

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL – BLENDED MEETING

Council Chamber, 6th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

8 May 2025

10.00 am – 2.55 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Leishman (Provost), Tom Adams, David Alexander, Blair Allan, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Karen Beaton, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, John Caffrey, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Rod Cavanagh, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Jean Hall-Muir, Judy Hamilton, Alycia Hayes, Cara Hilton, Stefan Hoggan, Gary Holt, Lynda Holton, Andy Jackson, Margaret Kennedy, Louise Kennedy-Dalby, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian, David MacDiarmid, Julie MacDougall, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Derek Noble, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Gordon Pryde, Bailey-Lee Robb, David Ross, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Craig Walker, Darren Watt, Daniel Wilson, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Fiona Corps and David Graham.

169. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Backhouse declared an interest in Para. (178) – 'Notice of Motions', Motion 4 - as they were a member of the Burntisland Harbour Access Trust.

Councillor Hilton declared an interest in Para. (178) – 'Notice of Motions' – Motion 1 as they were employed by the Trussell Trust.

170. DEPUTATION - GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER

The Provost agreed, in terms of Standing Order No. 12.0 that Alison Clyde, Chief Executive Officer, Generations Working Together, be permitted to address the meeting, regarding a vision of what an Intergenerational Fife could look like. Members asked a number of questions, which were subsequently answered by Alison. The Provost thanked Alison for their presentation.

171. CIVIC BUSINESS BULLETIN

Decision

The council noted the Civic Business Bulletin.

172. MINUTE

The council considered the minutes of the meetings of Fife Council of 20 March 2025.

Decision

The council approved the minutes.

173. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Minutes of the undernoted committees and sub-committees, as contained in the volume of minutes, were submitted for accuracy: -

- (1) West & Central Planning Committee of 26 March 2025;
- (2) North East Planning Committee of 12 March 2025;
- (3) Cabinet Committee of 6 March 2025;
- (4) Pensions Committee of 31 March 2025;
- (5) Education Scrutiny Committee of 18 March 2025;
- (6) People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 13 March 2025;
- (7) Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee of 25 March 2025; and
- (8) Fife Health & Social Care Integration Joint Board of 29 January 2025

Decision

The council noted the minutes.

174. LEADER'S REPORT

The council considered a report by the Leader of the Council on a number of strategic issues. The Leader responded to questions from members on the content of the report.

Decision

The council noted the report.

175. QUESTION TIME

In terms of Standing Order 9.3, the following questions were submitted: -

Question 1 from Councillor Boubaker-Calder

What work has been done to assess the traffic impact of the signalisation of the Bothwell Roundabout in Dunfermline?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

At the initial activation of the signals, traffic flows were monitored and modifications made to ensure that the roundabout operated efficiently. It should be reminded that the signalisation is one of the strategic improvements identified to help future proof the road network in Dunfermline in advance of the planned housing growth over the next 20 years. The roundabout appears to be functioning well with no reported issues. However, as is the norm for such

schemes, an assessment of its operation is programmed to be undertaken at the end of year 1, which would be October 2025.

Supplementary

Are there avenues for residents to give their feedback into this assessment at the end of year 1?

Answer

In the review any issues with traffic conflict and accidents or near misses will be taken seriously about how we do signalisation.

Question 2 from Councillor Boubaker-Calder

On 13 March a number of Area Roads Programme schemes were deferred due to the funding being reduced as part of reprofiling. Why did this happen?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

By the nature of the Area Roads Programme, it is developed in advance of a confirmed budget position and always subject to budget approvals. In this case, the anticipated budget was higher than the budget approved in February 2025 due to the rephasing of budgets. Over the 10-year period the budgets are higher than anticipated due to additional investment from the Administration. The rephased budget means that the programme has been revised and projects deferred. The Capital Plan Review addressed the previous issue of front loading where budgets from previous years were brought forward to early years, which was not affordable long term. The rephased budgets mean that there is no longer a substantial drop in the budget in 2027/28 and instead the budgets are more equitable across all years.

Supplementary

As Area Committees are responsible for designating these schemes and since there is such a significant change, should we not allow a local councillors to input into these changes?

Answer

In terms of the Area Roads Programme, in previous years we have used Capital and this year we have used Revenue so that we can focus more on maintaining the roads that need pothole repairs and resurfacing. That slight shift in what was important at the budget setting has probably brought about the change in the structure of what is available. It is very important that Area Committees are on top of what needs done in their area and prioritise the things that meet their budget.

Question 3 from Councillor Boubaker-Calder

Are there plans to undertake repair work in any of the deferred Area Roads Programme schemes in this financial year?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Deferred locations will continue to be managed and maintained through regular safety inspections, with necessary repairs undertaken. The Area Roads

Programmes are monitored throughout the financial year, and should any underspend arise and be of a suitable scale, the deferred scheme would be re-introduced to the programme.

Supplementary

As spokesperson will you join me to inspect roads in Ward 3 to see if he thinks that they are acceptable in their current state?

Answer

More than happy to attend with the Head of Roads and Transportation and relevant colleagues for their professional input.

Question 4 from Councillor Boubaker-Calder

What is the process for including engagement with elected members and the wider community when the Council is selling large areas of land (such as former school sites)?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Capital receipts are managed corporately and the proceeds used to help fund the capital plan. Authority for large asset disposals lies with the Cabinet Committee. Typically, the process through which sites are identified as being surplus takes many years and significant engagement takes place with local members about the shape and form of investment proposals. Likewise, discussion will typically take place on the creation of a development framework to support any proposed disposal and the framework will reflect a range of council policies and priorities. Once a disposal has been agreed in principle it can often take a number of years before any disposal itself is finalised to include the granting of planning consent.

Supplementary

Recently the Dunfermline Area Committee has worked with Estates to ensure local communities are consulted on the Woodmill and St Columbus sites. Would the Spokesperson agree that this should be the norm for developing major sites?

Answer

In principle yes. We should be as connected as possible if there is a decentralisation agenda to work through. There are always wider concerns that we need to manage. With large long term projects sometimes Elected Members change and the level of understanding of what's in train is difficult to maintain but we should be cognisance of this and ensure that the Service keeps everyone informed. The local dimension is important to make sure we get places that are fit for our communities.

Question 5 from Councillor Eugene Clarke

What contact or discussion has there been between Fife Council and the Scottish Government following the latter's commitment to carry out an infrastructure investment review for special education schools?

Answer (Spokesperson for Education)

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I can advise that no one has had any communication or discussions with Scottish Government, as yet, regarding infrastructure investment review for special education schools.

Supplementary

When will Fife Council start the process of replacing Hyndhead and Kilmaron Special Schools either individually or with a single new facility?

Answer

Happy to have a discussion with Councillor Clarke about the budgetary challenges we face and the support we need for the Scottish Government to renew our School Estate here in Fife.

Question 6 from Councillor Jonny Tepp

What number of households in Fife do not have access to off-street parking i.e. a drive, garage or residential car park?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Fife Council does not hold this information. However, a Scottish Government consultation in 2021 on Building regulations suggested that approximately 40-45% of dwellings in Fife were without a dedicated parking provision, other than on-street.

Question 7 from Councillor Jonny Tepp

Of those households what number have access to adequate on-street parking i.e. 'street parking generally being available outside or adjacent to the house or block of flats where the surveyed flat is located, and the road is sufficiently wide to allow easy passage of traffic'?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Fife Council does not hold this information.

Question 8 from Councillor Jonny Tepp

Does the administration agree that these households could potentially benefit from domestic EV charging safely with the installation of cross-pavement solutions?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Yes, they could benefit. However, there are significant safety, legal and practical challenges to enable this to happen. Scottish Local Authorities are working with the Scottish Government to explore potential cross pavement solutions and guidance to enable this to happen.

Supplementary

Can you comment on enabling Fifers to put gulley channel across a pavement outside their property so that they can charge an electric vehicle outside their

house should not be on the face of it a significant issue that has taken years to resolve.

Answer

It is a significant issue as we try to decarbonise transport moving across that agenda is trying to make it easy and efficient as possible for people to make use of electric vehicles should they choose to do so.

Question 9 from Councillor Jonny Tepp

How does the cost of the residential off-street EV charging compare to the cost of Fife Council public EV charging currently?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Currently, the electrical tariff to charge at home is likely to be lower than those at public or commercial EV charging points across Scotland. The public/commercial EV tariffs cover the whole life costs of the service provision, including transaction fee, banking and merchant fees, electricity costs, and the costs for maintenance, warranty and replacement of the EV units.

Supplementary

Can you confirm this to be a significant issue and one where many Fifer's could make significant savings?

Answer

Yes, people should be able to use electric vehicles if they choose to do so.

Question 10 from Councillor Jonny Tepp

What steps is the administration taking to press SCOTS to publish proposals on off-street parking so that Fifers can benefit from this option?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

A short-term working group has been established to discuss Cross Pavement EV charging and to develop SCOTS Guidance for a national solution. The group is considering physical limitations of footways, accessibility for disabled road users, ongoing maintenance, liability, and legal implications. Officers from Roads & Transportation Services contribute to this group with a view to producing the necessary guidance.

Supplementary

Can you comment on lack of progress, do you think the problem lies in Fife do you think we could have run our own pilot, or does it lie at Scottish/National level or can we blame the UK Government for this?

Answer

We need a National solution and will keep pushing SCOTS for guidance.

Question 11 from Councillor Julie MacDougall

Following the last full council meeting on 20th March 2025 I refer to Questions 25, 26, 27 and 28 in relation to Bus Shelters and ask when I will receive an update on a bus shelter which I reported last year in my own Ward area Burntisland? I have written to Cllr Craik following the last meeting but still await the details.

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The job has been done.

Question 12 from Councillor Dave Dempsey

What measures are in place to monitor and to ensure compliance with the response times to Business as Usual Requests as laid out in para 5.3 of "Elected Member Enquiries Procedure for Fife Council Staff"?

Answer (Leader of the Council)

While there is no formal mechanism for recording or reporting on response times, but as set out in the protocol there is a clear expectation that officers should respond to elected member requests as a priority and in line with the timescales set out. It may be that there are some departments that do seek informal feedback about response time and quality of officer responses from elected members, for example committee services. Elected members should always escalate issues if there has not been a response, or an insufficient response to an elected member enquiry. Finally, there is currently no single way in which Councillors make requests for information – it can come from email, discussions or at meetings. It would be possible to provide an analysis of elected member query response times if all Cllrs used the case management system, for example, as that would permit reporting.

Question 13 from Councillor Dave Dempsey

For quite some time, <https://www.fife.gov.uk/services/form-pages/report-a-road-or-pavement-fault> has stated that Service Updates will start in the next few weeks. When will those few weeks be up?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The updates went live on 1 May 2025. The latest upgrade will enable customers to subscribe for updates on known pothole faults. As a sidenote, timescales for this area of work were affected by IT staff resources being diverted to deliver the revised refuse bin collection schedules as part of the new shift patterns.

Question 14 from Councillor Dave Dempsey

What and when is the next step in removing the booking system from Dalgety Bay Recycling Centre?

Answer (Spokesperson for Environment and Climate Change)

Due in part for the need for a booking system at Dalgety Bay that Councillor Dempsey and his ward colleagues have been instrumental in. The FRS board has commissioned an independent full review of the options for all recycling centres with a particular focus on Health & Safety, this report once completed will be

presented to the FRS board for consideration then the Council will be notified of the next steps, which will make considerations for Dalgety Bay. FRS is fully aware of the council's position on providing safe, unrestricted access to all recycling centres.

Supplementary

Do we have any idea of timescales?

Answer

I haven't been given a timescale yet for that, Board meetings are normally quarterly, but I will find out when the review is due and I will pass that information on to you.

Question 15 from Councillor Patrick Browne

To ask the Labour administration what assessment it has made of the proposals announced on 6 May 2025 in the SNP Government's Legislative Programme on local government in Scotland and on Fife Council.

Answer (Leader of the Council)

The programme for Government was only announced on Tuesday so there has been limited time to look at that. Previous ones welcome the fact that Scot Gov seem to have adopted the Plan for Fife priorities largely in terms of tackling poverty, addressing economic growth and climate change challenges and looking for high quality services. So there is a point of agreement there. One of the difficulties as the LGIU assessment says it is very difficult without in depth analysis to see what measures have been already implemented, what are being reannounced and what is new and what funding is new. The question would be that with only a year to go until the next election, whether a lot of these can be implemented. In terms of Fife, some positives inclusion in the Fairer Futures Partnership which will feed into our No Wrong Door Approach. A reference to piloting Citizen Assemblies which may be in Dunfermline. Proposal for new stations on Scotland's Railway Network and that could include Newburgh. This would be welcomed and a benefit for that area of Fife. Capital Investment for regeneration which could include redevelopment of Cowdenbeath Town Hall. The only omission I would point out is there is no reference to the demand from COSLA that the First Minister rules out a freeze or cap on Council Tax. Hopefully the First Minister is coming to the May meeting of the Council Leaders at Cosla and he will be in a position at that time to make that commitment on Council Tax.

Supplementary

Can the Leader confirm that there was nothing in the programme from Government on the reform of Council Tax to make it fairer or is it just another example of another broken promise from the SNP?

Answer

There may be a mention in there, there is a joint working group that have been working on it for some time. I think all we can expect over the next year is further consultation and technical reports back rather than action.

Question 16 from Councillor Patrick Browne

Would the Labour administration agree with First Minister John Swinney MSP that Scottish councils are "adequately" funded to fix potholes or does it want more action and funding to clear the estimated £2.5 billion backlog of road repairs across Scotland including the £100 million backlog in Fife?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

I am not entirely certain where the £2.5 billion backlog for road repairs across Scotland including the £100 million backlog in Fife comes from. However Fife has 2.5 thousand kilometers of road and same again in pavements. Over the last year we have repaired about 100 thousand square meters of road defects. I would also point to the budget that we put forward in February that had extra investment in roads maintenance again. Each year of this administration we have put in an extra £3.5m or more into roads maintenance to deliver what is effectively the backbone of Fife and try to deliver for the people who use our roads and keep them to a standard we can live with. We are not there yet, everyone knows we are not there yet but we are working on it.

Supplementary

Would he agree that the additional £5.2 billion that the Scot Gov got from the UK Government in the budget it would have been a great opportunity to take some of that cash and give more of it to councils to repair roads instead of patching them?

Answer

No I do not think we are adequately funded. We spend money on priorities here based on Scottish Parliament and Local Government. Own goal that Scot Gov didn't take advantage of that and fund us extra for dealing with our roads.

Question 17 from Councillor Patrick Browne

To ask the Labour administration to provide an update on the council's consideration of the possible redevelopment of the site of the now derelict former Inverkeithing primary school for affordable housing.

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

The Council and its partners in the Fife Housing Association Alliance have and continue to invest heavily in the provision of social housing for the people of Inverkeithing to include the current investment in Fraser Avenue for Council houses in Inverkeithing. We remain keen to work with any landowner or developer who can help us meet the future needs of the town, to include the owners of the former primary school who are aware of the challenges that they need to overcome for redevelopment of their site to be viable. Officers are working with them on those challenges.

Supplementary

Can I ask Cllr Hamilton to remember this project, I appreciate there is a funding shortfall which has not been made good yet, but hopefully we can revisit this in the future and include this in the affordable housing programme?

Answer

There was a cut in the programme last year which created a backlog. We do have a 5 year programme which is committed and will deal with section 75 sites as they come on site and maybe windfall sites but we do not have capacity at this time because of the backlog to bring in new projects. So I will ask officers to look again at this.

Question 18 from Councillor Auxi Barrera

What procedures are in place for the Housing Service to engage with tenants prior to demolition of garages, where a lease is in place?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

This is about the demolition of garages and lock-ups. Staff follow a very strict checklist and contact existing tenants in the first instance. As part of this discussion, they will establish the reasons for use of the lock up and encourage tenants to consider moving to an alternative site at the earliest opportunity. They will also ask tenants what would be their preferred notice period to vacate the lock-up. I have a copy of the very extensive check-list.

Supplementary

In light of the difficulties experienced at Headwell when residents were given no notice of when the garages would be demolished despite the claims of housing services what lessons could be learned and could the Spokesperson commit to reviewing the process to ensure improved engagement and communication with tenants in future cases and what comeback do residents have in such situations?

Answer

The process is laid out and if it has not been followed in a particular instance I will raise that with the service if you would like to provide the details. Perhaps if it is continual breakdown of the process it needs to be raised at a Scrutiny committee.

Question 19 from Councillor Derek Glen

Since being granted city status, what progress has been made to develop an Open Data platform for Dunfermline?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The recent focus has been on developing a single vision for the City and to join up existing planned regeneration projects into a long term roadmap. Joining up the data to evidence the need and performance of the city currently held by several services is part of that process. The need to consider the joining up and managing of data across services is part of the consideration of the digital programme. However there are no plans to develop a separate open plan platform for Dunfermline.

Supplementary

Dunfermline is the only one of Scotland's 8 cities not to feature an open data platform on the Scottish cities alliance Smart City programme website despite much being made of that at the city status conference in 2023. What work is

being done to establish such a platform and what progress is being made towards implementation?

Answer

In terms of the SCA, the other city areas were done before we joined so work to be continued.

Question 20 from Councillor Derek Glen

What progress has been made to implement the data-centric approach to delivering better quality and better-targeted services to citizens of Dunfermline that was promised following the award?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The recent focus has been on developing a single vision for the city and to join up existing and planned regeneration projects into a long term roadmap. Joining up the data to evidence the need and performance of the city currently held by several Services is part of that process. The need to consider joining up and managing data across services is part of the consideration of the Digital Programme. However, there are no plans currently to develop a separate Open Platform for Dunfermline.

Supplementary

What work has been done either within the SCA or with other partners, agencies and suppliers to develop intelligent citizen focused data driven services and what outcomes and results are anticipated?

Answer

Referred to work done recently with Babble to deliver smart cities type thinking. Will check the position and advise.

Question 21 from Councillor Brian Goodall

How many Housing Functional Needs Assessments are currently outstanding in Fife?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

According to our records we currently have 433 new forms awaiting assessment. From the 1st of January 2025 to 29th April 2025, the team have completed 1470 assessments.

Supplementary

Does the Spokesperson feel that level of performance is adequate?

Answer

Completing 367 assessments per month – completed in around 29 days – don't think that is poor performance.

Question 22 from Councillor Brian Goodall

What percentage of Housing Functional Needs Assessments are currently being completed within the stated Fife Council policy timeframe?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

The team are currently working on assessments received on the 19th of March 2025 meaning the average assessment is completed in about 29 working days, with the exception of some complex cases that may require visits and further details to ensure a thorough assessment. Due to year end reporting, we are unable to provide percentages at this time, however the above should give an indication of assessing timeframes.

Supplementary

Does the Spokesperson recognise that the impact of such poor performance can be felt most on the vulnerable people and on the allocation system itself?

Answer

We do have a significant lack of suitably adapted or appropriate housing at the moment I think that is to do with aids and adaptations. The positive side of that is more people are living at home with lifelong conditions and because of that we need more adaptive properties so that is sometimes the delay in the allocation process.

Question 23 from Councillor Brian Goodall

What is the current waiting time, by Area Committee, for a Housing Functional Needs Assessment?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

The Housing Service recognises the need to stabilise waiting times across Fife and as such moved to a Fife Wide assessment approach in 2021, with resources directed to need and risk, regardless of their area in Fife. Particular focus areas include but are not limited to, supporting hospital discharges, homeless cases, complex cases with specific housing requirements, and young care leavers. The team monitor requests for assistance daily, realigning work to meet demand as required.

Supplementary

Does the Spokesperson recognise her responsibility for this level of poor performance?

Answer

Don't agree that this is a poor level of performance. The priority for assessment is focused on those with no housing functional needs assessment and where there is a potential property match they will be prioritised to link in with the allocations.

Question 24 from Councillor Brian Goodall

What additional resources have been directed to address the current delays in Housing Functional Needs Assessments in Fife?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

5 Occupational Therapy Assistants were recruited to the team. Their varied experience, knowledge and skill set has allowed them to complete 91% of the total assessment figures noted above. An experienced Housing Options Officer was appointed to assist with assessing the suitability of potential allocations for identified applicants, creating additional capacity for the OTs in the team to focus on complex cases. Priority for assessments is focused on those with no previous HFNA's, or where there is a potential property match. This ensures that all applicants have recommendations and relevant points award, allowing suitable matches for rehousing at the earliest opportunity.

Supplementary

How does the Spokesperson intend to ensure that our most vulnerable are not disadvantaged by this ongoing backlog of assessments?

Answer

The team monitor requests for assistance daily, realigning work to meet demand as required.

Question 25 from Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb

With reference to the 'Change Planning' paper presented to Cabinet in November 2024, to ask the Spokesperson when a report on the Digital and AI Opportunities for the Council will be brought forward to the appropriate committee, to allow Members to consider the available options for capitalising on these opportunities and to ensure timely progress is made.

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

There is a report being prepared for the 5 June 2025 meeting of the Finance, Environment and Corporate Services Scrutiny committee. The report will outline the potential benefits and risks associated with the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies within Fife Council. AI, in all its guises, is thought to be one of the single most impactful digital developments offering transformative opportunities for enhancing service delivery, improving efficiencies, enriching jobs and achieving better outcomes for citizens, although any adoption has to be carefully considered. In addition, the Cabinet Committee is due to consider a progress report paper on 26 June 2025 on change planning.

Supplementary

Does the Spokesperson agree if we mobilise and capitalise on these opportunities both quickly and safely, Fife Council could indeed lead the way for Scotland and the UK and will he undertake to ensure that there is proper crossparty working and dialogue going forward and to keep members regularly updated on the progress?

Answer

We have expressed an interest in the UK Government AI zones. Yes AI is very important in delivering on change and we should be working crossparty to do so. When there is an opportunity to work cross party we will take advantage of this as there are many skills across the chamber and many people with expertise that we could leverage to make sure our services get the best from it.

Question 26 from Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb

To ask the Spokesperson if they can advise Council of what specific actions the Administration has taken to promote local job creation, specifically in areas of Fife facing the highest levels of deprivation.

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Thank you for your enquiry regarding local job creation in areas of Fife facing the highest levels of deprivation. The Fife Economic Strategy outlines a clear commitment to fostering inclusive economic growth and ensuring that opportunities reach every corner of our communities, particularly those in greatest need. Through the work of Economic Development Services and Business Gateway Fife, the Council has actively pursued initiatives that support self-employed, business startups, business growth, skills development, and employment opportunities within these areas. Specifically, the Administration has undertaken the following actions: - Business Support & Investment: Business Gateway Fife has continued to provide tailored advice and funding opportunities to local enterprises, helping them expand and create new jobs in communities facing economic challenges. We have provided support to circa 580 small business starts up across Fife during 2024/25.- Skills & Employability Programmes: Business & Employability have worked in partnership with employers, colleges, and training providers to deliver targeted skills programmes designed to enhance employability prospects for residents in deprived areas. - Investment and Regeneration Efforts: Investment in regeneration projects, informed by the recent local area economic profiles prepared for Area Committees earlier this year, has focused on attracting new businesses and supporting infrastructure improvements that facilitate job creation. Such as new light industrial business units, site servicing of employment land and remediation of vacant derelict land.

Supplementary

Does he agree with me that any serious attempt to promote job creation in Fife's most deprived communities, including many in my ward, must go hand in hand with protecting our most vulnerable?

Answer

The Life Chances programme helps. We also spend a great deal of time working with those furthest from the labour market to get them ready through pre employment checks and support to get them ready for interviews for jobs and big apprenticeship programmes i.e.. Babcock. We also work with Opportunities Fife that offer great support. Will need to wait to see what comes out of the green paper in future.

Question 27 from Councillor Andy Jackson

Cabinet Committee agreed on 30 November 2023 that a report be brought back to a future committee meeting providing options for the council to begin the provision of a council run not-for-profit bus service, with Workshops being held in October 2024. Can the Spokesperson advise when the report will be presented to members?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The draft final report is currently being developed by Roads & Transportation Services and the Consultants. It is anticipated that the final report with recommendations would be presented to the Cabinet Committee in August.

Supplementary

Why has it taken so long and what process has been gone through to bring this back to committee?

Answer

Acknowledge it is frustrating when things taken longer than expect but important to get the report right and in a position where we can make use of it. One of the key officers involved has recently retired so may be impacted by that. Look forward to reading the report and make something of it that we can deliver on.

Question 28 from Councillor Andrew Verrecchia

Carnegie swimming pool excludes members of the public from swimming at peak times during the day every evening except Wednesday whereas Kirkcaldy pool keeps 2 lanes free for public swimming at all times and this disparity is grossly unfair. What is the public access to swimming pools at peak times (Mon-Fri 18:00-20:00) like in the rest of our facilities across Fife?

Answer (Spokesperson for Communities and Leisure)

FSLT have lane swimming available depending on the size and type of pool, along with club demand in each area. There is some additional pressure on the aquatics programming due to the investment and redevelopment of Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre. Carnegie offers some public lane swimming on a Wednesday and Thursday during the times of 1800 – 2000, it provides 6-lanes Monday – Wednesday and Friday 1600 – 1800 and 1600 – 1730 on a Thursday. Additionally, it provides 4-lanes Monday and Wednesday 2000 – 2130, and 6-lanes Tuesday and Thursday 2000 – 2130.

FSLT regularly review pool programmes across venues to ensure the best balance between the learn to swim programme, club use and public availability.

Supplementary

Given that Carnegie has two large pools that the public are excluded from using for the majority of the time, these are public buildings paid for and maintained by tax payers. Would the administration consider adopting a minimum service level that two swimming lanes should be reserved for the public at all times as is the Kirkcaldy model?

Answer

Have set up meeting with FSLT to take forward the issues raised.

Question 29 from Councillor Gordon Pryde

To ask the Labour administration what assessment it has made of the SNP Government's decision to abandon its manifesto commitment to cut car use in Scotland by 20% by the end of the decade and would it agree that this shows "a lack of leadership" by the SNP Government as stated by Audit Scotland in January?

Answer (Spokesperson for Environment and Climate Change)

The administration's assessment is it's another failure of the Scottish Government to deliver on its climate change commitments in the last few years.

They have missed the legally binding annual greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in 9 out of the last 13 years.

They've admitted that their 2030 target of 75% reduction in greenhouse emissions is no longer achievable – so they've scrapped it.

They've admitted that the heat in buildings bill which was to have 1 million homes converted to green heating by 2030 is unachievable.

The list just goes on, and on, and on.

The Climate change Committee itself said that the Scottish government had a lack of comprehensive strategy to decarbonize to net zero, and scrapping the 20% reduction in car use is just more evidence that the CCC's assessment was absolutely correct.

Supplementary

Would the Spokesperson agree with me that the lack of leadership outlined by Audit Scotland of the Scottish Government and not to take action and involve other agencies like ourselves in local government in tackling that climate crisis demonstrates the failure identified by Audit Scotland?

Answer

Absolutely.

Question 30 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

Further to Question 22 asked at the council meeting of 20th March, 2025, when can the data relating to making all our bus stops accessible be provided as advised by the spokesperson?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Assessing all bus stops in Fife is a major piece of work. As the initial phase, data is being sought from the bus companies on the routing and bus stop accessibility of new express bus services. It is anticipated that this data will be available late summer 2025. Once this data is received and assessed Roads & Transportation

Officers will be able to determine the scale of necessary works and funding requirements. It is programmed that the assessment of the entire network would follow from this initial work stream. Roads & Transportation Services staff are exploring grant funding opportunities from external sources including the Scottish Government's Bus Infrastructure Fund (Community Bus Fund) to allow the timely progress of this work.

Supplementary

Issues with accessible bus stops at Victoria Hospital. Does the Spokesperson agree that this is an urgent issue that should be resolved promptly and not left until the end of the year?

Answer

Yes I would agree that it is a priority we need to get on top of. We will raise these as pressing issues to be addressed.

Question 31 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

Further to Question 15 asked at the council meeting September 19th, 2024, and question 23 asked at the council meeting March 20th, concerning aids and adaptations, when can the data requested be provided as advised by the spokesperson?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services).

The assessment of adaptations is undertaken by the Health & Social Care Partnership. They have advised the following about timescales -Referrals to the Community Occupational Therapy (COT) Service are triaged and assessed based on the risks and needs of the individual and they are placed on the waiting list accordingly. Therefore, it is difficult to give an exact response as to how long people will wait for an assessment as the waiting list can change on a daily basis. Waits also vary across Fife depending on demand and staffing resource. If people are assessed at a critical priority with no option to mitigate risk they will be assessed within 5 working days. If there are alternative solutions that can be put in place to maintain safety, such as washing at a sink, an individual will be placed on the waiting list at substantial priority and the current wait is approximately 8 months. For those assessed at low risk are placed on the waiting list at a moderate priority and the current wait is approximately 12 months. The COT Service acknowledges the current waiting times are prolonged and are working hard to bring the waiting times down, this includes some staff working extra hours to reduce the waiting times. Housing Services are responsible for the delivery of adaptations once the assessment has been completed. Housing Services advise that from the point of it reaching Housing average wait time for stair lift installation is 26 days and average completion times for other adaptations is 20.42 days from the referral reaching Housing Services.

Supplementary

Would the Spokesperson agree that we need to be showing better priorities so that our people can actually stay in their home, use their home and the idea of an assessment only taking days is utter nonsense because these figures are just of

having people from OT come out to their house not having equipment installed in their property?

Answer

I agree and I think we all would agree that the waiting times are unacceptable. The service has advised they are taking steps to address this. I am sorry it has taken so long to answer your question.

Question 32 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

What is the current waiting time for replacement painted road line markings by Area committee including and not limited to, faded double yellow lines, zig-zag and other markings at crossings and schools, painted roundabouts?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Road markings are prioritised in relation to location, safety and risk with varying target times for reinstatements. It is acknowledged that there has been a backlog in road marking works across Fife due to reliability issues with the lining vehicle, contractors and diversion of resources to address road safety defects. I'm now pleased to say that the additional funding secured within the Council budget has enabled new lining equipment to be purchased and staff recruited which will look to address the backlog and better improve the programming of work going forward. Roads & Transportation Services propose to issue a Briefing Note and plan of proposed road line marking refurbishment to each area committee in May 2025. (Note– there have been issues with the reliability of external line contractors also hence a new framework is being formulated to help secure quality contractors and improve performance).

Supplementary

Will you agree that the rates of works being done is not acceptable and the works that have been getting done need to be changed?

Answer

Road lining has taken too long we know that. A year is too long and safety is priority when trying to get these things done. Service is working hard to catch up.

Question 33 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

How many road carriageway patching operations have been reported or assessed as requiring repair/replacement within one month of the original repair?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Over the past year, repeat visits to previously repaired carriageway faults have reduced from 32% to 21%. This highlights the focus of targeting permanent repairs to help avoid repeat visits. Roads & Transportation Services are currently in the process of updating ALLOY their digital asset management system to enable more detailed performance data to be analysed.

Supplementary

What is the cost of the constant patching of these?

Answer

Sometimes patching is the only option.

Question 34 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

What process does the Council have to engage with bus companies when concerns are raised about non-compliance with the 'National standard for driving buses and coaches (category D)'?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Any complaint about a driver or service is discussed and investigated by the bus company and a formal report presented to Fife Council for consideration and any necessary actions. Should there be any significant issues found the issue would be raised with the Traffic Commissioner for Scotland or Police Scotland as necessary.

Question 35 from Councillor Carol Lindsay

What assessment has been made in relation to the increasing installation of 24/7 parcel lockers across Fife, particularly those located in residential or other areas where they can contribute to residential dis-amenity?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

In line with most planning applications residential amenity is a material consideration in the assessment of the planning merits of a proposed development. To date there is no evidence to Planning Services of there being a particular issue arising from an increase in the siting of such units in residential areas.

The applications submitted to Planning Services to date have related to locations adjacent to existing retail units where the existing opening hours of such premises are not restricted. In one recent case the siting of a self-serve parcel unit was refused as it was considered to be a pedestrian safety issue causing an obstruction to a footpath.

Question 36 from Councillor Carol Lindsay

What planning controls, policy reviews or consultation processes does the Council intend to carry out in relation to the siting of parcel lockers ensuring that residents' amenity, local character, and community safety are protected?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

There are no permitted development rights which apply to the siting of self-serve parcel units. As such the location of such units (some are internal to a retail unit), as well as whether they are free standing, will determine whether planning permission is required. Planning permission would be required for the siting of these units in a Conservation Area or adjoining a listed building. There is no consultation proposed. Planning Services will be providing advice via the Council

web planning pages to assist customers and residents which will include where any person proposes to install such a unit on the public footpath.

Any siting of self-serve parcel units without the necessary planning permission, which the Planning Authority are aware of, will be pursued through the established planning enforcement process to determine the most appropriate action to address any unauthorised development.

Question 37 from Councillor Robin Lawson

How many Council Employees are engaged in repairing damaged and broken road signs across Fife, and how many signs have been repaired since 1 January 2025?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Approximately 20 staff are engaged in delivering the repair of signage across Fife.

A great deal of the damage arose from the major storm at the end of January 2025. On completion of winter maintenance duties Roads & Transportation operational staff have programmed the works between April and October.

Approximately 20 signs have been completed and a further 230 are programmed to be repaired/replaced between now and October.

During consideration of the above item, the Provost led the chamber in the nationwide 2 minute silence for the 80th anniversary of VE day following a poem recital by the Armed Forces Champion.

176. CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES TO LIST OF COMMITTEE POWERS

The council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services proposing minor changes to the List of Committee Powers as a result of decisions made by the Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 3 April 2025.

Decision

The council:-

- (1) agreed that the List of Committee Powers be amended as set out at Section 1.3 of the report to take effect from 9 May 2025; and
- (2) delegated authority to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to amend the List of Committee Powers to reflect the minor changes.

The meeting adjourned at 12.10 pm and reconvened at 1.05 pm.

177. FIFE COUNCIL, BEST VALUE CONTROLLER OF AUDIT REPORT

The council considered a report by the Chief Executive, Fife Council advising members of the Best Value Controller of Audit (CoA) Report, published by the Accounts Commission in February 2025, and the Council's response to the Commission's findings.

Decision

The council: -

- (1) noted the Best Value report and Commission findings in Appendix 1;
- (2) noted the response to the audit report in Section 2.0; and
- (3) agreed the plan to address the Commission's findings as set out in Appendix 2.

The meeting adjourned at 1.45 pm and reconvened at 1.50 pm.

178. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services requiring the council to consider motions submitted in terms of Standing Order 10.

Councillor Hilton left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item, having earlier declared an interest.

Motion 1

Councillor Kennedy-Dalby, seconded by Councillor Robb, moved as follows: -

“Council notes that the £5 billion “savings” announced in March as part of the Westminster Governments “Pathways to Work: Reforming Benefits and Support to Get Britain Working” Green Paper will be the biggest cuts to disability benefits on record penalising Disabled people and increasing the number in poverty.

Council seeks an urgent report to the next available meeting of the Cabinet to consider the impact of these looming cuts within Fife not only to the services budgets in this Council but those services it provides with partners and the 3rd sector to the most vulnerable in Fife.

Council further agrees that the Chief Executive and Council Leader write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor, and Secretary of State of Work and Pensions as a matter of urgency to convey Fife Council's opposition to these "savings" given the imminent impact they will have on the most vulnerable groups in Fife.”

Decision

The council unanimously approved the motion.

Councillor Hilton rejoined the meeting after consideration of the above item.

Motion 2

Councillor Dempsey, seconded by Councillor Gulline, moved as follows: -

“Council: -

- acknowledges the positive contribution of trees and woodland with regard to environmental, community, economic and human wellbeing benefits but notes that for some residents living next to unmanaged woodland there

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can be a negative impact from neighbouring trees and woodland on those householders and property.

- Agrees that the Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee receive a report that: -
 - Summarises the Council's policy and procedures for managing its own trees, hedges and woodland; and
 - Describes the use to date of the Council's powers under the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013."

Amendment 1

Councillor Calder, seconded by Councillor Knox, moved as follows: -

"Add

c. Summarise the Council's policy and procedures in regards to managing trees, hedges and woodland on private land that the Council and its predecessors agreed to take on grounds maintenance in perpetuity."

Amendment 2

Councillor Patrick, seconded by Councillor Neal, moved as follows: -

"Add to

1) Council also notes that the Councils 'Tree Management Strategy 2019-24' is now out of date.

Add c. and considers the Tree Management Strategy with a view to updating the Strategy and making recommendations to the Cabinet Committee."

Prior to a vote being taken, Councillors Dempsey and Gulline agreed to accept both proposed amendments.

The conjoined motion was agreed as follows: -

"Council: -

- acknowledges the positive contribution of trees and woodland with regard to environmental, community, economic and human wellbeing benefits but notes that for some residents living next to unmanaged woodland there can be a negative impact from neighbouring trees and woodland on those householders and property. Council also notes that the Council's Tree Management Strategy 2019-24 is now out of date.
- Agrees that the Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee receive a report that: -
 - Summarises the Council's policy and procedures for managing its own trees, hedges and woodland; and
 - Describes the use to date of the Council's powers under the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013.
 - Summarises the Council's policy and procedures in regards to managing trees, hedges and woodland on private land that the

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Council and its predecessors agreed to take on grounds maintenance in perpetuity and considers the Tree Management Strategy with a view to updating the strategy and making recommendations to Cabinet Committee.”

Decision

The council unanimously agreed to approve the conjoined motion and amendments.

Motion 3

Councillor Boubaker-Calder, seconded by Councillor Caffrey, moved as follows: -

Young Carers Leads in Fife’s Schools

“Council notes:

- That Pupil Census Data in 2024 showed that there are 634 Young Carers who are pupils in Fife’s Schools.
- Many Young Carers face increased challenges in their education and wellbeing due to the stress and requirements of their caring role
- Young Carers provide an important role caring for those close to them, such as parents, siblings and other relatives.
- Fife Council currently support Young Carers in Education through management processes as well as working with the wider third sector.

Council Calls for a report to be brought back to the Cabinet Committee with options and costings for putting in place a pilot for a specified Young Carers lead in schools. They would have responsibility for ensuring young carers are supported as well as supporting staff with training in young carers' issues, and would receive specific training themselves in order to deliver this role.”

Amendment 1

Councillor Liewald, seconded by Councillor Barrera, moved as follows: -

“Council seeks a report to be brought back to the Cabinet Committee which will include but not be limited to: -

- a. seeking to ensure young carers are supported in the school environment;
- b. seeking to provide appropriate training for staff supporting young carers;
- c. consideration to support a limited number of pilots in our schools where an existing specific member of the school staff will lead in identifying and supporting young carers, with a view to consider whether it would be possible to provide a lead in every school to work with young carers; and
- d. developing any pilot/s with Fife Young Carers and school-based staff already aiding young carers.”

Prior to a vote being taken, Councillors Boubaker-Calder and Caffrey agreed to accept the proposed amendment.

The conjoined motion was agreed as follows: -

“Council notes:

1. That Pupil Census Data in 2024 showed that there are 634 Young Carers who are pupils in Fife’s Schools.
2. Many Young Carers face increased challenges in their education and wellbeing due to the stress and requirements of their caring role
3. Young Carers provide an important role caring for those close to them, such as parents, siblings and other relatives.
4. Fife Council currently support Young Carers in Education through management processes as well as working with the wider third sector.

Council seeks a report to be brought back to the Cabinet Committee which will include but not be limited to: -

- a. seeking to ensure young carers are supported in the school environment;
- b. seeking to provide appropriate training for staff supporting young carers;
- c. consideration to support a limited number of pilots in schools where an existing member of school staff will act as a Young Carers lead, with the responsibility of identifying and supporting young carers as well as supporting staff on young carers issues, with a view to consider whether it would be possible to provide a lead in every school to work with young carers. They will receive specific training themselves in order to deliver this role;
- d. developing any pilot/s with Fife Young Carers and school-based staff already aiding young carers.”

Decision

The council unanimously agreed to approve the conjoined motion and amendment.

Councillor Backhouse left the meeting prior to consideration of the following item, having earlier declared an interest.

Motion 4

Councillor Kathleen Leslie, seconded by Councillor Watt, moved as follows: -

“Council recognises:

- Access rights are provided for in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provides local authorities with enforcement power.
- Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, local authorities have a statutory duty to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction any route by which access rights may reasonably be exercised.
- The Harbours Act 1964 requires Harbour Authorities when undertaking their statutory duties to have regard to the desirability of preserving for the public any freedom of access to places of natural beauty and for visiting or inspecting any building, site or object of archaeological, architectural or historic interest.

Council notes:

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- Burntisland Harbour, including East Dock, is a B listed structure and, following a grant of planning permission Forth Ports erected fencing preventing public access to all harbourside areas of Burntisland's East Dock.
- Fife Council officers are currently considering whether rights of access apply at the East Dock.

Council requests:

- a report is brought to Cabinet Committee which will
- provide a summary of the Council's position on access rights around the East Dock as defined under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- a summary of the Council's approach to managing access rights in general and
- a recommendation on options for access at East Docks and any associated enforcement action, with an indicative timeline for the enforcement action."

Amendment 1

Councillor MacDougall, seconded by Councillor Walker, moved as follows: -

"Council agrees to:

Remove the following.

Council requests:

- a report is brought to Cabinet Committee which will
- provide a summary of the Council's position on access rights around the East Dock as defined under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
- a summary of the Council's approach to managing access rights in general and
- a recommendation on options for access at East Docks and any associated enforcement action, with an indicative timeline for the enforcement action.

Replace with.

- Officers prepare a report to cabinet in August 2025 summarising the current position, noting legal issues identified to date and setting out available options to address the issues."

Prior to a vote being taken, Councillors Kathleen Leslie and Watt agreed to accept the proposed amendment.

The conjoined motion was agreed as follows: -

"Council recognises:

- Access rights are provided for in the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003.
- The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 provides local authorities with enforcement power.

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- Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, local authorities have a statutory duty to assert, protect and keep open and free from obstruction any route by which access rights may reasonably be exercised.
- The Harbours Act 1964 requires Harbour Authorities when undertaking their statutory duties to have regard to the desirability of preserving for the public any freedom of access to places of natural beauty and for visiting or inspecting any building, site or object of archaeological, architectural or historic interest.

Council notes:

- Burntisland Harbour, including East Dock, is a B listed structure and, following a grant of planning permission Forth Ports erected fencing preventing public access to all harbourside areas of Burntisland's East Dock.
- Fife Council officers are currently considering whether rights of access apply at the East Dock.

Council requests:

- a report is brought to Cabinet Committee in August 2025 which will:
 - provide a summary of the Council's position on access rights around the East Dock as defined under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003
 - a summary of the Council's approach to managing access rights in general and
 - noting legal issues identified to date and setting out available options to address the issues."
-

Decision

The council unanimously agreed to approve the conjoined motion and amendment.

179. BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE PROVOST AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

No business was brought forward under this item.