

Thursday 8 May 2025 - 10.00 a.m.

AGENDA

Page Nos.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In terms of Section 5 of the Code of Conduct, members are asked to declare any interest in particular items on the agenda and the nature of the interest(s) at this stage.

3. DEPUTATION - GENERATIONS WORKING TOGETHER

4. CIVIC BUSINESS BULLETIN

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5. MINUTE – Minutes of the meeting of Fife Council of 20 March (Special Meeting) and 20 March 2025.

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6. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

Minutes of meetings of the Council's committees and sub-committees, as contained in the volume of minutes uploaded to the intranet and Fife Council website, are submitted for accuracy.

7. LEADER'S REPORT

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8. QUESTION TIME

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9. CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES TO LIST OF COMMITTEE POWERS – Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

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10. FIFE COUNCIL BEST VALUE CONTROLLER OF AUDIT REPORT – Report by the Chief Executive.

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11. NOTICE OF MOTIONS – Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

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

<p>Members are reminded that should they have queries on the detail of a report they should, where possible, contact the report authors in advance of the meeting to seek clarification.</p>

Fife House
North Street
Glenrothes
Fife, KY7 5LT

1 May, 2025

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Agendas and papers for all Committee meetings can be accessed on
www.fife.gov.uk/committees

BLENDED MEETING NOTICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Civic Business Bulletin

Fife Business Awards

Congratulations to the following who have been shortlisted for the Fife Business Awards:-

- Apprentice of the Year – Callum Gordon, 4th year Electrician
- Community & Partnership – Neil MacGregor

We wish them all the best for the event that will take place at the Old Course Hotel on Friday 16th May.

ERA Foundation David Clark Prize 2025

Class teacher Tracey Ellicott has been awarded joint winner of the 2025 ERA Foundation David Clark prize for outstanding teaching in the field of engineering for Primary Schools.

In February 2024 East Wemyss Primary School opened their Makerspace Downunder using the designs created by the janitor at the time, Allan Baird. Tracey and Allan designed the space to make use of the unique features of the building and were supported by the Parent Council who gave their time and skills to transform the space into what it is today. Tracey formed partnerships with Levenmouth Academy, Metaflake, Ineos and Bright Green Energy who all supported them to create the stations that the children now benefit from to develop a range of skills across STEM.

Tracey shares her passion and skillset with colleagues, offering professional learning sessions and support with planning to build staff confidence and ensure the sustainability of teaching STEM skills in the school.

Civic Events

An Investiture was held on Thursday 1st May in Kirkcaldy Town House for the four Fife recipients of the British Empire Medal. The Lord-Lieutenant presented medals to:-

- Joyce Anderson, for services to schools and the community
- David Christie, for services to cricket and the community in Freuchie
- Barclay McIntosh, for services to advocacy and volunteering in Fife
- Diana Sykes, for services to visual arts and craft in Fife

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL (SPECIAL MEETING) – BLENDED MEETING

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

20 March 2025

10.00 am – 10.15 am

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Leishman (Provost), Tom Adams, David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, 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.

158. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

159. REVIEW OF SCHEME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The council considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services seeking approval to undertake a review of the Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils in accordance with the statutory framework.

Decision

The council:-

- (1) noted that a review of the Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils for Fife would be undertaken in accordance with section 53 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
- (2) noted that the proposed Scheme for Establishment would be based on the Improvement Service's Model Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils, as appropriately tailored for Fife's requirements; and
- (3) agreed to proceed with the consultation process set out within the indicative timeline at Appendix 1 of the report, delegated to the Head of

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Legal and Democratic Services to make any necessary minor amendments.

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?

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

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

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)

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.

- 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)

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

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. SCOTTS 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

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

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)

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

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

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

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

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:-

2025 FC 250

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Leader's Report

1. Pay

The pay offer to the SJC trade unions has been rejected and the unions have indicated that they will formally ballot their members on industrial action.

Most local authorities including Fife have budgeted for a 3% pay increase in line with the public pay policy set out by the Scottish Government. However the Scottish Government have now made a two year offer to NHS Agenda for Change staff of 4.25% in 2025/26 and 3.75% for 2026/27 with an inflation guarantee. The local government trade unions are understandably arguing that they should receive a similar offer.

The position taken by councils through COSLA is that local government itself cannot afford to increase its pay offer from its existing budgeted resources. It will therefore continue discussions with the trade unions on the basis of developing a single claim from all three unions and a possible approach to Scottish Government for additional top up funding for pay.

2. Transient Visitor Levy Consultation ("Tourist Tax")

Scottish Government have given Scottish local authorities the power to introduce a Transient Visitor Levy commonly known as a tourist tax to raise additional funding for tourist related investment or to offset the impact of tourism on local communities. Several authorities are currently proposing to introduce such a measure.

The Cabinet Committee at its meeting in April agreed to go ahead with the necessary analysis and consultation to be able to take an informed decision on whether or not such a levy should be introduced in Fife.

It has to be stressed that at this stage the Council has not taken a decision to introduce such a levy, despite some reports in the media, and we recognise there are pros and cons to such a measure and we will only make a decision on whether or not to introduce a levy after thorough investigation and consultation has taken place.

3. Power of General Competence

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on the possible introduction of a power of general competence for local government in Scotland. This power would allow local authorities to undertake actions in any area of work not specifically ruled out by legislation or the specific and exclusive duty of another public body, within the framework of current prudential regulations and best value.

This is something that COSLA on behalf of local government, has been supportive of in conjunction with the adoption of the European Charter of Local Self Government and it has submitted a strong response to the consultation.

This was considered by the Council's Cabinet Committee at its meeting in April and a similarly positive response to the consultation was agreed.

4. Plan for Fife Refresh

The Plan for Fife – Fife's Community Plan – is due to be refreshed to run from 2027 onwards. Fife Partnership will be discussing the process for developing the new plan at its meeting on 6th May prior to the Council meeting.

5. Anti-Social Behaviour Roundtable

Last week I hosted a roundtable discussion on anti-social behaviour in Fife along with the Fife Divisional Police Commander, including representatives from public agencies, the voluntary sector, the retail sector and bus operators.

There was a constructive exchange of views and experiences and an agreement to look in depth at what additional measures might be put in place to prevent and respond to anti-social behaviour.

6. Behaviour in Schools Summit

A meeting of Education staff, trade unions and elected members was organised by the Education Directorate at the end of March to discuss the issue of behaviour in schools and our current action to address this. This was a positive meeting that allowed the sharing of best practice and discussion of the Council's current approach to dealing with the issue. It was agreed that further sessions would be useful with this group to provide consistency.

7. Tay Cities Deal

The Tay Cities Deal has been delivering well against the original programme but approaching the half way point in the Deal the Joint Board has agreed to keep under review the remaining projects that have still to be delivered. All projects in which Fife is a partner are on schedule to be delivered and we will be engaging with local partners to consider whether Fife could benefit from additional funding through the Deal should any become available.

8. Better Homes Exhibition

The annual Better Homes Exhibition was held on the 27th March in the Rothes Halls, showcasing for our tenants the facilities that they will be receiving over the coming year as part of the housing improvement programme.

9. Scottish Enterprise

The Chief Executive and myself met with senior officer from Scottish Enterprise to discuss their participation in community planning partnerships. Some years ago, Scottish Enterprise withdrew participation in community planning partnerships to focus on more nationally strategic economic development. They are now undertaking a review of their approach to community planning through discussions with a number of CPPs.

Scottish Enterprise continue to have good relationships with Fife Council at officer level on some elements of economic development, but both parties felt there are opportunities for a closer working relationship through community planning. We were able to confirm to them that the Plan for Fife and a partnership approach are part of 'core business' in Fife and not something separate. They also appreciated that developing the locally economy is a key pillar of the Plan for Fife, which isn't the case with some other local authority community plans.

We will continue to build on this relationship and the opportunities it presents for assisting in the development of our local economy.

10. St Andrews Innovation

The Chief Executive and myself met with the Chief Executive of St Andrews Innovation and the Director of Eden Campus – part of St Andrews University dedicated to supporting enterprise and innovation – to discuss the organisation's future aspirations and how the Council is working in partnership with the University to encourage local economic development and innovation.

11. Accounts Commission

The Corporate Management Team and myself met with members of the Accounts Commission to discuss the recent Best Value Review undertaken for the Commission by Audit Scotland. Whilst recognising that the Review itself was fair and will be useful for the Council's improvement journey, we expressed our concerns about the tone of how the review was presented and reported, which failed to recognise the significant transformations that the Council has already implemented over a period of years.

It was a positive meeting with the Commission able to gain a wider perspective on transformation within the Council whilst we recognised the constraints of the audit process itself.

12. Courier Rebranding Event

I attended an event organised by the Courier newspaper presenting its new brand image – Local Stories Make Us – and setting out its approach to local news and current affairs. Whilst clearly as a major local media organisation covering the whole of the Fife, the Courier will continue to challenge and hold the council to account, there are many opportunities for positive engagement on local issues and events and this is something the Council should build on over the coming months and years.

13. Community Wealth Building

As a follow up to a recent event organised by the Economic Development Association Scotland on Community Wealth Building, the Council hosted a visit by a delegation of South Koreans from local government and research institutions to look in detail at Fife's approach to Community Wealth Building.

Our visitors found the visit very informative and we were able to learn a little about their approach in South Korea including innovative approaches such as issuing local currencies to encourage local spend.

Councillor David Ross
Leader of Fife Council
Fife House,
North Street,
Glenrothes
30th April 2025

FIFE COUNCIL

8 MAY 2025

ITEM 8 – QUESTION TIME

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?

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?

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?

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)?

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?

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?

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'.

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?

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?

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?

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.

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"?

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?

Question 14 from Councillor Dave Dempsey

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

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.

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?

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.

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?

Question 19 from Councillor Derek Glen

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

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?

Question 21 from Councillor Brian Goodall

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

Question 22 from Councillor Brian Goodall

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

Question 23 from Councillor Brian Goodall

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

Question 24 from Councillor Brian Goodall

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

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.

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.

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.

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

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)'?

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?

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?

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?

8 May 2025

Agenda Item No. 9

Proposed Changes to List of Committee Powers

Report by: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report proposes 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.

Recommendation(s)

Council is invited to:-

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

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

Legal & Risk Implications

The Council is obliged, in terms of local government legislation, to ensure that appropriate decision-making structures are in place.

Impact Assessment

A formal impact assessment is not required.

Consultation

The minor changes proposed are as a result of decisions by the Cabinet Committee on matters of policy. There has been no formal consultation undertaken in bringing these matters forward.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council's Governance Scheme comprises a number of documents, including Standing Orders, the List of Committee Powers and the List of Officer Powers. These documents are kept under regular review and changes have been made on occasion. Any substantive amendments must be approved at a meeting of the Council and minor changes as detailed in Section 1.3 below are now presented for approval.
- 1.2 Cabinet Committee can make policy decisions but any policy decision which has an impact on the Lists of Committee or Officer Powers must be agreed by full Council.
- 1.3 The changes proposed to the List of Committee Powers are:-
 - Cabinet Committee – Section 5.1.25 – Additional Power – to approve the creation of Short Term Let Control Zones.
 - Area Committees – Section 7.36 – Additional Powers – to recommend to Cabinet Committee the designation of a Short Term Let Control Zone and to decide on a street name where a unanimous decision cannot be made by ward members.

2.0 Conclusions

- 2.1 Council is invited to agree the minor amendments to the List of Committee Powers as set out in Section 1 of the report and agree that they are implemented with effect from Friday 9 May 2025.

List of Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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8 May 2025

Agenda Item No. 10

Fife Council Best Value Controller of Audit Report (CoA)

Report by: Ken Gourlay, Chief Executive

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

This report is to give members the opportunity to consider 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.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Fife Council:-

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

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications arising from the content of this report as actions proposed are included in existing work plans.

Legal & Risk Implications

There are no direct legal implications from the report. Risks will be managed and reported as required to the Council Executive Team.

Impact Assessment

Not required at this stage.

Consultation

The council supports the external audit team's work, responding to queries and providing evidence of the work we do. The Controller of Audit report was shared with officers for a factual check before being presented to the Accounts Commission for consideration. CET, Communities and Finance & Corporate Services leadership teams have contributed to this report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Best Value is monitored nationally through the annual audit programme and includes detailed work focusing on a consistent theme across all councils. The Best Value theme for 2022/23 was Leadership and the 2023/24 theme was Workforce Innovation. [Fife Council's Best Value Reports can be found in the performance section of fife.gov.uk](#)
- 1.2 Officers meet regularly with our external auditors, Azets, to answer queries, explain plans and provide evidence in relation to the audit programme. This is an ongoing process throughout the year. In the case of thematic reviews, auditors pose the organisation a series of questions, and the council provides a formal submission of responses and evidence – the process also involves group meetings and / or individual interviews with a selection of senior officers and members.
- 1.3 To strengthen our performance reporting, in line with audit recommendations from 2022/23, we have introduced an annual corporate self-assessment of best value. The first of these self-assessments was reported to the [Standards, Audit and Risk Committee on 30 September 2024](#).
- 1.4 The Council will now receive a Controller of Audit (CoA) Report, every five years, as part of Audit Scotland's programme. The report, designed to support accountability and transparency across local government, summarises all the external audit work conducted throughout the previous year, for review by the Accounts Commission. This method integrates Best Value audits with annual financial audits, ensuring continuous oversight and regular feedback on performance and governance.
- 1.5 This first CoA Report on Best Value for Fife Council draws on information collected through previous annual audits and thematic reviews from 2022/23 and 2023/24, as well as our corporate self-assessment. As it is an overview of previous audit work, the council is not involved in further discussions to help produce it. Officers received a draft report in January 2025 with a short window to check for factual accuracy.
- 1.6 The Accounts Commission considered Fife's CoA Report at their meeting on 6 February 2025 – it was presented by our external auditors, council representatives were only permitted to attend as observers. On 7 February commission representatives met council officers to relay findings and discuss reporting arrangements. After the full report was published on 25 February, the Controller of Audit came to Fife House on 2 April to meet council representatives and discuss the findings in more detail.

2.0 Response to CoA Findings and Report

- 2.1 The Controller of Audit Report is a fair summary of the annual audit work and recommendations from our external audit team. The findings are in keeping with our existing direction of travel and commitment to continuous improvement.
- 2.2 The findings highlight a number of challenges that are not unique to Fife. Public services are operating in difficult financial times, and the rising cost of living continues to significantly impact many of the citizens we serve. Poverty is entrenched in parts of our community leading to widening inequality gaps; pressure on health and social care services is escalating as our population ages; and there's an ongoing housing emergency. These are issues across Scotland and tackling them in Fife is at the heart of our plans as a council and with our community planning partners.

- 2.3 In recent years, Fife has operated under the same funding constraints as other councils. However, good financial management, combined with taking some decisions in year, for example, in relation to local taxes and asset rationalisation enabled us to balance the budget and avoid major cuts in services over recent years.
- 2.4 The report highlighted that significant levels of reserves were used during 2024/25. However, the use of reserves was planned for one off purposes in line with commitments agreed by the Cabinet Committee. Whilst the report identified that the level of reserves had dipped below the Council's policy minimum of 2% over a rolling three-year period, the position had been brought back in line with the policy after efforts were made to reduce overspends in year and after decommitting some plans. Council approved the budget for 2025/26 in February and, following decisions taken, the projected budget gap for 2027/8 reduced from £46m to £16m.
- 2.5 The findings highlight the need to develop clear plans for change and reform to address the challenges facing local government services. The Council has delivered significant programmes of change over the last 10 -15 years and these have played an important role in both addressing budget challenge and shaping the current organisation. While these were not part of the audit period looked at during this work, they do provide assurance that the Council has the capability and experience to address the challenges going forward and realise the reform ambitions set out in the Plan For Fife Recovery and Renewal Plan.
- 2.6 The next update on council-wide change plans will be reported to Cabinet Committee in June. In the meantime, we welcome the fact that the Accounts Commission recognises the strong foundations we have in place.

3.0 Next steps

- 3.1 The Council Executive Team (CET) has reviewed the Commission's findings and set out how these will be addressed. See Appendix 2.
- 3.2 Progress will be monitored by CET and reported to committee as part of our annual best value and performance review cycle.

List of Appendices

1. Appendix 1 – Fife Council Controller of Audit Best Value Report
2. Appendix 2 – Fife Council Controller of Audit Action Plan

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Best Value

Fife Council



ACCOUNTS COMMISSION 

Prepared by the Controller of Audit
February 2025

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You can find out more and read this report using assistive technology on our website www.audit.scot/accessibility.

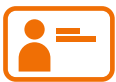
Key facts



512 Square miles



371,340 Population



Approximately
15,750 Workforce (FTE)



75 Elected members
19 Labour, 34 SNP, 13 Liberal Democrat,
8 Conservative & Unionist, 1 Independent
(Labour minority administration)



£46.5m Cumulative funding gap forecast for
three years to 2027/28



£1,024.4m Net revenue expenditure 2023/24



£242m Capital investment 2023/24

Commission findings

The Accounts Commission endorses the Controller of Audit's report on Best Value in Fife Council ([presented at page 6](#)) and the recommendations made by the auditors. Following consideration of these reports at its meeting on 6 February, the Commission has made the findings presented below:

- 1** Fife Council has demonstrated competent financial management over the years and has achieved a positive outturn position without having to make significant savings. But the council has reached a turning point and is now managing significant in-year pressures and forecasting a cumulative gap of £46.5 million by 2027/28. The Commission was particularly concerned about the following issues highlighted in the annual audit report:
 - The Fife Strategic Assessment shows that the region continues to face key challenges including worsening inequalities; and slowing performance improvement has been identified in areas such as children's services and adult social care despite limited savings.
 - There were large overspends in Fife's Integration Joint Board (IJB) in 2023/24 and the same is being projected for 2024/25 due to ongoing and increasing demand-driven spend.
 - The Housing Revenue Account is under pressure with urgent plans now required, in consultation with tenants, to meet financial gaps and enable future investment in much needed affordable housing.
 - Significant levels of reserves were utilised in 2023/24, and uncommitted general fund balances dipped below the council's rolling three-year target of two per cent.

These issues will continue to impact the council's finances, so it is now critical for its Medium-Term Financial Strategy to set out how it will respond.

- 2** The council is demonstrating awareness of these issues and the work it must do in partnership to address not only the ambitions in the 'Plan for Fife', but the immediate service pressures in areas like health and social care. All services are now preparing three-year change plans (due by end March 2025) focused on longer-term financial sustainability. The Commission regards these plans as especially important in providing clear evidence that the right leadership, culture

and capacity (including in relation to digital) are in place to significantly accelerate the scale and pace of delivering the transformation and change now required. The Commission expects the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy to be updated to take into account the impact of the change plans, and to provide transparency about future intended use of reserves.

- 3** The Commission is encouraged to see improvements in performance reporting arrangements in response to challenging audit recommendations in 2022/23. The next key step is robust evidence of how the council is using this improved reporting framework to drive continuous improvement. The council should evidence that its new change plans are having a positive impact on services performance and outcomes for communities.
 - 4** The Commission welcomes the minority party's leadership in fostering the joint arrangements required to make effective decisions. As well as a range of structures to support strong cross-party working, mandatory training has been developed for elected members to support their work on boards and committees. A range of tools and techniques are embedded to engage with communities, including area committees and well-established processes around community asset transfer, although further work is needed to encourage and support groups to manage assets in the most deprived areas. The council will need to ensure that these engagement structures support meaningful conversations between elected members and communities on the challenging fiscal reality, ensuring that they are equipped and able to take the tough decisions that lie ahead and implement the necessary service changes that have been delayed up until now.
 - 5** The council should be commended for innovative work in relation to its workforce, much of which is driven by recruitment, retention and capacity challenges. Its 'Life Chances' model (focused on employability and poverty reduction), apprenticeships, 'Grow your Own' schemes (in areas like environmental services), and a focus on flexible working and wellbeing are all initiatives that should be shared with other councils. While processes are in place for tracking implementation of its workforce strategy, the Commission expects evidence of regular reporting to be prioritised to measure the impact of initiatives and maintain a focus on continuous improvement.
-

Controller of Audit report

Introduction

1. This report is made by the Controller of Audit to the Accounts Commission under Section 102(1) of the amended Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. It is based on evidence collected in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 annual audits of the council, with the latter reported in September 2024. [Appendix 1](#) includes links to the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Annual Audit Reports (AAR) and [Appendix 2](#) includes a link to the Best Value Statutory Guidance.

2. The reporting of Best Value is undertaken through the annual audit of each council and includes detailed work focusing on a Scotland-wide theme. The Best Value theme for 2022/23 was councils' leadership of the development of new local strategic priorities while the 2023/24 theme focused on workforce innovation.

Pace of continuous improvement

3. Fife Council (the council) shows a commitment to Best Value principles, although the pace and depth of improvement has been difficult to assess due to a period of significant change which has included:

- a review of the council's organisational structure
- refresh of the Plan for Fife 2024-2027
- development of three-year service change plans
- a review of decentralisation and area committee roles
- a review of the approach to elected member training and development.

4. All initiatives were completed in 2023/24 except for work on service change plans, something which had been the subject of a recommendation in the [Best Value Assurance Report \(BVAR\) in 2018 \(paragraph 7\)](#).

5. The council now needs to focus on delivery of improvement and ongoing change necessary for the realisation of its priorities and the sustainability of its services. Effective financial management and scrutiny will be increasingly important as will greater transparency around the way the council plans to use reserves, make savings and transform services.

Best Value Assurance Report follow-up

- 6.** There has been ongoing management activity to address outstanding recommendations from the 2018 BVAR. One recommendation, relating to the roll out of the education attainment improvement methodology, was marked as complete in 2022/23, and another relating to delivery board plans was marked as complete in 2023/24.
- 7.** Progress has been made with the two remaining recommendations relating to the redesign of health and social care, and the development of service level plans. The transformation of health and social care is a key priority for the council. The council has moved to a three-year planning horizon to help ensure service change programme initiatives focus on redesign and transformation. Directorate and service visions have been developed and work is under way to identify the change required to make those visions a reality. The council aims to have agreed and settled change plans in place by the end of March 2025.

Leadership

- 8.** The local government elections held in May 2022 resulted in a change in council leadership from a joint administration to a minority Labour administration with Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative councillors voting together to introduce a cabinet style governance approach.
- 9.** A new chief executive was appointed in July 2023 and changes were also made to the council's organisation structure and senior leadership team. A new Place Directorate was established, the Education and Children's Services Directorate was remodelled to establish a focused Education Directorate and a 'reset' Communities Directorate, including Children's Services and Criminal Justice.
- 10.** Each council directorate is headed by an executive director who, together with the chief executive and the director of health and social care, collectively form the Council Executive Team (CET). The CET is supported by a senior leadership team which is a mature team comprising officers with many years of experience, who are skilled leaders and professionals.
- 11.** The council has committed within its Annual Governance Statement to further develop the leadership skills and capacity of officers during 2024/25 to ensure there is effective leadership to respond successfully to changing demands and risks.
- 12.** A revised approach to member development, including mandatory training was agreed. This focused on extending requirements to complete relevant training before sitting on relevant board/committees, and the scope of training areas designated as mandatory. The auditor concluded that the revised approach provides elected members with the information and platform to continue to discharge their responsibilities effectively.

13. Effective working relationships continue to exist between senior officers and elected members with positions of responsibility. Various structures promote collaborative working including a formal area committee work programme, ward meetings, elected member workshops, development of Local Community Plans, and directing spend of decentralised budgets.

14. In 2022/23, the auditor concluded that the council has in place appropriate arrangements to demonstrate best value in each of the areas covered by the 2022/23 Best Value thematic report on leadership.

15. There has been continuity of the vision for 'A Fairer Fife' throughout the period of change at the council, with a commitment from members and officers to the existing Plan for Fife (the combined Community Planning Partnership and council Local Outcomes Improvement Plan).

16. Recovery and renewal priorities in the Plan for Fife include reducing inequality and addressing climate change. Methods for consulting and involving citizens were found to be appropriate.

Community engagement

17. The council has embedded a culture of community engagement where engagement is a continuous process within services instead of being used for specific consultation purposes only. The council gives citizens a greater say in budgeting through participatory budgeting and has developed consultation and participation tools including a Local Development Plan, Place Plans and a Fife People's Panel.

18. The council has a robust and well-established policy framework in place to support community asset transfers (CATs) and 12 assets to date have been transferred. The 2023/24 annual report showed that two community asset transfers were successful in the year. The council has recognised that further work is required to encourage and support community groups to manage and own assets through CATs.

Effectiveness of performance reporting

19. In 2022/23, the auditor made recommendations for the improvement of performance reporting to ensure fuller compliance with statutory requirements and to better demonstrate the pace and depth of improvement at the council.

20. The council undertook significant work to strengthen performance reporting in 2023/24. An annual Best Value self-assessment was introduced setting out how the council is delivering on its Best Value responsibilities, further detail is provided in [paragraph 26](#). Improvements were also made to the presentation and availability of performance information for internal management and external publication.

21. The council intends to further develop the performance information made available online with a focus on improving the way plans, performance, project delivery, evidence of impact, and community news are linked.

22. The auditor is now satisfied that the council has made proper arrangements for preparing and publishing statutory performance information although the success of recent changes cannot be fully evaluated until a full cycle of service annual reporting has been completed.

Reported performance

23. The council undertakes a 'Fife Strategic Assessment' every three years. The assessment tracks nine performance indicators that are intended to provoke discussion on whether the council is doing the right things and approaching them in the right way. The August 2024 report shows the trends and the gap between most and least deprived areas worsening for almost all outcomes tracked, including life expectancy and school attainment.

24. The Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) data available for the council shows that around 60 per cent of the indicators have improved over time (indicator base year to December 2024). However, for key service areas such as children's services and adult social work the proportion of indicators showing improvement is much lower at 50 per cent and 27 per cent respectively. Only around 20 per cent of indicators for these service areas are above average.

25. The council has identified that in overall terms around 40 per cent of LGBF indicators have improved, relative to the family group and Scotland averages with:

- Signs of slowing improvement in aspects of finance, children's services and adult social care, but that these are in line with national trends and increased pressure/demand. Other declines in relation to child poverty, education, business start-ups and recycling, for example, are being explored further alongside other data/assessments.
- Areas where performance has improved and/or are performing better than the Scotland average. These include aspects of financial sustainability, economic development, procurement, housing management and climate change.

26. The council's new annual corporate Best Value self-assessment includes 16 Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) which help to assess how well the council is doing in delivering best value. The BVPs are drawn from a range of best value themes including workforce, asset management, financial management, equalities, customer responsiveness, digital and climate. Assessing performance against target for 2023/24 shows nine of the core set of 16 best value indicators have a green RAG status, three are amber and four are red.

Workforce planning to deliver the council's vision

27. The Best Value thematic review of workforce innovation in 2023/24 found that the council works collaboratively with partners and has appropriate arrangements in place for building future capacity. A range of innovative schemes and initiatives have been developed across services to help produce a resilient workforce.

28. The council has a clear and comprehensive workforce strategy 'Our People Matter 2022-2025' (OPM) which supports the achievement of the Plan for Fife. Following the refresh of the Plan for Fife in 2023/24, work has started on the refresh of Our People Matter 2025-2028 and this was reported to Cabinet Committee in September 2024.

29. The refreshed OPM will reflect latest challenges facing the council and already incorporated in three-year budgets and the medium-term financial strategy. The refresh of the strategy will include development of a Corporate People Plan (to supplement service plans) to clearly set out the actions that are required to be taken at a corporate level to address the current and future gaps in workforce capacity and capability.

30. Appropriate arrangements are in place to enable the delivery of the council's digital strategy. However, work is still required in developing the leadership and culture of the organisation which will drive digital change and progress. A key challenge for the council is the creation of capacity within its workforce to enable the review, exploration and development of digital opportunities. If the council is to fully exploit and explore new opportunities, particularly in the emergence of data-driven approaches and AI and automation, this needs to be addressed.

31. There is a well-established blended office and home working approach with a strong culture of support for employee wellbeing and a team focus. However, most services operate through front-line staff for whom a blended working approach is not currently possible. The council intends to explore flexible working opportunities for front-line staff and develop productivity measures for each of the council's workstyles.

32. The council has developed a suite of performance indicators which directly link to the success measures within the OPM strategy, and which are reported in the OPM annual reports. Auditors have recommended that the council reviews the timeliness of workforce performance reporting, and a delayed report was considered by the Cabinet Committee on 12 September 2024.

Financial management and sustainability

33. There is a three-year approach to budget-setting and the council has a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which is regularly updated. In recent years the council has managed its budget without needing to make significant savings. The auditors concluded that the council has appropriate arrangements in place for financial management and the use of resources.

34. The use of one-off financial flexibilities and the receipt of additional non-recurring Scottish Government funding in 2022/23 enabled a contribution of £26.6 million to usable reserves. The overall usable reserves increased to £238.7 million at 31 March 2023. Significant levels of reserves were utilised in 2023/24 with overall usable reserves declining by £57.4 million to £181.3 million.

35. The uncommitted general fund balance at the end of 2023/24 was £13.6 million. This represents 1.3 per cent of budgeted net revenue expenditure which is below the council's rolling three-year target of two per cent. Key financial information is shown for recent years in [Exhibit 1](#).

Exhibit 1

Fife Council – key financial information

Budget-setting	2022/23 (£m)	2023/24 (£m)	2024/25 (£m)
Budget gap	1.5	11.5	8.2
Planned to be met via:			
• Savings/increase in fees and charges	-	-	0.8
• Use of reserves	0	1.6	0
• Council tax increase & additional funding	5.2 (3%)	11.1 (5%)	9.3
• Available for investment	(3.7)	(1.2)	(1.9)
Reserves position at year end			
Total usable reserves carried forward	238.7	181.3	Forecast
Of which: General fund	216.1	157.3	105.5
Uncommitted general fund balance	37	13.6	11.8

Source: Fife Council committee papers and accounts

36. There was no planned use of reserves to close a budget gap for 2024/25 when the budget was set, but recognition of a significant balance of earmarked reserves. Investment decisions made at that time were met from in year funding and the use of reserves. The expected use of earmarked and committed reserves is reported separately.

37. Since the 2024/25 budget was set, the council have encountered increased financial pressures and an overspend against service budgets is forecast. At the time the auditors reported in September 2024, a general fund overspend of £16.7 million was forecast. A proposal to de-commit balances was presented to Cabinet in September 2024 and executive directors were tasked to plan and implement corrective/mitigating actions to bring costs down to a more sustainable level in 2024/25.

38. The latest budget monitoring report in January 2025 shows an improved forecast with general fund overspend reducing to £10.7 million for 2024/25. The report also provides an update on the planned and agreed use of committed and earmarked reserves which is forecast to be £41.2 million for 2024/25. This would leave the overall general fund balance at £105.5 million with the uncommitted balance at £5.6 million. The council agreed to decommit £6.2 million of earmarked reserves in order to increase the uncommitted balances to £11.8 million, closer to the policy minimum.

39. Health and social care is a service area under particular pressure, having overspent significantly in 2023/24 and with the council's allocation of the Health and Social Care Partnership's forecast overspend in excess of £11 million for 2024/25. The council recognise that a partnership approach is required to mitigate the level of financial risk emerging, and monthly meetings with senior finance staff across the partnership have been implemented to allow for greater scrutiny of financial controls, financial management and any further significant movements in budget.

40. The council's MTFs, updated in September 2024, reported an indicative budget gap of £16.8 million for 2025/26, rising to a cumulative £30.6 million for 2026/27 and £46.5 million for 2027/28.

41. The council acknowledges that the use of reserves to close budget gaps is not sustainable, and that significant change and difficult decisions will need to be made. As set out in [paragraph 7](#) work is ongoing to bring forward change proposals. The council will need to ensure that it has mechanisms in place to enable these difficult decisions to be made.

Housing Revenue Account

42. The council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the account used to record landlord costs for council housing, remains under financial pressure with £2.1 million of reserves utilised in 2023/24. The closing balance on the HRA (which forms part of the general fund and total usable reserves in [Exhibit 1](#)) reduced to £5.3 million at 31 March 2024 following planned and agreed use of reserves.

43. Increased cost pressures on the HRA also resulted in a reduced contribution from revenue to support the capital programme for the second year in a row. If this pattern continues, then borrowing will increase further which could impact affordability of the HRA capital programme in the longer term.

Delivery of the capital programme

44. The council has developed a Capital Strategy and has a ten-year rolling capital programme that is reviewed every two years. The Capital Investment Plan 2023-33 was approved by the council in June 2023 and work has begun on a review of the Capital Strategy which will ensure it is in line with the refreshed Plan for Fife.

45. The council's capital investment plan is ambitious with increased investment in recent years. However, slippage in the delivery of the capital programme has also increased to £89 million, or 27 per cent of planned investment, in 2023/24. Slippage is particularly high in relation to affordable housing programmes, due to inflation and cost increases, resulting in delays in project start dates of some large projects.

46. The council is compliant with applicable regulations and codes relating to capital investment and treasury management and is aware of the potential affordability challenges which may arise in future years if costs continue to rise ahead of funding.

Appendix 1

2022/23 and 2023/24 Annual Audit Reports

These reports summarise the findings from the 2022/23 and 2023/24 annual audits of Fife Council.

Each Annual Audit Report comprises:

- significant matters arising from the audit of the council's Annual Accounts
- conclusions on the council's performance in meeting its Best Value duties
- conclusions on the following wider scope areas that frame public audit as set out in the Code of Audit Practice 2021:
 - Financial management
 - Financial sustainability
 - Vision, leadership and governance
 - Use of resources to improve outcomes.



2022/23 Annual Audit Report Fife Council November 2023



2023/24 Annual Audit Report Fife Council September 2024



Appendix 2

Best Value Statutory Guidance

The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 introduced a statutory framework for Best Value for local authorities. The Best Value duties set out in the Act are:

- to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance (while maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost); and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance, to have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirement and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- to achieve break-even trading accounts, subject to mandatory disclosure
- to observe proper accounting practices
- to make arrangements for the reporting to the public of the outcome of the performance of functions.

Best Value

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FIFE COUNCIL BEST VALUE

Response to Accounts Commission's Findings on Fife Council's Best Value Report: May 2025

Findings - 1	Response	Scrutiny	Leadership	Timing
Inequality gaps are widening in Fife and performance improvement has slowed in areas such as children's services and adult social care	<p>Action on the social determinants of health requires a partnership approach. The Plan for Fife 2027 design group will look at how partners can work more effectively together to address inequalities as part of a whole systems approach.</p>	<p>Fife Partnership Board</p> <p>Annual report on State of Fife (SoF) Indicators</p> <p>Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF)</p> <p>Annual Service Review Reports to Scrutiny Committees</p>	<p>CET</p> <p>Plan for Fife Leadership Board</p>	<p>Ongoing, with Annual Reviews</p>
	<p>The H&SCP Strategic Plan for Fife, supported with its annual delivery plans, provides a framework for the planned programme of work and outlines the expected improvement outcomes.</p>	<p>Annual Report - Integrated Joint Board</p> <p>Performance Overview Report – Integrated Joint Board</p>	<p>Director H&SCP</p>	<p>Ongoing, with regular monitoring, and annual reviews</p>
	<p>The monitoring of children's services performance reporting is conducted on a regular basis, with detailed reports presented to committee for review. These reports provide valuable insights into service effectiveness, key performance indicators, areas for improvement, and overall impact on children and families.</p>	<p>Annual Report – Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Head of Children & Families and Criminal Justice</p>	<p>Ongoing, with regular monitoring and annual reviews</p>
Large overspends in Fife's Integration Joint Board	<p>Regular tripartite meetings at Director of Finance Chair and CEO level have been held 4-weekly over the year. The frequency increased</p>	<p>Dashboard reporting has progressed and reporting from new controccc system is in use</p>	<p>Finance H&SCP</p>	<p>Monthly reviews and ongoing scrutiny</p>

(IJB) in 2023/24 also projected for 2024/25 due to demand-driven spend	given the financial position. During these meetings a focus on the savings and their deliverability has been a priority. An escalation tool has been developed showing 'what the budget buys' versus current commitments, these volatile budgets are subject to further scrutiny.	– reducing reliance on spreadsheets and human error Regular scrutiny panels reviewing all expenditure commissioned		
The Housing Revenue Account is under pressure -plans are required, in consultation with tenants, to meet financial gaps and enable future investment in affordable housing	Housing and Finance complete an annual HRA 30-year Business Plan review.	Housing Management Executive & Cabinet Committee	Finance Housing	October 2025
	Annual business efficiency reviews are undertaken by the Housing Service Managers to reduce costs and increase the HRA CFCR capacity.	Housing Management Executive & Cabinet Committee	Housing & Finance	Continual process
	Tenant Participation on annual rent increase to increase the capacity in the HRA to continue to deliver services and borrow to invest in new and existing housing stock.	Housing Services & Cabinet Committee	Housing	Annual Rent Conference in November 2025
	Exercise strong financial management and financial control	Housing Services/Property Services/FHAA & Cabinet Committee Regular discussions are held between the Council, Scottish Government and the Fife Housing Association Alliance to prioritise housing projects.	Housing	Quarterly meetings

		Housing Management Executive & Cabinet Committee.	Housing	Continual process
Significant levels of reserves were used in 2023/24, and uncommitted general fund balances dipped below the council's rolling three-year target of two per cent	<p>Planned use of reserves with a value of £62.6m included commitments in relation to COVID-19, planned Capital Investment, draw down of specific grant funding, devolved school management.</p> <p>A report to Cabinet Committee in March 2025 reported estimate uncommitted balances of £23m, which is above the policy minimum.</p>	Reserves are kept under continual review by the Section 95 Officer and reported quarterly to Cabinet Committee	Finance	Ongoing, with regular reporting
The council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy must set out how the council will respond to ongoing issues	Reports outlining future budget gaps are routinely presented to Cabinet committee. These reports set out some scenarios and outline the approach to balancing the budget.	Regular reviews and updates regarding the budget to CET and Cabinet Committee	Finance	Normally two reports to Cabinet Committee per year, unless circumstances or events dictate additional reports
Findings - 2	Response	Scrutiny	Leadership	Timing

<p>Three-year service change plans (due by end March 2025) are important to evidence that the transformation and change required can be delivered at accelerated pace</p> <p>The council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy should be updated to take into account the impact of three-year service change plans, and provide transparency about future intended use of reserves</p>	Service Change Plans complete as at end of March 2025.	CET Reform Board	Services Change & Improvement Finance	March 2025
	<p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is a set of guiding principles for financial planning and does not need updated to reflect services change plans.</p> <p>Transparency about intended use of reserves is delivered through quarterly reporting to Cabinet Committee with the estimates and forecasts being updated regularly.</p>	Cabinet Committee	Finance	Ongoing
Findings - 3	Response	Scrutiny	Leadership	Timing
<p>The next key step in performance improvement is robust evidence of how the council is using its improved performance reporting</p>	<p>Further development of an integrated planning and performance framework in 2025/26. Embed the framework within the Service</p>	<p>CET Cabinet Committee</p> <p>Scrutiny Committees</p>	<p>CET Policy & Communications</p>	<p>Annually - Autumn</p>

<p>framework to drive continuous improvement</p> <p>The council should evidence that its new change plans are having a positive impact on services performance and outcomes for communities.</p>	<p>Annual Review Reports.</p> <p>Performance monitoring and reporting will continue to evolve online, internally and to elected members and the public.</p>			
Findings - 4	Response	Scrutiny	Leadership	Timing
<p>Further work is needed to encourage and support groups to manage assets in the most deprived areas</p> <p>The council will need to ensure engagement structures support meaningful conversations between elected members and communities on the challenging fiscal reality, ensuring that they are equipped and able to take the tough decisions that</p>	<p>Proactive Community Asset Transfer (CAT), leases, and Common Good dialogue with communities and elected members.</p> <p>Further development of community engagement strategy and the online engagement tool, Citizen Space.</p>	<p>CAT progress monitored via Communities Directorate Management Team</p> <p>Cabinet Committee</p> <p>Area Committees</p>	<p>Communities & Neighbourhoods Service</p>	<p>Ongoing, with regular reviews</p>

lie ahead and implement the necessary service changes that have been delayed up until now				
Findings - 5	Response	Scrutiny	Leadership	Timing
Evidence of regular reporting on the council's workforce strategy should be prioritised to measure the impact of initiatives and maintain a focus on continuous improvement	A report is delivered annually to both the Council Executive Team (CET, senior council officers) via the Reform Board in May and to the Cabinet Committee (including elected members) in June.	CET Cabinet Committee	HR Service	Annually May June

8 May 2025

Agenda Item No. 11

Notice of Motions

Report by: Head of Legal & Democratic Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

In terms of Standing Order No. 10, the attached notice of motions have been submitted.

Recommendation(s)

Council is asked to consider the motions.

Resource Implications

Not applicable.

Legal & Risk Implications

Not applicable.

Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

Consultation

Not applicable.

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Motion 1

“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.”

Proposed by Councillor Louise Kennedy-Dalby
Seconded by Councillor Bailey-Lee Robb

Motion 2

“Council:-

- 1) 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.
- 2) Agrees that the Environment., Transportation and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee receive a report that:-
 - a. Summarises the Council’s policy and procedures for managing its own trees, hedges and woodland; and
 - b. Describes the use to date of the Council’s powers under the High Hedges (Scotland) Act 2013.”

Proposed by Councillor Dave Dempsey
Seconded by Councillor Peter Gulline

Motion 3

Young Carers Leads in Fife’s Schools

“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 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."

Proposed by Councillor Aude Boubaker-Calder
Seconded by Councillor John Caffrey

Motion 4

"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:

- 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."

Proposed by Councillor Kathleen Leslie
Seconded by Councillor Darren Watt