

12th November 2024

Agenda Item No.

PLANNING SERVICES: CLIMATE CHANGE – ANNUAL SERVICE REVIEW REPORT 2023/2024

Report by: Pam Ewen, Head of Planning & Chief Planner

Wards Affected: N/A

Purpose

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

This report focuses on the climate change and zero waste functions of Planning Services; the planning functions was reported to the Finance, Economy and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee on 29 August 2024.

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 Planning Services (climate change and zero waste functions) for 2023/24 and the activity undertaken in 2024/25 to date; and,
- 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.

In terms of and under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 as amended (the “2009 Act”), public sector bodies are legally required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support Scotland’s adaptations to a changing climate. For the purposes of the 2009 Act, all local authorities including the Council as designated “Major Players” are legally required to report annually on their greenhouse gas emissions and what they are doing to help adaptation to a changing climate.

In the preparation of this report, the Council is also required to have regard to the current Scottish Government guidance published under Part 4 of the 2009 Act.

In terms of risk, failure to proactively address the climate and ecological emergency across all service delivery areas carries significant reputational risk, particularly considering the political ambition at both local and national level around the climate change agenda. In addition, failure to take a proactive approach to climate change action will limit opportunities to secure external funding.

Impact Assessment

An EqlA is not required as this report does not propose any changes to policies or services. A Climate Impact Assessment has not been undertaken 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 Planning Services (climate change and zero waste functions) Annual Review for 2023/24. It looks back over the previous year and assesses how the service has performed in relation to their priorities and challenges and looks forward to the changes and improvements that need 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; and,
- Objectives and themes for service delivery, change and/or improvement going forward.

This information is then used to inform annual service planning and the strategic direction of the services 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

1.4 Performance information and related case studies for Climate Change will be available online www.fife.gov.uk/performance

- 1.5 Planning Service reports across two Scrutiny Committees, with wider Planning functions reporting to the Finance, Economy & Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee. This report focusses on those climate activities specific to the Planning Service. The 2023/24 annual review report for Planning Service can be found here [Planning Service Annual Review Report \(fife.gov.uk\)](https://www.fife.gov.uk/planning-service-annual-review-report)
- 1.6 It should be noted that Fife Council is required under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act to report annually on how it is performing in relation to its duties under the act. It provides a greater breakdown of performance figure related to the Council's carbon footprint and additional information relating to the wider Council activity on Climate. This year's report was recently considered by Cabinet on 7th November.

2.0 Service Overview

Key role and responsibilities 2023/24

- 2.1 The Climate Change and Zero Waste function within Planning Services is part of the Place Directorate and is established to:
- Deliver a range of statutory functions including the Climate Change Public Bodies Duties reporting and Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and delivery plan;
 - Address the Climate Emergency, enable economic growth, tackle poverty, further community wealth building, and protecting and enhancing Fife's built and natural environment; and,
 - Deliver some non-statutory planning functions, including staff, public sector and community engagement and awareness raising of climate challenges and opportunities. For example, by being an active partner in delivery of the Climate Action Fife project.
- 2.2 The Service's strategic approach to and interventions on climate change supports the Plan for Fife and the Council's reform agenda by facilitating Fife -wide and Fife Council changes to address the climate emergency, grow Fife's economy, tackle poverty and further community wealth building.
- 2.3 The climate change and zero waste function of Planning Services is responsible for developing, delivering and promoting sustainability initiatives and developing strategies to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to unavoidable climate change, raise awareness and encourage sustainable practices. Key responsibilities include:
- Support and initiate delivery of activities under the Climate Fife action themes of: Buildings; Low Carbon Energy; Zero Waste; Transport and Travel; Nature and Land; Protecting and Supporting our Communities. This includes the delivery of the "Zero Waste Fife, Resource Strategy and action plan 2018-2028".
 - Inform and influence policy and strategy to reduce carbon emissions and increase resilience to climate impacts.
 - Report on progress against the Council's mandatory duties from the Climate Change Act (Scotland) 2009, "address the climate emergency" under the Plan 4 Fife, and now also to report on progress against Climate Fife 2024.

Budget breakdown 2023/24

- 2.4 The Planning Service's budget overview is set out in Table One below. This is the Service wide budget. The substantial expenditure is on staffing. Income is essentially through planning and related applications both statutory and non-statutory. Application income is monitored monthly and can be subject to volatility, for example where there is an economic downturn particularly related to housebuilding. To assist in delivering some climate change and zero waste functions, the Service has secured external temporary funding to resource those related actions.
- 2.5 Budget savings achieved over the past decade have mainly been through staffing reductions particularly over the period 2010 to 2019, as well as an introduction/increase in some discretionary fees to achieve permanent savings.
- 2.6 Budget pressures remain and are mitigated where possible. Pressures relate to new and unfunded duties placed on the Planning Authority through the Scottish Government, in addition to costs of preparing the Local Development Plan. Increasing non-statutory income through our pre-application service assists, to an extent with overall funding. The LGBF report (2021/22) identified that there has been a 26.1% reduction in planning spending in real terms nationally since 2010/11; one of the highest reductions in Council service areas.

Table One: Planning Services Budget

	Net Expenditure by Business Area	Provisional Outturn	Variance	Budgeted FTE by Business Area
	23/24 £m	23/24 £m	23/24 £m	23/24 FTE
Development Management	0.206	0.152	-0.055	53.16
Planning Administration	0.145	0.153	0.008	1.00
Climate Change & Zero Waste	0.688	0.584	-0.104	11.00
Policy & Place	1.104	1.148	0.044	17.48
Total Net Expenditure	2.143	2.035	-0.107	82.64

	Gross Expenditure	Provisional Outturn	Variance
	23/24 £m	23/24 £m	23/24 £m
Employee Costs	4.745	4.534	-0.210
Premises Related Expenditure	0.000	0.001	0.001
Transport Related Expenditure	0.030	0.021	-0.009
Supplies and Services	0.460	0.533	0.074
Third Party Payments	0.202	0.000	-0.202
Transfer Payments	0.000	0.061	0.061
	5.436	5.150	-0.286

	Gross Income	Provisional Outturn	Variance
	23/24 £m	23/24 £m	23/24 £m
Internal Income	-0.183	-0.179	0.004
External Income	-3.110	-2.936	0.174
	-3.293	-3.115	0.179

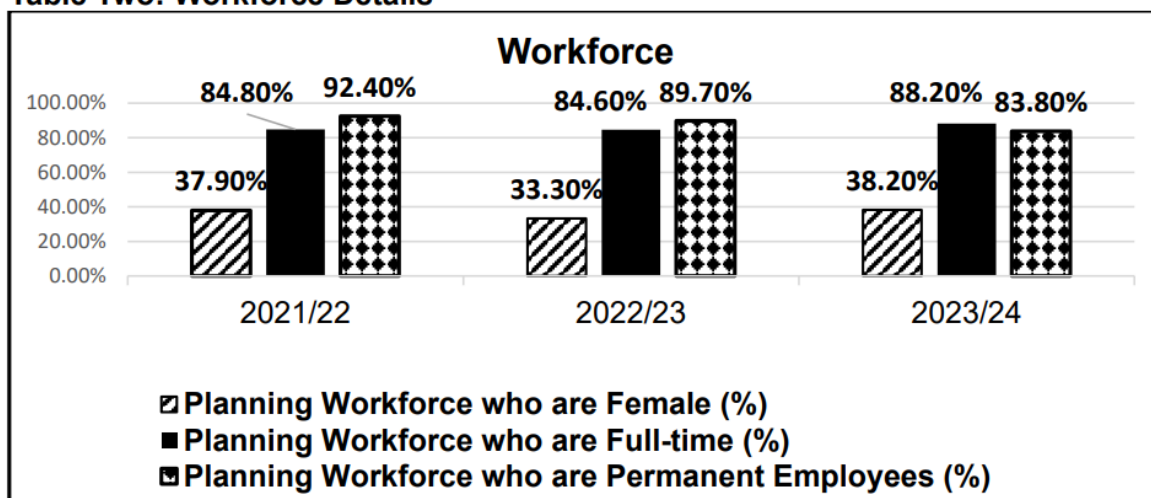
Note – Table One shows the 2023/24 Financial Performance for the whole Planning Service which is reported to 2 scrutiny committees. The financial monitoring of Planning Activities comes under the remit of the Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee. The financial monitoring of

the climate change and zero waste function of the Service comes under the remit of the Environment, Transportation & Climate Change Scrutiny Committee.

Workforce profile 2023/24

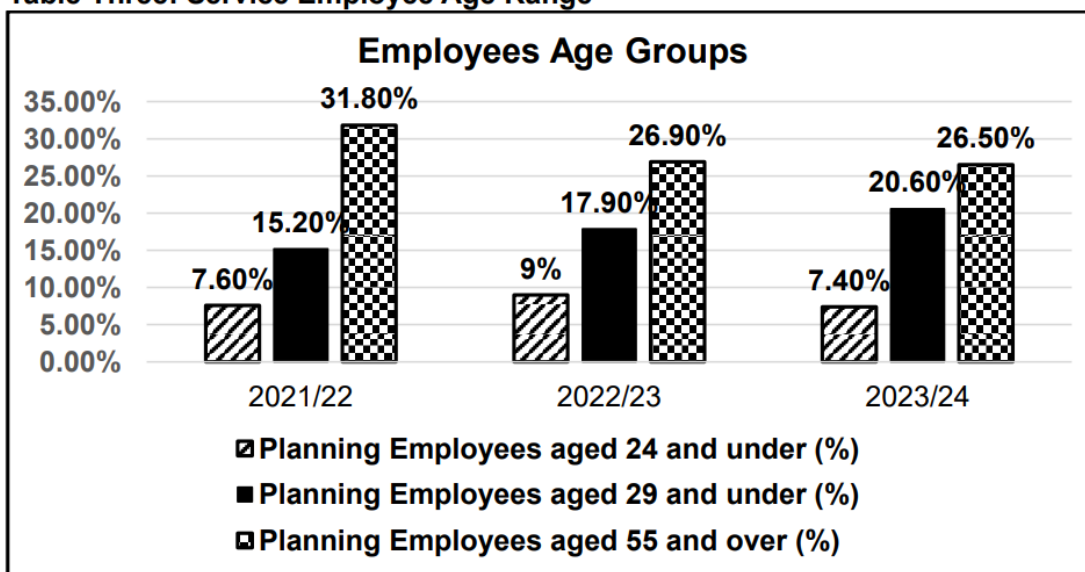
2.7 Please note that a breakdown for workforce profile information is not available for the climate change and zero waste function of the Service alone, as it is contained within the Planning Service Annual Review Report for 2023/24 and is detailed in this section. The Planning Services workforce comprises 82 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles – employing 87 people in total (including 11 members of staff in the Climate Change and Zero Waste team as of 31st March 2024). Table Two below details some of the key measures of the Planning Service's workforce.

Table Two: Workforce Details



2.8 Over the past decade the Planning Service has had a focus on growing staff at an early stage of their career, including students. One of the outcomes from this is a more diverse workforce in respect of age. Table Three below demonstrates that the workforce has a positive age profile, which is the outcome of a decade of workforce strategy.

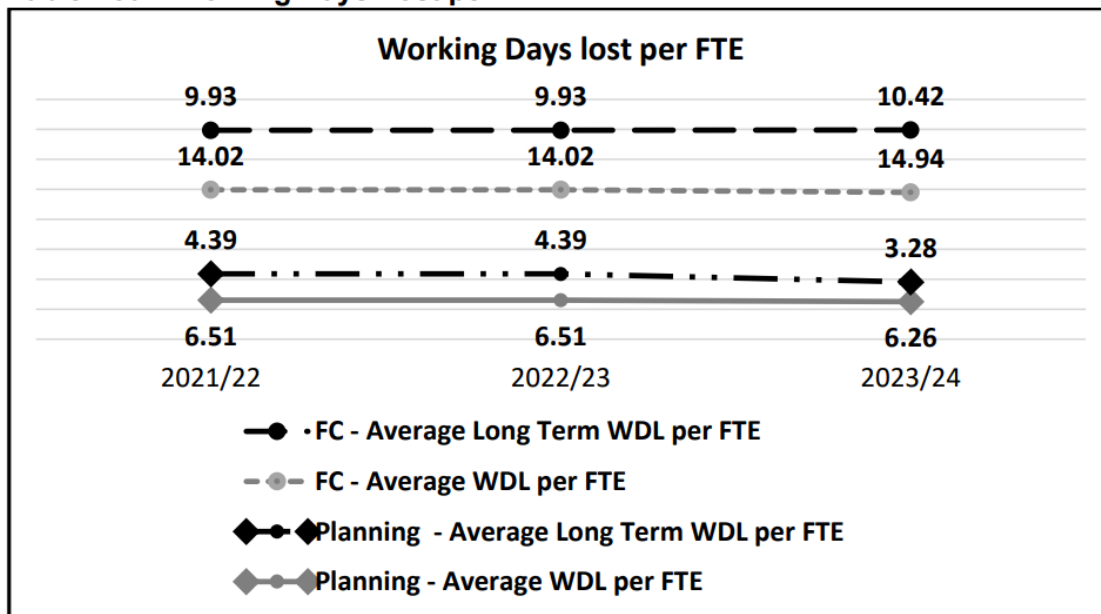
Table Three: Service Employee Age Range



* Note - 29 and under data includes 24 and under

- 2.9 The Planning Service People Plan/Workforce Strategy has created opportunities for a younger workforce, achieved through several routes, in particular the University of Dundee and Fife College. The placements created in Planning Service are a mix of full and part-time; aimed to support students engaged in a course of planning and related study to gain valuable experience, and full-time graduate posts. The Service culture is one where people feel supported. The Service annual staff survey in Sept 2023 showed that 90% of staff were happy at work, and 90% felt supported to develop their skills and knowledge.
- 2.10 Attracting and retaining talented professionals into local government is increasingly challenging. The Service is successful in attracting and retaining talented staff. Through recruitment stages promotion of the Service through short videos to convey the values, opportunities and why Fife Council is a great place to work are utilised. The Service's approach to workforce strategy was recognised in a national award in early 2024.
- 2.11 Working days lost in the Service is significantly less than the Council's averages. The Service has a Mental Health First Aider and managers across the Service seek to identify any support that is required for staff at an early stage. Table Four below shows that the average working days lost has reduced. The service will seek to learn from early lessons from the attendance management pilot being led by Human Resources Service.

Table Four: Working Days Lost per FTE



3.0 Priorities and Performance

3.1 Service Priorities 2023/24

The climate change and zero waste function of Planning Services had 3 strategic priorities in 2023/24, to:

1. Review and prioritise the 2019 Climate Fife Strategy, to identify key deliverables by 2027;

2. Develop and publish Fife's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) by December 2023; and,
3. Complete the Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment and identify actions to increase the council's "maturity" in tackling climate adaptation across the Adaptation Scotland benchmarking.

3.2 How we delivered

3.2.1

Priority 1: Review and prioritise the 2019 Climate Fife Strategy

What we said

- Refresh the Climate Fife Delivery Plan
- Deliver climate literacy across Fife Council, including working towards Gold Accreditation for Planning Services

What we achieved

The Climate Fife 2024 Strategy and Action Plan was launched in March 2024, confirming the 6 action themes as detailed in 2.3 above.

Climate Fife 2024 also recognised 3 areas in which transformational changes are required and set a timetable for their development. The Big Moves are:

- Big Energy Move: where we will begin to transform the energy system in Fife to low carbon.
- Big Resilience Move: where we will transform how we protect Fife from the unavoidable impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss, including nature-based solutions.
- Big Community Move: where we will transform our approach to supporting community climate action, empowering communities to transform local food, waste, transport and energy generation systems to create community wealth and wellbeing.

A Climate Action Towns project delivered by Architecture and Design Scotland engaged the community of Benarty to learn from their place-based experiences and engage them in how they could be part of climate actions to improve their community and homes. [Climate Action Towns | A&DS \(ads.org.uk\)](#) The UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund also supported further capacity building sessions in Kirkcaldy and Ballingry that the Service developed and delivered with Coalfields Regeneration Trust.

How we know

The Climate Fife 2024 Strategy and Action Plan was reviewed by a community climate action groups at a session with councillors in February 2024, further edited by officers, approved by Cabinet in and launched in March 2024: [Climate Fife 2024 Strategy and Action Plan](#)

Monitoring of delivery of Climate Fife 2024 will be developed in 2024/25, and will support the monitoring and reporting for the priority of Addressing the Climate Emergency under the Plan4Fife.

Fife Council's Planning Service achieved Gold Standard Carbon Literate Accreditation. The team also worked with NHS Fife to initiate and support development of a health-based climate literacy course for NHS and associated staff. Full 2023/24 progress of the Council's carbon literacy training is summarised below.

Table Five: Number of climate literacy courses completed and successfully accredited in 2023/24

Directorate	Climate Literacy courses completed	Successful Climate Literacy accreditations
Communities	7	7
Enterprise and Environment Directorate (now Place Directorate)	49	33
Education Directorate	1	1
Fife Coast & Countryside Trust	7	3
Total	64	44

We continue to work creatively in partnership with community groups and third sector organisations, and our partnership project "Climate Action Fife" won the "Partnership" award at the national Climate Awards in October 2024.

The Climate Change and Zero Waste team cannot deliver Climate Fife 2024 in isolation. It is therefore essential to build on existing collaborations and develop ownership of climate across all Directorate and Service Change Plans. This will be progressed in 2024/25.

3.2.2

Priority 2: Develop and publish Fife's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy

What we said

- We would comply with Scottish Government's requirement to publish Fife's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and delivery plan by December 2023. This LHEES strategically plans opportunities and actions to help building owners transition buildings to meet the targets for net zero emissions.

What we achieved

Fife's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, and high-level delivery plan was published in November 2023 following extensive collaboration with key stakeholders and a public consultation.

The Strategy is at the heart of a place based, locally led, and tailored approach to the heat transition. It underpins an area-based approach to heat and energy efficiency planning and delivery. For Fife, the Strategy was developed in partnership with key stakeholders, and:

- provides a long-term, flexible strategy, and iterative delivery plan to decarbonise heat and improve energy efficiency, considering wider priorities and targets,
- details how segments of building stock must change to meet national and local targets,
- identifies opportunities for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency, and
- uses an optioneering process to prioritise actions.

It also identifies potential opportunities for district heat networks which will be used to help inform the Council's requirements under the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021.

The strategy will play a crucial role in helping the Council meet its 2045 Net Zero target, and help Fife be climate friendly, climate ready, and climate just by 2045. As such, LHEES will inform development and detail of the Big Energy Move in 2024/25.

Furthermore, a pilot "energy prospectus" was completed for the Dunfermline & Rosyth area. This explores the opportunity for a large-scale heat network in the area, exploring how energy opportunities and constraints could support/impact any network respectively. This exercise will be used to inform a more detailed study. It has also been used as a tool to bring key stakeholders on board and be engaged with the full energy plan.

The LHEES also notes the wider energy system must be considered when planning heat decarbonisation. To support this and wider planning objectives, the opportunity for land across Fife for solar generation was mapped.

How we know

LHEES was published in November 2023: [Local heat & energy efficiency strategy \(LHEES\) and delivery plan | Fife Council](#)

3.2.3

Priority 3: Increase the council's "maturity" in tackling climate adaptation

The 2022/23 report on climate change noted the increasing risks from climate impacts and that the Council's 'maturity' in tackling climate adaptation was benchmarked in May 2023 using the Adaptation Scotland tool, demonstrating that Fife Council currently fall in category 1 of 4 levels of maturity across:

- Organisational culture and assets preparedness for climate adaptation.
- Understanding the challenge of climate adaptation.
- Planning and implementation for climate adaptation.
- Working together for climate adaptation.

What we said

To tackle this the Climate Change and Zero Waste team committed to:

- Developing a regional approach to Climate Risk with the Edinburgh & Southeast Scotland Regional Prosperity Framework.
- Support the update of Local Community Plans to include climate action.

Delivery of climate literacy, and the development of the Big Resilience Move will also help to improve resilience to climate impacts and the Council's capacity in relation to the Adaptation Scotland benchmarking tool.

What we achieved

The Climate Ready South East Scotland project was developed and launched in 2023/24, to better understand how climate change will affect the South East Scotland City Deal region, the key risks and opportunities faced, and where more action and collaboration is needed. The project website is: <https://climatereadyses.org.uk/>

Climate Ready South East Scotland over the period from October 2023 to March 2025:

- Identify and prioritise the risks and opportunities from climate change to Edinburgh and South East Scotland's society, economy and environment between now and 2080.
- Lay the foundation for a transformational approach to climate adaptation and resilience for the city region.
- Support a Just Transition to a net zero and climate resilient economy, in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

Within 2023/24, Climate Ready South East Scotland was developed and resources secured for it's delivery, Fife Council's funded by a successful bid to the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund. The scope was set for a detailed assessment of the climate risks and opportunities faced by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region. This included 2023/24 work to identify key stakeholders within and beyond the Council who hold data and information that will be compiled and submitted as evidence in 2024/25.

Through preparatory work on Climate Ready South East Scotland, collaborative work with officers in Roads and Transportation Services identified a need to review the projected coastal impacts on Fife to inform future creation of a Council approach that will inform hold the existing line, managed realignment or no active intervention in identified areas. Working with colleagues in Roads and Transportation Services, Climate Change and Zero Waste Team successfully secured funding from Scottish Government's Coastal Change Adaptation Budget for a Coastal Change Adaptation case study project in 2024/25. This case study project will take into account mandatory requirements, legal, social and economic risks, and how to inform engagement with 3 communities of interest on the Fife coast.

How we know

Fife Council have not yet identified Key Performance Indicators for climate adaptation; this will be progressed through development of the Big Resilience Move in 2024/25.

3.3 Wider operational performance

3.3.1 Climate Change is responsible for 5 Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators (LGBF) indicators. The latest set of LGBF data published covers 2022/23.

Performance Indicator	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Status	Long Trend
CO2 Emissions area wide per capita (LGBF)	7.57	7.8	7.56	7.81		
CO2 Emissions area wide: within scope of LA per capita (LGBF)	4.65	4.53	4.7	4.33		
CO2 Emissions from Transport per capita	29.23	25.56	27.5	29.93		
CO2 Emissions from Electricity per capita	61.68	46.7	49.48	44.07		
CO2 Emissions from Natural Gas per capita	52.89	47.23	54.27	49.77		

3.3.2 Climate Change is responsible for 2 Plan4Fife indicators relating to area wide emissions and the Council's total carbon footprint.

Performance Indicator	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Status	Long Term
Area Wide Emissions (thousand tonnes of Carbon)	2821.3	2919.8	2840	2474.2	N/A		
Total Fife Council Carbon Footprint - tCO2e	55585	49655	54358	50153	52197*		

* 2023/24 Council carbon footprint data was considered by Cabinet Committee recently on 7th November.

3.3.3 Climate literacy is important to performance in respect of growing leadership, ownership, knowledge and action.

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Value	Value	Value
Number of Fife Council Staff and Councillors completed Climate Literacy Course	71	90	64
Number of Climate Literacy events, including wider engagement sessions and courses	16	9	5 Climate Literacy sessions.38 other events

3.3.4 Commentary on the indicators

Area wide emissions continue to follow broad national patterns. Notably the decarbonisation of the national grid has provided reduction to both our estate emissions

and wider energy use. Emissions from transport appear to be rebounding back to pre-covid levels after significant reductions.

The Council continues to have significant uptake to our Climate Literacy course. New sessions are being developed for frontline staff and online opportunities.

4.0 Priorities ahead

- 4.1 To develop ownership of climate across all Directorate and Service Change Plans in 2024/25, the Head of Planning is engaging with the extended Council Leadership Team and Directorate Leadership Teams. This is intended to inform Service and Directorate leadership in addressing the climate emergency and to set out the actions that will be progressed across Council Services.
- 4.2 A reporting portal will be developed for Climate Fife 2024 and the 'addressing the climate emergency' priority of the Plan4Fife. This will involve engaging with the range of delivery partners within the Council and the Fife Partnership organisations to inform across the range of activities. It is intended that this should also facilitate climate reporting across a range of reporting needs and to the public.
- 4.3 The 3 Big Moves will be developed, collaborative partnerships established, and delivery opportunities identified and progressed throughout 2024/25, as below.

4.3.1 Big Energy Move

- Publish, and subsequently deliver, a detailed 5-year LHEES Delivery Plan.
- Complete a pilot place-based energy plan for the Dunfermline & Rosyth area, building upon the "energy prospectus" (section 3.2.2) to explore:
 - The potential expansion of the Dunfermline Community Energy Scheme, and alternative heat sources.
 - Feasibility of a large-scale district heat network, taking account of wider energy opportunities and challenges.
 - Develop a replicable methodology.
- Appoint legal support to review potential heat network (and wider energy) delivery models for Fife, in partnership with Property Services.
- The Council have been awarded £135,000 of Scottish Government funding for 24/25, to support the energy plan and delivery model review.
- Formally designate heat network zones, in line with requirement in the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021. This involves revising the initial LHEES heat network zones and a formal consultation. This will also inform the site assessment for Fife's Place Plan (the Local Development Plan).
- Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Net Zero Innovation & Delivery Programme. Deliver a 2-year funded project with two work packages looking at:
 - Jobs and training needs for the region to retrofit domestic properties.
 - The level of manufacturing in the region linked to retrofitting properties and what the skills and training gaps are for the supply chain (including supply chain opportunities arising from the Forth Green Freeport and LHEES's).

4.3.2 Big Resilience Move

- Deliver the Coastal Change Adaptation case studies project for Scottish Government by March 2025. This project will inform the language and engagement techniques to engage with communities of interest. It is intended to be able to inform the creation of a future Fife Council policy position on this matter, that would then be completed through the creation of the future Coastal Change Adaptation Plan for Fife, and in Fife's Place Plan currently being developed for adoption by 2028.
- Deliver the Climate Ready South East Scotland project in partnership with the 6 local authorities in the South East Scotland City Deal region and SNIFFER. This project will carry out a detailed assessment of the climate risks and opportunities faced by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region. This assessment will both draw on the best available scientific evidence, and work with communities across the region to gather and share their experiences of climate change. The assessment will inform decision-making across the region, laying the foundation for collaborative climate adaptation action.
- Inform the wider planning for the Big Resilience Move by engaging with relevant officers throughout the Council to understand their roles, responsibilities, data and evidence related to improving resilience to climate impacts, to then propose improvement activities.

4.3.3 Big Community Move

Details of this will be developed through 2024/25, through a session in each of the 7 area-based Place and People Leadership groups, with additional engagement with community members of the Fife Climate Hub at each session. Some examples of delivery actions that will be undertaken in 24/25 include:

- Participation in the Climate Action Fife project will continue. This includes delivering climate literacy sessions, supporting capacity building for place-based climate action, and delivering events to engage council and public sector staff in climate action.
- The Food 4 Fife Partnership and Strategy will be developed and launched to move towards a local low carbon food system in Fife, benefitting communities, local growers and businesses.
- Delivery of the Zero Waste Strategy will be augmented by investigation of opportunity for a reuse hub in Fife.
- A Fife Climate Forest approach will be developed to engage communities in tree planting and stewardship, improving biodiversity, green network connectivity and targeting upstream catchment areas to help attenuate nature-based flood resilience.

Report contacts

Ross Spalding, Service Manager, Climate Change and Zero Waste

Shona M Cargill, Lead Officer, Climate Change and Zero Waste

Appendices

No appendices

Background papers:

1. [2023/24 annual review report for Planning Service](#)
2. Climate Fife 2024 [Strategy and Action Plan](#)
3. [Zero Waste Strategy and action plan 2018-2028](#)
4. [Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy 2023](#) .
5. Climate Change Public Bodies Duties Annual Report, from 5th November Cabinet Committee papers (not yet live online, will add a link when available)