

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL – BLENDED MEETING

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

20 March 2025

10.35 am – 3.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Leishman (Provost), Tom Adams, David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, Lynn Ballantyne-Wardlaw, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Karen Beaton, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Rod Cavanagh, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Jean Hall-Muir, Judy Hamilton, Alycia Hayes, Cara Hilton, Stefan Hoggan, Gary Holt, 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, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Derek Noble, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Gordon Pryde, Bailey-Lee Robb, David Ross, Sam Steele, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Craig Walker, Darren Watt, Daniel Wilson, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors John Caffrey and David Graham.

160. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order 22.

161. CIVIC BUSINESS BULLETIN

Decision

The council noted the Civic Business Bulletin.

162. MINUTES

The council considered the minutes of the meetings of Fife Council of 12 December 2024 and 20 February 2025.

Decision

The council approved the minutes subject to amendments to points of accuracy.

163. 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 and Central Planning Committee of 18 December 2024, 29 January, 26 February 2025.

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- (2) North East Planning Committee of 4 December 2024, 15 January, 12 February 2025.
- (3) Fife Planning Review Body of 16 December 2024, 24 February 2025.
- (4) Regulation and Licensing Committee of 3 December 2024, 14 January 2025.
- (5) Cabinet Committee of 5 December 2024, 9 January, 6 February 2025.
- (6) Standards, Audit and Risk Committee of 24 November 2024, 13 February 2025.
- (7) Pensions Committee of 13 December 2024.
- (8) Glenrothes Area Committee of 27 November 2024, 22 January 2025.
- (9) Levenmouth Area Committee of 27 November 2024, 12 February 2025.
- (10) City of Dunfermline Area Committee of 10 December 2024, 4 February 2025.
- (11) Kirkcaldy Area Committee of 17 December 2024, 25 February 2025.
- (12) North East Fife Area Committee of 9 December 2024, 26 February 2025.
- (13) Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 11 December 2024, 5 February 2025.
- (14) South and West Fife Area Committee of 11 December 2024, 5 February 2025.
- (15) Education Scrutiny Committee of 28 January 2025.
- (16) Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee of 30 January 2025.
- (17) People and Communities Scrutiny Committee of 26 September and 16 January 2025.
- (18) Environment, Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee of 21 January 2025.
- (19) Rates Appeal Committee of 20 September, 25 November 2024.
- (20) Fife Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board of 27 September, 4 December 2024.

Decision

The council noted the minutes.

164. 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.

165. QUESTION TIME

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

Question 1 from Councillor Dempsey

Given that drivers of wider vehicles such as busses, trucks and SUVs can circumvent speed cushions by straddling them, whereas drivers of smaller, narrower, less environment impactful vehicles cannot, why does the Council continue to deploy speed cushions as a method of slowing only a subset of road traffic?

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Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

When designing a 20mph scheme, the category and use of the road is taken into account.

In a 20mph zone that requires to be self enforcing through the use of vertical speed reduction measures, like speed humps (full width) or speed cushions (smaller bumps beside each other), the type of measure used depends on the class/category/environment of the road.

Where the road is a distributor type, “through” road, that is a public service bus route, and a road that emergency service vehicles are likely to use to get into residential estate roads, the cushion type are used. This was agreed with the bus companies and emergency services through consultation in the early 2000’s when the Council started implementing 20mph zones in line with then current guidance. The intention is to provide a more comfortable route for bus passengers and ambulance patients because these large vehicles can straddle the measure rather than bumping over a full width hump. This does not exclude them from the 20mph speed limit. Also, it does not preclude the use of full width, kerb to kerb table humps for crossings – the ramps are just lessened at these measures to decrease the discomfort for passengers.

Where the more residential, side/estate streets are not bus routes we can use full width humps rather than cushions.

All drivers, no matter their vehicle, should be complying with the 20mph speed limit within zones as the limit is mandatory. It is this limit that should be the defining factor and not the measures; they are a reminder to all drivers to drive with a reduced speed.

In the 20mph limits (between zones), that we are implementing now under the new guidance, there are no physical measures – only signage indicating the mandatory 20mph speed limit.

Supplementary

I note that in the Dunfermline Eastern Expansion there are roads with full width humps. I have heard the bus argument before and the implications of that is either that buses don’t exceed the speed limit or it’s not important if they do. Which is it?

Answer

I don’t think anybody is condoning speeding in a 20mph limit area.

Question 2 from Councillor Tepp

What steps have been taken to explore the installation of solar panel arrays in Fife Council car parks?

Answer (Spokesperson for Environment and Climate Change)

Typically, Council car parks have a limited footprint which would require a framework to be constructed for solar panels. The need for a framework - and the need to maintain and manage the framework (for example to control anti-social activity) would make the cost of solar panel installations prohibitive. A proposal was investigated for Halbeath P&R although ultimately wind loadings meant it

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wasn't feasible in this location. There would also be a number of other constraints to include grid capacity (for surplus energy) or the capacity and cost of battery storage. In line with available funding, our focus instead has been on deployment of the public charger network and on retrofitting buildings to meet net zero obligations.

Supplementary

If the work has been undertaken can you share this?

Answer

Yes if I can get this information for you I will.

Question 3 from Councillor Tepp

Smart / Interactive Whiteboard technology will be instrumental to the transforming learning strategy using 1-2-1 devices. What work has been commissioned by the administration to audit the current condition of such equipment?

Answer (Spokesperson for Education)

The Transforming Learning Fife programme will provide teachers and learners with the devices and digital resources needed to transform the ways they engage with teaching, learning and assessment, providing enhanced experiences, improving accessibility and outcomes, developing vital skills and nurturing individual creativity.

Smartboards and interactive whiteboards are present in several schools, funded and maintained by the schools themselves through devolved budgets. This arrangement allows flexibility based on each school's needs, layout, teaching spaces, and preferences. Currently, this technology is being gradually replaced with limited set of approved interactive and noninteractive smart TVs and wireless casting technology, depending on school preferences and teaching requirements.

As part of the Transforming Learning programme, schools looking to update their AV equipment will receive a list of recommended options compatible with the iPads. These options will enable sharing and interacting with iPad content on larger screens. While replacing AV equipment is not a requirement of the project, schools will be informed of their options and the benefits of updating existing equipment.

Regarding the condition of AV equipment, a one-off audit was conducted in 2017/2018 to audit the maintenance of this equipment by schools and to make recommendations on replacement. This audit, covering over 4300 devices, provided Schools with information on equipment to be replaced and further guidance and advice was published on SharePoint for Schools to ensure they were keeping equipment in good working order - or replacing it as required.

Supplementary

Can you confirm that an audit of the equipment required support to the transforming learning programme has been undertaken and either that no gaps have been found or any gaps will be filled and supported through central funding?

Answer

I can confirm that an audit has been completed for each school and can provide that information to Councillor Tepp.

Question 4 from Councillor Tepp

Can the administration make a statement on the targets that it has set for the transportation service with regards to replacing broken or damaged road signs Fife?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Roads & Transportation Services are programming maintenance repairs to all known faulty signs this financial year.

Question 5 from Councillor Tepp

Can the administration inform Council how many broken or damaged road sign faults have been reported to the transportation service during the term of the current administration and how many have been repaired within a target period?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The Service is currently transitioning from a historical paper-based system to a digital system, as such, this information is not readily available and would be a timely exercise to collate. Happy to fully share this information going forward as the new system is implemented.

Supplementary

Can you reassure me that we will see significant improvements from the funds allocated in the budget and in order to test that would you be willing to join me on a before and after road trip so we can see the improvements for ourselves?

Answer

Yes I can give that assurance and yes I am sure we can sort that out.

Question 6 from Councillor Tepp

Does the administration believe that this sort of information should be available to Councillors and members of the Public so that we can all understand what road faults have been reported where and what their current status of these road faults is?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Yes

As part of the digital transformation and use of the Asset Management System 'ALLOY' - that is the vision to make this type of information and performance directly open to the public.

Supplementary

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The online solution is something we have been talking about improving for a long time now do you have a timeline for when we can go online and check the status.

Answer

No I don't have a timeline but I will check and advise Councillor Tepp.

Question 7 from Councillor Tepp

Can the administration explain why it should take more than 3 months to provide an incomplete list of the road signs currently waiting to be repaired and replaced in Fife?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Not sure of the background to the question but can confirm that there are currently 397 signs reported across Fife in need of repair. I should highlight that over 100 of these were a direct result of Storm Eowyn. It should be reminded that our staff resources over the winter period are very much focused on priority emergency events and key winter and flooding functions etc.

Question 8 from Councillor Tepp

Is it the policy of this administration to leave broken signs littering the countryside?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

No it is not a policy choice.

A budget of £200,000 is allocated this financial year to address the road sign faults.

Supplementary

Are we open to prosecution as the broken signs are litter?

Answer

That is a matter for the Chief Executive to decide.

Question 9 from Councillor Kathleen Leslie

At the meeting of Fife Council on 13/12/2018 it was unanimously agreed that "Council notes the good work that is being done in a number of Fife secondary schools to train senior pupils in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)..." and that "Council further notes that as at the start of the academic year 12 out of the 18 secondary schools were continuing to deliver the *Headstart* programme." And that "Council are asked to support the roll-out and extension of this training to all secondary schools in Fife and that the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) familiarisation should be included in the training programme."

Has this happened?

Answer (Spokesperson for Education)

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CPR/AED is now confirmed as a core entitlement in the PSE curriculum in Fife, at S4. Schools use a variety of means of delivery for this element of PSE, to fit in with their wider curriculum. In addition, some schools are doing this as part of: Sports Leaders, Alternative Curriculum and Extra Curricular activities.

The Directorate will remind our secondary schools of this priority.

Question 10 from Councillor Dave Dempsey

What consultation as carried out prior to the recent extension of the 20mph limits in Rosyth?". I have asked the Service but the response didn't answer the question.

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Consultation was with local ward members and the Rosyth Community Council through email in August 2024, so that a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order could be operational from 1 November 2024 (for 18 months) – this was to tie in with Transport Scotland's proposals for a temporary 20 mph limit on the Rosyth corridor.

Further public consultation would be required before April 2026 to decide whether the 20mph limit should be made permanent.

Supplementary

On 16 May 2024 this council agreed that any changes in speed limits should involve consultation with local members and other interested parties. Since there was no consultation with the population of Rosyth, surely they are an interested party, and if so is what happened not in breach of council policy?

Answer

Consultation was with ward members and Rosyth Community Council as a proxy for the public in Rosyth and online but it is a good point as to how we engage with the public if not through the community council.

Question 11 from Councillor Dave Dempsey

What was the last occasion on which NHS Fife commented on a planning application?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The last response to a planning application consultation was in 2022 from NHS. However, there is discussions between NHS Fife and the Planning Authority in relation to new development, the Fife Place Plan (Local Development Plan), and addressing climate change. Through the ongoing review of the Fife Place Plan, Planning Services will be discussing with NHS Fife the potential for health related planning policies, and considering whether health infrastructure could/should be included with developer obligations.

Supplementary

Can we be kept up to date on the progression of this?

Answer

Yes.

Question 12 from Councillor Patrick Browne

To ask the Labour administration what assessment it has made of the statistics published by the SNP Government on 25 February 2025, "Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations", which showed that the attainment gap between Scotland's richest and poorest school pupils increased last year for pupils sitting National 4s, National 5s and Highers. And if the administration will outline what steps it is taking across Fife Council to close that attainment gap.

Answer (Spokesperson for Education)

The national picture and the Fife picture

There was an increase in the attainment gap seen nationally for last year's school leavers across all measures of leaver attainment from SCQF level 1 to level 7. By contrast, the attainment gap for Fife school leavers narrowed across all measures of attainment.

Broadly speaking, national attainment outcomes for leavers from the *most* deprived areas fell across most measures, but with some improvement at level 6 (Higher or equivalent).

In comparison, there was a stronger picture of improvement for Fife leavers from the *most* deprived areas, with improvements across levels 1-3, together with a strong improvement at level 6.

However, whilst national outcomes for leavers from the least deprived areas were broadly in line with the preceding year, outcomes for Fife leavers from the least deprived areas generally fell.

Fife approach to improving outcomes and closing the gap

Key supports (this is not exhaustive but illustrative).

- Schools are provided with data analysis training, to identify gaps in attainment at cohort, subject and individual pupil level. Plans are then implemented to address key actions.
- Bi-annual school outcome reviews are held by Senior Education Officers with each school's Senior Leadership Team and actions are then both identified and implemented.
- All Secondary Head teacher collaborative meetings have a focus on improving attainment. There is also a range of established networks for senior leaders which focus on improving the key areas of pupil experience such as wellbeing, curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment, attainment and achievement and positive destinations.
- On 7 March 2025, there was an Improving Outcomes summit held with senior leaders from all Fife secondary schools where national speakers highlighted clear messages and shared good practice about where Fife is and what we need to do to improve.

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- Both support and challenge visits are provided for primary and secondary schools in relation to their planned interventions to reduce the poverty related attainment gap and the impact of their targeted use of Scottish Attainment Funding on improving outcomes.
- Fife education service has invested in a digital monitoring and tracking tool (called Progress) to consistently track and monitor all learners progress at key points in each session. This helps to identify gaps and concerns for those at risk of not achieving. Timely interventions are then planned for those pupils who need targeted support.
- Schools are developing the range of curricular pathways with college and other partners to ensure appropriate progression routes and maximise pupil's attainment.
- Principal teacher subject networks are being strengthened to provide greater opportunities to share existing good practice across all establishments. All Fife staff who are SQA appointees will be leading twilight professional learning sessions to share insights about their work.
- Finally, schools are continuing to increase opportunities for young people to engage in work experience, volunteering, enterprise and other Wider Achievement Opportunities to enhance achievement, secure skills for learning, life and work and raise aspirations.

Supplementary

Would the Spokesperson agree that when it comes to transforming learning and closing the attainment gap, voters can rely on Fife Council led by its Labour administration to deliver when the SNP could only make promises they walk away from?

Answer

At a national level we have a First Minister with a poor report card when it comes to closing the attainment gap and delivering on these promises and here in Fife we are determined to build a better, fairer future for our young people. That is why we have investing in the transforming learning programme and I am grateful to everyone who supported the budget last month to make this happen.

Question 13 from Councillor Patrick Browne

Given the SNP Government's announcement on 23 January 2025 that it was scrapping its plans for a National Care Service what contact has the Labour administration and Fife Council had with the Scottish Government directly or through COSLA to address the underfunding of care for Fife's elderly and vulnerable residents as documented in the Audit Scotland report published on 6 March which warned that "reform (is) urgently needed to tackle precarious health and social care finances."

Answer (Leader of the Council)

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In terms of underfunding, we see the Audit Commission identifying a budget gap of £457m for 2024/25 and I have also received a letter through COSLA that has been sent to the Cabinet Secretary by Health and Social Care Scotland and jointly signed by IJB chairs network identifying potential gap of 560m for 25/26 in the funding.

There is not enough money going into health and social care to meet the real demands across the country never mind Fife.

We have written as a tripartite partnership (FC/HSCP/NHS Fife) looking for a meeting with Neil Gray, Cabinet Minister to discuss the underfunding of health and social care but to also demonstrate good practice in Fife.

Supplementary

Would the Leader agree that what we need is a serious conversation with the SNP government, Fife Council, COSLA and other partners to sort out the long term issues around funding for care for the elderly and vulnerable people in our communities and for the SNP to stop pursuing a set of policies that only they believe in, we need a consensus on moving forward?

Answer

Absolutely agree with you, I welcome withdrawal of Part 1 of the National Care Service bill and I think having an advisory board is a much more appropriate way to go forward without wasting money.

Question 14 from Councillor Margaret Kennedy

Our Trading Standards Officers will be aware of campaigns highlighting the safety concerns of lithium-ion batteries and specifically the lack of regulation in online marketplaces with regards items such as e-bikes and scooters. Particularly in relation to issues such as battery fires.

Is this of concern and what steps are we taking at a Fife level to help protect consumers?

Answer (Spokesperson for Communities and Leisure Services)

Fife Trading Standards are aware of increased reports of fires involving lithium-ion batteries and the related Electrical Safety First Battery Safety Campaign and the proposed Bill.

In Fife we have had very few Lithium-ion battery safety issues reported to Trading Standards. We have had one complaint in Fife in the last year of a battery of this type causing an incident; an e-bike imported directly from China. The main concern is where small package or fast parcel imports come direct to the consumer from online sources and may miss the usual checks at ports. There are also problems with enforcement when the supplier is outside of the UK.

Fife Trading Standards took part in an East of Scotland Product Safety Group e-bikes project in 2022 and a UK wide Office for Product Safety and Standards project in 2024. These projects targeted Fife based suppliers of e-bikes and conversion kits and audited them for compliance as well as understanding of hazards and their responsibilities as importer/manufacturer/retailer. Findings were

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mostly positive with any minor issues resolved at time or following contact with suppliers out with Fife.

Findings show that a large part of the safety issues may come from misuse e.g. incompatible batteries with a product or incompatible charger with a battery. Fife Trading Standards continues to promote safe use of all products through their social media channels.

This issue together with safety campaign and proposed Bill has been discussed within the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards (SCOTSS) in Scotland and also at their Product Safety working groups. SCOTSS have given qualified support for the objectives of the bill, although they have some concerns regarding the practicalities relating to these proposals.

The proposals mention Lithium-Ion batteries and E-Scooters etc as if they are all synonymous which are in fact a grouping of a large number of distinct product types.

I hope this gives reassurance that Trading Standards teams across Scotland have a watching brief and will continue to engage on this matter to ensure consumers are better protected from potential hazards associated with lithium-ion batteries.

Question 15 from Councillor Patrick Browne

To ask the Labour administration what action it is taking along with Police Scotland, Fife Coast and Countryside Trust (FCCT) and third sector partners to tackle the scourge of motorbikes and quad bikes being driven illegally and dangerously on pavements roads, in parks and in open spaces blighting the lives of local residents because of noise and nuisance, and if it will consider establishing a working group to involve all council departments that have an involvement in addressing the issue along with other partners to ensure a pan-Fife approach can be used to tackle the problem and its causes.

Answer (Leader of the Council)

I would like to acknowledge your concerns regarding off-road biking in Fife and assure you that we are taking a coordinated approach to address this issue. Through Fife Community Safety Partnership, a working group has been established to address anti-social behaviour in public spaces that affects communities in different parts of Fife. This Group includes a range of partners including the Police, Fire, Safer Communities, Community Learning and Development, Parks, Education, Clued Up and Kingdom Offroad. Examples of joint working include the Police, Fire, and Safer Communities Officers who have undertaken shared patrols to ensure there is a presence in high-activity areas. We have worked to reduce access points in affected areas by installing gates, bollards, metal barriers, and shin rail fences.

We recognised there needs to be a proactive approach across Fife. This needs to be targeted at those who are most likely to engage in this type of activity through both enforcement and educational opportunities.

Partnership working across the wider Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath constituency has led to the development of an educational resource to be delivered in all

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schools. This resource addresses the risks, safety concerns, consequences of injury, exploitation concerns, prosecution, and life consequences associated with illegal off-road biking. The resource will be in video format and piloted in Kirkcaldy and Beath High Schools, with plans to roll it out across Fife.

The Cowdenbeath Area Committee has also recently supported Police Scotland by funding a pilot project involving Selecta DNA, which aims to tackle illegal off-road biking. Local officers will soon be trained in using this equipment to aid in identifying and prosecuting offenders. If successful Police Scotland will look to see how this could be deployed fife wide.

We also need to recognise that this is only one aspect of anti-social behaviour affecting our communities, fires starting in derelict buildings, trouble in shops and buses. Large groups of young people causing considerable disruption. Spoke this week to Divisional Commander and agreed to pull together a group of key stakeholders to look at what we are doing and what we can do through a combination of local action and central coordination.

Question 16 from Councillor Nicola Patrick

What assessment, as part of the national ban on pavement parking has been undertaken in relation to disability access points and dropped kerbs?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

There is no need for an assessment of disabled access points and dropped kerbs these locations would not be subject to an exemption order.

Any vehicles parking at these locations will be subject to enforcement when it comes in to force on 1 September 2025.

Supplementary

My understanding was that it could be two separate things that could be done in conjunction with each other under the current legislation so is that not something that would be looked at if not with the pavement parking as its own entity?

Answer

In terms of parking over dropped kerbs, it has never been acceptable and this will continue to be enforced. The focus of the legislation is to ensure pavements are accessible for all our communities.

Question 17 from Councillor David Barratt

When does the administration anticipate making a decision on the location of investment in sports and leisure facilities in West Fife following the allocation of £13.1m?

Answer (Spokesperson for Communities and Leisure Services)

Following allocation of budget of £13.1m for a pool in West Fife, officers have held meetings with SportScotland and Scottish Swimming to share information about the funding allocation from the council. Council officers are reviewing next

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steps and the decision on a preferred location will be made as part of a future business case which will be subject to committee and planning approval.

Supplementary

Do you agree that any location that is not Inverkeithing would go against previous commitments made by the council? As a reminder that included a commitment to investigating the current Inverkeithing High School site and a subsequent sum of money agreed in the capital plan specifically for Inverkeithing?

Answer

We would prefer Inverkeithing but proper research and due diligence is required and we will continue to seek funding to build a centre for excellence in that area.

Question 18 from Councillor Lesley Backhouse

How much of the Scottish Government funding of £15 million for Upgrading Gypsy Travellers Sites has Fife Council received?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

Fife Council Housing Service bid for funding from both rounds of Scottish Government Funding. This was to progress work to install chalets at Tarvit Mill.

In round 1 we were awarded £384,000 and in round we were awarded £397,910.40. The majority of funding for works on Gypsy Traveller sites has come from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Fund.

The Housing Revenue Account has invested £1.5 million this financial year on this project but this think will increase when we get to the outturn.

Supplementary

Given that the gypsy travellers sites were moved the HRA account some time ago and £1.5m spent in upgrading Heatherywood, how do you answer that the Local Government Information Service has said that Fife Council is failing to reach the Scottish Housing Standard for our gypsy travellers?

Answer

That report did come out last year. Since then a considerable amount of work has been undertaken. The new chalets are well insulated they are EPCB and have all fixtures and fitting do meet standards. There are exemptions for trailers which were in place before moved to the HRA.

Question 19 from Councillor Lesley Backhouse

What progress has been made in bringing Fife Council's 3 Gypsy Travellers sites up to The Scottish Housing standards since they were moved onto the Housing Revenue Account?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

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Work has been focussed on the Tarvit Mill site where we have reformed pitches and have been installing residential chalet accommodation. This work will be complete by the end of April 25. At this point we will be starting work on redeveloping the Heatherywood Site and looking to install residential chalet accommodation at this site.

The final site to be complete will be Thorntonwood which is the smallest of our 3 sites.

The Housing Revenue Account will invest a further £6 million of capital funding in improving sites over the next 2 years.

Supplementary

Given we have not had an update on the gypsy traveller site renewal in some time I would ask that we have an update on meeting standards?

Answer

Refer to previous answer. Ongoing discussions with the gypsy traveller communities.

Question 20 from Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb

To ask the Spokesperson what discussions they have had with the Executive Director for Finance & Corporate Services and the Head of Roads and Transportation about the revenue raised from pavement parking being reinvested into parking enforcement to make any ban in Fife effective for communities.

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The ban on pavement parking is not focused on revenue generation, it looks to help safeguard accessibility for our communities, particularly those most vulnerable. If there were to be any surplus revenue raised this could be used to support parking enforcement in Fife.

Supplementary

Do you not agree that for any pavement parking ban to be effective for our most vulnerable communities we do need to have enough staff to enforce any ban in our local communities from Crail to Kinross and for everywhere in between and to act as a deterrent once it is in force and if you don't, how do you see the current staffing structure being spread across the vast Fife road network of over 2500km?

Answer

We are all pushing at the same door to try and get it right and deliver a level of enforcement that makes it feel like it is part of our communities and that it isn't being ignored or not being delivered. Legislation has been put in place without the scaffolding to support it. Work requires to be done at a local level to ensure we don't get any unintended consequences

Question 21 from Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb

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With reference to the unanimous decision of Cowdenbeath Area Committee of 28 February 2024, to ask the Spokesperson when they expect the scrutiny report on a Fife-wide review of School Meals to be presented to committee for consideration.

Answer (Convener of Education Scrutiny Committee)

Following consultation and agreement with myself as Convener of the Education Scrutiny Committee, the School Meals report will be presented to Education Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 20 May 2025.

Supplementary

Surely you must agree that the delay in coming back to committee is not ideal, especially given that the pupils from Beath High School who did come back to CAC as members will be aware raised this back in 2023. This is not good enough would you agree?

Answer

With regard to those pupils I did want to write to those pupils after the area committee but was advised not to due to the exam timetable and I did write to you in November 2024 to advise that there had been a number of other reports that could not be pushed back. I am sure you will welcome that the report is coming to committee in less than two months.

Question 22 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

What discussions have been had with stagecoach in relation to accessible access to their vehicles?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Roads & Transportation Officers meet regularly with Stagecoach and other bus operators to discuss relevant issues.

All buses operating as local bus services in the UK must comply with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) legislation. These regulations were created in 2000 to ensure that people with disabilities can access buses and coaches with ease.

Recently Stagecoach introduced new double decked coaches to the express Fife network, these have two access doors. The access door for people with disabilities is mid-way along the vehicle. In response, Roads & Transportation Services are in the process of providing additional pedestrian platforms or removing railings at Glenrothes, Leven, and Kirkcaldy Bus Stations to help facilitate access for passengers to these specialist vehicles.

(The works at Glenrothes Bus Station are scheduled to be completed within the next few weeks with the rest to follow thereafter.)

Supplementary

It is not just bus stations that are an issue. There are 67 (1 in 4) bus stops in Fife that the new buses stop at are not accessible. 75% of bus stops are not

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accessible. How long will it take to make the changes and how much will it cost to make our buses accessible to everyone?

Answer

I will check with the service and advise.

Question 23 from Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby

How many properties are awaiting adaptation by area committee?

Answer (Spokesperson for Housing and Building Services)

The figures for each area are derived from our manual records. The figures produced in the table contains figures for each Area where people are on the waiting list or where the work has commenced and is in progress. It includes all cases except for those where the work has been completed. The Housing systems team are working on a bespoke report through Power BI which will give us more segmented information for each Area. This could be reported to the Area Committees in 2025/6.

The ability of the Council to deliver adaptations and reduce the waiting list is mainly influenced by the availability of budgets from Health & Social care Partnership, the Council's General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. The Housing Service is currently streamlining processes including the provision of services such as care & Repair to maximise the impact of current budgets. A report was made to the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 13th March to outline the actions being taken.

Area	Total Waiting
SW Fife	28
NE Fife	46
Levenmouth	45
Kirkcaldy	66
Glenrothes	72
Dunfermline	26
Cowdenbeath	60
Total	343

Supplementary

What is the timescale for these works and how long has it been from the first point of contact with the OT to the actual rolling point for these things are going in, This number has increased dramatically since I asked this question back in September, can you explain why this number is rising instead of being dealt with?

Answer

A report was presented to the People and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 13 March and I would refer you to that report as it provides the detail of all work ongoing and the budget position. Further detail has been requested by the

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scrutiny convener. Timescales are difficult to predict but can get this information for you.

Question 24 from Councillor Derek Glen

What mechanisms are being put in place in order to enable members of the public and/or community groups to feedback information about instances of pavement parking to Fife Council once the ban is implemented?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

A communications plan is currently being developed which will consider feedback means for customers. Currently, members of the public can provide feedback on parking issues by emailing parking.management@fife.gov.uk.

Communities may share their issues with local Councillors, and they too would be encouraged to forward issues to this email address.

Supplementary

Can enforcement action be taken after the fact by providing evidence?

Answer

I don't know but can check and let you know.

Question 25 from Councillor John Beare

What is the budget for Bus Shelter repairs for 2024/25 and 2025/26?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

The Service's bus shelter maintenance budget for 2024/25 is £54,137 increasing to £55,491 for 2025/26.

Question 26 from Councillor John Beare

What is the inspection regime for Bus Shelters?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Bus shelters are inspected in line with the Council's approved Road Asset Condition Inspections - Policy & Standards, with repairs prioritised on a risk-based approach.

Question 27 from Councillor John Beare

How many Bus Shelters are awaiting repairs?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

12 bus shelters require full replacement whilst 43 requiring replacement panels.

Question 28 from Councillor John Beare

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What is the current waiting period for Bus Shelters to be repaired?

Answer (Spokesperson for Finance, Economy and Transportation)

Repair timescales are estimated at 12-weeks, subject to stock availability.

Supplementary

We have assurance of 12 weeks but I know of one waiting more than 5 years. Is the service going to provide detail on which shelters of those 12 waiting repairs can be provided?

Answer

12 bus shelters require full replacement and 43 replacement panels. I would not have left the issue of a bus shelter replacement for 5 years. We need to get better in persisting in our attempts to have them fixed.

The meeting adjourned during consideration of the above item at 12.00 pm and reconvened at 12.45 pm.

166. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND PLACES IN FIFE

The council considered a report by the Returning Officer which advised members of the outcome of the consultation on the statutory review of Fife's polling districts and polling places, as required by Section 18(c) of the Representation of the People Act 1083 and to seek approval of the proposed amendments to the Council's Polling Scheme, as a result of the consultation exercise.

Decision

The council:-

- (1) noted the outcome of the public consultation exercise;
- (2) approved the recommended amendments to the Fife Council Polling Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 of the report and Maps 1 to 13; and
- (3) remitted to the Returning Officer to make any necessary amendments to the Fife Council Polling Scheme in the run up to a statutory election.

167. 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 Dempsey, as mover of Motion 2 of the agenda, advised he had withdrawn his motion.

With the agreement of the Provost, Councillors Corps and Verner, as movers of Motions 1 and 3, agreed to conjoin as they were on the same subject. Both motions were formally moved and seconded prior to conjoining.

Motion 1

Councillor Corps, seconded by Councillor Liston, moved as follows:-

Compensation of WASPI Women

“Council notes the findings of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsmen of maladministration when it failed to properly communicate changes to the state pension age to women born in the 1950s. This recommended the payment of £1,000 to £2,950 per person affected.

Council further notes the announcement on 17/12/24 of the Work and Pensions Secretary to not accept this compensation recommendation.

In light of this decision, Council therefore resolves to support the original recommendations of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsmen and calls on the UK Government to also accept this.”

Motion 3

Councillor Verner, seconded by Councillor Lindsay, moved as follows:-

Support for WASPI Women and Pension Inequality Redress

“This Council notes that:

1. The Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign represents women born in the 1950s who have been unfairly impacted by changes to the State Pension Age.
2. The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) has found that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was guilty of maladministration in failing to properly notify affected women of the changes.
3. Many of these women have faced financial hardship due to inadequate notice, impacting their retirement plans and overall well-being.
4. Council notes that it is estimated that in excess of 350,000 women were impacted in Scotland and more than 23,000 in Fife.
5. The ruling by the PHSO is vindication of the tireless efforts of the WASPI campaigners including groups here in Fife and the injustice that has been served by successive UK Governments, this has not only had a profound effect on the individuals but also on the wider community in Fife.

Council acknowledges the PHSO has confirmed that women affected are owed compensation on the grounds of maladministration by the DWP, and instructs the Leader on behalf of the Council to write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, urging them to implement a fair compensation scheme for all WASPI women without further delay.”

Conjoined Motion

Support and Compensation for WASPI Women

“This Council Notes that:-

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1. The Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign represent a women born in the 1950s who have been unfairly impacted by changes to the State Pension Age.
2. Council notes the findings of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsmen that the Department of Work and Pensions were guilty of maladministration when it failed to properly communicate changes to the state pension age women born in the 1950s. This is recommended the payment of £1,000 to £2,950 per person affected.
3. The announcement of 17/12/24 of the Work and Pensions Secretary to not accept this compensation recommendation.
4. Many of these women have faced financial hardship due to inadequate notice, impacting their retirement plans and overall well-being.
5. The ruling by the PHSO is vindication of the tireless efforts of the WASPI campaigners including groups here in Fife and the injustice that has been served by successive UK Governments, this has not only had a profound effect on the individuals but also on the wider community in Fife. Council acknowledges the PHSO has confirmed that women affected are owed compensation on the grounds of maladministration by the DWP.
6. In light of this decision, Council therefore resolves to support the original recommendations of the PHSO and calls on the UK Government to accept this. Council therefore instructs the Leader on behalf of the Council to write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary of State for work and pensions, urging them to implement a fair compensation scheme for all WASPI women without further delay.”

Decision

The council agreed the conjoined motion unanimously.

Motion 4

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

Ukraine – 3 Years of the 2nd Russian Invasion

“Council notes the motion approved unanimously on March 10th, 2022, condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Council recognises that three years on from what it understands was Russia’s illegal full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022 that Ukraine and its people continue to resolutely defend their sovereign nation from Russian aggression.

Council also notes the support for the European Parliament resolution of 23 January 2025, which called on the Russian Federation to immediately terminate all military activities and withdraw from Ukraine, and similar motions debated in the Scottish Parliament on March 5th 2025 and in the House of Commons on 27th February 2025.

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Council reiterates its ongoing support for President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people in their right to live freely in a Ukraine as recognised by the international community since 1991.

Council also condemns absolutely the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been committed in Ukraine by the regime of Vladimir Putin and which have been documented by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine established by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Consul General of the Russian Federation in Scotland, conveying the council's condemnation of the actions of his government. And additionally writes to the Consul General of Ukraine in Edinburgh indicating our support to the people of Ukraine."

Amendment

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

"Add before last paragraph:-

Council acknowledges the work of Council officers and education staff in providing both critical assistance and ongoing support to Ukrainian families in Fife.

Council notes and thanks support provided by voluntary organisations, charities and individuals in welcoming Ukrainians who are living in Fife."

With the agreement of the Provost, the mover of the motion agreed to accept the amendment. The amended motion was agreed as follows:-

Ukraine – 3 Years of the 2nd Russian Invasion

"Council notes the motion approved unanimously on March 10th, 2022, condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Council recognises that three years on from what it understands was Russia's illegal full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022 that Ukraine and its people continue to resolutely defend their sovereign nation from Russian aggression.

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Council notes and thanks support provided by voluntary organisations, charities and individuals in welcoming Ukrainians who are living in Fife.

The Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Consul General of the Russian Federation in Scotland, conveying the council's condemnation of the actions of his government. And additionally writes to the Consul General of Ukraine in Edinburgh indicating our support to the people of Ukraine."

Decision

The council agreed the amended motion unanimously.

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

No business was brought forward under this item.