of Appendices

1. Life Chances Case Studies
2. Community Benefit Case Studies

Background Papers

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

- [Item 4. Community Wealth Building - Progress Report \(10 October 2024\), Cabinet Committee](#)
- [Item 3. Community Wealth Building: Deep Dive 2025 \(4 February 2025\), Fife Partnership Board](#)
- [Item 6. Annual Procurement Report 2024-25 \(4 September 2025\), Finance, Economy & Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee](#)

Report Contact

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Life Chances Case Studies

The following case studies demonstrate the support clients on Life Chances placements receive and the outcomes that can be achieved from participating in this programme.

Case Study 1:

Client A is a 28-year-old single parent. They have a disability that impacts their mental health and have transport issues. Client A was supported by a Life Chances Partnership between Fife Council, Fife Gingerbread and Fife Sports & Leisure Trust to gain a paid placement with the Trust for 16 hours per week as a receptionist.

Prior to commencing the Life Chances placement, Fife Gingerbread made a referral to Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF) for a benefit check and better off in work calculation. Client A has received support from Fife Gingerbread throughout their placement, alongside support from a Fife Council Employability Key Worker.

Client A has worked on building confidence during the placement in a slower paced environment that suits their learning needs. Discussions with the Key Worker have focused on additional opportunities near their home, as well as setting financial goals and learning how to drive.

Case Study 2:

Client B is 41 years old, lives in an area with high deprivation, and suffers from extreme anxiety. Client B was supported via a Life Chances Partnership with Rural Skills Scotland to undertake a paid placement at Lochore Meadows Country Park with Fife Council.

When the client started their placement, they could not interact within a team setting and preferred to work on their own. During the placement, their confidence has increased, and they are now able to work with team members and travel around Fife for work. Key worker support was essential for this participant, and an extension was arranged to allow them to gain more confidence. This involved a transfer to a placement in the council's Bereavement Services.

Client B has overcome a lot of personal issues during the placement and has progressed into seasonal employment with Bereavement Services. They are delighted with this position and feel they are learning a lot, whilst being supported by their colleagues.

Case Study 3:

Client C is a young person with limited work experience and had been long-term unemployed for some time. Client C started a placement in Fife Council's Childcare Service seeking to gain work experience in childcare, gain paid employment and form a good routine.

Throughout the placement, the client was able to participate in required training that would support ongoing employment and progression into future roles. The programme provided proactive support to the client from both the Life Chances team and their manager with ongoing dialogue on how best to support them.

Since the placement, Client C has secured a temporary contract with the service. The client has been offered more working hours and has taken on more responsibility by providing cover while team members are on leave. The client's confidence has increased during this period and they are planning to undertake a qualification in childcare with support from the service.

Community Benefit Case Studies

The following case studies demonstrate the positive outcomes that can be achieved through contractor delivery of community benefit commitments from Fife Council contracts.

Case Study 1: Benarty Primary School

Benarty Primary School was seeking support to provide an enhanced dining room experience for pupils to encourage children to eat a full lunch in an inviting area. A request was submitted via the Community Benefits Request Form, which was shared with the Council's suppliers.

Through Community Benefits, the school received:

- New tables for indoor lunches with laminated graphics of fun, educational facts (3x laminated dining tables supplied by Findel)
- Provision of an outdoor area where children could grow vegetables and herbs (donations for gardening equipment and PPE from Carruthers)
- Picnic tables for outdoor lunches and a planting area (donation from Alliance)
- Televisions in dining area to provide educational facts during mealtimes (2x TVs and 2x USBs supplied by Irruptus).

This project was also referenced at Fife Council's Education Scrutiny Committee in May 2025:

"The service initiated this experimental project to educate and enthuse pupils about climate change and the benefits of locally grown food. Council suppliers provided the financial support (via contractual community benefits obligations). In conjunction with Education colleagues and our Trainee Coordinators the Garden-to-Plate Project was launched. The aims of this project included:

- How to grow, prepare and cook vegetables.
- Pupils learning gardening skills.
- Demonstrating the benefits of sustainability and healthy eating.
- Learning other cooking skills and techniques.

Benarty Primary School hosted this pilot project and planted potatoes, onions and carrot seeds. The pupils harvested over 200 potatoes.

Supported by our Catering Supervisor the pupils prepared and cooked potato dishes including potato and onion cakes and wedges. We supplied the school with televisions for the dining hall, benches for the garden, extra dining tables with laminate at print with the benefits and fun facts of carrots, onions, runner beans and potatoes and drawing from a Ground to Plate competition. We are continuing this innovative project in 2025/26."

(Extract from the [Annual Procurement Report 2024/25](#), pages 29-32.)

Case Study 2: Templehall Community Gym

Delivering a modernised gym for the community in Templehall

As part of the overall masterplan for closing the existing community centre, Templehall Community Gym needed to be relocated. An annex office building, owned by Fife Council, directly across from the existing centre agreed to be renovated into a gym as part of the social value contributions for this project.

This involved internal and external works (see before and after image) including remodelling the kitchen in the annex building to a shower/changing facility and remodelling a portioned office space into open plan. Contractor for the Templehall Community Centre, BAM, recycled materials from the two Fife Council schools that were demolished in Dunfermline and had a number of spare materials left over from previous projects.

Works were completed over 5 weeks to ensure the community were not left without a gym facility for too long. BAM reached out its supply chain partners to help with the renovation.

As a result of the renovation, particularly the new location and external signage making it more accessible and visible to the public, membership of the gym increased by 70 new members.



Estimated over £140,000 of materials and labour donated	Estimated over £17,900 social and local economic value generated	More than 70 new gym members	More than 150 volunteer hours
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Case Study 3: Affordable Housing - Hill Street, Cowdenbeath

The partnership between Fife Council and Robertson Housing Partnership has resulted in a number of community benefits from the Hill Street, Cowdenbeath, development.

Volunteering & Donations

Support for Clear Fife, Rosyth Men's Shed and Brag Enterprises with 55 hours of volunteer hours.

The team supported various activities, including garden tidy ups, building and painting planters. Building relationship in the community is vital to leave a positive lasting impression on the communities where work takes place.

Off cuts or surplus materials are able to be donated to charities that need them, reducing waste going to landfill.



Ideal Candidate & Work Experience – Beath High School

8-week programme with 12 pupils achieving SCQF Level 3 & 4 certificate

2 apprenticeship interviews on site

10 hours of content delivered in collaboration with Developing the Young Workforce

Developing meta skills transferrable to any future education, employability and training ambitions

Suitable for school leavers, colleges, young people, and job seekers of all ages



The below infographic shows the social value generated from the project.



Opportunities Fife Partnership approach to Employability Pathway Commissioning 2026-29

Report by: Carol Connolly, Executive Director (Place)

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report seeks approval for the Opportunities Fife Partnership (OFP) approach to Employability Pathway Commissioning 2026-29.

The headline changes are:-

- (1) **Place-based Commissioning** – Local Area Committee priorities and targets are embedded in the framework, ensuring services reflect local need and economic opportunity.
- (2) **Supported Employability** – A dedicated supported employment element strengthens provision for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions.
- (3) **Allocated Funding for Fife Council's Employability Services** - Ensuring continuity of service delivery whilst continuing to support external commissioning for the majority of OFP funding

Recommendations

Members are asked to: -

- (1) note the rationale proposed by the Opportunities Fife Partnership for the Commissioning Framework 2026-29; and
- (2) approve the recommended Opportunities Fife commissioning approach 2026-29 set out in Section 2 of this paper.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications from approving the commissioning approach. Grants will be awarded in line with the commissioning approach on an annual basis and within the annual allocation for No One Left Behind activities from the Scottish Government. It is assumed that the annual allocation will continue at £6m however activities can be flexed accordingly once Fife Council allocation is confirmed.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Commissioning process will replicate the approach approved in 2021. The terms and conditions of funding for No One Left Behind were agreed in 2020-21 with Legal Services and Finance. Any change for future years delivery will be considered as part of any annual offer of grant.

There is a six month lead in time to undertake the commissioning process to ensure continuity of service delivery for clients and delivery organisations.

Impact Assessment

The Opportunities Fife Partnership's Employability Pathway delivery model has been developed using a Human Rights Based approach to ensure that delivery is inclusive of all groups with protected characteristics and those at greater disadvantage in the labour market.

The commissioning framework was developed in line with the Scottish Approach to Service Design and in line with Scottish Government strategy on Halving the Disability Employment Gap, Reducing the Gender Pay gap, Reducing the Race Pay Gap and Tackling Child Poverty.

The Fairer Scotland Duty, which came into force on 1 April 2018, requires the council to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. Fife Partnership's and Fife Council's commitment to working towards Inclusive Growth and Jobs and Thriving Places align with this Duty.

The grants provided by Fife Council, as detailed in this report, provide specific support to reduce inequalities and support inclusive growth in Fife.

Consultation

Area Managers and Tackling Poverty Project Managers have been consulted on local area priorities.

The Opportunities Fife Partnership Executive Group has been consulted and accepted the recommendations.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Scottish Government allocation for 2025/26 is based on the [no one left behind employability strategic plan 2024-27](#) jointly developed with COSLA.
- 1.2 Local Government and Scottish Government have a mutual commitment to the delivery of employability support through No One Left Behind (NOLB), as outlined by the Partnership Working Agreement on Employability agreed in December 2018.
- 1.3 The contribution of employability services, delivered locally through the place-based approach of NOLB, to national economic development is a shared priority for Local and Scottish Government. This priority is outlined in the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (Project 15: Eradicate Structural Barriers to Participating in the Labour Market).
- 1.4 The Scottish Government's allocation by component in 2025/26 is detailed in Table 1 below. It is assumed that in 2026/27 and for 2027/29 that these are the same.

Table 1: Fife's No One Left Behind Allocations 2025-2026

	£m
Total NO ONE LEFT BEHIND 2025-26 (Inc. Child Poverty Co-ordinator)	£6.037
No One Left Behind All-Age	£2.569
Parental Employability Support Fund	£3.000
Specialist Employability Services	£0.349
Total Indicative Allocation for Employability Pathway Provision	£5.918
Child Poverty Co-ordinators	£0.119

1.5 The Opportunities Fife Partnership's Delivery and Oversight Group, its Executive Group and the OFP Board considered the strategic policy drivers that would inform the direction of the Employability Pathway for 2026-29. Consideration was given to:

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund existing priorities and new identified Key Missions
- The ambitions within the updated Plan 4 Fife 2021-24
- Best Start, Bright Futures 2022 - 26
- The updated Fife Economic Strategy 2023-30
- Refreshed Opportunities Fife Partnership Strategy 2024-30
- The No One Left Behind Employability Strategic Plan 2024-27

1.6 An options appraisal was carried out by the Opportunities Fife Partnership Programme Management Team considering the performance of each of the delivery partners against the following criteria:

- Performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Client Experience
- Compliance
- Evidence of Need
- Link to Strategic Priorities.

1.7 These assessments were the basis for the proposed Commissioning Framework to employability service delivery in 2026-29.

2.0 Opportunities Fife Partnership Employability Commissioning Framework 2026-29

2.1 There are several priorities for employability services, including: Continuous Improvement, increased uptake of employability services, tackling child poverty, supporting economically inactive individuals experiencing disability or long-term health conditions and supporting foundational as well as vocational skills.

- 2.2 Area priorities and targets are now explicit in the Commissioning Framework (Summary in Appendix 1). The Area Managers and Tackling Poverty Project Managers were consulted on the rationale for these.
- 2.3 The Commissioning Framework adopts the national guidance and toolkits co-produced by COSLA, SLAED and Scottish Government in line with the principle 'local by default, national by agreement'. The framework confirms the Council's role as Accountable Body and Opportunities Fife's as the Local Employability Partnership for Fife.
- 2.4 Evidence of need is based on performance of the Labour Market for each area, historical performance of employability services, need or demand from FORT, the employability customer management system, the Council's Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) and DWP Benefits data.
- 2.5 A portion of the Employability Pathway budget will be ring-fenced for Council-delivered services that are integral to supporting the wider pathway infrastructure. This will apply to delivery by Fife Council Employability Service, recognising its central role in providing essential progression routes and specialist interventions such as Fife Jobs Contract and Positive Pathways, allowing the pathway to flex and adapt around the needs of Fife.

To ensure balance and transparency:

- Fife Council Employability Service delivery of pathway supporting services will be capped at 40% of the total Employability Funding budget.
- Fife Council Employability Services delivery will continue to report into and be monitored through the Opportunities Fife Partnership.

3.0 Issues and Risks

- 3.1 There is a significant degree of uncertainty about the funding and strategic priorities for employability services during 2026-29. This period includes two elections and, should funding continue to be awarded based on current procedures, this is likely to be allocated on an annual basis limiting strategic forward planning. The Commissioning Framework has been designed to be as flexible as possible so that services can adapt to changed priorities and funding conditions. The overarching priority is to ensure that clients have access to the support that they need to access sustainable employment.
- 3.2 Increased employer engagement is critical to ensure that clients are well prepared for the specific jobs and skills that employers require. Edinburgh City and Tay City Region Economic Partnerships are developing regional skills pathways for key sectors including the Transition to Net Zero and Digital. Recognising the importance of local area focus is essential and this will be supported with the OFP Business Engagement group.
- 3.3 Integration of a new client management system scheduled for Q4 2025/26 is acknowledged as a risk, however, innovation and testing new approaches to service delivery is a vital role for the Opportunities Fife Partnership. This has been included in the Commissioning Framework where appropriate. During 2025/26, the client management system will be replaced with Helix in line with the Local Employability Partnerships in Edinburgh & South East of Scotland City Region. This will provide new opportunities for data driven innovation to better understand the needs of individual clients and employers.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The proposed approach to Commissioning for the Opportunities Fife Partnership Employability Pathway Provision 2026-29 builds on the current commissioning framework. This approach supports a stronger, place based approach to service commissioning whilst balancing performance and strategic alignment with the new UK and Scottish Government priorities for People and Skills and Employability.
- 4.2 The proposed approach aims to support 1780 beneficiaries with a target of 1020 progressions into work with a further 350 progressing into other positive destinations. These are subject to the funding being available.
- 4.3 Ring-Fenced allocation of funding to Fife Council's Employability Service will ensure continuity of provision, supporting the wider Employability Pathway and partnership approach.

List of Appendices

1. Local Area Priorities (Summary)

Background Papers

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

- [Agenda and Reports for Cabinet Committee Feb 2025](#) Opportunities Fife Partnership Employability Pathway Provision 2025-26, Page 39
- [Agenda and Reports Cabinet Committee June 2024](#) OPPORTUNITIES FIFE PARTNERSHIP - STRATEGY 2024-30 Pages 241 - 265
- [Agenda and Papers for Cabinet Committee 29-June-2023.pdf](#) Opportunities Fife Partnership Employability Pathway 2022-25 Commissioning, Page 106

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APPENDIX 1: Local Area Priorities (Summary)

The Opportunities Fife Partnership is embedding a place-based approach within the 2026-2029 Commissioning Framework. Delivery will continue to be Fife-wide but approaches will also reflect the specific needs of each Area Committee.

The figures below are indicative only. They provide a guide to the scale of local delivery

Area Committee	Key Priorities	Indicative Annual Reach
City of Dunfermline	Youth unemployment, low-paid and insecure work, mental health, carers and care experienced young people.	350-400 supported / 120-150 outcomes
Cowdenbeath	Long term unemployment, low/no qualifications, health barriers, youth claimants (highest in Fife) and substance recovery	220-270 supported / 70-90 outcomes
Glenrothes	NEET young people, carers, mental health, substance use, older unemployed and families affected by child poverty.	200-250 supported / 100-120 outcomes
Kirkcaldy	High claimant rate, NEET young people, mental health, insecure work and migrant/ESOL needs.	350-400 supported / 180-200 outcomes
Levenmouth	Long-term unemployment, justice leavers, NEET, addiction recovery, child poverty, disabilities and digital exclusion.	300-350 supported / 100-180 outcomes
North East Fife	Rural Poverty, lone parents, carers, health conditions, seasonal/insecure work and migrant workers.	140-200 supported/ 80-100 outcomes
South West Fife	Justice leavers, health and addiction, young people with low qualifications and ex-mining communities	220-330 supported / 140-160 outcomes

Fife Development Plan Scheme 15

Report by: Pam Ewen, Head of Planning Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To seek approval of the Fife Development Plan Scheme, fifteenth edition, for publication.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the committee:

- (1) approves, for adoption, the 2025 Fife Development Plan Scheme (fifteenth edition) for publication, deposit and copying to Scottish Ministers (Appendix 1);
- (2) delegates non-substantive edits to the Head of Planning; and
- (3) agrees the arrangements described in paragraph 3.1 to hold Area Committee workshops early in 2026.

Resource Implications

None. Preparation of the Development Plan Scheme is part of Planning Services' work programme and is prepared within existing resources.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires the Council, when preparing the Development Plan Scheme, to seek the views of the public on what the content of the Participation Statement should be and have regard to any views expressed.

Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices. An environmental assessment is not applicable for this report because it does not directly impact the environment. An assessment using the Fife Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) is not required as it is not a recommended change to policy.

Consultation

The Head of Legal Services and Head of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report. There are no outstanding issues.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 All planning authorities in Scotland are to produce a Development Plan Scheme at least annually or when directed by Scottish Ministers. Development Plan Schemes:
- a) explain what the Development Plan is and its component parts including the Local Development Plan;
 - b) set out the timetable for preparing the next plan; and
 - c) explain how the public at large can get involved in preparing the Local Development Plan.

The most recent Fife Development Plan Scheme (DPS14) was published in 2024. The draft Development Plan Scheme for 2025 (DPS15) is presented in Appendix 1.

- 1.2 The Fife Development Plan is now comprised of the [Fourth National Planning Framework \(NPF4\)](#) and the adopted [Local Development Plan \(FIFEplan\)](#) together with supplementary guidance issued in connection with FIFEplan.
- 1.3 Legislation requires that, as soon as is reasonably practicable after a Development Plan Scheme has been adopted, the Council is to send two copies of it to the Scottish Ministers, publish it (including by electronic means) and place a copy of it in each library in Fife.

2.0 Discussion

- 2.1 Development Plan Schemes must include a Participation Statement which should say how and with whom consultation on the plan will take place. It should also say how the Council will involve the public and stakeholders in the preparation of the Plan. The Statement will be used when the Local Development Plan is submitted to Scottish Ministers for examination to show how the Council has conformed with the Participation Statement's proposed means of engagement.
- 2.2 The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 requires the Council, when preparing the Development Plan Scheme, to seek the views of the public on what the content of the Participation Statement should be and have regard to any views expressed. The 2022 edition of the Development Plan Scheme invited the public at large to express their views on the content of the Participation Statement. This invitation remains open in the 2025 edition and feedback will inform the public engagement stage.
- 2.3 The Participation Statement in this Development Plan Scheme reflects the preferences and most efficient way to keep Fife's citizens and other stakeholders informed about plan progress and how to engage. It recognises that some stages of plan preparation are better managed by in-person events, such as seeking views on the Proposed Plan. The proposed methods of engagement are based on experience and consistent with the guidance on effective community engagement in local development planning published by the Scottish Government in December 2024.
- 2.4 LDP2 will be known as *Fife's Place Plan* to reflect its role as a corporate document acting as the spatial expression of the *Plan4Fife* Local Outcome Improvement Plan. The final published version of DPS15 will incorporate corporate branding prepared for *Fife's Place Plan*. The Local Development Plan Regulations state the Development Plan Scheme is to indicate the anticipated timetable for constitution of the new LDP and must specify when the Council expects to:

- a) publish its evidence report and its proposed local development plan;
- b) submit its proposed local development plan to the Scottish Ministers; and
- c) adopt the proposed local development plan.

The regulations and guidance specify the date convention to be used follows fiscal year quarters: 1Q = April-June; 2Q = July-September; 3Q = October-December; 4Q = January-March.

- 2.5 The anticipated milestone dates for the Fife Place Plan (LDP2) between now and adoption are given below. Changes from the timescales given in Development Plan Scheme 14 come from a review of the Fife Place Plan project plan. These changes are a result of the extended Gate Check stage following two separate requests for additional information by the DPEA. The second resubmission of the Plan's Evidence Report is programmed for November 2025.
- 2.6 Further work will be carried out to review the Local Development Plan stages to reduce timescales where possible, noting the Scottish Parliament and Council elections are scheduled in the period when the Proposed Plan will be prepared, consulted on with consequential analysis of representations and preparation of examination material. Some cautious assumptions are made regarding the length of the plan examination which should be shorter given the role of the Gate Check in establishing the evidence base on which the plan will be prepared. With the revised timetable, plan adoption is within five years of the Regulations coming into force - i.e. by May 2028 – the target date given in the Local Development Planning Guidance.
- 2.7 At the time of writing, the Gate Check assessment is scheduled for completion by January 2026.

Table 1 – Fife's Place Plan (LDP2) stage timetable

Stage	Expected date DPS14 (2024)	Expected date DPS15 (2025)	Change from DPS14 (2024)
Evidence Report submission to Gate Check	1Q 2024/25 (April 2024) (submission)	1Q 2024/25 (April 2024) (submission)	No change
	4Q 2024/25 (January 2025) (1 st resubmission)	1Q 2025/26 (June 2025) (1 st resubmission)	+5 months
	N/A	3Q 2025/26 (November 2025) (2 nd resubmission)	New Stage
Gate Check close	1Q 2025/26 (June 2025)	4Q 2025/26 (expected January 2026)	+7 months
Proposed LDP2 and consultation	1Q 2026/27 (June 2026)	2Q 2026/27 (July 2026)	+1 month
Submit Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers	2Q 2027/28 (September 2027)	1Q 2027/28 (May 2027)	-4 months
Examination Report published by DPEA	4Q 2027/28 (March 2028)	4Q 2027/28 (March 2028)	No change
Adoption	1Q 2028/29 (May 2028)	1Q 2028/29 (May 2028)	No change

3.0 Conclusions and next steps

- 3.1 The timescales programmed for the main stages to prepare *Fife's Place Plan* contained in the Development Plan Scheme do not contain all the details such as the Council's own committee governance stages. The new plan content will be presented to Area Committees in line with the committee powers for their views on the emerging LDP strategy and potential development, then report their views to Cabinet. The Area Committee stage will be in the form of workshops and all Area Committee Conveners and Depute Conveners have been notified.
- 3.2 In conclusion, this edition of the Development Plan Scheme discharges the Council's legislative requirement to publish its Development Plan Scheme at least annually. It includes:
- a) information on the changes to development planning coming from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019;
 - b) an up-to-date timescale for the key stages in preparing the Fife Place Plan;
 - c) updates on planning guidance, development frameworks, and development briefs; and
 - d) contact information for the public to communicate with Planning Services.
- 3.3 Future editions of the Development Plan Scheme will be reported to this Committee.

List of Appendices

1. Fife Development Plan Scheme 2025 (fifteenth edition)

Background Papers

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

- [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)
- [The Town and Country Planning \(Development Planning\) \(Scotland\) regulations 2023](#)
- [Local Development Planning Guidance 2023](#)

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Equality Impact Assessment Summary Report

(to be attached as an Appendix to the committee report)

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

Fife Development Plan Scheme 15 – Cabinet Committee 9 October 2025

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.

An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required because the report does not propose a change or revision to existing policies and practices

Further information is available from:

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Fife Development Plan Scheme 2025

Fifteenth Edition

Planning Services





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About the Development Plan Scheme

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019), and the Town and Country Planning (Development Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2023, require planning authorities to prepare a Development Plan Scheme each year.

This is the fifteenth edition of Fife Development Plan Scheme which:

- Provides information about Fife's Development Plan and its preparation timetable;
- Summarises updated information on planning guidance, development frameworks and development briefs; and
- Lets stakeholders know when and how they can get involved in the plan preparation.



Development Planning

The planning system in Scotland is led by development plans which form the basis for making planning decisions.

The Fife Development Plan is now comprised of [the Fourth National Planning Framework \(NPF4\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) and the adopted [Local Development Plan \(FIFEplan\) \(opens in a new window\)](#) together with supplementary guidance issued in connection with FIFEplan.

Following NPF4's adoption by the Scottish Government, the former **SESplan** and **TAYplan Strategic Development Plans** no longer have effect and are not part of the Development Plan. NPF3 and Scottish Planning policy have also been superseded.

The Act introduced provisions for **regional spatial strategies**. These are not part of the development plan but are to be taken into account in preparing local development plans. The Act does not prescribe the geographical areas to be covered by regional spatial strategies, nor at this stage the procedures for their preparation.

An interim regional spatial strategy has been produced for South East Scotland. It includes all of Fife. There is currently no agreed timescale for a formal version and the relevant part of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is not in force at the time of writing.

[Local place](#) plans have also been introduced by the Act. These do not form part of the Local Development Plan but have an important role in preparing it. More information on local place plans is given later in this scheme.

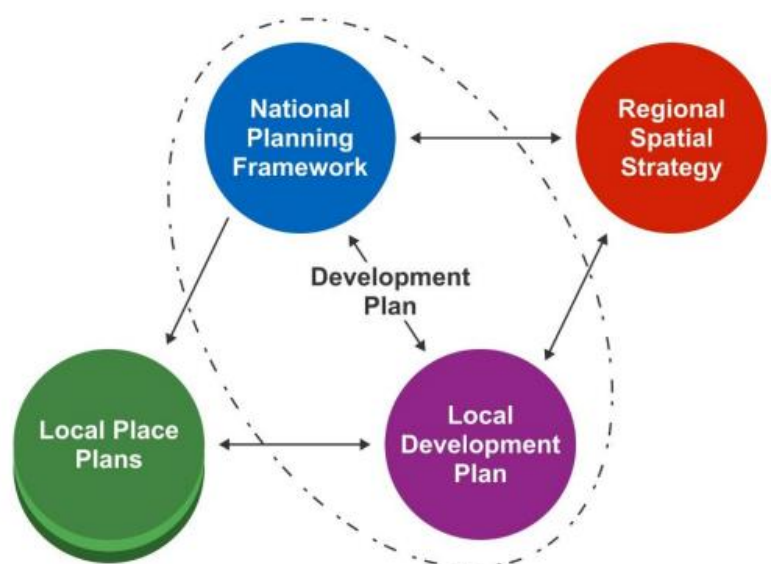


Figure 1 – The statutory development plan and related plans



Fife's Local Development Plan

Adopted FIFEplan (Fife Local Development Plan)

The current Local Development Plan, FIFEplan was adopted on 21 September 2017. As it was adopted more than five years ago, it needs to be updated.

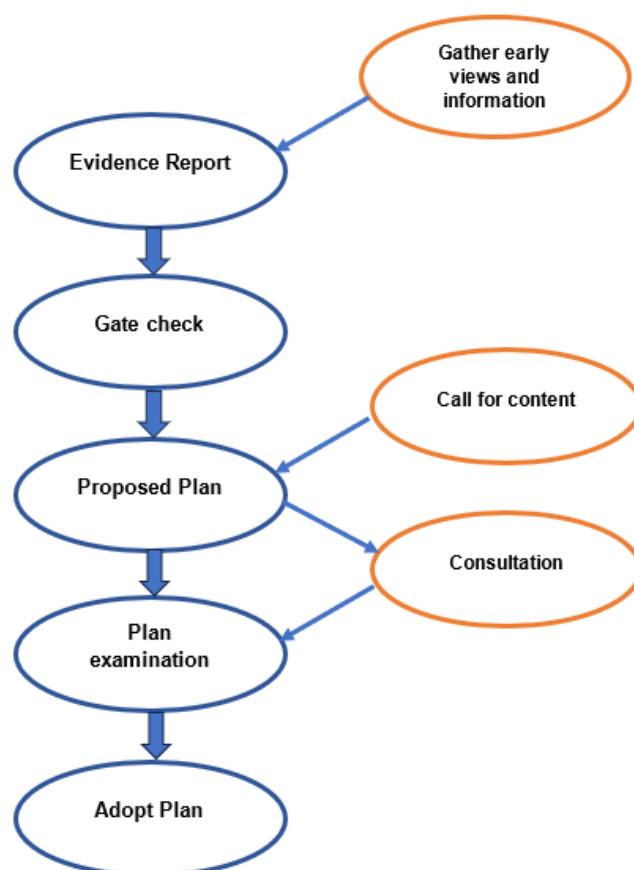
The Fife Place Plan (LDP2)

Under the new Planning Act Local Development Plans (LDPs) are to be reviewed every ten years, rather than five years as previously. The process for the preparation of LDPs has changed. There is no Main Issues Report stage; instead, the first main stage is the preparation of an Evidence Report. The Evidence Report sets out the Council's views on the matters listed which the Local Development Plan will address and is the basis for an independent assessment of whether the Council has sufficient information to prepare the Plan. That assessment will be by a person appointed by Scottish Ministers during a 'Gate Check' at the start of the plan preparation process.

Every planning authority in Scotland should have a new style LDP in place within around five years of the Regulations coming into force – that is, by May 2028. LDP2 will be called the Fife Place Plan to reflect its role as a corporate document acting as the spatial expression of the *Plan4Fife*. It is programmed to be adopted by the Council in 2028. The milestone steps for the Fife Place Plan between now and adoption are outlined on this page and the timetable is set out later in this Development Plan Scheme.

Plan themes and changes

The Fife Place Plan will be quite different from FIFEplan in 2017. It will contain fewer policies because NPF4 provides most policies for development management. Climate change and the nature crisis will be core themes. The Fife Place Plan will be more place-focussed by setting out development requirements and objectives for local areas. As far as possible, development briefs and guidance will be included in the Plan. It will also be prepared alongside the Council's updated Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Plan4Fife, which will set the corporate policy direction for the Fife Place Plan to follow as a spatial land use plan.



Fife Place Plan (LDP2) Timetable

The timetable for the plan preparation shows the expected dates for each plan stage. The date convention used is in accordance with local development planning regulations and guidance: 1Q = April-June; 2Q = July-September; 3Q October-December; 4Q = January-March.

Table 1 - LDP2 Key stage dates

Stage	Expected date	Change from DPS14 (2024)
Evidence Report submission to Gate Check	1Q 2024/25 (April 2024)	No change
Evidence Report re-submission to gate check	1 st - 1Q 2025/26 (June 2025) 2 nd – 3Q 2025/26 (November 2025)	+ 5 months New stage
Gate Check Close	4Q 2025/26 (January 2026)	+ 7 months
Proposed LDP2 and consultation	2Q 2026/27 (July 2026)	+ 1 month
Submit Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers	1Q 2027/28 (May 2027)	- 4 months
Examination Report published by DPEA	4Q 2027/28 (March 2028)	No change
Adoption	1Q 2028/29 (May 2028)	No change

The changes since the 2024 Development Plan Scheme reflect two separate requests for additional information by the DPEA for the Gate check process. In addition, slippage occurred in the first resubmission of the Evidence Report to Gate Check due to the level of additional work required. Whilst the resubmission stage has added 7 months to the LDP's Gate Check, the programmed submission of the Proposed Plan to Scottish Ministers has been reduced by 4 months.

The democratic process for preparing the LDP is set out in the Council's committee powers: Fife's seven Area Committees have a role in considering the potential impact of strategic policy proposals and making recommendations to the relevant committees. Cabinet Committee has a remit to recommend the Local Development Plan Evidence Report, the Local Development Plan, and the Local Development Plan Delivery Programme for final approval by the full Fife Council.



Participation Statement

The Participation Statement is a summary of when and how the Council proposes to engage the public on the production, adoption, and implementation of the Development Plan. This will include future changes to NPF4 although the consultation on that part of the Development Plan will be led and run by the Scottish Government. The Participation Statement also considers who is to be included, how the Council will consult, and the steps to involve the public in the process.

When you can influence the Fife Place Plan (LDP2)

There are three stages where the public can influence the shape of the next plan: early engagement (Evidence Report); the call for content (the beginning of Proposed Plan stage); and following publication of the Proposed Plan.

Table 2 – Fife Local Development Plan engagement activity is listed on the next pages

Plan stage	Engagement	How	When
Early canvassing of views - • Younger persons (age 16-25) engagement – June 2022 • 20 Minute Neighbourhood Case Study survey – September 2022 • Have Your Say on the Future of Fife's places survey engagement outcomes (Fife-wide) – October 2022 • PAS Engaging with gypsies, travellers, and travelling show people – Fife-wide – February	<i>Involve</i> <i>Consult</i> <i>Collaborate</i>	• Online and in-person • Web based surveys and commissioned engagement • In person at Sinclairtown, Freuchie, Tayport, Donibristle, North Queensferry, Kingsbarns, Canongate, Lumphinnans, and Torryburn primary schools (Living Well Locally and Play Sufficiency Assessment) • In Woodmill and Bell Baxter High Schools (Play Sufficiency Assessment)	June 2022-August 2023



Plan stage	Engagement	How	When
2023 • Businesses and Organisations Survey • Disabled Persons & Place survey engagement outcomes (Fife-wide) – April 2023 • Play Sufficiency Assessment (Fife-wide) – May 2023		• Community sessions in Cupar, Lochore, and Buckhaven (Play Sufficiency Assessment)	
Inviting community bodies to prepare local place plans	<i>Involve</i>	• Invite to all community councils and registered community bodies • Social media • Dedicated local place plans website (opens in a new window) created • Webinar workshop • Capacity support provided online and in person by Planning Aid Scotland	May 2022-end June 2024
Participation Statement	<i>Inform Involve Consult</i>	• Invitation in Development Plan Scheme 12 (2022) to comment on how the Council should consult and engage. • Social media • E-newsletter	December 2022-November 2023



Plan stage	Engagement	How	When
Gate check The Scottish Government's Planning & Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) conducts the gate check. This is to provide an independent assessment of whether the Council has sufficient information to prepare an LDP	<i>Inform</i>	- Website - Online forums - E-newsletter	April 2024 - January 2026 (subject to DPEA work programme)
Plan preparation - Call for content – what the Plan should say for communities and Fife-wide to address the issues identified in the Evidence Report	<i>Inform Involve</i>	- Website - Online forums - E-newsletter - Report back in a 'you said, we did' format.	Nov 2024 – Feb 2025 July 2026
Proposed LDP (draft plan) Plan approved by Fife Council and published for public consultation – a minimum of 12 weeks	<i>Consult</i>	- Website - Notification for neighbouring land (conterminous with or within 20 metres of the boundary of a specific site) - In person drop-in events - E-newsletter	July – September 2026



Plan stage	Engagement	How	When
Modifying the plan - Assess representations to the Proposed LDP - Negotiate changes where agreement can be reached with objectors (and other affected parties) to make modifications to the Proposed LDP	<i>Inform</i>	- Website - Online forums - E-newsletter	September 2026 – May 2027
Submit Plan to Scottish Ministers for examination	There is no consultation on this stage. The examination is led and managed by the Scottish Government, but the LDP website will be updated with the latest news		May 2027
LDP progress	<i>Inform Involve Consult</i>	- LDP webpage - E-newsletters - Media articles and news	Throughout the plan preparation period since May 2022.
National Planning Framework	<i>Inform</i>	- LDP webpage - E-newsletters	When changes are made to NPF4

A summary of all engagement will be published in an engagement calendar as the Plan progresses.

Comments on this version of the Participation Statement are invited through the contact address in the HAVE YOUR SAY box on the last page.



Table 3 – Fife Local Development Plan assessments

Plan stage	Strategic Environmental Assessment	Habitats Regulations Assessment	Flood Risk Assessment	Development Plan Transport Assessment	Public Sector Equality Duty Assessment	Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment
Evidence Report	✓ Note 1		✓		✓	✓
Plan preparation including site assessment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proposed Plan (draft plan)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adopted Plan	✓				✓	✓

Note:

1. The Evidence Report is not subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report, but it scopes the SEA and will be accompanied with a scoping report.



Delivery Programme

The Delivery Programme accompanies FIFEplan by identifying what is required to implement FIFEplan and deliver its proposals, the expected timescales and who is responsible. The Delivery Programme shows the linkages between development and the provision of related infrastructure and helps to coordinate activity in identifying priorities and funding. Delivery Programmes must be approved by the full Council and updated at least every two years following the Plan's adoption.

The [FIFEplan Delivery Programme 2024](#) is a step change to a more comprehensive and informative Delivery Programme to be used for Local Development Plans. Future iterations of the Delivery Programme will look to include information regarding estimated high level costs to the Council as a result of development and other relevant financial implications.

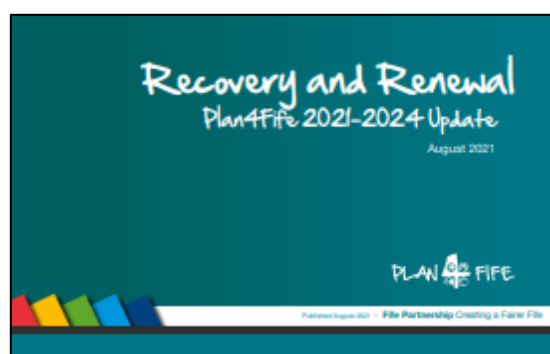


Community Planning

Community Planning is how public bodies work together and with the community in each council area to make life better for people. Fife's Local Outcome Improvement Plan [Plan 4 Fife: 2017-2027](#) was published in April 2018 as Fife's new Community Plan. An update to this was published in August 2021 [Recovery and Renewal: Plan4Fife 2021-2024 Update](#).

Work on revising the Plan 4 Fife will take be co-ordinated with the LDP preparation.

Local Community Plans for each of Fife's seven local committee areas are in place, and these are in the process of being updated. Neighbourhood Plans have also been developed for selected areas. All these above plans will help to identify priorities as we review the Local Development Plan.



Local Place Plans

The 2019 Planning Act introduced provisions to enable community bodies to prepare [Local Place Plans](#). These will not form part of the development plan but will help to inform it.

An invitation to communities to prepare Local Place Plans was issued in May 2022, through:

- Letters to community councils
- Our Planning e-newsletter
- Fife Voluntary Action e-newsletter
- News and social media releases

Local Place Plans have been introduced to encourage communities to be active participants in planning for their futures. Examples of the issues that they might address include:

- Proposals for new homes (including affordable), local employment, tourism or community facilities
- Sites which help support new renewable energy projects, or climate change adaptation measures, such as flood mitigation
- Improvements to town and neighbourhood centres
- Improvements to open space, play facilities and active travel
- Conservation of the natural and built environment
- Land for community food growing

These are plans for local communities that have a focus on development, land use and 'place-making' (an all-inclusive approach to the design, development, regeneration and management of the built environment).

Our [register of Local Place Plans](#) shows where community groups across Fife.



Supplementary Guidance

The main purpose of supplementary guidance is to help applicants understand what planning authorities expect in relation to planning applications.

Supplementary guidance prepared in connection with a Local Development Plan, subject to meeting consultation requirements, forms part of the Development Plan and is referred to in this document as statutory supplementary guidance.

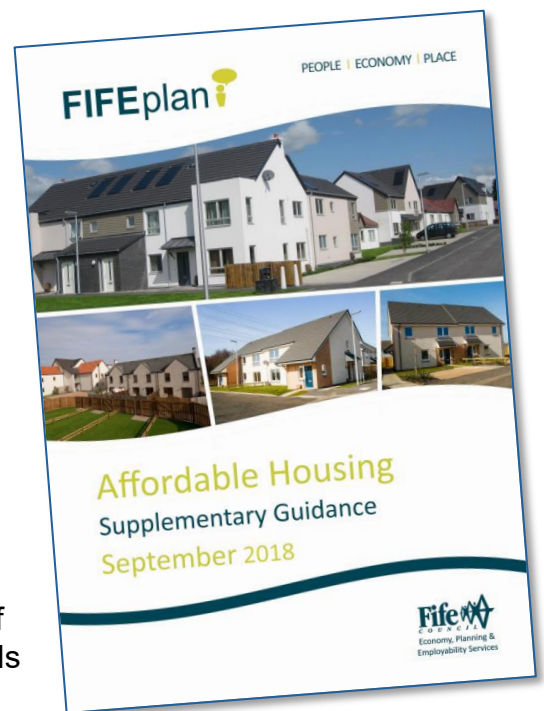
Supplementary guidance prepared for the former Strategic Development Plans no longer have effect and have been withdrawn.

A range of statutory Supplementary Guidance has been produced since the adoption of the Local Development Plan:

- Making Fife's Places Supplementary Guidance
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance
- Minerals Supplementary Guidance
- Low Carbon Supplementary Guidance

The Council will also continue to use existing non-statutory guidance listed in this Development Plan Scheme and will prepare other guidance on a range of planning matters as required. A full list of current and proposed Fife Council planning guidance is included in Table 4.

Non-statutory guidance Policy for Development and Noise was produced in 2021. This guidance aims to ensure that new development does not lead to detrimental impacts on existing businesses and future investment, or to impacts on the health and wellbeing of new or existing residents exposed to unacceptable levels of noise.



The future of Supplementary Guidance

Statutory provisions for Supplementary Guidance have been removed under the 2019 Planning Act. Local Councils will still be able to produce supplementary guidance on specific planning issues, but this will no longer have 'development plan' status.



Table 4 – Supplementary Guidance, Development Frameworks and Development Briefs (position at September 2025)

Topic	Status	Timescales
Statutory Supplementary Guidance		
Affordable Housing	Adopted Supplementary Guidance	Adopted Autumn 2018
Making Fife's Places	Adopted Supplementary Guidance	Adopted Autumn 2018
Minerals	Adopted Supplementary Guidance	Adopted Autumn 2018
Low Carbon Fife	Adopted Supplementary Guidance	Adopted January 2019



Topic	Status	Timescales
Non-Statutory Guidance		
Planning Obligations Framework Guidance	Approved Framework March 2015 - A new version of this guidance was prepared in 2017 and is a material consideration in determining planning applications. In addition, an updated version of this guidance is in preparation.	Scheduled for Cabinet approval in early 2026
Houses in Multiple Occupation in Central St Andrews Conservation Area	Approved Supplementary Planning Guidance June 2011.	To be reviewed as part of the Fife Place Plan (LDP2)
Lochgelly Supplementary Planning & Transportation Guidance	Approved Supplementary Planning Guidance September 2011	Complete
St Andrews Design Guidelines	Approved Supplementary Planning Guidance August 2007	Complete
Inverkeithing Design Guide	Approved Supplementary Planning Guidance October 2024	Complete



Topic	Status	Timescales
Development Frameworks & Briefs		
East Sands Urban Design Framework	Approved September 2010	Complete
Levenmouth Strategic Land Allocation Strategic Framework	Approved October 2012	Complete
St Leonards Fields and Memorial Hospital	Approved November 2011	Complete
Development brief for Bonnygate, Cupar gap site	Approved November 2012	Complete
Gap site at 269-293 High Street, Cowdenbeath	Approved March 2011	Complete
Millgate Development Brief, Cupar	Approved November 2008	Complete
Crail North Development Framework	The community led charrette report 'Deciding Crail's Future' and Crail's Local Place Plan will inform the Council's framework for this site.	Timescales to be confirmed – to follow assessment of 'Local Place Plan' by local community.
Rosyth Waterfront Development Framework	Approved December 2017	Complete
ATS depot, Cupar	Updated Brief Approved March 2019	Complete
Madras College (Kilrymont) – Design & Development Framework	Framework approved January 2020	Complete



Topic	Status	Timescales
Town Centre Frameworks		
Kirkcaldy Town Centre Design & Development Framework	Approved October 2015 (Review due 2023/2024)	Complete
Kirkcaldy Charrette Area - Green Infrastructure Masterplan	Produced April 2018	Complete
Kirkcaldy Town Centre Car Parks Design & Development Brief	Produced February 2023	Complete
Glenrothes Town Centre Design & Development Framework	Produced September 2016	Complete
Glenrothes Town Centre Masterplan	Approved March 2021	Complete
Cowdenbeath Town Centre Design & Development Framework	Approved July 2015	Complete
Leven Town Centre - Urban Design Study	Produced August 2012	Complete
Dunfermline City Centre Design & Development Framework	Approved March 2025	Complete



KEEP IN TOUCH

You can keep in touch with the Policy & Place team preparing the Fife Place Plan (LDP2) using the options shown.



If you prefer to write to us, you can do so by addressing your mail to:

**Policy & Place Team,
Planning Services,
Fife House,
Glenrothes,
Fife KY7 5LT**

We also welcome your views on the Participation Statement which sets out how we will engage with you and keep you informed.

HAVE YOUR SAY

E-mail your suggestions on this Development Plan Scheme to:
fife.devplan@fife.gov.uk



Fife Development Plan Scheme 2025
Fifteenth Edition



Wellbeing and Safeguarding Support for Employees

Report by: Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive; Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources; Lindsay Thomson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services; Pamela Redpath, Service Manager – Audit & Risk Management

Purpose

This report provides a response to the Council motion from August Cabinet Committee with an overview of the policies Fife Council has in place to support employee wellbeing and safeguarding.

Recommendations

Committee is asked to:-

- (1) note the robust policies and procedures in place to ensure those working for or with the Council are supported to raise any concerns of wrongdoing including the behaviour of any members, employees or other workers; and
- (2) note the next steps outlined at paragraph 5.3 in response to the conjoined motion agreed at the Fife Council meeting on 18 September.

Resource Implications

The employee supports outlined in the report are managed by Human Resources with input from Legal Services and Audit & Risk Management colleagues where appropriate.

Legal & Risk Implications

We have a legal duty to provide a safe working environment for our employees and we have a range of policies, procedures, training and supports in place to ensure we comply with this duty.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act of 1998 (PIDA) provides legal protection for those making a disclosure about a prescribed wrongdoing that is made in the public interest. The protection applies to those directly employed by the Council (including casual workers), agency staff, those employed by Council contractors and volunteers who are working for or on behalf of the Council.

As high-profile cases in other authorities have shown, it is important to have effective reporting and recording arrangements in place for whistleblowing as well as a positive and supportive culture where employees feel confident to raise concerns and that these concerns will be dealt with appropriately.

Impact Assessment

No changes to policy or practice are proposed therefore no Impact Assessment is needed.

HR, Audit & Risk Management Services and Legal Services have agreed the content of this report. The Trade Unions are consulted on all employment policies, including the Whistleblowing Policy and there are opportunities for the Trade Unions to raise any issues either informally or formally through agreed Directorate/Service consultation forums as well as Workforce Consultation Group and JNCF.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 14 August 2025, Cabinet Committee agreed a motion that the Chief Executive would report back to the Committee summarising the procedures that are currently in place, with particular reference to how staff members would be supported to raise any concerns, including through the whistleblowing process, about the behaviour of any member, or other officer. It also covers how elected members are supported to understand their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct and how elected member conduct issues are dealt with. The report will cover the timescale and approach for ensuring that all policies are regularly promoted to all staff and a commitment to ensure that policies are reviewed appropriately and regularly.

2.0 Employee Wellbeing and Safeguarding

- 2.1 Employee wellbeing and safeguarding is at the centre of the work led by the HR team and then implemented across the Council. There are a range of employment policies/strategies, procedures, frameworks and accreditations in place to support employee wellbeing and safeguarding which are regularly reviewed and include:-

- Grievance
- Sexual Harassment
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Supporting Employee Wellbeing
- How We Work Matters
- Our People Matter
- Equally Safe at Work

Grievance

- 2.2 The purpose of the Grievance policy and procedure (September 2023) is to ensure that all employees are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and that any concerns they have about their work or treatment in the workplace are addressed in a consistent, sensitive and timely manner. This policy is used by employees to raise issues and the approach encourages informal resolution and then moves through the process for formal grievances.
- 2.2.1 Councillors are not employees and therefore the grievance procedure does not apply. Instead, employees are encouraged to raise concerns via the Head of Service in the first instance. The Head of Service will then be advised by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in her role as Monitoring Officer, and/or HR. Reference should also be made to the Councillors' Code of Conduct. It is appropriate for the good practice set out in the grievance policy and process to be applied to the resolution of concerns about councillors' conduct, but the formal process will not apply. Further information on raising concerns about elected member conduct is set out below.

Sexual Harassment

- 2.3 The Sexual Harassment Policy (May 2024) applies to all employees and covers harassment at work, during work related events and online and includes third party harassment. The Policy Statement and supporting guidance advises employees how to report any instances of violence, aggression or threats including:-
- Assault, abuse or threat causing injury or distress
 - Verbal or written aggression
 - Stalking
 - Sexual harassment
 - Harassment relating to any protected characteristic

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- 2.4 The EDI Policy Statement (March 2025) reinforces a zero-tolerance stance on discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation and promotes fair treatment across all employment stages, an inclusive culture and leadership and safe environments where employees are confident to be themselves.

Supporting Employee Wellbeing

- 2.5 Our Supporting Wellbeing at Work Policy (September 2024) outlines a proactive approach to supporting staff, particularly during periods of absence.

How We Work Matters

- 2.6 The How we Work Matters (HWWM) framework sets out how employees are expected to behave at work and encourages fairness, respect and inclusion in everyday interactions. It underpins conversations such as those held during Talking Points meetings, where wellbeing is a key focus; and supports resilience-building. HWWM complements employee safeguarding by promoting a culture of respect, dignity and safety.

Our People Matter

- 2.7 Our Workforce Strategy – Our People Matter (OPM), embeds equalities as a core success measure and strategic priority and aims to ensure that our employees have increased awareness of equality priorities through targeted communications and policy updates.

Equally Safe at Work

- 2.8 Following 18 months of collaborative work across HR, the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership and other Directorates, Fife Council achieved Bronze Equally Safe at Work Accreditation in November 2023. This is a structured employer programme developed by Close the Gap, who support employers to advance gender equality and prevent violence against women in the workplace. The programme is designed to:-
- Improve employment policies and practices
 - Create inclusive workplace cultures
 - Support employees affected by gender-based violence
 - Promote early and effective interventions to maximise safety and wellbeing

Elected member conduct

- 2.9 The framework for elected member conduct is set out in the Councillor's Code of Conduct. This document sets out the requirements for Councillor conduct but also allows Council employees and members of the public to understand what they can expect from Councillors. The Code is supported by a comprehensive guidance document and supplementary advice notes. One of the advice notes summarises the role of the

Monitoring Officer and this includes providing training and advice to elected members about the Code of conduct. This includes supporting local resolution of complaints where that is appropriate or supporting the Ethical Standards Commissioner complaint investigation process.

- 2.10 In Fife, regular refresher training sessions are provided by the Monitoring Officer to all elected members and there are also inductions training sessions provided after all elections. The Standards, Audit and Risk Committee consider an annual report from the Monitoring Officer on the ethical standards framework, with information provided about trends, themes and cases.
- 2.11 Fife Council has had a very low incidence of Standards Commission hearing decisions, with only one full hearing case since 2021. This case related to a now former councillor and was about a failure to foster good relations. There were a further seven Fife Council cases since 2021 where referrals had been made for investigation and no further action was taken by the Standards Commission. Any hearing outcome is reported to full Council.
- 2.12 The Monitoring Officer is consulted on occasions about member conduct issues and these can also be addressed informally through discussion with the Group Leader or Whip and the member concerned. The Monitoring Officer would refer a case for investigation to the Ethical Standards Commissioner (or indeed the police if required) if local resolution had not been possible or had been ineffective, or where the allegation was serious. The Ethical Standards Commissioner can consider interim suspension referrals to the Standards Commission as the Council has no power to suspend members.

3.0 Whistleblowing

- 3.1 The Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) provides workers (which includes employees, agency staff, those employed by Council contractors and volunteers working for or on behalf of the Council) with the right to raise concerns about the Council's behaviour or behaviour of a person within the Council without fear of being punished or victimised for doing so.
- 3.2 Having robust processes and procedures in place reduces legal risk from contravening the protections covered by the PIDA. Perhaps more importantly, it also provides the Council with information about behaviour that is in the wider public interest so that this can be properly investigated and action taken, where necessary.
- 3.3 A standalone Whistleblowing Policy was introduced, following Council Executive Team approval, in September 2023 and encourages employees to report concerns about misconduct or unethical behaviour covered by the PIDA, ensuring concerns are investigated and addressed appropriately. The policy is supported by detailed guidance and whistleblowers are protected from victimisation or unfair treatment. Employee communications were issued via the intranet, in employee news updates and through service communication routes to raise awareness of the new policy position. Further reminder articles have also been posted. We will be using "Speak Up Week" at the end of September to raise the profile of whistleblowing through employee communications and dedicated training for those involved in dealing with whistleblowing complaints is being arranged through PROTECT (the whistleblowing charity).
- 3.4 Our approach to whistleblowing involves a central reporting and recording process to provide a degree of confidentiality to the individual raising the concern and the right to confidentiality is assured where requested. There is a further option to raise a whistleblowing concern directly with the Head of HR, Head of Legal and Democratic Services or the Chief Executive.

Responding to concerns

- 3.5 Protections under PIDA apply to different types of wrongdoing including those relating to a criminal offence, breach of legal obligations, health and safety dangers, damage to the environment and deliberate concealment of information. Initially, whistleblowing concerns are notified to HR, Legal Services and Audit Services, with other disciplines becoming involved as / when appropriate. Given the range of concerns that could potentially be received, this tripartite approach ensures concerns are considered thoroughly.

Reporting

- 3.6 An update report on the Whistle blowing Policy was taken to Standards, Audit and Risk Committee in March 2024 and we have agreed annual reporting of whistleblowing statistics, outcomes and learnings to the same Committee. The last report was presented to the Committee in November 2024.
- 3.7 Since the Whistleblowing Policy was introduced in September 2023, the Council has received 45 whistleblowing allegations through its central reporting mechanisms. It should be noted, however, that some of these reports do not strictly meet the formal definition of whistleblowing under PIDA and some contain multiple elements to them.

4.0 Employee Engagement/Awareness Raising

- 4.1 All of our employment policies and procedures are available on the intranet and on fife.gov.uk for employees. We also utilise other communication methods, e.g. newsletters and toolbox talks as well as employee emails highlighting relevant weekly news items.
- 4.2 Our revised Induction Checklist (December 2024) covers the main employment policies and highlights information on sexual harassment.
- 4.3 Mandatory learning, including e-learning and alternative mandatory learning resources for all employees cover relevant issues including:-
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (incorporates sexual harassment)
 - Corporate Fraud (incorporates whistleblowing)
 - How We Work Matters
 - Child and Adult Protection
 - Trauma Informed Workforce
- 4.4 The Council's Corporate Fraud Team has undertaken a programme of engagement with Directorate Leadership / Management Teams, delivering presentations that include a dedicated section on the Council's whistleblowing arrangements. These sessions have also been used to actively promote a culture of openness and encourage the reporting of any concerns.
- 4.5 There is an ongoing collaboration, via a partnership Whistleblowing Group, between the Council, Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Fife and trade union colleagues in relation to the development, alignment, reporting and continuous improvement of whistleblowing arrangements.
- 4.6 Whilst policies and procedures across partnership bodies are not identical, the Whistleblowing Group aims to ensure alignment where possible and to promote the sharing of knowledge and learning. The Group also plays an important role in ensuring that the expectations placed on IJBs through the National Whistleblowing Standards are met, including those relating to reporting requirements

5.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

- 5.1 It is important that employees feel confident to speak out when they see or reasonably believe that there is wrongdoing through the various policy mechanisms available. Equally as important, they should feel confident that when they do raise concerns, the organisation listens to them, supports them and takes action as necessary.
- 5.2 Implementing a standalone Whistleblowing Policy and mandating corporate fraud training, including whistleblowing, for all staff demonstrates the importance the Council places on this process. Providing a central reporting and recording team with various routes to raise whistleblowing concerns encourages employees to come forward. An approach to sharing information across the relevant professional disciplines, according to the information received, ensures that concerns are addressed appropriately. Reporting mechanisms provide governance assurance and sharing of lessons learned.
- 5.3 Following the conjoined motion agreed at the Fife Council meeting on 18 September 2025, a further report will be brought to Cabinet setting out how an internal and independent review could be commissioned into:-
- The handling of any complaints or concerns raised within Fife Council, whether to officers or elected members, regarding former councillor David Graham prior to his conviction
 - Whether the Council policies and procedures were sufficient to protect women, staff, elected members, other vulnerable groups, children and the public, and how they were applied in practice
 - Options for strengthening safeguards and complaint-handling to ensure robust protection in the future.
- The report should include potential models for independence (e.g. use of external investigators, peer review by another authority, COSLA, or commissioning from an independent safeguarding body) and provide indicative costs.
- 5.4 We are currently gathering potential options for such a review to present to Cabinet Committee for consideration.

Report Contact:

Jacqui Cameron
HR Service Manager
Policy & Reward
Jacqui.cameron@fife.gov.uk

Relevant Documents (all can be found on the intranet under HR Online or on the Employee Information pages of fife.gov.uk)

- DI10 Grievance Policy Statement and Procedure (September 2023)
- EO03 Sexual Harassment Policy Statement (May 2024)
- EO01 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy (March 2025)
- WB01 Supporting Wellbeing at Work Policy (September 2024)
- IN51 Induction Checklist (December 2024)
- How We Work Matters Framework
- OPM People Plan and Strategy (June 2025)
- CC50 Whistleblowing Policy (September 2023)
- Whistleblowing Policy Update Report - Agenda Pack for Standards, Audit and Risk Committee 14th March 2024

9 October 2025

Agenda Item No. 8

Review of Discretionary Benefits and Pensions Policy Issues

Report by: Sharon McKenzie, Head of Human Resources and Elaine Muir, Head of Finance

Wards Affected: N/A

Purpose

This report provides a review of the discretionary benefits changes agreed by the Policy and Co-ordination Committee in August 2020 which came into effect on 30 September 2021. It also provides an update on Pension Policy areas including Approvals and Flexible Retirement. Information on the Accounts Commission report on senior officer exit packages in Glasgow City Council is provided with a review of the approach in Fife Council.

Recommendations

Cabinet Committee are asked to: -

- (1) note the review and the use of discretionary benefits to date;
- (2) note the approvals route and the actions highlighted at recommendation 6 in light of the Glasgow City Council report;
- (3) note the advice issued by the Scottish Public Pensions Agency on discretionary decisions associated with flexible retirement and Fife Council's adherence to these;
- (4) note the use of updated early retirement reduction factors may result in an increased strain cost. The factors to be applied are based on actuarial advice;
- (5) note the recommendations from the report on Glasgow City Council exit packages and the approach taken to these by Fife Council and agree the recommended actions in paragraph 4.3 with a further update to Cabinet Committee in December setting out the revised Policy; and
- (6) recommend to Council to amend the List of Officer Powers in line with the recommended actions in paragraph 4.3.

Resource Implications

Additional costs will arise from the updated factors outlined in Section 3 of the report and these will be considered as part of the usual decision-making process in relation to flexible retirement.

Legal and Risk Implications

There is a requirement to regularly review the policy to be applied in the exercise of discretionary powers as permitted under relevant legislation. The next review will be scheduled in 2027 given the current low numbers involved.

Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out in 2020 when the changes to Discretionary Benefits were agreed. No further material changes are proposed.

Consultation

The policy remains discretionary under pension regulations and therefore does not require agreement with the Trade Unions.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In August 2020, the Policy and Co-ordination Committee agreed to (from September 2021): -
- Remove the discretion to award Compensatory Added Years and Discretionary Compensation Payments for both voluntary and compulsory redundancies and business efficiencies for Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and Teachers.
 - Introduce a Discretionary Exit Payment at a flat rate of £3,000 to be paid to all employees leaving the organisation through redundancy (compulsory and voluntary) or business efficiency in addition to their unreduced pension benefits and redundancy payments.

- 1.2 The Council continues to mitigate the number of redundancies across the organisation wherever possible. The table below shows the total number of redundancies (which included a discretionary exit payment) since the agreed changes to discretionary benefits: -

Reason for Leaving	Total Number (Sept 2021 – July 2025)
Voluntary Redundancy	3
Compulsory Redundancy	7

- 1.3 In addition to the above occasions, a discretionary exit payment has also been paid to six employees who received a redundancy payment on termination of a temporary contract.
- 1.4 In August 2020, we reported that in the three-year period 2016/17 to 2018/19, the total cost of exit packages was £23.9m. These costs included: -
- Strain on the pension fund costs of £8.9m
 - Redundancy payments of £4.9m
 - Discretionary Compensatory Payments (DCP) costs of £4.3m
 - Compensatory Added Years (CAY) lump sum costs of £0.7m
 - Compensatory Added Years (CAY) capitalisation costs of £5.1m

- 1.5 The total cost of exit packages from September 2021 until July 2025 for all exits under the revised policy (effective from 2022/23) was £0.45m.
- 1.6 The significant reduction in costs associated with exit packages can be attributed to the relatively stable financial situation for the Council and mitigation of redundancies. There have been no significant staffing reduction exercises and only 10 redundancy situations in that period as outlined at para. 1.2 above.

2.0 Flexible Retirement

- 2.1 The Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) issued a circular (LGPS 2025/03) on 6 August 2025 clarifying employer duties when making discretionary decisions on whether to allow flexible retirement under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018.
- 2.2 In the Local Government Pension Scheme (Scotland) Regulations 2018, Regulation 58, Statement of Policy about exercise of discretionary functions, a scheme employer must prepare a written statement of its policy in relation to the exercise of its function including regulation 29(7) (Flexible Retirement). The circular outlines what the employer should take into consideration when applying their discretion on an application for flexible retirement. The policy must set out the way in which a discretion should be exercised to achieve consistency, however, any decision made should also consider the facts of each case and be prepared to make exceptions, depending on the situation of the member.
- 2.3 Fife Council's Flexible Retirement Policy (September 2021) has agreed guiding principles to ensure a consistent approach but does include discretions on the following basis: -
- Each application will be decided on its merits and Services should seek advice from Human Resources and Financial Services
 - Payback of any costs involved will normally be within 1 year but may be between 1 and 2 years if agreed by the Head of Finance
- 2.4 Fife Council's Policy Statement on LGPS Employer Discretion lists a further discretion under Flexible Retirement (Regulation 29) which states: -
- Fife Council will consider requests on a case by case basis in accordance with the policy. Actuarial reductions may be waived, where it is in the Council's interest to do so. In practice, reductions are always applied.
- 2.5 Early payment of unreduced benefits may result in a cost to the pension fund. This cost is known as the strain cost and represents the cost of paying out pensions earlier and for longer as well as considering the loss of contributions and lost investment returns. Strain costs are met by the Council.
- 2.6 Following the Actuarial Valuation, the factors applied when calculating the strain costs associated with early retirements are updated to reflect the same underlying assumptions used in the most recent valuation. The rationale being that the strain costs are a cost for the employer and as such should use the same assumptions.
- 2.7 Implementation of the new factors will likely give rise to higher strain costs required to be met by employers. The change in factors will generate a higher capital cost.

- 2.8 The capital cost is offset by savings from paying reduced benefits by applying actuarial reductions based on using factors supplied by the Government Actuary Department (GAD). The GAD factors have also been updated resulting in a lower level of savings from benefit reduction. This, coupled with the increased capital cost, means strain costs will likely be higher.
- 2.9 The Pension Fund has considered further advice from the actuary and evidence from the testing and agreed to move to the new factors from 1 October 2025.
- 2.10 Implementation of the new factors may result in additional costs of flexible retirements and the Council will need to consider these costs in the normal decision-making process. Any estimates for flexible retirement provided and approved before implementation will be honoured.

3.0 Approvals

- 3.1 Currently, there is a process whereby voluntary early retirements with a payback period outwith two years can be approved by the Head of Finance and the Head of HR. To ensure there is a robust governance framework around this process, Finance, Pensions and HR will work together to undertake a mapping exercise of the approvals process taking further account of the recommendations outlined in Section 5 of this report.

4.0 Glasgow City Council – Senior Officer Exit Packages

- 4.1 An investigation was conducted by Brodies LLP into the exit packages of five former senior officers at Glasgow City Council. This highlighted a number of issues and made several recommendations. Subsequently, the Accounts Commission has reported that the processes, decisions and actions that enable the senior officers to take significant early retirement and redundancy payments fell short of the behaviour and standards expected of public servants.
- 4.2 The Brodies report picked up a number of issues relating to the exits which are described below: -

Departure Terms

The officers left on various terms, including voluntary redundancy and early retirement, with significant financial packages. The total cost to the Council for these departures was substantial with payments for redundancy and pension strain.

Compliance with Policies

The investigation found that the severance terms for most officers were consistent with Council policies. However, the departure of the Chief Executive was not approved in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations.

Conflict of Interest

The investigation highlighted potential conflicts of interest, as the officers involved in approving the packages were also beneficiaries of the packages. There was a lack of substantial oversight at the political level.

- 4.3 The Brodies' report made a number of recommendations which are shown below along with the current Fife Council position in relation to these and any further actions which have been identified: -

Glasgow CC Recommendations	Fife Council Position
1. Revision of the Scheme of Delegations	
The Scheme of Delegation should be revised to make specific provision for the approval of severance or early retirement of the Chief Executive. This could involve vesting authority in the City Administration Committee (CAC) or a combination of senior officers.	The Fife Council List of Officer Powers confirms: In relation to officer powers, the Chief Executive has the power to agree severance terms with any chief officer whereby the chief officer agrees to terminate their contract of employment with the Council where there is no conflict with relevant statutory provisions and Council policies. RECOMMENDED ACTION – add specific provision for the approval of severance terms for the Chief Executive via Committee
2. Committee Approval for Senior Officers	
The Council should consider whether a committee should be required to approve any early retirement or severance arrangements for officers above a particular grade.	Any exit payments are reported and scrutinised through the Remuneration Report disclosed in the annual accounts which report on all exit packages payable because of either an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before normal retirement date, or an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits, as agreed by the Council. RECOMMENDED ACTION – seek Committee approval to approve severance terms for Chief Officers. This would mean a change to the Scheme of Delegation (see 1 above)
3. Formal and Thorough Approach	
A more formal and thorough approach is needed for the approval process. Advice to decision-makers and the decisions taken based on that advice should be clearly recorded in writing to ensure a properly documented audit trail.	The Fife Council List of Officer Powers confirms: - 2.3.5 An Executive Director may approve the voluntary redundancy, early retirement or ill health retiral of any employee in their directorate where: - - the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) has been consulted and has agreed. In the case of Finance and Corporate Services' employees, the Executive Director shall advise the Chief Executive of any relevant matters; and - the termination is in accordance with the relevant Council policy. Any such terminations should be reported to the

Glasgow CC Recommendations	Fife Council Position
	Cabinet Committee as part of the annual review of discretionary exit payments and reported as part of the monitoring report to the Pensions Committee. RECOMMENDED ACTION – None
4. Written Guidance	
Written guidance should be issued to set out the requirements for the approval of exit packages. This guidance should ensure that service reform initiatives, which include a dependency on staff leaving on enhanced terms, are properly scrutinised to ensure that the enhanced terms are incidental to the reform rather than the reform being designed to allow staff to leave on enhanced terms	RECOMMENDED ACTION – develop formal written guidance for the approval of exit packages to support the Service Change Plan process
5. Proper Scrutiny of Service Reform Initiatives	
It is vital to ensure that service reform initiatives, which include a dependency on staff leaving on enhanced terms, are properly scrutinised. This scrutiny should ensure that the enhanced terms are incidental to the reform or underpin the reform, rather than the reform being designed to allow staff to leave on enhanced term	RECOMMENDED ACTION as above, develop formal written guidance for the approval of exit packages to support the Service Change Plan process.

- 4.4 The Accounts Commission report further poses a number of questions for Councils to consider: -

Accounts Commission Question	Fife Council Position
Are their schemes of delegation and codes of conduct fit for purpose and do they reflect the principles of public life?	RECOMMENDED ACTION – Head of Legal and Democratic Services to review
Does the scheme of delegation include a clear process for considering proposals and approvals for restructure, redundancy and retirement and does it appropriately manage potential conflicts of interest?	RECOMMENDED ACTION – this will be addressed through the actions proposed in 5.3 (above)
Is there appropriate officer and councillor scrutiny of the decision-making process in relation to restructure, redundancy and retirement?	RECOMMENDED ACTION – whilst we are assured this situation would not arise in Fife Council, further scrutiny will be addressed through the actions proposed in 5.3 (above).

Accounts Commission Question	Fife Council Position
Is there a good understanding and implementation of the requirements set out in the scheme of delegation relating to restructure, redundancy and retirement, through training and monitoring?	RECOMMENDED ACTION – Head of Legal and Democratic Services to review
Does the prevailing culture among senior officers reflect the standards and behaviours required by the principles of public life?	RECOMMENDED ACTION – Head of Legal and Democratic Services to issue a reminder on standards and behaviours

- 4.5 We intend to take a report to Standards, Audit and Risk Committee on 27 November to confirm the agreed approach.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Whilst we are confident that appropriate approval and scrutiny is and would continue to be applied to exit packages, there are lessons to be learned from the Glasgow City Council investigation and the recommended actions will strengthen and safeguard our approach.

Background Papers

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

- Voluntary Early Retirement – Review of Discretionary Benefits Report to Policy & Co-ordination Committee 27th August 2020
- The Accounts Commission report [The 2023/24 audit of Glasgow City Council | Audit Scotland](#)

Report Contact

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Outstanding Remits from Committees

Title	Service(s)	Comments
6th November, 2025 (MEETING CANCELLED DUE TO BY-ELECTION)		
All reports scheduled for this meeting have been moved to either the December 2025 or January/February 2026 meetings.		
4th December, 2025		
Fife Bus Network Review	Roads and Transportation Service	As agreed at 30.11.23 Cabinet meeting - para. 185 of 2023.CC.102 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 30th November 2023 - A report be brought back to a future meeting of the committee providing options for the council to begin the provision of not for profit bus services. Update (September 2025): Moved to December 2025 due to cancellation of November meeting.
Pedestrian and Cyclist Access to Household Waste Recycling Centres	Environment and Building Services	As agreed at 11.01.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 199 of 2024.CC.110 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 11th January 2024 - Deferred to a future meeting. UPDATE: CIRECO to undertake a full health and safety review of all their facilities. September 2025 - Report to Cabinet deferred to November 2025 as still awaiting H&S report from CIRECO. Update - Moved to December 2025 due to cancellation of November meeting.
Mothballing of Kirkton of Largo Primary School Review	Education	As agreed at 09.01.25 Cabinet meeting - para. 322 of 2025.CC.170 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 9th January 2025 - A further report be brought back to committee no later than December 2025 reviewing the decision.
Scaling Up Housing First in Fife	Housing	As agreed at 6th March 2025 meeting - para 343 of 2025.CC.181 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 6th March 2025 - Noted next steps and further reporting as detailed in section 3 of the report. UPDATE (July 2025): Deferred to October to allow partners and services to discuss the evaluation at a workshop event being held in autumn. Update (September 2025) Deferred from October to allow the Ending Homelessness Together more time to incorporate feedback from a strategic workshop held on 18th September.

Title	Service(s)	Comments
4th December, 2025		
Housing Allocation Policy Review Update	Housing Services	As agreed at 03.04.25 Cabinet meeting - para. 355 of 2025.CC.187 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 3rd April 2025 - Report back to Cabinet in Autumn 2025. UPDATE (September 2025) - Deferred from October as the Allocation Policy Task and Finish Group are still working through core issues and awaiting feedback from a customer engagement survey.
8th January, 2026		
Education Service Anti-Bullying Policy	Education	As agreed at 02.11.23 Cabinet meeting – para. 169 of 2023.CC.93 refers – Cabinet Committee Minute - 2nd November 2023 - Report to be brought back in a year's time. UPDATE (July 2025): Working Group recently established - update report being submitted November 2025. Update (September 2025): Moved to January 2026 due to cancellation of November meeting.
Short-Term Let Control Areas Update	Planning	As agreed at 03.04.25 Cabinet meeting - para. 358 of 2025.CC.189 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 3rd April 2025 - A report to Cabinet in December 2025/January 2026 would further comprehensively address the risk and benefits of promoting a STLCA in Fife.
Affordable Housing Programme 2026-29 / Affordable Housing Phase 4	Housing	As agreed at 6th March 2025 meeting - para 343 of 2025.CC.181 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 6th March 2025 - Noted next steps and further reporting as detailed in section 3 of the report. UPDATE: Deferred from October 2025 to coincide with the SHIP report being submitted in January. Work currently underway to look at alternative delivery and financing models for AH.
5th February, 2026		
Tackling Marine Pollution - Membership of KIMO UK and KIMO International - Update	Planning	As agreed at 01.05.25 Cabinet meeting - para. 369 of 2025.CC.196 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 1st May 2025 - Six monthly update to be submitted on progress of KIMO membership. Update (September 2025): Moved to February 2026 due to cancellation of November meeting.

Title	Service(s)	Comments
Unallocated		
Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) - Scottish Government Consultation Response	Housing Services	As agreed at 07.03.24 Cabinet meeting - para. 223 of 2024.CC.122 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 7th March 2024 - A further report be brought back to Cabinet later in 2024. UPDATE: December 2024 - Deferred from January 2025 meeting as Scottish Government announcement on SHNZS is still awaited. An Elected Members' Briefing to be issued meantime.
Fife Transient Visitor Levy Scheme	Business and Employability	As agreed at 03.04.25 Cabinet Committee - para. 362 of 2025.CC.192 refers - Cabinet Committee Minute - 3rd April 2025 - Draft Levy Scheme to be developed and brought back to Cabinet Committee for approval prior to statutory consultation.