

21 November 2024

Agenda Item No.

---

## **BUSINESS & EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES – ANNUAL SERVICE REVIEW REPORT 2023/2024**

---

**Report by:** Carol Connolly, Executive Director, Place.

---

Wards Affected: N/A

---

### **Purpose**

To present an overview of the Service, detail the service planning, change and improvement work undertaken in 2023/24 and to provide an assessment of performance to inform scrutiny and future service planning.

### **Recommendation(s)**

---

The scrutiny committee is asked to:

- consider and comment on the remodelled 'annual service review' report format and related products
- review the progress and performance of Business & Employability Services for 2023/24 and the activity undertaken in 2024/25 to date
- note the Service planning objectives for 2024/25 and the three-year direction of travel.

### **Resource Implications**

---

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

### **Legal & Risk Implications**

---

There are risks in not meeting Best Value requirements that can lead to additional monitoring/audit, external intervention and/or loss of public confidence.

### **Impact Assessment**

---

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

### **Consultation**

---

Consultation is not required as the report does not propose a change to existing policies and practices.

## 1.0 Purpose of this report

---

1.1 This is the Business & Employability Services Annual Review for 2023-24. It looks back over the previous year and assesses how the Service has performed in relation to its priorities and challenges and looks forward to the changes and improvements that need to be considered next and the Service's priorities for the next 12 months.

1.2 In the report you will find:

- An overview of the Service's roles and responsibilities;
- Budget and workforce information to put service delivery into context;
- The key priorities the Service has been working to and how these relate to the Plan for Fife and council reforms;
- An assessment of how the Service has performed in relation to these priorities;
- Objectives and themes for Service delivery, change, and/or improvement going forward; and
- Case studies showing examples of best practice and Service improvement.

This information is then used to inform annual service planning and the strategic direction of the Service over the next three years.

1.3 This approach to annual review and reporting is part of the Council's updated public performance reporting and scrutiny arrangements. More information on that and how the Council performs and compares with other local authorities can be found online here [www.fife.gov.uk/performance](http://www.fife.gov.uk/performance)

1.4 Performance information and related case studies for Business and Employability Services will be available online. [www.fife.gov.uk/performance](http://www.fife.gov.uk/performance)

## 2.0 Service Overview

---

### Key role and responsibilities 2023/24

2.1 Business and Employability Services is part of the Place Directorate and its key role is to lead delivery of Fife's Economic Strategy 2023-30, delivering interventions which help grow a stronger, greener and fairer economy for Fife.

2.2 The Service has the following specific responsibilities:

- **Supporting businesses** - delivering interventions which help businesses start-up and grow, including through support to specific sectors and the management of Fife Council's Business Gateway contract.
- **Creating thriving places** by investing in business premises and infrastructure, improving Fife's built and natural heritage and developing and promoting Fife as a tourism destination.
- **Increasing skills, training and fair work** by delivering employability initiatives to help clients in disadvantaged groups and local communities into jobs, particularly targeting young people and the long term unemployed.
- **Managing Fife's engagement in regional economic partnerships** including City Region Deals and associated strategic growth projects.

## Budget breakdown 2023/24

2.3 The Service's budget is set out in Table 1 below. It relies on external income – revenue and capital funding - to fund its activities. Some funding is awarded as an allocation, some through a competitive bidding process; most tends to be for one year with limited capacity for carry-over into the following financial year. UK Government funding was secured from the Levelling Up and Shared Prosperity Funds; Scottish Government funding from the Place Based Investment, Vacant & Derelict Land and City Region Deal funds. Much of this income is then distributed to other council services or to third party organisations.

**Table 1: Business & Employability Service Budget**

	Net Expenditure by Business Area 23/24 £m	Provisional Outturn 23/24 £m	Variance 23/24 £m	Budgeted FTE by Business Area 23/24 FTE
Business & Employability	7.510	7.595	0.084	132.49
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>7.510</b>	<b>7.595</b>	<b>0.084</b>	<b>132.49</b>
	Gross Expenditure 23/24 £m	Provisional Outturn 23/24 £m	Variance 23/24 £m	
Employee Costs	7.834	8.687	0.853	
Premises related expenditure	1.276	1.371	0.095	
Transport Related Expenditure	0.070	0.103	0.033	
Supplies and Services	3.924	3.744	-0.179	
Third Party Payments	7.827	6.478	-1.350	
Transfer Payments	2.145	1.769	-0.376	
Support Services Charges	0.021	0.074	0.053	
	<b>23.097</b>	<b>22.225</b>	<b>-0.872</b>	
	Gross Income 23/24 £m	Provisional Outturn 23/24 £m	Variance 23/24 £m	
Internal Income	-0.561	-1.314	-0.753	
External Income	-15.026	-13.316	1.709	
	<b>-15.587</b>	<b>-14.630</b>	<b>0.957</b>	

2.4 Funding for Fife's UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan ends in March 2025. The UK Government announced in the Autumn Budget that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to continue for another year at 60% of 2024/25 levels. Funding from the Levelling Up Fund for the River Regeneration Projects in Levenmouth and Glenrothes is to continue to March 2026, but the provisional allocation to Dunfermline for culture projects is likely to be withdrawn. A decision on the UK Government's plans to replace the two funds (that in turn replaced the former EU Structural Funds) is expected in Spring 2025. Any reductions in investment from these funds will impact several economic development and employability programmes delivered by the Service and third sector partners. In

2024/25 approximately 50% of employability programmes delivered through the Opportunities Fife Commissioning Framework and economic development activity delivered by Business Gateway Fife or directly by the council is funded by UK Shared Prosperity Funding.

## Workforce profile 2023/24

2.5 The Service has a headcount of 183 people (around 132.49 full-time equivalent posts) located in three teams as shown below:

- 28 posts in Place, Programmes & Policies
- 129 in Employability & Employer Engagement
- 26 in Economic Development.

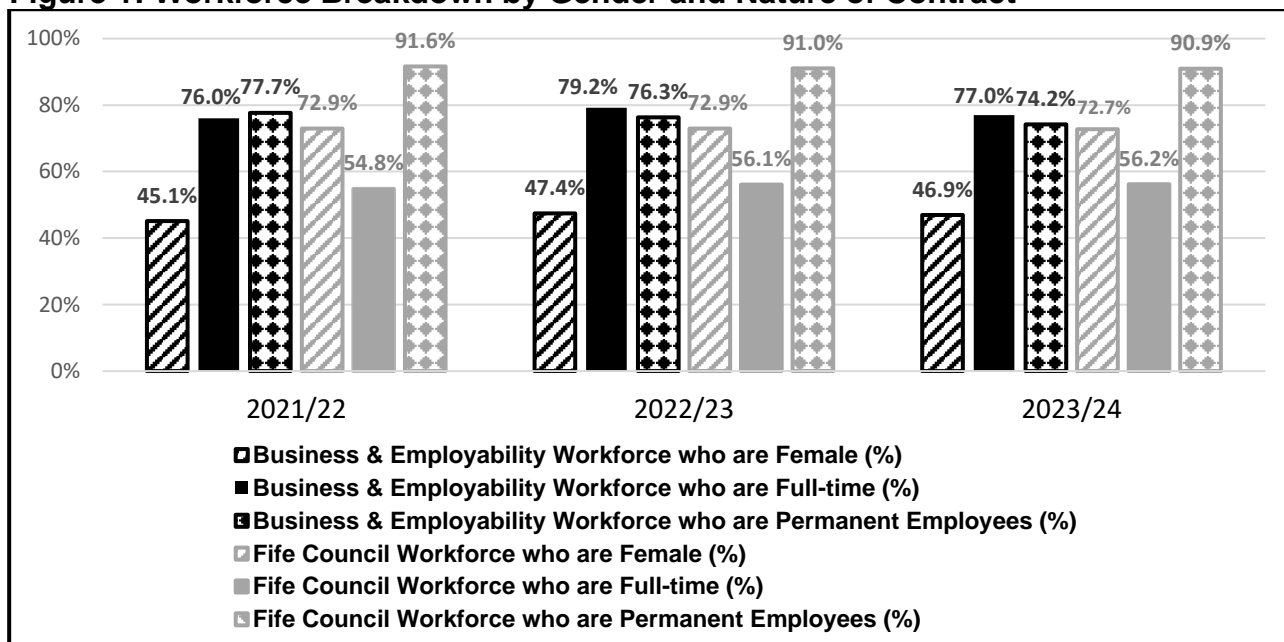
2.6 Figures 1 and 2 below detail some of the key characteristics of the Service's workforce.

### Gender Balance and Nature of Contract

2.7 The Service has a smaller proportion of its workforce who are female (46.9% compared to 72.7% of the council's workforce).

2.8 Only 74.2% of its workforce are on permanent contracts compared with 90.9% council wide. 57 roles in the Employability programme delivery team are on temporary contracts.

**Figure 1: Workforce Breakdown by Gender and Nature of Contract**



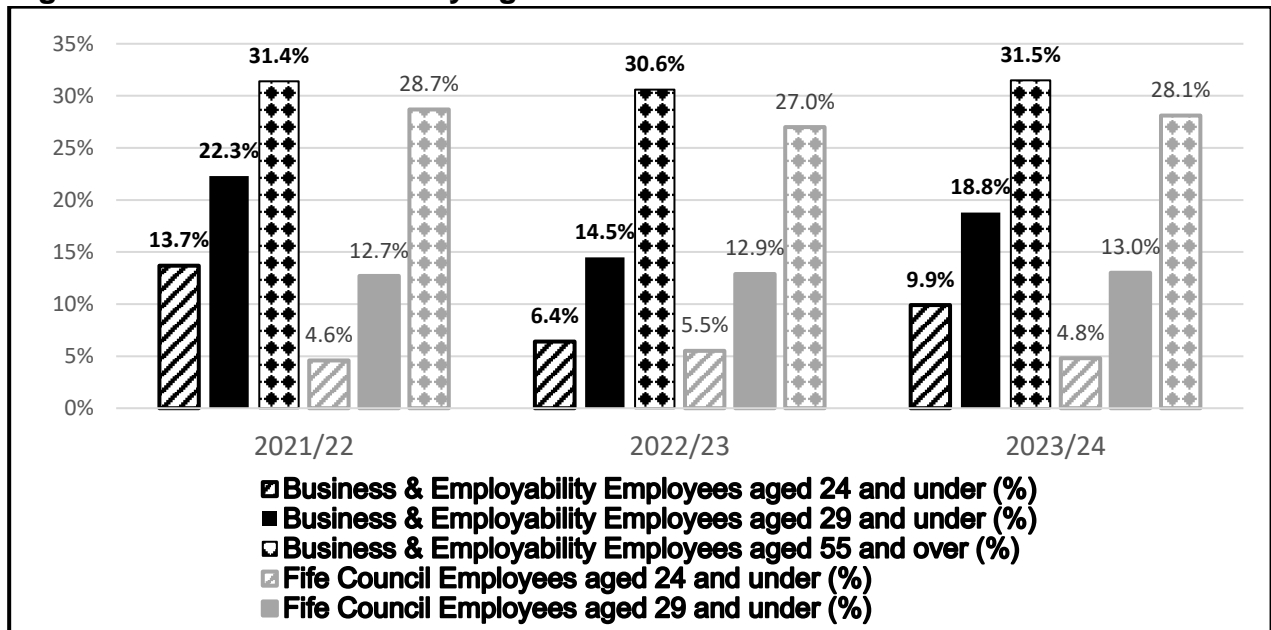
### Age Profile

2.9 Although the Service has a significant proportion of older workers, with nearly a third (31.5%) aged 55 or over, a higher proportion (18.8%) is under the age of 30 (compared with 13.0% council-wide). This is a result of succession planning carried out by the Service. Coaching and mentoring are also used to mitigate the risk of a capability gap arising from the loss of experience, relationships and networks when older workers retire.

2.10 The Service prioritises ongoing development to enhance skills and experience, particularly focusing on cultivating a young workforce and building project management capabilities.

2.11 Recruitment of qualified staff can be difficult for specific technical roles but other vacancies receive healthy levels of interest. The use of peer-to-peer networking to highlight opportunities helps promote vacancies.

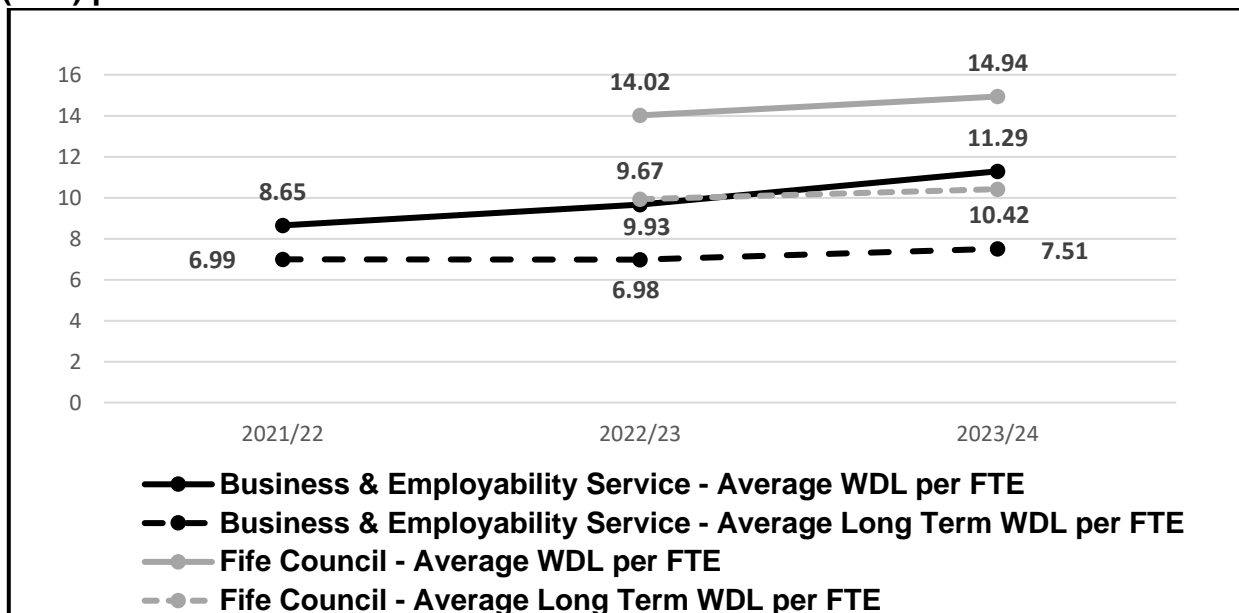
**Figure 2: Workforce Profile by Age**



**Staff Absences**

2.12 Although managing absences creates pressure in the teams impacted, the Service’s absence levels are lower than those for the council as a whole and long-term absence levels have been fairly stable over the past 3 years as shown in Figure 3. Absences tend to reflect major life events impacting individuals rather than a Service-wide pattern of significant absences.

**Figure 3: Average Number of Working Days Lost (WDL) per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) post**



## 3.0 Priorities and Performance

---

### 3.1 Service Priorities 2023/24

3.1.1 The Service realigned its priorities to match those set out in the new Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030, namely to:

1. **Support Local Businesses**
2. **Create Thriving Places**
3. **Deliver Skills, Training and Fair Employment**
4. **Work in Collaboration and Partnership.**

3.1.2 Fife's Economic Strategy also committed the Service to taking a **Community Wealth Building** approach to maximise the local impacts of investment in projects and programmes and to making sure that its interventions support the council's commitment to **tackling climate change**.

### 3.2 How we delivered

#### 3.2.1

##### Priority 1: Supporting Local Businesses

##### What we said

We would focus on:

- supporting new business start-ups and their early survival
- helping small and medium-sized local businesses to grow
- helping businesses accelerate their transition to net zero emissions and adopt digital technologies
- developing and strengthening local supply chains and optimise the level of public sector expenditure retained within Fife's economy.

##### What we achieved

##### Supporting new business start-ups and their early survival

Business Gateway Fife supported a total of 614 new business start-ups which created an estimated 812 new jobs (see separate Business Gateway Fife Performance Report).

##### Helping small and medium-sized local businesses to grow

A total of 668 Fife businesses were supported by the Service's economic development and employability activities. Whilst this was fewer than the previous year (852), more instances of support were given (1,249 compared with 1,014 in 2022/23).

The Economic Development team supported 273 businesses to attend and exhibit at 63 major trade shows, events and workshops.

A Skills & Training Needs in Fife survey was carried out with Fife College in February 2024 to help align the training provision on offer with the evolving needs of businesses.

Funding from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund was used to deliver a SME (Small & Medium-Sized Enterprises) Development Grants Scheme aimed at supporting

the growth ambitions of local businesses. To date 111 grants have been approved amounting to £256k.

Tailored support given to Fife's key sectors included:

- A free business support programme delivered in response to the specific challenges faced by town centre and independent retail businesses.
- Support provided in partnership with Fife College and the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland to advanced manufacturing businesses.
- Support for the first Fife Food & Drink Week held in March 2024.
- A survey of farmers examining the demand for an abattoir in Fife.

### **Helping businesses accelerate their transition to net zero emissions and adopt digital technologies**

Funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other sources was used to provide a Business Efficiency Grant Scheme providing businesses with grants of up to £20k to support net zero and digital development ambitions. When the fund closed in April 2024 105 grants totalling £1.284m had been approved.

### **Developing and strengthening local supply chains and optimising the level of public sector expenditure retained within Fife's economy**

Economic Development's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Fife Business Week in November 2023 included a Meet the Buyer event featuring a 'Construction Zone' bringing together key construction-related business and a 'What the Forth Green Freeport Means for Fife' session.

In September 2023 an inaugural 'Fit for Defence Programme' was delivered in partnership with Make UK Defence, providing targeted support to eight Fife-based businesses.

A new 'Build Fife Programme' ran for the first time over 8-weeks in February and March 2024. Delivered in partnership with Hub East Central Scotland and Tier 1 construction contractors, the programme provided 12 companies with skills and knowledge for trading in the construction sector.

The Alibaba Trade programme also ran for the first time in early 2024, giving six Fife businesses the opportunity to engage with Alibaba, the world's largest business-to-business e-commerce platform.

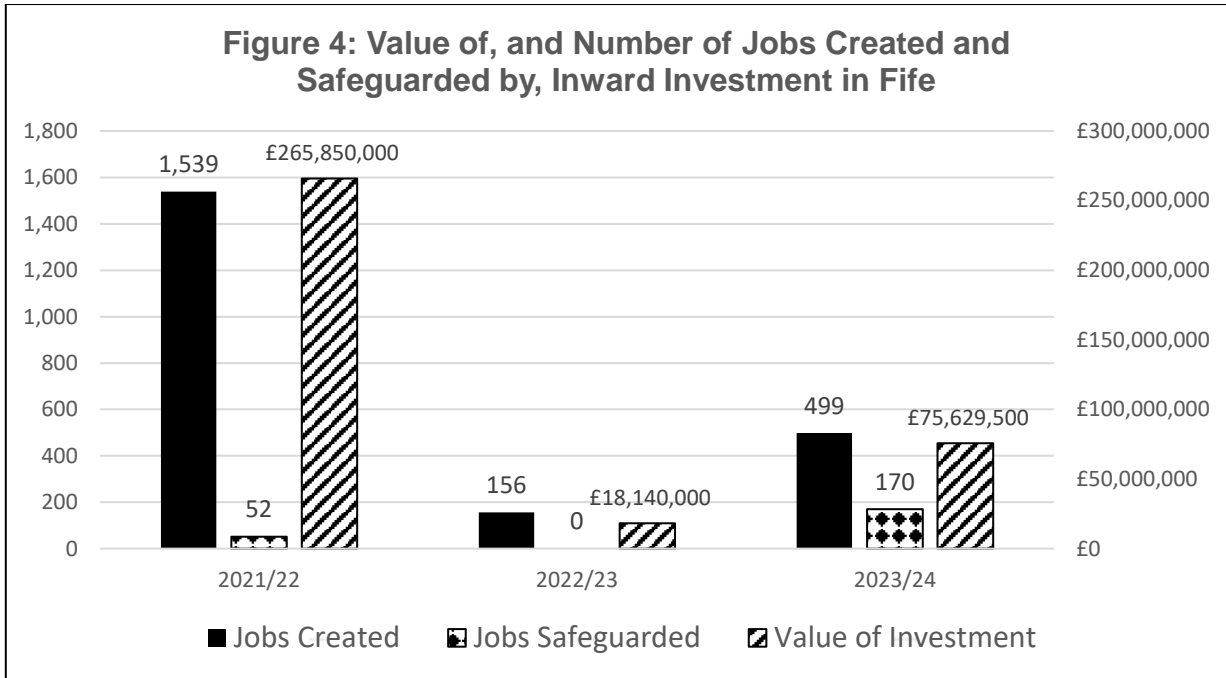
### **Attracting and supporting inward investment**

Investment prospectuses were produced for Levenmouth, Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy.

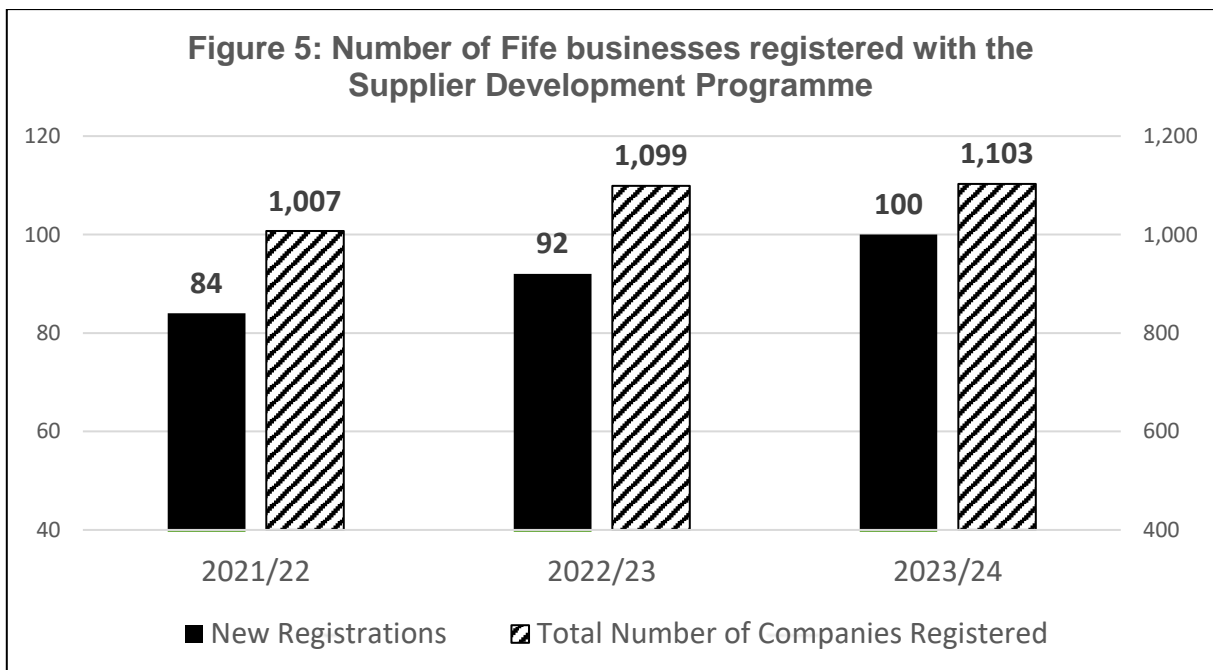
The City of Dunfermline's investment potential was showcased to national and international investors and developers at Scottish Cities Week in London in January 2024; in May Fife's top investment opportunities were showcased at the UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) in Leeds as part of the Scottish Cities Alliance.

## How we know

As a result of the support provided to new and existing businesses by the Economic Development team and Scottish Development International, £75.6m of inward investment was secured for Fife during 2023/24, investment that is estimated to create and/or safeguard 669 jobs (Figure 4).



There are now over 1,000 Fife businesses registered with the Supplier Development Programme to receive help to secure work with the public sector (Figure 5).





## 3.2.2

### Priority 2: Creating Thriving Places

#### What we said

The Service will be at the centre of placemaking for our towns and city centres with the council's move to a place focus and the opportunities arising from Dunfermline's city status and the opening of the Levenmouth rail link.

#### What we achieved

##### **Providing high-quality, modern business premises**

Seven business units were completed at the new Levenmouth Business Park as part of the Fife Industrial Innovation Investment Programme (Fi3P) funded by the Edinburgh & South-East Scotland City Region Deal. A new industrial estate is under construction at Fife Interchange North, scheduled to open in early 2025.

The new units will be managed by the Service's Business Property Team which manages almost 350 industrial and office premises owned by Fife Council.

Investment in the Service's Business Property Portfolio in 2023/24 delivered a full internal refurbishment of Iona House in Kirkcaldy, new flooring at Kirkcaldy Business Incubator and new roofs at Fife Food Centre in Glenrothes and Dunfermline Business Centre.

##### **Developing serviced employment land sites and bringing vacant & derelict land and buildings back into productive use**

Investment continues to be made in servicing employment sites within the Council's control. A summary of site servicing work undertaken during 2023/24 can be found in Appendix 1.

Around 15 projects are being supported by funding from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund as detailed in Appendix 1.

##### **Delivering place-based investment to help revitalise and re-purpose Fife's key town and city centres**

The 5-year Inverkeithing regeneration programme is due to be completed in Spring 2025. The National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic Environment Scotland approved the Round 1 applications for the Buckhaven Area Heritage Regeneration Scheme.

The Service continues to operate the Town Centre Building Improvement Grant Scheme, supporting 15-20 town centre businesses each year with grants of up to £10,000.

The £4.98m regeneration of Riverside Park in Glenrothes, funded by the UK Levelling Up Fund, is on target for completion in Spring 2025.

Town centre capital investment continues to be used to lever additional external funding. Recent investment includes improvements to Glenrothes bus station and pedestrian area at the Kino cinema, the completion of the Adam Smith Theatre refurbishment, and protective works at St Margaret's House in Dunfermline. The second phase of public realm improvements at Kirkcaldy waterfront and Volunteer's Green are now complete. Complex and protracted land acquisitions at Bonnygate Inner Court in Cupar are now moving with delivery expected to start during October 2025.

## Supporting & delivering investment in tourism infrastructure and events

A new Welcome to Fife Tourism Strategy was launched in December 2023 and the biennial Welcome to Fife tourism conference held in February 2024 was attended by over 150 people.

Fife's biggest ever consumer marketing campaign ran from October 2023 to February 2024. The campaign promoted Fife to over 8 million people and inspired more than 46,000 people to visit the [welcometofife.com](http://welcometofife.com) website (see case study in Appendix 2).

The Service also continues to support a Fife-wide programme of cultural events.

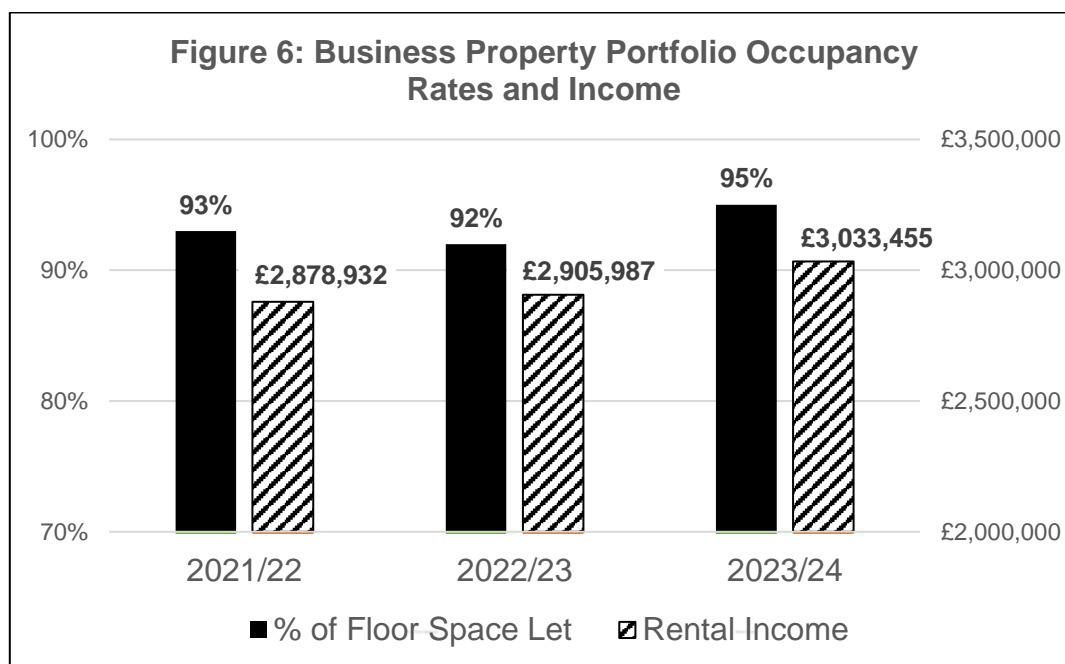
The City of Dunfermline was provisionally awarded £5m of Levelling Up Funding in the UK Government's 2024 Spring Budget towards cultural regeneration projects. A bid was submitted in May 2024; confirmation of the funding will be confirmed in the UK Autumn Statement. A Dunfermline City Tourism Action Plan, published in October 2023, to develop and promote Dunfermline as a city break destination, is now being delivered.

A tourism action plan was also developed for Levenmouth, promoting the area as a new destination to visit by train.

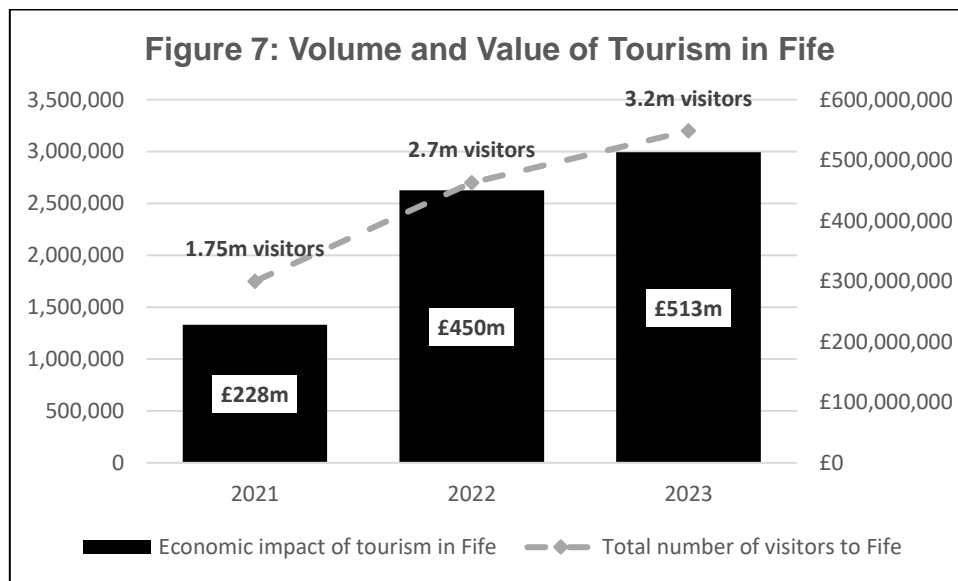
Further tourism interpretation and directional signage was added to the Forth Bridges Trail, work partly funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Forth Bridges website and multi-channel social media programme continue to promote visits to the Forth Bridges area.

## How we know

At the end of 2023/24, units in the Service's Business Property Portfolio were 95% occupied and brought in over £3m in annual rent income (Figure 6).



In 2023, Fife received over 3 million visitors who brought in an estimated £513m to the area's economy (Figure 7).



Source: Fife STEAM Reports for 2012-2023, Global Tourism Solutions (UK) Ltd.

### 3.2.3

#### Priority 2: Delivering Skills, Training and Fair Employment

##### What we said

We will:

- bring together UK and Scottish Government funding for a cohesive delivery of employability activity across Fife with the implementation of a new Opportunities Fife delivery framework.
- target enhanced employability support to those most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market.
- promote community benefits and fair work practices.

##### What we achieved

###### New Opportunities Fife Delivery Framework

The Opportunities Fife Partnership's employability strategy, priorities and structure was updated (see separate OFP Employability Pathway 2023-24 - Annual Performance Update Report).

###### Targeting enhanced employability support to those most disadvantaged and furthest from the labour market

In 2023/24, there were 628 unique participants on employability programmes run by the Service's Employability and Employer Engagement Team.

82 Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) were supported across various council services and a further 257 Fife residents were supported to undertake MAs with other employers.

Examples of the Employability and Employer Engagement Team's use of pre-employment training academies to help people experiencing barriers to employment can be seen in Appendix 3.

Matrix, Employability’s sheltered workshop, continued to provide meaningful employment, training and development opportunities to individuals with disabilities and long-term health conditions. The team of 35 has completed several projects for customers including NHS Fife, NHS Glasgow, Edinburgh Council and HMP Grampian delivering: upholstery for theatre seating, hospital and clinic seating, refurbishment of Occupational Therapy equipment and private sales. Matrix was integral to the successful opening of the Methil Care Village in October 2023, providing the furniture and soft furnishings for this development.

The Service was also involved in developing a new progressive recruitment approach – the Life Chances Model - which was piloted in 2023/24. The approach, which focuses on giving people experiencing barriers to employment access to hard-to-fill, entry-level positions within the council has now been fully integrated in the council’s recruitment strategy.

### **Ensuring school and college leavers have the skills, knowledge and opportunities to move on to positive destinations**

A programme of 82 different Culture of Enterprise activities was delivered to Fife’s schools, providing a total of 2,177 instances of pupil engagement; 198 Foundation Apprenticeships were supported.

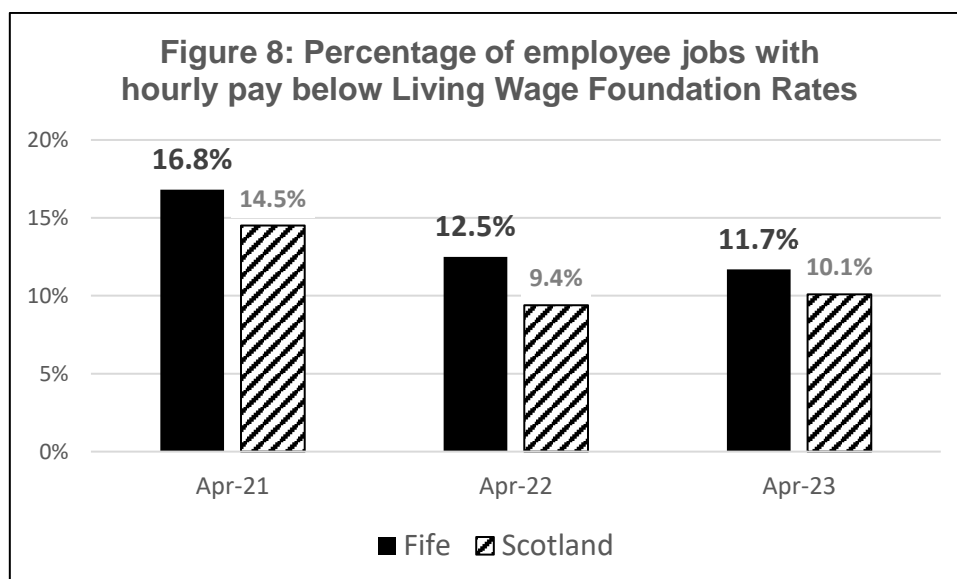
### **Promoting community benefits and fair work practices**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Fife Business Diversity Awards took place in December 2023. Organised by the Supported Employment Service, the awards showcase the achievements of individuals and employers in ensuring that people from all backgrounds are able to fulfil their work ambitions.

### **How we know**

Of the 628 people participating on employability programmes run by the Service’s Employability and Employer Engagement Team, 413 or 65.8% went on to employment.

The proportion of employee jobs with hourly pay below the real living wage fell between 2021 and 2023 to its lowest level (11.7%) although this rate is still higher than the Scottish rate (10.1%) (Figure 8).



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics

## 3.2.4

### Priority 4: Working in Collaboration and Partnership

#### What we said

The Service will build on the opportunities arising from the move to regional scale working, including delivery of the Regional Prosperity Framework for Edinburgh & South-East of Scotland and refresh of the Regional Economic Strategy for the Tay Cities Region.

The Service will also be working across new geographies and partnerships, with the designation of the Forth Green Freeport providing significant employment and investment opportunities.

#### What we achieved

##### Edinburgh & South-East Scotland (ESES) City Region

In March 2024, the ESES joint Committee endorsed the third and final Business Case for the Fife i3 Programme. The Leaders continued to engage with the UK and Scottish Governments on the delivery priorities for the Regional Prosperity Framework.

##### Tay Cities Region

The Joint Committee for the Tay Cities Region focused on the approval of business cases for projects being funded through the Deal and initiated the review of the Regional Economic Strategy's priorities.

##### Forth Green Freeport (FGF)

In September, the FGF's Final Business Case was submitted to both governments. Work has started on the FGF Fair Work and Skills Proposal to develop a timescale for the skills that will be required to fill the projected 50,000 jobs that will be created and/or sustained by the project.

#### How we know

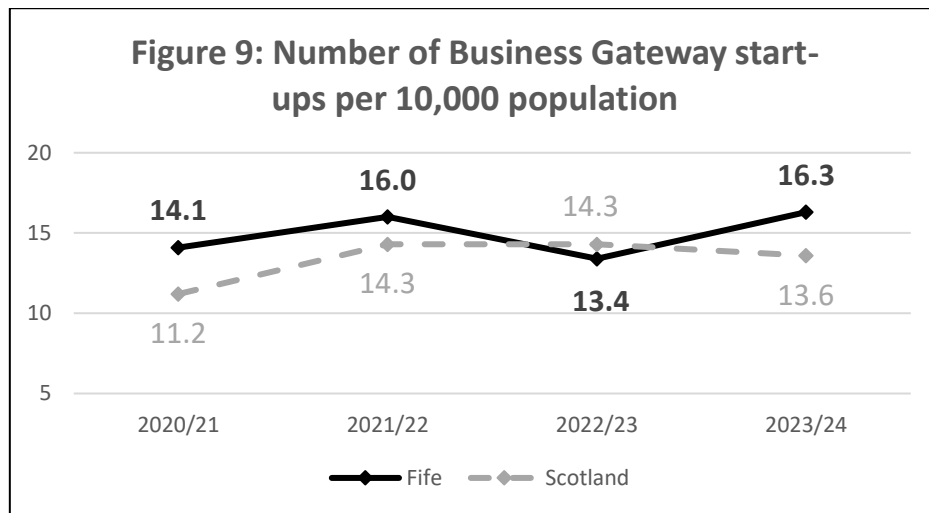
The Forth Green Freeport Outline Business Case and designation of three tax sites in Grangemouth, Rosyth and Mid-Forth (Leith and Burntisland) were approved by the Scottish and UK Governments in June 2024.

An infographic summarising the impact of the Edinburgh & South-East Scotland City Region's Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) Programme in Fife between 2019 and April 2024 can be seen in Appendix 4.

## 3.3 Wider operational performance

- 3.3.1 Business & Employability Services monitor several indicators to measure both the health of Fife's economy and the delivery of its interventions. Each year, Area Economic Profiles are produced which analyse the latest labour market and business base trends in Fife and in each of the council's seven committee areas. This information is then used to inform and direct delivery of the Service's economic development and employability activities. The latest Profiles can be seen here – [Fife Local Economic Profiles 2022/23](#)
- 3.3.2 There are 10 economy-related Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) indicators. [The latest set of LGBF data published covers 2022/23](#); 3 of the indicators have data for 2023/24.

3.3.3 Only one of these indicators directly reflects Business & Employability’s performance in delivering its services (see Figure 9 below), the rest monitor wider outcomes and the health of Fife’s economy.



3.3.4 The Service also submits data for input, activity and output indicators to the Improvement Service for inclusion in the annual Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development (SLAED) Indicators Framework Report. This enables the Service to benchmark the performance of its economy and its delivery of economic development and employability activities against other Scottish local authorities. The latest 2022-23 report can be seen here – [SLAED Indicators Framework Report 2022-23](#).

## 4.0 Priorities ahead

- 4.1 The Service will continue to work towards delivering the four priorities of the Fife Economic Strategy – Supporting Businesses; Creating Thriving Places; Delivering Skills, Training and Fair Employment; and Working in Collaboration and Partnership.
- 4.2 Given the uncertain nature of UK and Scottish Government funding and significant pressures on both revenue and capital budgets, the Service will seek other funding sources and take an agile, flexible and opportunistic response to new possibilities.
- Supporting Businesses**
- 4.3 The Economic Development team is investigating ways of using digital technologies to improve the efficiency of its business support services.
- 4.4 The Edinburgh & South-East Scotland City Region partners and Innovate UK are finalising an Innovation Action Plan whose immediate focus will be strengthening and promoting two innovation clusters, one of which is Sustainable Advanced Manufacturing at the Forth Green Freeport.
- 4.5 The Service will investigate how its business start-up support service can best support organisations with plural ownership in order to increase the number of social enterprises, co-operatives and community-owned businesses.

### **Creating Thriving Places**

- 4.6 The Service will continue to deliver new industrial premises and serviced employment land, including through the Fife i3 Programme and the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund.
- 4.7 The Service is testing an approach to develop a 10-year economy roadmap to develop and grow the City of Dunfermline's economy with a focus on culture. Lessons from this will help inform similar processes, starting with Levenmouth and Kirkcaldy, until each of the committee areas have a local economic impact plan based on the area's economic assets. The aim is to create more visibility of the pipeline of projects that are being undertaken and planned. These plans would also be used to leverage external income.

### **Delivering Skills, Training and Fair Employment**

- 4.8 Working with the Opportunities Fife Partnership, the Service will assess the implications of the Scottish Government's [Employability Strategic Plan 2024 to 2027](#). A more integrated process of employer engagement is being developed to increase awareness of employability services and recruitment from Employability Pathway clients.

### **Working in Collaboration and Partnership**

- 4.9 The Scottish Government is proposing that the 12 regional economic partnerships (Tay Cities and Edinburgh & South-East of Scotland are two of these) are the primary method for engaging on the delivery of Scotland's Strategy for Economic Transformation.

### **Report contacts**

Morag Millar, Service Manager, Place, Programmes & Policies

Pamela Stevenson, Service Manager - Economic Development

Kirsty Martin, Service Manager – Employability & Employer Engagement

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Servicing employment land sites and bringing vacant & derelict land and buildings back into productive use

Appendix 2 - Case Study: The Kingdom. Where it All Begins Destination Marketing Campaign

Appendix 3 - Case Study: Employability Academies

Appendix 4 - Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Region Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) Programme Impact in Fife

### **Background papers:**

1. [Fife Economic Strategy 2023-2030](#)
2. [Fife Vacant and Derelict Land Audit Report](#)

## Appendix 1

### Servicing employment land sites and bringing vacant & derelict land and buildings back into productive use

#### Servicing employment land sites

The following site servicing projects and feasibility studies were carried out during 2023/24:

- *Lochgelly Industrial Park* – delivery of ground stabilisation, road surfacing and associated utilities funded through the Fi3P and the Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF). The works have provided a total of 2ha of serviced employment land all of which has now been either sold or is under offer of sale.
- *Fife Interchange North, Dunfermline* – the construction of an access road and provision of utilities, surface water infrastructure and associated landscaping which have been funded as part of the Fi3P. The proposal has delivered serviced employment land extending to 3.24ha. Business units extending to a total of c2,260 sq m of are now under construction on the site by Fife Council as part of the Fi3P and site of 1.99 ha is under offer to an inward investor who proposes to construct a manufacturing facility extending to c2,700 sq m.
- *Mountfleurie Industrial Estate, Leven* - a site investigation exercise and feasibility study were undertaken to support the proposal to deliver site servicing on a vacant and derelict site extending to c1.07ha. It is proposed the delivery of servicing works will be funded through the Levenmouth Reconnected Programme and VDLF.
- *Levenmouth Business Park, Buckhaven* – the provision of landscaping, sub-station, and a Sustainable Urban Drainage System. The works were funded through Fi3P; Capital Programme; VDLF as well as the approved Tax Increment Financing (TIF) initiative. The works have delivered a total of c8.5ha of serviced employment land.
- *Fife Interchange South, Dunfermline* - a site feasibility and design study has been undertaken to support site servicing proposals at Fife Interchange South, Dunfermline which will deliver a total of c10 ha of serviced employment land. It is proposed the site servicing works will be funded through the Scottish Enterprise/Fife Council Joint Venture, Capital Programme, section 75 monies and approved TIF initiative.
- *Rolling Site Servicing Programme* – a site feasibility study was undertaken in respect of a number of sites including Dunnikier Business Park, Kirkcaldy; Westwood Park, Glenrothes; Wheatfield Place, Kirkcaldy; Midfield Road, Kirkcaldy; Sandybrae, Kennoway and Dalton Road, Glenrothes. The feasibility study has been undertaken with support of funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The site servicing works are proposed to be funded through an approved allocation of £6.6m as part of the Council's capital plan.

#### Vacant and Derelict Land

In 2023, there were 203 sites (713 hectares) of vacant & derelict land across Fife. Derelict land has a broader impact than vacant land in terms of total area (604.6ha) and in the number of individual sites (154). South & West Fife contains the largest proportion of



vacant & derelict land (49% of Fife's total). More information can be accessed from the annually published report, alongside an interactive map of sites, on the council's Land Audits webpage: [Planning information and land use audits | Fife Council](#)

Since 2015/16, Fife Council has been one of only five of Scotland's 32 local authorities to receive funding from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund (VDLF). In 2023/24 Fife was awarded £1.621m of funding; at present around 15 projects are being supported including:

- industrial estate regeneration across Fife, including support to the Fi3 programme. This includes circa £3.5m of VDLF investment on sites at Hillend and Donibristle (Dalgety Bay); Muiedge and Mountfleurie (both in Levenmouth); The Avenue (Lochgelly); and Queensway Industrial Estate (Glenrothes).
- Town centre regeneration projects in Lochgelly, Cupar and Cowdenbeath projected to deliver commercial property and 100 affordable homes.
- The regeneration of buildings in Ravenscraig Walled Garden in Kirkcaldy.
- Activity in support of Climate Fife Plan and its associated Action Plan including feasibility work to assess the potential use of vacant and derelict land in minewater geothermal heat schemes.
- The acquisition and remediation of a site in Rosyth for the creation of a memorial to a Polish Navy World War II submarine lost on patrol in 1940.

## Appendix 2

### Case Study: The Kingdom. Where it All Begins Destination Marketing Campaign

The Service's tourism team, under the Welcome to Fife brand, commissioned a winter 2023/24 destination marketing campaign, with the aim of raising awareness of Fife as a visitor destination, driving visits to the Welcome to Fife website, and ultimately increasing the number of visitors to Fife. This was aimed at young families and retirees, in Scotland and the North of England.

**The Kingdom. Where It All Begins** was the biggest campaign Welcome to Fife has ever delivered. The campaign had to grab attention in a busy marketplace, clearly convey the abundance of things to experience in Fife, establish an emotional connection and to tap into trends such as wellness and sustainability.

The campaign consisted of:

- A new landing page on the Welcome to Fife website - [Fife Icons | Welcome to Fife](#)
- New destination video - [The Kingdom. Where it all Begins. \(youtube.com\)](#)
- Paid social media campaign through Meta, YouTube and Google
- Influencer activity with @watchmesees and @traveltwo
- [The East Neuk of Fife: 17 Must Do's from Elie to Kingsbarns - Watch Me See](#)
- [Hidden Treasures in the Kingdom of Fife - TravelTwo](#)
- Online Travel Agent advertising with Expedia, Hotels.com, Vrbo and Tripadvisor
- Media partnerships with National Geographic and Coast Magazine
- [How to spend a long weekend in Fife, Scotland's ancient kingdom \(nationalgeographic.com\)](#)
- [Discover Fife - Coast Magazine](#)
- A toolkit to enable businesses to use the brand assets for their own benefit - [Welcome-to-Fife-CampaignToolkit.pdf \(welcometofife.com\)](#)

The main campaign was supplemented by area campaigns for Dunfermline to promote as a city break destination, and Levenmouth to celebrate the opening of the new rail line.

The main campaign results show that the campaign was a great success and performed well against the objectives:

- Raise awareness of Fife as a visitor destination – 8,006,175 reach/impressions through social media activity, 29,237 digital article views, 11,380 video views.
- Drive visits to the Welcome to Fife website – 46,826 clicks to landing page
- Ultimately increase visitors to Fife – online travel agent activity led to £341,394 gross bookings to Fife.

The online travel agent activity delivered a return on advert spend of 9.8 (anything above 2 is considered to be good) and resulted in a very strong economic impact for Fife. The paid social media campaign delivered exceptional results and was a very cost-effective way of targeting a north of England market. The content created with media partners produced strong results, with National Geographic stating that it was one of their best performing articles ever.

Due to the success of the campaign, the same creative brief and messaging will be used for a winter 2024/25 campaign, to drive further destination awareness and convert this to actual visits.

**Images from the campaign:**

Social media campaign – retirees



Social media campaign – families





## DISCOVER A SCOTTISH COASTAL BREAK WITH A DIFFERENCE

Escape to The Kingdom of Fife and explore its magnificent coastal path

**W**hen you think of holidaying on the coast, you might think of sandy beaches, hot air balloons and fishing boats, or sailing yachts and sunsets with beautiful views. But a coastal break to The Kingdom of Fife offers an alternative view over coastal Scotland's spectacular scenery, heritage, villages and world-class food and drink.

The region is an ancient Scottish Kingdom with a stunning coastline that boasts one of Scotland's Great Walls and the longest, unbroken coastal path in the country. The Coastal Path, stretching for an impressive 117 miles, it offers you the chance to combine the best of Scotland, each with its own character and distinct local history and charm.



### 7 SURPRISING EXPERIENCES ON FIFE COASTAL PATH

- 1 The best sunset right across the world to watch. (Literally, when you're in the middle of the Fife Coastal Path.)
- 2 Enjoy a local whisky, a beautiful view and the best of Scotland in a matter of minutes as you stroll down to the beach.
- 3 Enjoy a picnic on the beach with the best of Scotland's produce in a basket in the sand.
- 4 The most picturesque, often unspoiled, view from any coastal town in Scotland. (The view from the beach.)
- 5 The best view of the Scottish coastline from the air. (The view from the beach.)
- 6 The best view of the Scottish coastline from the water. (The view from the beach.)
- 7 The best view of the Scottish coastline from the land. (The view from the beach.)



golf courses, where in some of Scotland's most beautiful scenery, you'll find a world-class golf course. In fact, you'll find a world-class golf course in every part of the Kingdom. (The view from the beach.)

### TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE FIFE COASTAL PATH

- The Fife Coastal Path is a 117-mile-long path that runs along the coast of Fife.
- The path is a mix of rugged, rocky terrain and beautiful views.
- The path is a mix of rugged, rocky terrain and beautiful views.
- The path is a mix of rugged, rocky terrain and beautiful views.
- The path is a mix of rugged, rocky terrain and beautiful views.



## WIN A LUXURY COASTAL BREAK TO THE KINGDOM OF FIFE

We have teamed up with Welcome to Fife to offer one Coast reader the chance to win an unforgettable break to Scotland's spectacular east coast

**F**ife is a region like no other. It's a region of stunning scenery, world-class food and drink, and a coastline that's as beautiful as it is historic. It's a region that's as beautiful as it is historic. It's a region that's as beautiful as it is historic.

The Fife Coastal Path is a 117-mile-long path that runs along the coast of Fife. It's a path that's as beautiful as it is historic. It's a path that's as beautiful as it is historic.



### YOUR PRIZE FOR TWO ADULTS

- A 7-day, 6-night stay at a luxury hotel in Fife.
- A 7-day, 6-night stay at a luxury hotel in Fife.
- A 7-day, 6-night stay at a luxury hotel in Fife.
- A 7-day, 6-night stay at a luxury hotel in Fife.
- A 7-day, 6-night stay at a luxury hotel in Fife.

### HOW TO ENTER

Enter the competition by visiting [www.welcometofife.co.uk](http://www.welcometofife.co.uk) and answering the questions by February 28, 2024.

### Which Fife village is Scotland's most beautiful?

- A. Gullane
- B. Gullane
- C. Gullane

## Appendix 3

### Case Study: Employability Academies

The Service's Employability and Employer Engagement Team is using a pre-employment training academy approach to help people in Fife experiencing barriers to employment.

Examples of three academies that were delivered in 2023/24 are below.

#### Community Improvement Squad Academy

A Community Improvement Squad Academy (CISA), based in Levenmouth, was launched in partnership with Grounds Maintenance Service, other council services and external third sector organisations. The programme focuses on enabling participants to gain experience in an outdoor work environment, whilst receiving employability support and improving their local community.

Class-based learning was provided by Raeburn Training and Fife Council's training hub at the Skills Development Centre in Kirkcaldy. Training experiences so far have included undertaking works at Arden House in Leven, the promenade and Fife Heritage Railway. CLEAR, a third sector organisation in Levenmouth, also provided knowledge and experience for the CISA squads. In turn, CLEAR benefitted from receiving more hands-on help to achieve their planned work which would not have been possible with their existing volunteer workforce.

The CISA is increasing its partnership with Grounds Maintenance Service (GMS), Fife's largest employer in this sector.

The benefits of this approach are:

- Equips potential GMS job applicants with essential criteria, skills and experience needed to progress into work with minimum induction and training.
- Provides an alternative recruitment pathway for people struggling to navigate mainstream recruitment processes
- Quicker turnaround recruitment for harder to fill vacancies or that require a fast-track recruitment process
- Meeting seasonal demands
- Job applicants who come through this pathway are likely to be invested in the opportunity, come from more diverse backgrounds, meet essential criteria and will participate well in interview and selection processes.
- Allows outdoor works for community projects that benefit the community and provides participants with real work experience to enhance their chances of securing more sustainable work.
- Builds GMS capacity to develop and sustain diverse workforces.



### **Lochore Meadows Green Skills Academy**

Delivered in partnership with Lochore Meadows Country Park and Community Learning and Development, the 3-month outdoor Access to Industry and Meta Skills (AIMS) employability project focuses on upskilling local young people interested in working in environmental and land-based industries. The programme is designed to prepare participants for the job application and interview process as well as providing relevant Health and Safety training and outdoor work experience.

During the project, participants undertook various employability activities (with the centerpiece of the activity being the rebuild of the Roundhouse on Lochore Meadow's Tod Island that was destroyed by fire in 2022), along with accredited training.

The Academy was targeted at school leavers aged 16 -18 who were not in education, employment or training; priority was given to clients who were facing additional barriers to gaining employment. Focusing on local schools and local young people contributed to the community wealth building approach of this programme, ensuring ongoing support into a positive outcome for those who took part.



### **Babcock PSO Academy**

This bespoke pre-employment training academy was delivered in partnership with Kingdom Works (the Kingdom Group's employability project) and international defence, aerospace and security company, Babcock, as part of a wider exercise to recruit new Production Service Operators (PSOs) at Babcock's advance manufacturing and shipbuilding facility in Rosyth.

The innovative, 2-week programme gave unemployed individuals the chance to progress directly to the second stage of the PSO recruitment process with participants guaranteed a place at the Babcock assessment centre.

As well as help to build their employability and interview skills, participants received top-quality, industry-recognised health and safety training from Raeburn Training,

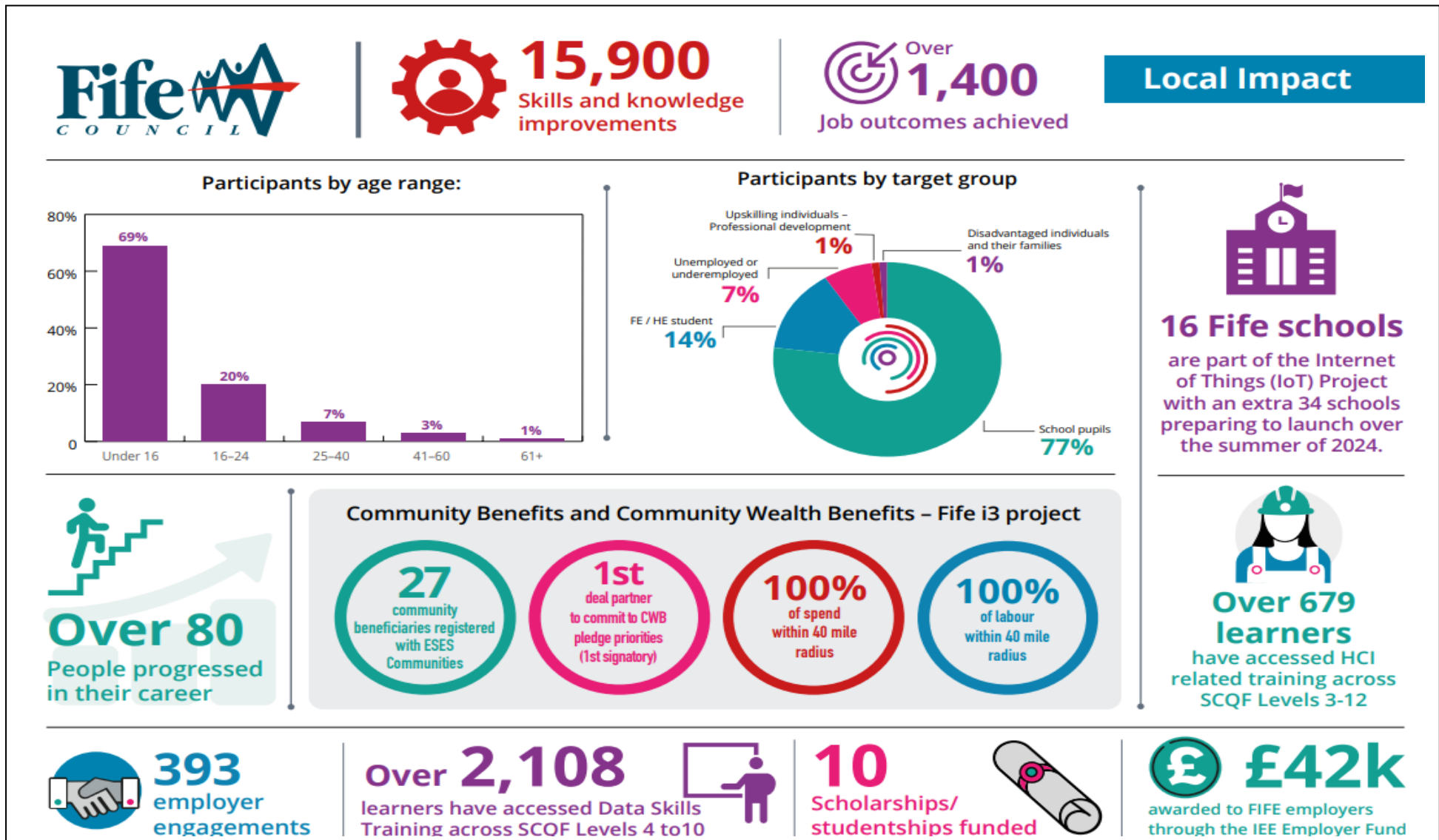
All 14 people attending the academy were offered a place at the Babcock assessment centre, with 10 then being offered employment and 9 accepting a PSO job with the company.

The pre-employment academy was part of the wider Babcock PSO Training Programme developed and delivered by Babcock in partnership with Fife College, Fife Council, Kingdom Works and Trade Unions to address skills shortages in the shipbuilding industry. The PSO Training Programme, the first of its kind in the UK, is focused on attracting people from a range of backgrounds and experiences, including those not currently in education, employment or training and living in areas of higher deprivation. Since the launch of the programme in April 2022, Babcock has employed more than 150 PSOs and will create a further 350 PSO roles over the next four years. The programme has been recognised both by the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) Sanctuary Awards, winning this year's Social Value Category and by the Centre for Engineering, Education and Development (Ceed) which awarded the programme the Transformational Change through Education and Skills Award.



## Appendix 4

# Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Region Integrated Regional Employability and Skills (IRES) Programme Impact in Fife



Source: [IRES Programme Impact: Edinburgh & SE Scotland City Region Deal regional and local achievements to April 2024](#)