**Community and Housing Services Committee**

**29th October 2021**

**Agenda Item No**.

|  |
| --- |
| **Communities and Neighbourhoods Service Performance Report**  |
| **Report by: Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods** |
| **Wards Affected:** All |

**Purpose**

To present the performance scorecard for the Communities and Neighbourhoods Service for 2020/21

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

1. Consider the Communities and Neighbourhoods Service performance information presented at Appendix 1.
2. Consider if any further review work or scrutiny is required and the scope of that review.
3. Note the arrangements set out to fulfil the Council’s obligation to comply with Audit Scotland’s 2018 SPI Direction.
4. Note the information regarding the Area report at Appendix 2.
5. Note the information regarding the Workforce profile at Appendix 3.
6. Note the information regarding the Active Fife Way of Life at Appendix 4

Resource Implications

None

Legal & Risk Implications

None

Impact Assessment

An EqIA is not required because the report does not propose any changes or revisions to existing policies and practices.

Consultation

None required

## 1.0 Background

1.1 Audit Scotland published the Statutory Performance Direction in December 2018. 2020/21 is the second year to which that direction applies. The Council is required to report a range of information setting out:

1. Its performance in improving local public services, provided by both (i) the Council itself and (ii) by the Council in conjunction with its partners and communities.
2. Its progress against the desired outcomes agreed with its partners and communities.
3. Its performance in comparison (i) over time and (ii) with other similar bodies, including information drawn down from LGBF and from other benchmarking activities.
4. Its assessment of how it is performing against its duty of Best Value, and how it plans to improve against this assessment

1.2 This is the first performance report submitted following implementation of Oracle Cloud. This system has sophisticated reporting tools and better reporting functionality. However, some of these reports are still in development, particularly those relating to sickness absence.

 1.3  Members should therefore be aware that the figures in that section are different due to the change of system. Previously, absence was reported as Working Days Lost (WDL) per Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The output data currently being produced is for WDL per employee and, as a result, there is likely to be a slight difference in the figures.

1.4 This report is part of the Council’s public performance reporting covering the whole of the Council’s performance against key indicators, including the Local Government Benchmarking Framework.

## 2.0 Policy Context

2.1 Fife Council and the Fife Partnership have recently completed a review of the Plan for Fife to ensure that continued progress is being made towards the Plan's twelve ten-year ambitions, while at the same time providing a recovery and renewal plan following the Covid-19 emergency.  The updated Plan provides clear direction for the Council and the Partnership’s work over the next three years. It sets out three recovery and renewal priorities - tackling poverty and preventing crisis, leading economic recovery, and addressing the climate emergency. These priorities will be addressed as part of an overall community wealth building approach that puts people and communities firmly at the heart of everything we do.

2.2 The updated Plan has been approved by the Fife Partnership Board and Fife Council and provides the basis for regular reporting to the Fife Partnership Board and relevant Fife Council committees on the delivery of the agreed priorities and ambitions. This will, in turn, drive service performance and improvement activities.

## 3.0 Covid Impact

3.1 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been felt across all aspects of the service and the partner organisations and communities the service works with.

3.2 The detail of the support the service provided at the height of the pandemic in 2020 has been reported elsewhere. Many thousands of people across Fife received emergency food and welfare support thanks to the efforts of teams within the service. The pandemic had an impact on the delivery of core service offerings, as is shown in the performance data within the appendices. For a large part of 2020 there was no core community learning and development service or community use delivery. Many of the community and capital projects that would have been delivered were halted in response to the restrictions and teams having been redirected to deliver emergency support. Emergency support continues to be a feature of the current service offering, although demand is less than during the spring and summer of 2020. Community Use was able to restart outdoor offerings within government and SportScotland guidelines, albeit at reduced capacities.

3.3 The Council’s ALEOs were also impacted by the Covid restrictions, As can be seen from the performance information in the appendix relating to sports attendances, the impact of 270 days closure for Fife Sports and Leisure Trust and the closure of community use schools resulted in a significant drop in attendances. A similar impact was also experienced by the Fife Culture Trust. Both Trusts were able to provide a positive online experience during the periods of shutdown and reopened as best they could within the restrictions that were in place at the time. Fife Golf Trust and Fife Coast and Countryside Trust were affected in different ways, with the Golf Trust able to resume a degree of operation from May 2020 and Fife Coast and Countryside Trust experiencing a busy operational period with an increase in ‘staycations’ and visits to Fife.

3.4 Capital projects and greenspace work were also affected by the pandemic. Most capital projects were delayed, and greenspace work suspended because of Covid restrictions. Allotments remained open within government guidelines and the increase in visitors to the countryside led to an increase in the number of access issues being dealt with by the service.

3.5 Voluntary organisations supported by grants and service level agreements were also impacted by the pandemic. Their services were adapted to meet the needs of their customers using on-line and other digital methods; most staff were able to work from home and Council link officers continued to provide support and advice as required.

## 4.0 Service Activity

4.1 This section outlines keys activities that have been delivered by the service and wider directorate over the past year, along with recovery work that is ongoing.

**People and Place Leadership**

4.2 The development of multi-disciplinary teams during the summer of 2020 led to a change in the Council’s area working arrangements, with the agreement of a local People and Place Leadership approach. The multi-disciplinary teams demonstrated the ability of the Council and partners to collaborate effectively to deliver support to families and individuals across different services. This approach is now being developed as part of a wider approach to tackling poverty. All seven areas have established local People and Place Groups and are now developing local processes and building relationships to make this an effective delivery mechanism.

4.3 The growth in online learning and video calls led to a growing recognition of the digital inequality that exists across Fife. The service worked with Connecting Scotland to provide people with laptops and access to technology through the Connecting Scotland Scheme. This was supplemented with ongoing telephone support for beneficiaries of the scheme.

4.4 Additional telephone and online welfare support was provided during the pandemic. The service now provides a blended service, receiving referrals from a wide range of agencies and providing a mix of face to face, telephone and online advice and support to clients.

4.5 The pandemic had a varying impact across Fife, and community research was undertaken to gauge this impact and hear directly from those affected. Narrative enquiry research was undertaken by area teams across Fife with support from Aberdeen University. The research reports will help to ensure that people’s lived experiences of the pandemic help shape future provision and crisis/resilience planning. This work was dovetailed with community consultations carried out in summer 2021.

4.6 The People and Place Approach, together with learning from work to support individuals and families through the pandemic, helped to inform a successful bid to establish asymptomatic Covid test centres in Fife. Working with NHS colleagues and the Council’s communications team, the service established asymptomatic testing centres across Fife, with static and mobile test centres being used to provide free testing to anyone without symptoms.

4.7 With the arrival of the Covid vaccines, community use teams worked with NHS colleagues to establish the vaccine centres. Staff from the service continue to support these centres, with many having been trained to administer lateral-flow tests. An important part of testing in Fife has been the ability of the service to support individuals with wrap-around support, including food and welfare advice and hardship support. This was part of a wider package of support provided by Fife Council.

4.8 The devolved approach to the provision of support, along with local knowledge, was important in the delivery of support during the pandemic. Community assistance hubs were established across Fife. These hubs worked with Test and Protect staff and community partners to coordinate food supplies and deliveries for people in need. This arrangement was established early in the pandemic and provided vital support. The hubs were supported by colleagues from a range of services who were redeployed to help. Many areas introduced local befriending services - a telephone service to support socially isolated people.

4.9 During the summers of 2020 and 2021, community development teams, alongside the Active Fife team and partners, provided an enhanced summer programme that offered children, young people and their families opportunities to engage in activities that were meaningful and enjoyable. For example, over £43,000 was secured from the ‘Additional Summer Monies’ made available by the Scottish Government to provide activities, including outdoor family learning sessions in the West Fife Villages and in the Orchard in Rosyth. Adult learning opportunities and youth work sessions were offered in the form of face-to-face activities, as well as online sessions, focussing on mental health and wellbeing, digital youth work and work with referred young people.

4.10 Area teams have continued to deliver local community plan priorities and a summary of activity in each area is provided in Appendix 2.

**5.** **Fife-wide Provision**

**Physical Activity and Sport**

5.1 Covid restrictions closed many indoor facilities and prevented indoor sport for much of last year. When restrictions permitted, community use teams developed robust procedures to facilitate the return of employees and customers to Council facilities. Initially supporting outdoor activity, the teams were eventually able to offer indoor sports provision for children and young people. Groups using indoor facilities were offered a 30% discount to help them recover from the loss of income due to activities being cancelled.

5.2 Our Active Communities team responded quickly to ensure that people still received  opportunities to participate, with a new online offering developed providing weekly participation sessions to all classes, along with daily ‘how to be active at home’ family sessions, all linked to the ‘5 ways to wellbeing’.  In partnership with the Council’s HR Team, and to support the working population, a six-week campaign ‘Active Fife 5-a-day’ was developed, which encouraged staff to get moving at home or in an office. This was shared with NHS Health Promotion who used the campaign to support businesses across Fife. This initiative generated over1400 newsfeeds through two social media platforms and three social media accounts, supporting mental health and wellbeing.

5.3 A new ‘Active Families’ outdoor programme was developed in the summer as some restrictions eased, with families able to enjoy a range of free activities, including cycling, golf, tennis, bowls, archery, handball, volleyball, all booked through a new online booking app, supported by the Council’s BTS Service.  The programme attracted a higher than anticipated number of participants in the first week, with 1,565 people attending across Fife.  As word spread via social media, numbers rose in the second week to1,659**.**  A great indicator of success was the vast majority of customers having booked into more than one session.  This continued throughout the rest of the year and into the October school holidays, working in partnership with area teams to link into the ‘Café Inc’ initiative throughout Fife, part of a targeted initiative to give those from deprived areas the chance to receive a free healthy meal, as well as taking part in physical activity opportunities for all the family.

5.4 With walking being one of the few physical activities still able to take place, from July the service recommenced the Walking Programme, initially with around 200 participants.  From there, we continued to deliver courses across 13 locations with over 400 participants attending weekly and trained 47new walk leaders from ESOL, Fife Carers, Sports Hubs, FSLT and community volunteers.  This has supported our inclusive approach to physical activity and our aim to reduce social isolation wherever possible.  The service continued to support the 78 care homes across Fife, along with the many care providers, with an online activity pack and network meetings.  As we were unable to hold our flagship ‘Go for Gold’ event that has been held since 2012, engaging older adults in physical activity, the team held a virtual event instead, where 39 care homes and over 500residents took part; here is a link to the video  [Fife Older Adults - Go for Gold with Physical Activity (2020) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F76Llc--Uc4)

5.5 Fife Sports and Leisure Trust (FSLT) also worked to reopen facilities following the announcement from the Scottish Government in August 2020 that gyms and leisure facilities could reopen from 31st August. From September 14th, 2020, 13 facilities re-opened on a phased basis, except for The Beacon Leisure Centre, which was unavoidably delayed due to the facility’s layout, which presented challenges, making delivering social distancing requirements difficult. Between FSLT and community use this represented one of the most significant reopening of facilities across Scotland. However, following the announcement from the Scottish Government of Level 4 local protection measures in December 2020, facilities again closed from December 26th, 2020 and did not reopen during the financial year 2020-2021. The 13 FSLT facilities operated for up to 15 weeks in 2020/21 and many employees were furloughed.

5.6 Online tools were used to continue to deliver engagement. FSLT provided an on-line offering delivering ten live fitness classes per week. Participants who previously attended FSLT’s Health Programme were engaged to encourage them to keep their physical activity levels up during the lockdown period.

5.7 Whilst at the start of the pandemic the online fitness offering provided a degree of optimism that there would be a surge in physical activity, the reopening of centres and the restarting of community sports clubs has shown that there has been a mixed re-engagement with physical activity and sport. The recently approved Active Fife Strategy is key to increasing physical activity and sport in Fife. The Council and FSLT are working together using 4DX methodology to increase participation in sport and to target citizens who receive concessions, to raise awareness of local provision and to increase ‘social connectedness’ among older members of the community. Already activities like walking football and inclusive swimming sessions are being delivered with increasing attendances across all public provision.

**Culture**

5.8 All Fife Culture Trust services and facilities were impacted by the pandemic. Libraries innovated with the development of click and collect services followed by limited browsing as the restrictions changed. Theatres were hardest hit with all shows stopped and only a slow recovery with continued issues in accessing venues. The redevelopment of the Adam Smith Theatre was brought forward. Museums and galleries were also closed and only reopened with limited access. The impact of Covid on staffing has presented challenges across the trusts and continues to be watched closely. Cultural innovation through the pandemic saw the use of online library and book sessions as well as cultural events.

**Outdoors and Greenspace**

5.9 During 2020/21 the Covid impact significantly increased the usage of outdoor spaces. Core paths, access, biodiversity and allotment operations saw an increased level of activity and usage across Fife.

5.10 36 allotment sites accommodate over 1600 plot holders. Waiting lists to access plots has exceeded 1500. 19 new allotment sites are planned over the next ten years. External funding opportunities will be sought to match fund Council funding.

5.11 While closed at the start of the pandemic, once re-opened playparks were busy across Fife. The recently approved Play Spaces Strategy will assist in transforming play parks over the next ten years and inform spending priorities in play spaces

5.12 The River Leven Restoration Project is being delivered in partnership with SEPA, and involves a feasibility, concept and developed design for restoration of the lower reaches of the River Leven, from Windygates to Leven, to improve morphology and ecology, with benefits for biodiversity, greenspace, ecosystem services, access and the local community. In 2020/21 funding was secured from SEPA’s Water Environment Fund to develop this work through RIBA Stage 2, with project management support provided from 2021/22 onwards. This project is part of the wider River Leven Programme.

5.13 Lyne Burn Green Network project (Dunfermline) commenced at the end of 2020/21. This involves river restoration works and greenspace improvements. SEPA is the major funder and expects Fife Council to secure funding from other sources for greenspace improvements. The project also creates a base in a derelict garden at Touch for a new community company Grow and Play. Grow and Play will create opportunities for food growing and outdoor education. FCCT has an extensive community engagement programme as part of project.

5.14 Several greenspace and biodiversity projects which were on hold due to restrictions recommenced. Initiatives included:

* In Glenrothes, Back Burn Restoration Project consultants have continued work on developing the scope for the river restoration project;
* Bluther Wetland site works were completed to develop habitat enhancement in West Fife;
* The grant-funded Fife's Buzzing project created over 12ha of species-rich grassland in parks and greenspaces across Fife, working with external partners.

5.15 Fife Council has a legal duty to produce a second Fife forestry and woodland strategy, the aims of which will include expanding the woodland resource, responding to climate change and protecting and enhancing environmental quality. Work includes:

* Creating a woodland of 65,000 trees at Minto (between Lochgelly and Cardenden). This will be completed by March 2022.
* A three-year woodland management project with Rural Skills Scotland (RSS), a social enterprise. RSS will apply for a WIAT grant for Kennoway Den and carry out wood management works at Townhill, Calaismuir (Dunfermline), and Woodend (Cowdenbeath).
* Work with other services to create new woods on Fife Council land and producing the second woodland strategy.

5.16 Fife saw increased use of its outdoor spaces. Nature Scot (2021) estimated that 80% of Scots were visiting the outdoors - up from 64% in 2019. One in five people say that access to the countryside is more important post-Covid. As a result, , pressure on landowners has increased. Maintenance of core path an ongoing challenge. The service has worked in partnership with FCCT, grounds maintenance and with communities to undertake core path works.. In 2020/21 20 access cases were dealt with, all resolved without the need for legal action.

**Capital Projects**

5.17 The value of the service capital plan for 2021-2031 is £55 million. The programme was developed with a range of partners, including other council services, Arm’s Length External Organisations (ALEOs) (Fife Sports and Leisure Trust, Fife Cultural Trust, Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, Fife Golf Trust) and partnership projects with the community and third sector. The service is engaged in the delivery of over 250 projects, which cover a range of indoor, outdoor, and green infrastructure projects from small scale through to large infrastructure projects for new builds, refurbishment or enhancements to existing facilities or outdoor space.

5.18 Progressing capital projects in 2020/21 was curtailed by the onset of the Covid lockdown, presenting major challenges for design development with partners, procurement, appointment of contractors and suspension of onsite works for live projects. Despite these delays, during 2020/21, 21 large capital projects were completed, a further nine were at a detailed design stage and three were on site. Following the easing of Covid restrictions, other projects have been able to resume.

5.19 The delivery of the service capital programme is dependent on several factors. These include Covid recovery impact, people and financial resourcing, project development, access to partner external funding, tender costs being higher than expected, contractor availability, agreement between partners on the scope of the projects, operator capacity to manage new assets or outdoor space, and issues over land ownership and availability in areas of need. In the short to medium term the capital delivery programme will be reviewed to re-phase delivery over a longer period and to review the financial budget to increase the staff resource required to deliver projects

 **Emergency Resilience and Events**

5.20 During 20/21 the key role of the Emergency Resilience Team was to support the co-ordination of the Council's response to Covid-19.  An interim debrief of the Council's response to Covid-19 has been carried out, and lessons identified will be taken forward to make improvements to the Council's response to any incident.  As the Council continues to respond to Covid-19 a further debrief will be carried out.

5.21 Due to the impact of Covid-19, all resilience training and exercising was put on hold.  The training and exercising programme will be re-started when resources permit.

5.22 The level of volunteer work carried out by Fife's communities during the Covid-19 response has been widely recognised. Building on this, work continues to increase awareness of community resilience through the provision of advice and support to community groups.

5.23 In addition to Covid-19, during 20/21 there were two notable severe weather incidents (August 2020 and February 2021).  These were responded to with partners concurrently with the Covid-19 response.  Lessons have been identified for implementation

5.24 For the majority of 20/21 most events were not permitted due to Covid restrictions.  During that time, the Council's events process was reviewed to ensure a more joined-up approach across services and to improve the experience of event organisers when planning their event.  Work continues to develop this process.

5.25 As part of the revised process, an events officer role was created.  This single point of contact for event organisers will liaise with relevant services and partners, ensuring that events are both successful and safe.

**Pan-Fife and Voluntary Sector**

5.26 Throughout the pandemic, the service worked closely with Fife Voluntary Action and local voluntary organisations to provide vital support and welfare services. Partnership working during the pandemic played a key role in supporting community-led responses. This was achieved through micro-seed funding, partnership delivery and link officer support. During the lockdown, over 70 local voluntary groups worked to support local communities across Fife, providing a range of essential services, including the delivery of shopping and prescriptions, transport and the provision of befriending services.

5.27 The Community Investment Team has provided ongoing support to the voluntary sector and community groups – providing funding support, supporting community asset transfers/subsidised leases and managing funding programmes. The team provides support to link officers and commissioning work across the Council and has coordinated work to ready the council for the change to new regional economic development funding from the UK Government through Levelling Up and the closure of the European programmes. The transition between the different funding regimes will require ongoing management.

5.28 The Community Development Support Team led on the development of Fife’s new community learning and development plan, while continuing to support local CLD delivery through continuing professional development, quality assurance and professional support.YouthSpace Fife provided innovative online engagement and delivery of youth work through Instagram, Facebook and Discord.

5.29 The Research Team provided research and policy support across a range of work to improve outcomes and increase capacity within Fife Council directorates.

## 6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The service has responded to the challenges presented by the pandemic and has been recognised by partners and members of the community for the support and assistance provided.

6.2 The recovery from the pandemic will be challenging, with a need to further build relationships with communities and develop their resilience and trust in the safety of attending learning, physical activity, sport, leisure and cultural activities.

6.3 Despite the pandemic, the service has been able to bring forward key areas of reform work, notably a new physical activity and sport strategy, more integrated working with the Trusts, tackling poverty and food insecurity strategies, a playpark strategy and an updated CLD Plan. Together with the updated Plan for Fife and a new approach to local People and Place Leadership, these strategies and plans provide a firm foundation for the service’s contribution to Fife’s recovery and renewal.

**List of Appendices**

1. Performance Annual Report 20/21
2. Area reports
3. Workforce Profile Report 20/21
4. Active Fife Way of Life

Paul Vaughan

Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods

Email**:** **paul.vaughan@fife.gov.uk**

**Key Business Delivery**

| **Performance** | **Progress** |
| --- | --- |
|  | Waiting lists increased, during 20/21. partly due to people’s desire to be outside and grow their own food. Other Councils have experienced similar increases in demand.During 2020 Covid restrictions meant that no new sites were built, and empty plots were not re-allocated. Restrictions on re-letting existing plots were lifted in spring 2021 and waiting lists have now fallen slightly.There is a commitment in the capital plan to deliver 19 new sites over the next five years to address the demand. However, this is dependent on future funding and obtaining the necessary planning consents. It is anticipated that fewer plots will be handed back each year. The commitment to build new sites should enable the Council to meet the statutory obligation for waiting lists that comes into force in 2026- waiting lists no longer than 5 years or 51% of availability It is likely that demand will continue to rise due to a combination of Covid, Brexit and climate change. \*  |
|  | The service reached 1249 individuals in 20/21. This is double the target set for the year. Staff have been able to offer face to face support when needed. However, for most of the year, advice and support was delivered via telephone only. From June, community job clubs are being re-opened. A small offer - 25 % of support - will continue via telephone for 2021/22. The new target will reflect the increased numbers from 2020/21 and will be set at 1,843.  |
|  | There was an increase in the number of people who were in work who required support during the Covid pandemic, and the service has reached more women and families who have needed help during the last 18 months.  |
|  | Nearly all the cases dealt with in 2020/21 were complex cases, which included debt issues, with an increase in the number of people referred to specialist debt services.  |
|  | Participation numbers were clearly significantly impacted by Covid-19 restrictions. The number recorded is for face-to-face participation and does not include online sessions delivered, as the data captured could not be compared with previous years. The Active Communities team was able to deliver sessions following Scottish Government/governing bodies guidance, which for much of the year included small number sessions/household bubbles. 21/22 has seen the successful level-system enable the reintroduction of most activities. Through the Council’s involvement in the Active Fife 4DX programme, and an increased focus on increasing participation in sport & physical activity, a significant increase in participation is anticipated for 21/22.  |
|  | During Covid-19 the Active Communities team delivered most participation sessions online due to lockdown restrictions. From July –Dec the number of face-to-face sessions was limited due to Scottish Government / governing bodies guidance. However, the team delivered many sessions using outdoor spaces and family restricted “bubbles”. A second lockdown from Jan 2021 saw face-to-face sessions revert online until the Easter break. 21/22 has seen a much quicker return to activity with limited numbers returning to face-to-face sessions following the easing of restrictions. Most sessions have now seen a safe return and, through the increased focus of increasing sport and physical activity through the 4DX programme, an increase in participation levels is projected for this year  |
|  | Community Use SchoolsThere were major closure periods during 20/21 due to Covid-19 restrictions. Substantial increases in attendance numbers are anticipated this year compared to last year. All facilities are now nearing full recovery in terms of indoor, outdoor and wetside provision.The number of swimming pools was reduced due to the closure of old Madras College Community Use and the move to a new site in St Andrews. Fife Sports and Leisure Trust Eight swimming pools were open to the public for swimming throughout Fife through the first 15 weeks that FSLT was able to open in 20/21. There was a steady increase in occupancy rates per hour for public swimming from 31% in week one to 57% in week 15.The Learn to Swim programme restarted on 12th October in eight venues; on average there were 6000 customers per week attending swimming lessons.Please note. Following the announcement from the Scottish Government regarding entering Level 4 local protection measures, FSLT closed all facilities from 26th December 2020. |
|  | Community Use SchoolsThere were major closure periods during 20/21 due to COVID 19 restrictions.Large increases in attendance numbers are expected this year and all facilities are now nearing full recovery in terms of indoor, outdoor and wetside provision.Fife Sports and Leisure Trust11 gym facilities were open to the public, with social distancing measures in place in all gyms. The occupancy rate for gyms remained consistent during the first 15 weeks of opening FSLT currently has an hourly average of 32% occupancy, with Mondays to Fridays 5pm to close being the most popular times for customers using gyms.In week 9 the fitness programme was providing over 100 classes per week, with an occupancy rate of almost 52%. However, due to Fife entering Level 3 restrictions from 13th November, the programme in centre was placed on hold and an on-line offering was provided. The on-line offering came into place on Monday 16th November 2020, delivering around ten live classes per week. |
|  | Community Use Schools/ Fife Sports and Leisure TrustThere were major closure periods during 20/21 due to Covid-19 restrictions. Outdoor facilities resumed sooner than indoor facilities, hence the improved attendances compared to indoor provision. Substantial increases in attendance numbers are expected this year compared to last year,  and all facilities are now nearing full recovery in terms of indoor, outdoor and wetside provision. |
|  | There was a substantial reduction in the number of adults engaged with in a learning context during the pandemic. The service quickly switched to an online offer but. for many learners living in SIMD communities, access to devices and/or broadband connections to allow them to continue with their learning was restricted. The uncertainty and confusion of the pandemic was most keenly felt by learners in SIMD communities and engagement was less concerned with learning and more with providing a friendly voice on a telephone call or a friendly face as part of a garden visit. Staff targeted regular contact opportunities with learners we knew who were living on their own or who were living in challenging circumstances due to mental health concerns, low incomes or strained personal relationships. |
|  | During the 2020/21 year, as a result of the pandemic, e-learning awards were introduced for food safety for volunteers and community groups responding to the emergency situation.In the second part of the year short online awards were re-introduced with a limited number of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners, as well as continuing to offer the 7 Habits programme with families. |
|  | Library visits decreased as a result of libraries closing completely for Q1 during lockdown. As restrictions eased, libraries were re-opened as quickly as possible, firstly by providing a lending service through a Connect & Collect offer before reopening branches and the home delivery service. There was a major peak in the use of e-book, e-audio books and e-magazines during lockdown. While this is now reducing , it remains above the levels for this service in 2019-20.Visitors to OnFife Libraries’ social media platforms and website pages were driven up by Scotland's lockdowns. In response to the first lockdown (Q1 2020), OnFife launched its ShineOn campaign which was developed to shine a spotlight on the inspiring online activities and community support programme developed throughout the Covid crisis by OnFife. Front line library staff were trained to promote the libraries' online offerings through social media. The initial phase of the campaign saw traffic to library pages on the website almost double between Q1 and Q2.   Connect & Collect and online library services were promoted across social media. While visitor numbers and engagement figures across social media and website increased and decreased in line with lockdowns, between Q1 and Q4, the number of unique visitors to OnFife library website pages almost doubled. The engagement figures for social media accounts for Q1 2020 are unavailable as the method of collecting data changed in Q2 but between Q2 and Q4, engagements on Twitter and Instagram doubled and Facebook pages increased in engagements by nearly 30%.  |
|  | Museum visitor numbers were impacted substantially as a result of complete closures during lockdown. While services were resumed as soon as practical, this was with a booking system to restrict the number of people allowed in the building at any one time so that Covid guidance could be fully adhered to. However, considerable work went into introducing services online, including a highly successful archive project digitising photographs and virtual exhibitions featuring works from the Fife collections.  |

**Customer**

| **Performance** | **Progress** |
| --- | --- |
|  | All Communities and Neighbourhoods Stage 1 Complaints were actioned within five days in 2020/2021. |
|  | There were no Stage 2 complaints reported for Communities and Neighbourhoods in 2020/2021. |
|  | The slight increase is a result of encouraging self-help access to funding information for Council staff and community groups. This is achieved through promotion of the portal in the monthly newsletter and at funding events.Since March 2020 additional promotion of Covid related funding opportunities has led to sustained increase in the use of the portal |
|  | The Fife Funding Community Facebook page was established in February 2021 to add to the ways in which funding opportunities are promoted to community groups across Fife. Up to three opportunities are posted each week and are supplemented by Tuesday Top Tips.\* Please note that data is only available from 20/21. |
|  | While the % of Fifers agreeing that the council is addressing issues affecting quality of life in their local neighbourhood (63.2%) is higher than Scotland (50.1%), this represents a decrease from 72.1% for Fife in 2018. Note: data relates to 2019 Scottish Household Survey.  |
|  | While the % of Fifers living in the 20% most deprived areas agreeing that they can influence decisions affecting their local area (23.2%) is on a par with Scotland (23.3%), this represents a drop in the historical trend data for Fife in recent years. Note, data relates to Scottish Household Survey 2019. |
|  | \* Please note that data for 20/21 is not available until later in the year.OnFife continues to work to ensure the library services it provides are meeting the needs of local communities and we note there was an increase in satisfaction levels. However, the data is collected by the Scottish Government’s Scottish Household survey and as the sample of people used in the survey might not have used the services, they are rating, we are unable to comment further on the data. The trust is currently working on an externally funded data-led leadership project which will help to better inform future service planning and marketing.  |
|  | \* Please note that data for 20/21 is not available until later in the year.OnFife continued to work to ensure museum and gallery services inspire visitors and provide exciting experiences for Fife communities, with permanent displays and temporary exhibitions that are enjoyed by all ages. The data is collected by the Scottish Government’s Scottish Household survey and as the sample of people used in the survey might not have used the services, they are rating, we are unable to comment further on the data. OnFife is part of the Museum Galleries Scotland Connecting Communities project which will enable it to improve the gathering and analysing of data from museum visitors to reflect accurately the experiences of museum visitors in Fife.  |
|  | \* Please note that data for 20/21 is not available until later in the year.Although there is a national downward trend across all local authorities, Fife has maintained a stable position for satisfaction with leisure facilities |

 **People**

| **Performance** | **Progress** |
| --- | --- |
|  | Average working days lost per FTE for Communities and Neighbourhoods further declined in 2020/2021 and remains substantially lower than the Fife Council average. |
|  |
|  |
|  | Recruitment within Communities and Neighbourhoods is in line with the Council’s HR policy. |
|  | The proportion of the Communities and Neighbourhoods workforce who are full-time remained broadly the same during 2020/2021. |
|  | The proportion of the Communities and Neighbourhoods workforce who are permanent rose slightly during 2020/2021 but remained below the Council average. |
|  | There were ten voluntary redundancies within Communities and Neighbourhoods during 2020/2021. |
|  | The proportion of the Communities and Neighbourhoods workforce aged 24 and under declined slightly during 2020/2021 but remained well above the Fife Council average. |
|  | The proportion of the Communities and Neighbourhoods workforce aged 29 and under declined slightly during 2020/2021 but remained above the Fife Council average. |
|  | The proportion of the Communities and Neighbourhoods workforce aged 55 and over rose slightly during 2020/2021 and remained above the Fife Council average. |
|  | The Covid-19 pandemic limited the opportunities for employing young people in the service as part of the WYI programme. |
|  |

**Financial**

| **Performance** | **Progress** |
| --- | --- |
|  | \* Please note that data is only available from 20/21.7 projects were supported; there were 345 crowd supporters and £30,286 was raised. 2020/21 was the first year of operation for Crowdfunder Fife. Unfortunately, campaigns were more limited during periods of lockdown with community groups unable to provide some of their intended activities. Despite this, ‘the crowd’ pledged £9.80 for every £1 pledged by Fife Council. |
|  | \* Please note that data for 20/21 is not available until later in the yearFife Sports and Leisure Trust fees and charges were not increased by the same level across the board, with a more selective charging regime being used. This is the main reason why Fife is in the middle band for average cost per visit when compared with other local authorities.. |
|  | \* Please note that data for 20/21 is not available until later in the year.The cost per library visit remained broadly the same and higher than the Scottish average. |
|  | \* Please note that data for 20/21 is not available until later in the year.The increased cost per visit in 19/20 is due to a significant spend on building repairs at St Andrews museum, where major repairs were undertaken to the turrets and windows.  |

**Area Reports**

**South and West Fife**

The South and West Fife staff team rose to the challenges presented by the pandemic. Community development and community use staff engaged with partners to offer support in the ‘response’ phase. Team members managed and supported asymptomatic test centres, vaccination facilities and temporary test centres across the area.

As well as re-opening Council premises, staff helped Carnock, Kincardine and Comrie hubs and pantries, including the local foodbank and EATs Rosyth.

Five community pantries have been established throughout South and West Fife. Volunteers are supported by management committees to re-open community run assets. The many clubs and groups who hire Council facilities also required additional support (signposting to e-learning, developing risk assessments etc) in advance of returning to facilities.

The area team has supported the development of the North Queensferry Action Plan using a questionnaire based on the Place Standard. The results contributed to focused discussions at socially distanced workshops. Information gathered is now being used to identify short, medium, and long-term goals to form the action plan.

A South and West Fife Food Resilience Group was established to provide support for food providers and delivery of Café Inc provision. The group consists of community food providers, community community development officers. Several community growing spaces have been funded through the local community planning budget. This funding has enabled projects to provide locally grown food to pantry providers. Staff have also been involved with the delivery of emergency food boxes.

Several family learning initiatives have been delivered over the last 12 months. This has included an art project in an underpass in Moray Way North, Dalgety Bay. Staff worked with two primary schools, the local community, and a local artist to produce artwork with an ‘under the water’ theme. Funding has since been secured to revamp two further underpasses in Dalgety Bay and Inverkeithing.

Staff have been involved in several capital projects including ‘Imagine Kincardine’ and Renewed Rosyth’. Both projects involved improvements to public realm infrastructure in partnership with Sustrans and other Council services. The community development team facilitated community engagement sessions to capture community views and on the proposed designs.

Area staff have supported Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration. This £4.144m project includes changes to the historical quarter public realm, a third-party grant scheme, a built heritage activity programme, modernisation, and refurbishment of the town house. As well as informing the plans for the refurbished building, staff found alternative accommodation for displaced groups. The regeneration project was slightly delayed due to the pandemic.

**Dunfermline**

As part of the area’s People and Place Leadership approach it was agreed to create a greenspace strategy for the town. This is led by the local Greenspace Forum in partnership with the Area Committee and supported by community development staff. The forum is investigating how a community anchor organisation could be established that focuses on the benefits of

 developing greenspace. During the pandemic, greenspace was integral to people's health, wellbeing and connection to community, as well its role as providing space to support heritage and tourism, help alleviate poverty and address the climate emergency, The strategy has begun to explore and coordinate how the town develops a coherent approach to support, enhance and plan the future success of its greenspace network. A conference is planned for later in 2021 using the online platform Hopin and will follow on from the successful Geddes conference held in June 2021 as part of the local Great Places Project.

A multi-disciplinary team (MDT) was established during lockdown, including members of both the local community development and community use teams. The group met virtually and frequently during the initial stages to ensure that clear and current information being circulated on support for people, including emergency food, financial support, grants, and resources. Staff teams were able to support each other and refer people for support. Directories and contacts were shared to provide local support and to ensure there was an inclusive and streamlined offer of support for people. Emergency response funding streams were also identified and accessed by local people. These included the Scottish Welfare Fund, Settlement Trusts, Food Fund Crisis Grants, and the British Red Cross Hardship Fund.

The Dunfermline Poverty Action Group also co-ordinated anti-poverty and crisis intervention work. The Community Assistance Hub was established in the Dell Farquharson Centre and from there staff and volunteers ensured emergency food and goods were distributed across Dunfermline. Collaboration amongst partners including Fife Voluntary Action, Citizens and Rights Fife, Churches, Community Councils and volunteers was quickly established. The group supported 382 helping hand requests, 4724 people through community pantries, 398 people through emergency food parcels, online vouchers and assisted shopping, as well as 465 volunteers contacted, and 598 foodbank vouchers issued.

Building on the success of the Food for Your Future and the Baldridgeburn pantry, a food resilience group was established to provide a coordinated and pro-active response to food resilience across the town. During the October break, specific and targeted support was offered by several organisations including F3 (Gillespie Church), Food for Your Future, Fife Pantry and Fife Council staff. This included a pilot project in Townhill and Kingseat working alongside eligible households connected to Townhill Primary School. During the school holidays, 524 packed lunches and 241 bags of groceries were distributed.

**Cowdenbeath**

To respond to Covid, services across the Cowdenbeath Area adapted their offer to support local communities. This included the formation or re-establishment of resilience groups, and local food projects adapting to provide meals and weekly essentials to families in need. As a direct response to the pandemic, a multi-disciplinary team was established and has now evolved into the local People Leadership Team. This has been invaluable for information share and being able to support those individuals and families most in need.  Fife’s first community testing centre was set up in the area and learning from this was shared as this service was rolled out throughout Fife. Mental health and suicide prevention remained a focus, with additional training for staff right across the area (CLD, Community Use, Safer Communities and the Police) being provided and the involvement of young people in developing an information and engagement campaign.

Visitor numbers at Lochore Meadows continued to grow, and will exceed 1 million this year, as more people visited for daily physical activity and to try new activities. The development of the park will continue to be a focus, both in terms of promotion of the existing offer, as well as identifying its potential for future use. A new capital and partner funded accessible destination playpark is due to open in 2022 and the Rockgelly climbing centre is due to open shortly creating additional opportunities to provide adventure activities in the area. Ongoing investment in the local area will continue to be a focus going forward, in particular:

* 20-minute neighbourhoods
* Community wealth building – local investment
* Mental Health – Veteran Centre

Significant work has taken place to encourage the community to shop local and return to the Town Centre areas, in particular Cowdenbeath High Street.  In conjunction with Love Cowdenbeath and Loyal free, an app has been created to promote all that is on offer from a retail and recreational perspective.  Our local Place Leadership group is key to this development and further improvements to the High Street which may include repurposing the Town House.

Local community groups, in conjunction with the Coalfield Regeneration Trust, are continuing to work on community action plans across the Cowdenbeath Area. These have also attracted additional investment to help to support local development.

**Kirkcaldy Area**

Initially co-ordinated through the Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) in the Area, staff, partner organisations and local communities worked tirelessly to respond the multiple and complex challenges presented during a global pandemic. Boundaries were blurred and people came together during the response phase to develop and co-ordinate the distribution of food supplies, set up of community testing and vaccination centres and support was put in place to combat the severity and impact of social isolation.

In the recovery phase, the People and Place Leadership Teams reflected on the emerging needs that their teams and organisations had identified and considered the recommendations in the narrative enquiry research with Professor Karen McCardle. The groups are mapping these reflections, data and information from organisations against the current areas of focus in the Plan 4 Kirkcaldy Area which will inform a refreshed Recovery and Renewal Area Plan.

Partners from the Kirkcaldy Area WRAAP have initiated a Crisis Planning subgroup has been created to review the area response during the pandemic and to work on the development of an off the shelf plan if faced with a similar crisis in the future.

In partnership with the Communications Team, the Community Development Team led a pilot project to make ‘Our Kirkcaldy’ more community led and increase the reach of the page. The team were encouraged to come up with creative ways to engage with local communities which led to teams and local people participating in the ‘2 metres is’ campaign. One video submitted by a parent of a local 4-year-old showcasing 2metres of cookies had over 4.5K views. These approaches resulted in key campaigns, messaging and engagement which has increased likes and followers by 40%.

Staff and Partners delivered a range of online, outdoor and indoor provision. Much of the activity was delivered online or with activity packs and kits being delivered to households. Some of the activities included:

* Family learning: As well as lots of families benefitting from learning about play outdoors, 10 families progressed to achieve the John Muir award at the height of the pandemic;
* Five Ways to wellbeing challenges were set with adult learners and families participating across the area;
* A series of cooking with us videos were developed for Facebook to maximise the use of store cupboard basics and food parcels.

The Community Development Team and Kirkcaldy YMCA offered a range of online youth work activities through the pandemic to ensure young people felt connected and that support was accessible. This then extended to outdoor learning, including cycling groups, wellbeing workshops, 16-plus returning, LGBT groups and schools' work. Staff and young people returned to face-to-

face activities during the summer, which included a residential programme for the Youth Forum Group and a return of some youth clubs.

A Test of Change pilot involving staff from the Kirkcaldy Community Development Team, Housing and Social Work started in August 2021. The aim is to work collaboratively to reduce poverty by offering a person-centred approach to improving outcomes for those facing multiple disadvantage. By sharing resources, knowledge and approaches the team aims to intervene early and prevent people from spiralling to statutory services and further hardship.

Inspired by the success of the Participatory City model developed in Barking and Dagenham, Fife Council were invited to explore participation in the project with 5 other Local Authorities in Scotland. 3 staff went down to Barking and Dagenham to further explore the concept. There has been a considerable delay due to the pandemic, but a feasibility study has now commenced in Kirkcaldy. From the initial 6 local authorities identified in Scotland, Fife and Renfrewshire are proceeding with the feasibility phase. The process is being led by The Corra Foundation and findings will be available in January 2022.

In partnership with a range of organisations progress has been made in energising the Kirkcaldy Town Centre through the development of the Love Kirkcaldy Gift Card and Rewards Card and promotional videos featuring local people. Love Oor Langtoon (a Community Interest Company - CIC) is now in its second year and is working in partnership to develop the Town Centre and the Town is now host to a very successful weekly artisan market organised by local traders.

**Levenmouth**

During 2020 and 2021 the area has developed its local People and Place arrangements. The establishment of the People group as a direct reaction to the pandemic has helped to develop quick solutions during a period that required adaptation and flexibility.

The People group has now started to refine its core priorities for the area, including:

• The Promise - ensuring local compliance with the terms of the Promise,

• Levenmouth Drugs Deaths Strategy - cross service support for this ADP led initiative.

• Mental health - Initial direct support for the approach to a mental health framework for young people, led at this time by Barnardo's and Columba

The work of the local welfare reform and anti-poverty group (WRAP) has also seen a redefinition of core work around the following four themes, each led by a subgroup of the WRAP:

• Food insecurity

• Digital inclusion and connectivity

• Mental health - all ages

• Welfare reform and wider anti-poverty work

Each of these sub-groups will progress actions to increase collaborative approaches and build in efficiencies where achievable.

In terms of Place, there has been ongoing activity over 20/21 around the core projects of:

• Rail Link

• River Leven

• Town centre redevelopment

• Silverburn Park

These projects fit well with the agreed priorities for the Levenmouth Place Group which are as follows.

* Rail Link - Maximising Outcomes, Understanding Impacts - supporting the four strategic briefs. Includes climate change and adaptation approaches.
* River Leven- Maximising Outcomes. Understanding Impacts - supporting the agreed workstreams. Includes climate change and adaptation approaches.
* Town Centre Regeneration - Built environment improvements, encouraging alternative uses of for vacant space within Leven town centre.
* Housing Development - Promoting opportunities for appropriate development.
* Promoting Innovation- An ongoing focus on Energy Park Development and the opportunities it presents. H100 (hydrogen production and supply) and the decommissioning approach will be key elements in this approach.
* Local Development Plan – The Place Group to act as a local respondent on LDP consultation.
* Fife Shoreline Management Plan – The Place Group to act as a local respondent on the Shoreline management Plan review.
* Vacant and Derelict Land – Agreed aim to reduce the prevalence of VDL sites in the area which impact on SIMD outcomes.
* Local Greenspace /Play Space Strategy - reducing the maintenance burden, improving the quality of the play offer, and increasing local satisfaction.
* Improved Quality of Community Facilities – Ensuring FC facilities are fit for purpose are supportive of service delivery and provide opportunities for viable community transfer.
* Improving maintenance arrangements - reconfiguring resource allocation to ensure key outcomes are met – town centre and key gateways will be a focus.
* Local project management. The Place Group will support the delivery of capital and revenue projects which have a Place improvement focus.
* The development and Implementation of the new Levenmouth Local Community Plan and Buckhaven South Neighbourhood Plan.

The work on the rail link is progressing to a point that the exact locations of the two train stations at Leven and Windygates have been identified along with the linkages these will require to ensure good connectivity and accessibility for active travel options as well as car and bus infrastructure. The preparation of the track bed is well underway, with Network Rail developing a large compound to facilitate this work, the aim is to have the track fully operational by 2024

The River Leven Connectivity Project has been partly incorporated into the rail link path connections design, the alignment of these two large projects is important to ensure the maximum advantage from both approaches is derived. The masterplan document was completed over the last year and will now be considered for its main funding support in from the Lottery in March 2022.

Town centre work has progressed in terms of public realm and connectivity improvements at Aitken Street and Commercial Road. A focus on vacant and derelict property has also seen the demolition of and proposals coming forward for the development of a key site at Bridge Street which had three derelict units, along with an undertaking from the owner of the Threeways Inn to start redevelopment of that property in late 2021. The Cummings building which has been a cause for concern for several years now appears to have an owner willing to carry out work, and the WH Smith building, one of the largest vacant units in the High Street is currently undergoing renovations led by our third sector partners at BRAG.

**North East Fife**

The People and Place Leadership Teams will help to deliver the Local Community

Plan. The People Leadership Team will focus on person centred approaches to GIRFEC (getting it right for every child), learning, employability, social inclusion, mental wellbeing, poverty and inequality and access to services. The three priorities identified by the team for action in the short term are:

* Mental health and social isolation
* Poverty and inequality
* Homelessness

The Place Leadership Team will undertake area work focusing on green space, play and recreation, facilities and amenities, transportation, traffic management and parking, skills development and the local economy, economic regeneration, climate change, community wealth building, community safety, housing and community-led services. The group has had three meetings to date and has identified a short-term priority - to ensure that residents benefit from new jobs created at Eden Mill.

In developing both the area anti-poverty plan and the workplan for the team, staff spoke with people across the locality, as well as within smaller targeted areas, about their situations and their recent experience of Covid-19. This highlighted the priorities that will make a real difference to the lives of the people in the area. A report recording the experiences of those was produced in partnership with Professor Karen McArdle entitled: ‘Some People are Struggling in NEF – Now more than ever’. The recommendations from the report inform the priorities for the community development team and the Anti-Poverty Group. Issues of isolation, loneliness, financial hardship, and barriers to accessing help were identified. A key focus for the area is the cost of bus travel for the unemployed and fuel poverty. Work with young people and adults to support them to reach their full potential continued despite lock downs, with staff finding innovative ways to reach out and work with people online.

The community development team has been supporting many communities in Northeast Fife to rally round its more vulnerable members. Many new and vibrant community groups and community led responses have been developed from meal making and food delivery, to clothes appeals and activities to address isolation. The team is working with these new activists and groups to both develop services and to deliver services in a different way. More people in need of services are now being reached. There is a wider network of local people working alongside the team and acting as community connectors.

 The clearest evidence of the impact of this is the increased community engagement in the delivery of the holiday hunger programme, Café Inc, in Northeast Fife. This summer there have been just over 2000 more meals provided for children across the area when compared with what we delivered in 2019. Area staff are working with more community partners to deliver this programme. A variety of community venues, community centres and new food banks have all stepped up and worked with area staff to grow the provision to this level, the level of provision has doubled to 4000 meals being delivered over the seven- weeks summer holiday.

**Glenrothes**

2020/21 was dominated by the issues relating to the pandemic and how local teams have had to adapt and respond to the challenges that this presented. Teams went into emergency mode and organised local food distribution networks and direct provision to vulnerable people. Our local Welfare Workers have dealt with unprecedented requests for emergency assistance and advice provision.

People and Place Groups were established, bringing together a range of services to identify and deal with a range of local issues. The immediate effect of this collaborative working was to ensure that solutions to many individual customer issues could be resolved by making more appropriate referrals. As lockdown eased, attention moved to long term impacts of the pandemic on local people, it was agreed that mental health was a major issue that required a multi-Service approach. This project is currently progressing in 2021/22.

The regeneration of the Glenwood area remains a key priority within the local community plan. A multi-disciplinary team was established in 2020/21 and a Compulsory Purchase Order process was commenced.

A Town Centre Masterplan was developed following local consultation. This plan provides a firm basis for the future development of the town centre.

The development of local Neighbourhood Plans is a key priority and is now supported by the local Place Group. .

**COMMUNITY & NEIGHBOURHOODS – WORKFORCE PROFILE 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR (01 APRIL 2020 – 31 MARCH 2021)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Service** | **Budgeted (FTE) April 2018** | **Budgeted (FTE) April 2019** | **Budgeted (FTE) April 2020** | **Budgeted (FTE) April 2021** | **Difference in FTE 2020-2021** |
| Community & Neighbourhoods  | 321 | 315 | 330 | 459.54 | 129.54 |
|  **Total** | **321** | **315** | **330** | **459.54** | **129.54** |

